

Guide to the Jess Mack Papers

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Mack, Jess
Creator:	Mack, Dorothy
Title:	Jess Mack Papers
ID:	MS-00022
Date [inclusive]:	1916-1988
Physical Description:	5.6 Linear Feet (14 boxes)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Jess Mack Papers document the professional life of burlesque agent and comedy writer Jess Mack from 1916 to 1988 in Las Vegas, Nevada. In addition to contracts, correspondence, engagements, and newspaper articles, the collection contains five boxes of jokes, scripts and scenes used in various burlesque productions. Other material includes photographs of entertainers and burlesque stars, joke booklets, and issues of Mack's magazine, <i>Cavalcade of Burlesque</i> , dating from 1951 to 1954.

Preferred Citation

Jess Mack Papers, 1916-1988. MS-00022. Special Collections, UNLV Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Biographical Note

Jess Mack, born in Baltimore, Maryland on May 14, 1905, was an actor for 30 years, and a producer, comedy writer, and agent for 35 years in Las Vegas, Nevada. Mack wrote for comedians including Phil Silvers, Rags Ragland, Red Buttons, Charlie Kemper, Phyllis Diller, and Rip Taylor. He also wrote comedy lines and sketches for Abbott and Costello, Jackie Gleason, *George White's Scandals* and *Minsky's Follies*. Mack was also the writer and publisher of the *Cavalcade of Burlesque* magazine. As an agent, Mack represented a number of prominent striptease dancers. In addition to his show business life, Mack was a member of a number of philanthropic and charitable organizations, including the Saints and Sinners, Kentucky Colonels, Catholic Actors Guild of America, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was a 32nd Degree Mason, a member of Scottish Rights and a Shriner with the Zelza Temple.

Mack first appeared in a comedy act in Las Vegas in 1944 with Charles Kemper at the El Rancho Vegas Hotel and Casino. He made two trips to the South Pacific with the United Service Organizations (1945 and 1946). Mack continued to work and travel until 1969 when he moved to Las Vegas permanently and opened the Jess Mack Theatrical Agency. His 35 years as an agent culminated on June 24, 1990 when the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) presented him with the Outstanding Achievement Award for being the first franchised SAG agent in Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Scope and Contents Note

The papers document the professional life of burlesque agent and comedy writer Jess Mack from 1918 to 1988. In addition to contracts, correspondence, engagements, and newspaper articles, these papers contain five boxes of jokes, scripts and scenes used in various burlesque productions. Other material includes photographs of entertainers and burlesque stars, joke booklets, advertisements for shows, scheduling information on entertainers, and issues of Mack's magazine, *Cavalcade of Burlesque*, dating from 1951 to 1954. Additionally, there are audio recordings of burlesque comic routines and musicals.

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Arrangement Note

The collection is divided into three series:

Series I. General Papers and Photographs, 1956-1987;

Series II. Promotional Materials, 1951-1989;

Series III. Comic Material, 1940s-1980s.

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Administrative Information

Access

The collection is open for research.

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 in 1992 by Dorothy Mack and Richard Saunders; accession number 1992-023.

Processing Note

Material was processed by Special Collections staff in 1992. Further processing was completed by Joyce Moore in 2011. In 2014, as part of a legacy finding aid conversion project, Lindsay Oden revised and enhanced the collection description to bring it into compliance with current professional standards. Subsequently Lindsay Oden entered the data into ArchivesSpace.

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Names and Subjects

- Burlesque (Theater)
- Comedy -- Las Vegas
- Entertainment -- Nevada -- Las Vegas -- History
- Entertainers

Collection Inventory

General papers and photographs, 1956-1987

Physical Description: 1.3 Linear Feet (3 boxes)

Scope and Contents Note: This series contains biographical information (including newspaper clippings), contracts and legal documents, correspondence, photographs, personal papers, and newspaper articles. It also contains scripts, booklets, the Nevada Production Directory from 1988, and other pamphlets on burlesque's history.

Arrangement Note: The materials are arranged alphabetically by topic and then chronologically.

