



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Dewey Michaels Burlesque Collection

NMAH.AC.0065

David E. Haberstich

1991

Archives Center, National Museum of American History

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Dewey Michaels Burlesque Collection
Date:	late 1920's-1967
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0065
Creator:	Garbo (Chicago) (Photographer) National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Community Life (Collector) Laverne, Gene (Buffalo, NY) (Photographer) Kriegsmann, James J. (Photographer) Michaels, Dewey, 1898- (theater owner, director, producer) (Collector) Maurice (Chicago) (Photographer) Seymour, Mamie (New York) (Photographer) Bruno ((Bernard?) of Hollywood (New York City)) (Photographer) Bakchy, Boris (New York) (Photographer)
Extent:	0.33 Cubic feet (2 boxes)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Mr. Dewey Michaels, January 31, 1981.

Provenance

Collection transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Community Life (now Division of Cultural and Community Life) , 7/26/83.

Related Materials

Theatrical backdrops and director's chair located in the Division of Home and Community Life (now Division of Cultural and Community Life).

Processing Information

Collection processed by David Haberstick, 1991.

Preferred Citation

Dewey Michaels Burlesque Collection, circa 1920s-1967, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

George Dewey Michaels (1898-1982) was owner, director, general manager and producer of the Palace Burlesque Theater in Buffalo, New York until it closed on September 29, 1977, when Michaels was 79 years old. Michaels started in the business when he was 19 years old. Through the years, he featured Abbott and Costello, Phil Silvers, Jerry Lewis, Red Buttons, and Sammy Davis, Jr. who was then a dancer with the Will Master Trio which included his father and uncle. The Palace Burlesque was part of a 40-city circuit. Michaels was married in 1920 to Phyllis Boasberg. She died in 1969, leaving two sons and one daughter. On December 4, 1980, Michaels donated a backdrop, used in the theatre, to the Smithsonian. The backdrop had a musical theme with a clarinetist and notes rendered in extravagant art nouveau. Michaels was then 83 years old. Other backdrops were distributed to other theatres and collectors. They were 60-100 years old, painted in Diamond Dye, and worth about \$1,000 apiece.

Scope and Contents

Newspaper clippings; advertising brochures; and photoprints of performers at the Palace Theatre (including studio publicity portraits). The majority of the items are silver gelatin photoprints. Some photographers are listed below as index terms. Subjects of photographs include strippers and comedians; photographs of women include portraits as well as full-length figures, nude or in costume.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series. Arranged alphabetically by subjects' names within categories.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Burlesque (Theater) -- 1920-1970
- Burlesque shows -- 1920-1970
- Comedians -- 1920-1970
- Entertainers -- 1920-1970
- Entertainment -- Photographs -- 1920-1970
- Glamour photography -- 1920-1970
- Musicians -- 20th century
- Nudity in the performing arts
- Striptease -- 1920-1970
- Stripteasers -- 1920-1970
- Theatrical producers and directors -- 1920-1970

Types of Materials:

Clippings -- 20th century

Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 19th-20th century

Names:

Palace Burlesque Theatre (Buffalo, N.Y.)

Places:

Buffalo (N.Y.) -- photographs -- 1920-1970

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1

[Aurora-Bon-Bon \(at Bon Bon Lounge?\)](#)

Notes: The Sparkling Seminole Aurora by Maurice Seymour; Honey Bee, 2 prints of different poses, ink on verso, photographer unidentified; Carmen Baby by Maurice Seymour; Tinker Bell, photographer unidentified; Tinker Bell as Cleopatra, photographer unidentified "The Sins of Cleopatra" in pencil on verso; Tinker Bell as Cleopatra, with snake; photographer unidentified "The Sins of Cleopatra" in pencil on verso; Tinker Bell by James Kriegsmann Virginia Bell (in ink on verso), color print by "Freddy" (gold stamp, lower right); Bust portrait, Virginia Ding Dong Bell by Gene Laverne, Buffalo, New York; Seated full-figure portrait, "Virginia Bell" by Gene Laverne, Buffalo, New York; Virginia Ding Dong Bell, standing portrait, by Paul Winik of Boston; Dancer with dummy in front of "The Bon Bon Lounge" sign; handwork applied to print; Same dancer in 4 poses on same print, with handwork applied to print; Bon-Bon, composite print of 6 images, stamped "Two-O-Clock Club / 414 E. Balto. St." on verso.

