

## Guide to Minsky's Burlesque Records

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections Division.
<b>Creator:</b>	Minsky, Harold
<b>Title:</b>	Minsky's Burlesque Records
<b>ID:</b>	MS-00290
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1922-1978
<b>Physical Description:</b>	11.5 Linear Feet (27 boxes)
<b>Physical Description:</b>	12.5 Cubic Feet (27 boxes)
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	Minsky's Burlesque Records (1922-1978) contain scripts, publicity, photographs, financial records, payroll records, sheet music, news clippings, contracts, and correspondence. Also included are the personal papers of noted burlesque producer Harold Minsky, who was known for creating the "family burlesque" style of entertainment and for introducing the topless showgirl to Las Vegas, Nevada at the Dunes Hotel in 1957.

### Preferred Citation Note

Minsky's Burlesque Records, 1922-1978. MS-00290. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## Historical Note

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Minsky, a name synonymous with Burlesque worldwide, had its origins in the National Winter Garden Theater in New York City in 1917. Four Minsky brothers, Abraham, Billy, Herbert and Morton began producing the risqué variety shows that featured comedy, variety acts and scantily clothed young women. A logical outgrowth of a dying Vaudeville, the shows met with fierce resistance in the 1920s and 1930s. Concerned citizens picketed the burlesque theaters; religious groups, both Christian and Jewish alike, appealed to their congregations to boycott the performances; and police conducted raids on a regular basis. Chorus girls were arrested and the Minsky brothers' licenses were constantly being challenged. By 1937 Minsky's Burlesque shows were banned in New York and the word "burlesque" could not be used in any production.

A young Harold Minsky, son of Abraham, began producing shows he called "follies" in New York at the Gaiety Theater, and the *New York Times* criticized the shows as being "dirtier" than burlesque. By 1942 Mayor La Guardia ordered all such theaters closed in New York. Harold Minsky, through his attorney Morris Ernst, demanded a "just cause" hearing to reopen his Gaiety Theater. After months of litigation, however, the ban was upheld by the Supreme Court and Minsky was forced to declare bankruptcy.

Undaunted by this, he moved his shows to such places as Chicago, Illinois; Hollywood, California; Miami, Florida; Newark, New Jersey; and Cincinnati, Ohio. He introduced the "family style" burlesque as "a type of show that wouldn't offend anybody." Minsky also introduced "ladies day" to entice women to attend.

After first introducing Burlesque to Las Vegas in 1954, Minsky produced shows at the Thunderbird, Aladdin, Silver Slipper, Fremont, and Frontier hotels. A book published in 1960 based on the stage productions, titled *The Night They Raided Minsky's* was followed, in 1967, by a motion picture of the same name.

Immensely successful in the 1950s and 1960s, the popularity of Burlesque declined in the 1970s. Harold Minsky died on December 25, 1977, shortly after his last show at the Fremont Hotel in Las Vegas had closed. His wife, Patricia, managed to keep Burlesque alive in other American cities until 1978 when the last Minsky's Burlesque was performed for the public.

Rowland Barber, *The Night They Raided Minsky's*, 1960.

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## Scope and Contents Note

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Minsky's Burlesque Records (1922-1978) contain scripts, publicity, photographs, financial records, payroll records, sheet music, news clippings, contracts, and correspondence. Also, included are the personal papers of noted burlesque producer Harold Minsky who was known for creating the "family burlesque" style of entertainment and for introducing the topless showgirl to Las Vegas, Nevada at the Dunes Hotel in 1957.

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## Arrangement

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The records are arranged into three series:

Series I. General Records and Papers;

Series II. Hotel Records;

Series III. Sheet Music.

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## Administrative Information

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### Access Note

This 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 from 1978 to 1982 by Patricia Minsky Shapiro; accession number 87-97.

### Processing Note

Collection was processed in 1996 by Joyce Marshall and updated in 2016 by Joyce Marshall-Moore.

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## Related Materials

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### Separation Note

Photographs from Minsky's Burlesque were removed to the UNLV Special Collections Photograph Collection number 0075.