Title/Description	Containers	
Biographical information, 1988-1990	box 01	folder 01
Contracts, 1950-1968	box 01	folder 02-03
Correspondence, 1960-1987	box 01	folder 04
Resume of DeAnn Johnson and photographs of performers and friends, 1960s	box 01	folder 05

Legal documents, 1957-1986	box 01	folder 06
Licenses, 1969-1990	box 02	folder 01
Personal papers, 1960s	box 02	folder 02
Newspaper articles, 1985-1988	box 02	folder 03
Photographs of burlesque theaters, 1960s-1980s	box 02	folder 04
Photographs of celebrities, 1960s-1980s	box 02	folder 05
Photographs of entertainment friends, 1960s-1980s	box 02	folder 06
Photographs of Jess Mack, 1960s-1980s	box 02	folder 07
Booklets, 1953-1968	box 03	folder 01
Booklets by Robert Orben, 1949-1952	box 03	folder 02
"The Laugh Clinic", 1968	box 03	folder 03
Nevada Production Directory, 1988	box 03	folder 04
"A Pictorial History of Burlesque", 1964	box 03	folder 05
"The Sex Maniac's Diary", 1988-1990	box 03	folder 06
"Soundings", 1988	box 03	folder 07

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Promotional materials, 1951-1989

Physical Description: 1.1 Linear Feet (3 boxes)

Scope and Contents Note: This series contains *Cavalcade of Burlesque* magazine, photographs and postcards, business papers, performer names and schedules from 1987 to 1989, information on Mack's clients, and advertisements for shows.

Arrangement Note: The Series is arranged into three subseries:

Subseries II.a. Cavalcade of Burlesque, 1950s-1960s

Subseries II.b. Entertainers, 1961-1989

Subseries II.c. Advertisements, 1960s-1980s

Cavalcade of Burlesque

Physical Description: 0.3 Linear Feet (1 box)

Scope and Contents Note: Subseries contains postcards, photographs, business papers, and the *Calvacade of Burlesque* magazine from 1951 to 1954.

Arrangement: Subseries is arranged alphabetically by media type and then chronologically.

Title/Description	Containers	
Postcards, 1950s-1960s	box 04	folder 01
Business papers, 1952-1960	box 04	folder 02
"Cavalcade of Burlesque" magazine, 1951-1954		

box 04 folder
03-04

Photographs, 1950s-1960s

box 04 folder 05

Entertainers

Physical Description: 0.5 Linear Feet (1 box)

Scope and Contents Note: Subseries contains Jess Mack's files on performers including resumes and advertisements.

Arrangement: Subseries is arranged alphabetically by performer.

Title/Description	Containers	
Bell, Virginia, 1961-1962	box 05	folder 01
The Cold Nose Five, 1989	box 05	folder 02
Dixie Dooley Magic Show, 1989	box 05	folder 03
Engagements, 1987-1989	box 05	folder 04-06
Entertainers handled by Mack, 1950s-1980s	box 05	folder 07
Francesca "Kitten" Natividad resume, news clippings, and advertisements, 1951-1953	box 05	folder 08
The New Dunhills, 1960s	box 05	folder 09
Tempest Storm, 1960s-1980	box 05	folder 10

Advertisements

Physical Description: 0.3 Linear Feet (1 box)

Scope and Contents Note: Subseries contains brochures, flyers, and programs.

Arrangement: Subseries is arranged alphabetically by topic.

Title/Description	Containers	
Brochures, 1967-1980	box 06	folder 01
Flyers, 1960s	box 06	folder 02
Programs, 1945-1980	box 06	folder 03
Show poster for "Hats and Dogs", 1960s	box 06	folder 04

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Comic Material, 1940s-1980s

Physical Description: 3 Linear Feet (8 boxes)

Scope and Contents Note: The materials contain scripts for sketches, notebooks of jokes, and compilations of Jess Mack's ideas for jokes and gags. It also contains scripts written for comedic acts like Abbott and Costello.

Arrangement Note: Materials are arranged alphabetically.

Title/Description	Containers	
Jokes and sketches, 1940s-1960s	box 07	folder 01-05
Sketch scripts, 1953-1970	box 08-10	folder 01-15
Denison's Vaudeville Vaudeville Sketches, 1904	box 10	folder 03
Abbott and Costello Program script, "Medals", 1944	box 11	folder 01
The Auto-Lite Show script, August 15, 1946	box 11	folder 02
"Honky Tonk Nights", 1983	box 11	folder 03
"Ride 'Em Cowboy" radio show script, 1940s	box 11	folder 04
"Take It Off", 1964	box 11	folder 05
Vaudeville Theater script, July 19, 1941	box 11	folder 06
Jokes in three bound volumes labeled by topic, 1940s-1950s	box 12	
Burlesque programs from New York and London, 1916-1940	box 13	folder 01
Newspaper clippings, programs, and correspondence, 1937-1952	box 13	folder 02
Jokes and sketches, 1940s-1960s	box 13	folder 03-05
Personal papers and memorabilia, 1940s-1980s	box 13	folder 06
Long playing records: Audio recordings of burlesque performances, 1971-1982	box 14	

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