Box 1, Folder 2

[Bruce, Bobbi-Dean, Jeri \(includes Camille 2000\)](#)

Notes: Unidentified dancer by Maurice Seymour; Bobbie Bruce (pencil on verso) by Garbo / Chicago; Camille 2000 by Maurice Seymour; Carmella / The Sophia Loren of Burlesk [sic] by Gene Laverne of Buffalo, N.Y.; --- Cassidy [pencil on verso], photographer unidentified; Charmaine [pencil on verso] by Bloom / Chicago; "Charming" Charmaine [sic] by Gene Laverne of Buffalo, N.Y.; Marie Cord [pencil on verso], fully dressed woman with hat, by Bruno of Hollywood, New York City; Marie Cord [pencil on verso] by Bloom / Chicago; Alice Crystal, photographer unidentified; Dolores Dawn [ink on verso] by Bruno of Hollywood; Dolores Dawn [ink on verso] by Bruno of Hollywood, second pose; Dolores Dawn [pencil on verso, plus ink autograph on front: "To Mr. Eisenberg / Just a reminder / Dolores Dawn," by Bruno of Hollywood, third pose; The Elegance of Miss Jeri Dean by James J. Kriegsmann.

Box 1, Folder 3

[Del Raye, Dolores-Doll, Barbi](#)

Notes: Dolores Del Raye [pencil on verso] by Maurice Seymour; Dolores Del Raye [pencil on verso] by Maurice Seymour, second pose; Dolores Del Raye [pencil on verso] by Bruno of Hollywood; Rita De Marco [pencil on verso] by Maurice / Chicago; damaged print, loss in upper right corner; Sheree Denise / The Jungle Goddess by Gene Laverne Sheree Denise / The Jungle Goddess by Gene Laverne, second pose; Simone De Ville by James J. Kriegsmann Hope Diamond / The Gem of Exotics by Murray Kovillan [?], N.Y.: standing pose; Hope Diamond / The Gem of Exotics by Murray Kovillan [?], N.Y.: kneeling pose; Hope Diamond / The Gem of the Exotics by Boris Backchy [?], N.Y.: standing pose; Hope Diamond / The Gem of Exotics by Murray Kovillan [?], N.Y.: head only;

Hope Diamond by Gene Laverne of Buffalo, N.Y., standing pose; Presenting / Hope / Diamond: folded publicity leaflet with reproductions of photographs by Gene Laverne, Buffalo, N.Y.; Barbi Doll by Madison Geddes, Cleveland, standing pose; Barbi Doll by Madison Geddes, Cleveland, another standing pose, same costume.

Box 1, Folder 4

Dolly, Rina-Frost, Jackie

Notes: Rina Dolly / "The European Bombshell" [sic] by Maurice Seymour; The Cherokee Half-Breed / Do May [in Indian headdress with bow] by Maurice Seymour; Domay [sic] The Cherokee Half-breed, by Maurice Seymour; with headdress, no bow; "Legs" DuBarry—the Most (1 print), photog. Unidentified; "Legs" DuBarry—the Most (1 print), standing pose, by Gene Laverne of Buffalo, N.Y.; Ecstasy "The Answer to All Your Dreams" 1 print, photograph unidentified, and 1 print of a composite of images; Fabulous Fanny by Bruno of Hollywood (1 print each of 3 poses) Fabulous Fanny by Gene Laverne, Buffalo, N.Y.; Amy Fong (pencil on verso), by Maurice, Chicago; Amy Fong (ink on verso), by Larry Karns Studio, Cleveland, Ohio; Gladys Fox (pencil on verso) by Bloom; Jennifer Fox (by Maurice?); Jackie Frost / The Coolest Kid in Town (2 poses) by Gene Laverne, Buffalo, N.Y.