### Related Collections

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

Harold Minsky Photograph Collection, 1957-1977. PH-00075. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Donn Arden Papers, 1918-1994. MS-00425. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Mida Mae Dick Papers, 1945-1986. MS-00259. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Dunes Hotel Records, 1955-1992. MS-00328. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## Names and Subjects

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- Aladdin Hotel and Casino -- Records and correspondence.
- Fremont Hotel -- Records and correspondence.
- Hyatt Hotel (Las Vegas, Nev.) -- Records and correspondence.
- Burlesque (Theater) -- United States -- Biography
- Showgirls -- Nevada -- Las Vegas
- Showgirls
- Show business - Nevada -Las Vegas
- Entertainers
- Entertainment -- Nevada -- Las Vegas
- Photographs
- Minsky, Harold
- Aladdin Hotel and Casino
- Fremont Hotel (Las Vegas, Nev.)
- Hyatt hotel (Las Vegas, Nev.)
- Dunes Hotel and Country Club (Las Vegas, Nev.)

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## Collection Inventory

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### Series 1: General Records and Papers, 1922-1978

Physical Description: 0.45 Linear Feet (1 box)

Scope and Contents Note: The general records of Minsky's Burlesque contain newspaper articles dating from 1922, tracing the rise of burlesque in New York City, New York. This includes correspondence and papers about Harold Minsky and Eddie Lynch, (his manager for many years), published articles about the various Minsky shows, photographs of Lili St. Cyr, and rehearsal photos for a show in New York City in 1964. Also included are book sale correspondence for and promotional information on the motion picture of the same name, production cost receipts, bills, payroll receipts, profit and loss statements, and costume designs and prices.complete the records.

Arrangement: Material is roughly arranged alphabetically.

Title/Description	Containers	
Bert Lahr's obituary clippings, undated	box 1	folder 1
Bills, receipts, payroll receipts, 1975	box 1	folder 2
Bills, receipts, payroll receipts, 1976	box 1	folder 3
Bills, receipts, payroll receipts, 1977	box 1	folder 4

Minsky, Ava, correspondence, 1959-1976	box 1	folder 5
Production cost receipts, 1971-1973	box 1	folder 6
Costume designs and prices, 1962	box 1	folder 7
Eddie Lynch Papers, undated	box 1	folder 8
Eddie Lynch photographs, undated	box 1	folder 9
General correspondence, 1959-1972	box 1	folder 10
Newspaper clippings, 1922-1942	box 1	folder 11
Newspaper clippings, Patricia Minsky, 1978	box 1	folder 12
The Night They Raided Minsky's, book correspondence, 1955-1969	box 1	folder 13
The Night They Raided Minsky's, movie correspondence, 1964	box 1	folder 14
Patavia, Incorporated, Profit and loss statements, 1969-1978	box 1	folder 15
Photographs		
Lili St. Cyr, undated	box 1	folder 16
Dunes Hotel showgirls, undated	box 1	folder 17
Show rehearsal, New York City, New York, 1964	box 1	folder 18
Published articles	box 1	folder 19
Publicity, undated	box 1	folder 20

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## Series 2: Hotel Records, 1953-1978

Physical Description: 3.2 Linear Feet (6 boxes)

Scope And Contents: The hotel records from 1953 through 1978 cover hotel information from Minsky's Burlesque productions including papers, contracts, correspondence, publicity, and newspaper clippings. There are show cost breakdowns and commissions, program order forms, a list of engagements, and income tax records. The Associated Guild of Variety Actors is represented through correspondence, retroactive pay to employees, labor agreements, welfare fund, rules and regulations and a law suit against the Nevada Resort Association from 1972. Also included are payroll sheets from the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas and the Condado Beach Hotel in Puerto Rico from 1969 to 1973, and a dictionary titled , and corresponding contracts.

Arrangement: Material is arranged alphabetically.

### 2.1 General Hotel records, 1958-1978

Physical Description: (3 boxes)

Scope And Contents: Includes the contracts, correspondence, publicity and clippings of several hotels.