Box 1, Folder 5

Fu, Sen Lee-Hubert, Eileen

Notes: Sen Lee Fu / French Indonesia / Venus or Pretty girl (ink on verso) by Carey[?], Dayton, Ohio; Sen Lee Fu / Oriental Pretty Girl (pencil on verso), by Garbo / Chicago; Blaze Fury by Park Tower Studio, Detroit; Blaze Fury, photo. unidentified; Blaze Fury by Gene Laverne, Buffalo, N.Y. (2 prints, 2 poses); Gilda (pencil on verso: 2 prints, 2 poses, photographer unidentified; Amber Hazr by Gene Laverne of Buffalo, N.Y. (2 prints, 2 poses); Anne Howe (2 prints, 2 poses by Bruno of Hollywood; Eileen Hubert / show / #17 / Palace (pencil on verso) by Bloom, Chicago.

Box 1, Folder 6

Irma the Body-Kelly, Judy

Notes: Irma the Body, by Garbo / Chicago (3 different views); Irma the Body: advertising composite photo; Irma the Body by Gene Laverne / Buffalo, N.Y. (2 different views); Jeneen [pencil on verso] by James Kollar / Radio City, N.Y. (2 different views); Jezebel. [sic, pencil on verso]: with framed portrait of actor Victor Mature, photog. unidentified Libby Jones / "The Park Avenue Playgirl" by James J. Kriegmann / N.Y. (2 views); Libby Jones by Gene Laverne / of / Buffalo, N.Y.; Libby Jones. (2 pp. photomechanical); Judy Kelly by Kriegmann.

Box 1, Folder 7

Lamont, Sharon- Lynn, Victoria

Box 1, Folder 8

March, April – Narda

Box 1, Folder 9

Natasa – O'Neill, Lynne

Box 1, Folder 10	Orlando, Dardy – Parker, Cindy
Box 1, Folder 11	Parker, Ermain – Powers, Jet
Box 1, Folder 12	Star, Dawn – Villa, Maria (includes Tempest Storm)
Box 1, Folder 13	Barker, Johnny – Hayden, Jac (sic)
Box 1, Folder 14	King, Billy – Rosin, Jack
Box 1, Folder 15	Burlesque novelty acts, including male and female dancers and musicians
Box 1, Folder 16	Palace Theatre materials: photoprints, newspaper clippings, etc. including pictures of Dewey Michaels. Includes photographs of the theater from 1946 (in poor condition), 1967, 1977, and 1980, including the opening of the new Palace Theater in 1967 (photoprint of Dewey Michaels with Anne Corio. Includes several newspaper columns by Anne McIlhenney Matthews from the Courier Express.
Box 2, Folder 1	1: Train Bit - Can't Go Home Scene, January 23-25, 1930
Box 2, Folder 2	Train Bit, January 23-25, 1930
Box 2, Folder 3	Taxi Cab Bit, March 15-19, 1930
Box 2, Folder 4	Theatrical Office Bit - Rehearsal Bit - Uncle Tom Bit, December 5-7, 1929
Box 2, Folder 5	Summer Kitchen, undated
Box 2, Folder 6	Subway Scene, August 17-20, 1930
Box 2, Folder 7	Stage Door Scene, October 25-29, 1930
Box 2, Folder 8	Sophia Plunk, February 23-26, 1930
Box 2, Folder 9	Sophia Plunk, February 23-20, 1930
Box 2, Folder 10	Should Say Not, October 30-November 1, 1930
Box 2, Folder 11	She Was So Innocent - No Dogs Allowed, April 10-12, 1930
Box 2, Folder 12	Sanitorium Bit - Jolly Jail Bird Bit - Lighthouse Bit, February 10-19, 1930
Box 2, Folder 13	Selling Melody Bit - Saints & Sinners - The Vampiye, February 6-8, 1930
Box 2, Folder 14	Saints and Sinners, February 0-8, 1930
Box 2, Folder 15	Ragtime Shimmy, undated