Title/Description	Containers	
Adams Theater Show, undated	box 2	folder 1
Aladdin Hotel contracts, 1968	box 2	folder 2

Aladdin Hotel contracts, 1969	box 2	folder 3
Aladdin Hotel contracts, 1970	box 2	folder 4
Aladdin Hotel contracts, 1971	box 2	folder 5
Aladdin Hotel contracts, 1972	box 2	folder 6
Aladdin Hotel show cost breakdown, 1969-1971	box 2	folder 7
Aladdin Hotel commissions, 1968-1972	box 2	folder 8
Aladdin Hotel correspondence, 1968-1972	box 2	folder 9
Aladdin Hotel publicity and newspaper clippings, 1969-1971	box 2	folder 10
Cal-Neva Lodge contract, 1966	box 2	folder 11
Chateau De Ville Theater contracts, 1976	box 2	folder 12
Chateau De Ville Theater correspondence and papers, 1975-1976	box 2	folder 13
Chateau De Ville Theater publicity and newspaper clippings, undated	box 2	folder 14
Condado Beach Hotel contracts, 1969-1970	box 2	folder 15
Condado Beach Hotel publicity and newspaper clippings, 1969-1971	box 2	folder 16
Condado Beach Hotel correspondence and papers, 1970-1971	box 2	folder 17
Condado Beach Hotel bankruptcy and claims, 1971-1974	box 2	folder 18
Dallas and Chicago contracts and correspondence, 1975-1977	box 3	folder 1
Dallas and Chicago payroll and receipts, 1978	box 3	folder 2
Dunes Hotel contracts and accounting, 1958-1959	box 3	folder 3
Dunes Hotel newspaper clippings, 1957-1958	box 3	folder 4
Edgewater Beach Hotel contracts, 1967	box 3	folder 5
Edgewater Beach Hotel publicity and newspaper clippings, 1967	box 3	folder 6
Elmwood Casino contracts, 1973	box 3	folder 7
Elmwood Casino publicity and newspaper clippings, 1973	box 3	folder 8
Fairmont Hotel contracts and correspondence, 1976-1977	box 3	folder 9
Fairmont Hotel publicity and newspaper clippings, 1977	box 3	folder 10
Foreign Tours correspondence, 1976-1977	box 3	folder 11
Fontaine Bleu contracts, 1973	box 3	folder 12
Fontaine Bleu publicity and newspaper clippings, 1977	box 3	folder 13
Fremont Hotel contracts, 1972-1973	box 3	folder 14
Fremont Hotel correspondence, 1973-1975	box 3	folder 15
Fremont Hotel publicity and newspaper clippings, 1973	box 3	folder 16



Gaiety Theater closing, 1970	box 3	folder 17
Hyatt Hotel correspondence, 1974-1977	box 3	folder 18
International Theater contracts, 1964	box 3	folder 19
International Theater publicity and newspaper clippings, 1962, 1964	box 3	folder 20
Latin Casino contracts, 1967	box 3	folder 21
Latin Casino publicity and newspaper clippings, 1967	box 3	folder 22
List of Engagements	box 3	folder 23
Lookout House contracts, 1971-1972	box 3	folder 24
Lookout House publicity and newspaper clippings, 1971	box 3	folder 25
Manor House contracts, 1964	box 3	folder 26
Melody Tent contracts, publicity and newspaper clippings, 1967	box 3	folder 27
Mineola Theater contracts and correspondence, 1966-1967	box 3	folder 28
Mineola Theater publicity and newspaper clippings, 1967	box 3	folder 29
Miscellaneous publicity, correspondence and releases, 1964-1971	box 4	folder 1
Miscellaneous locations contracts and correspondence, 1957- 1973	box 4	folder 2
Music Circus contracts and accounting, 1967	box 4	folder 3
Music Circus publicity and newspaper clippings, 1967	box 4	folder 4
Music Fair contracts, 1972	box 4	folder 5
Music Fair, Martha Raye appearance, 1972	box 4	folder 6
Music Fair publicity and newspaper clippings, 1961, 1967	box 4	folder 7
New York Hilton, Newark, and New Frontier publicity and clippings, 1975	box 4	folder 8
Palladium Hollywood publicity and newspaper clippings, 1969-1976	box 4	folder 9
Playboy Hotels contracts, 1969-1976	box 4	folder 10
Playboy Hotel's correspondence and papers, 1969-1975	box 4	folder 11
Playboy Hotel publicity and newspaper clippings, 196, 1971-1974	box 4	folder 12
Program orders from Rydell Publishing, 1967	box 4	folder 13
Riverside Rialto publicity and newspaper clippings, 1961	box 4	folder 14
Scotsman, Sherman House, and Shoreman Americana publicity and newspaper clippings, 1970-1974	box 4	folder 15
Shubert Theater contracts and correspondence, 1967	box 4	folder 16
Silver Slipper Hotel contracts, 1965-1966-1968	box 4	folder 17
Silver Slipper Hotel publicity and newspaper clippings, 1965-1968	box 4	folder 18

Thunderbird Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada contracts, correspondence, and accounting, 1968	box 4	folder 19
Thunderbird Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada publicity and newspaper clippings, 1967	box 4	folder 20
Thunderbird Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan publicity and newspaper clippings, 1975	box 4	folder 21
Winchester Town House publicity and newspaper clippings, 1964	box 4	folder 22

## 2.2 Legal Materials, 1953-1973

Physical Description: (1 box)

Scope And Contents: Includes the correspondence, rules and regulations, labor agreements, and the welfare fund of the American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA).

Title/Description	Containers	
American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA) correspondence, undated	box 5	folder 1
AGVA rules and regulations, 1967-1969	box 5	folder 2
AGVA retroactive pay to employees, 1969	box 5	folder 3
AGVA labor agreements, 1971	box 5	folder 4
AGVA welfare fund, 1970-1972	box 5	folder 5
AGVA vs. Nevada Resort Association, 1972	box 5	folder 6
Income tax records, 1953-1958	box 5	folder 7
Minsky trademark legal registration, 1972-1973	box 5	folder 8
Minsky trademark legal correspondence, 1972-1973	box 5	folder 9
Minsky trademark request to produce, 1972-1973	box 5	folder 10
Minsky trademark copyright violation, 1972-1973	box 5	folder 11
Minsky trademark complaint and settlement, 1972-1973	box 5	folder 12

## 2.3 Publications, undated

Physical Description: (1 box)

Scope And Contents: Materials include a dictionary that Minsky collaborated on called and corresponding contracts.

Title/Description	Containers	
The Language of Show Biz- a Dictionary, undated	box 06	
The Language of Show Biz- a Dictionary: contracts	box 06	

## 2.4 Oversized Materials (Payroll Sheets), 1968-1973

Physical Description: (1 box)

Scope And Contents: Includes payroll sheets, recap sheets and bank reconciliations related to Minsky's business with various hotels and theaters.

Title/Description	Containers	
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Bank reconciliations, 1971-1972	box 7	folder 1
Bank reconciliations, 1972-1973	box 7	folder 2
Payroll sheets, Aladdin Hotel, 1969	box 7	folder 3
Payroll sheets, Aladdin Hotel, 1970	box 7	folder 4
Payroll recap sheets, Aladdin Hotel, 1970	box 7	folder 5
Payroll sheets, Condado Beach Hotel, 1969-1970	box 7	folder 6
Payroll recap sheets, Condado Beach Hotel, 1970	box 7	folder 7
Payroll, 1969-1970	box 7	folder 8
Payroll sheets, rehearsal, 1970	box 7	folder 9
Payroll sheets, Thunderbird, 1968	box 7	folder 10
Payroll recap sheets, Thunderbird, 1968	box 7	folder 11
Payroll sheets, Sherman Hotel, 1970	box 7	folder 12
Payroll sheets, Shubert Theater, 1970	box 7	folder 13

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### Series 3: Music, undated

Physical Description: (20 boxes)

Scope And Contents: The third series is composed entirely of sheet music related to shows performed by Minsky's with a focus on the original show at the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Arrangement: Music is arranged alphabetically by title.

Title/Description	Containers
Sheet music A-B	box 8
Sheet music B	box 9
Sheet music B	box 10
Sheet music C	box 11
Sheet music C	box 12
Sheet music D-E	box 13
Sheet music F	box 14
Sheet music F-G	box 15
Sheet music G-I	box 16
Sheet music I-J-K	box 17
Sheet music L	box 18
Sheet music L-M	box 19

Sheet music M	box 20
Sheet music N	box 21
Sheet music O-P	box 22
Sheet music P-Q-R-S	box 23
Sheet music S	box 24
Sheet music S-T	box 25
Sheet music U-V-W	box 26
Sheet music W-Y-Z	box 27

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