Box 2, Folder 16	Pussy Café, October 9-11, 1930
Box 2, Folder 17	Pullman Scene, January 8-10, 1931
Box 2, Folder 18	North Pole - Witness - Here Comes Nellie - No Club Bits, February 9-12, 1930
Box 2, Folder 19	North Pole - Witness - Here Comes Nellie - No Club Bits, February 9-12, 1930
Box 2, Folder 20	New Leader Bit - Woman Bit, March 6-8, 1930
Box 2, Folder 21	Musical Cocktail, June 29-July 2, 1930
Box 2, Folder 22	Merry Xmas Bit, December 22-23, 1929
Box 2, Folder 23	Mandarin Bit - Murder Bit, January 26-29, 1930
Box 2, Folder 24	Mammy Vou Bit, December 19-21, 1929
Box 2, Folder 25	Mammy Vou Bit, December 19-21, 1929
Box 2, Folder 26	Knife & Fork Bit - Modern Topic Bit, December 26-28, 1929
Box 2, Folder 27	Janitors Bit - Lovers Bit, January.5-8, 1930
Box 2, Folder 28	Ice Cream Bit -Janitors Bit - Lovers Bit, January 5-8, 1930
Box 2, Folder 29	The Husband - Queen of Sheba - Battle of Sbenan Doah - What Price Glory, February 13-15, 1930
Box 2, Folder 30	Hotel Cowboy Bit - Too Late Bit, December 1-4, 1929
Box 2, Folder 31	Hotel Cowboy Bit - Too Late Bit - Convention Days, December 1-4, 1929
Box 2, Folder 32	Hold Up Bit - Pancake Bit, March 9-12, 1930
Box 2, Folder 33	Gus Scene - Acrobat Bit, January 2-4, 1930
Box 2, Folder 34	Give It To Me, undated
Box 2, Folder 35	Ghost in a Pawn Shop, undated
Box 2, Folder 36	Funny Face Bit, undated
Box 2, Folder 37	Four Door Bit, May 27-29, 1930
Box 2, Folder 38	Four Door Scene, Week of July 27, 1930
Box 2, Folder 39	Firehouse Bit, April 13-16, 1930

Box 2, Folder 40	Dope Scene, January 9-11, 1930
Box 2, Folder 41	Department Store Show, September 21-21, 1930
Box 2, Folder 42	Deducting, August 21-23, 1930
Box 2, Folder 43	Dodger Bit, March 2-5, 1930
Box 2, Folder 44	Courloom Scene - Dcsdemona Bit, February 2-3, 1930
Box 2, Folder 45	Corridor Bit - Old Homestead Bit - Poker Bit, January 30-February 1 , 1930
Box 2, Folder 46	Opening- Broadway Chappie Bits - Gus Bit - Acrobat Bit, January 2-4, 1930
Box 2, Folder 47	Big Shoes Bit - Critic Bit - Quartette Bit, December 12-14, 1929
Box 2, Folder 48	Baseball Rules Bit - Fishing Bit - Ostrich Bit, April 6-9, 1930
Box 2, Folder 49	Animal Book Bit, December 29-January 1 , 1930
Box 2, Folder 50	Animal Book Bit - Fairy-Prince Bit, December 29:January 1, 1930
Box 2, Folder 51	Bull Scene, January 12-13, 1930
Box 2, Folder 52	Baltic of Shenandoah - Wlial Price Glory, February 18-15, 1930
Box 2, Folder 53	Poker Bit - Old Homestead Bis, January 30-February 1 , 1930
Box 2, Folder 54	Throne Bit - Garter Bit - Grip Bit - Cleopatra Snake Bit - Ugly Face Bit, December 8-1 L 1929
Box 2, Folder 55	Dodger Bit, March 2-5, 1930