



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

McIntire Family Hawaiian Entertainers Collection

NMAH.AC.1511

Franklin A. Robinson, Jr.

2022

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives Center, National Museum of American History |
| Title: | McIntire Family Hawaiian Entertainers Collection |
| Date: | 1920-2011, undated |
| Identifier: | NMAH.AC.1511 |
| Creator: | McIntire, Lani Ellen (Donor) Mayo, Jean Alice, 1897-? |
| Extent: | 1.25 Cubic feet (3 boxes) |
| Language: | English . |
| Summary: | Photographs and ephemera collected by the McIntire Family of Hawaiian musicians documenting their careers throughout the United States, and those of other performers. |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated to the Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution by Lani Ellen McIntire, August 2021.

Processing Information

Processed by Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., archivist, 2022, supervised by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist.

Preferred Citation

McIntire Family Hawaiian Entertainers Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

The collection is open for research use. Researchers must handle unprotected photographs with gloves.

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Biographical / Historical

The McIntire family has a long history in performance of Hawaiian music, especially Hawaiian guitar, and dance. Lani McIntire (1904-1951) composer, vocalist, and guitarist, was born in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1904. Initially he entered his

father's laundry business but then landed a position as ship's musician that led to a life-long career as a professional musician. Lani served in the United States Navy on the U.S.S. Birmingham as a bugler and musician in the Navy Band. After the war, Lani formed his own orchestra. In addition to leading his own orchestra, he wrote and recorded his own music the most popular song being, "The One Rose." As of 1941, he had recorded over 150 compositions and with Sam Koki recorded a version of "Sweet Leilani" that sold over two million copies. His orchestra played nationally, and it was reported that his favorite venue was the Lexington Hotel in New York City, New York.

The McIntire's, "played a critical role in creating a global Hawaiian music craze that by the 1930s had swept Japan, the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, and the continental United States." Al McIntire (1906-1960) bass player and vocalist and his brothers Richard "Dick" McIntire (1902-1951) Hawaiian steel guitar player, and the aforementioned Lani McIntire became some of the best-known Hawaiian musicians in the world. They left Oahu in the 1920s and played in Polynesian-themed nightclubs while recording and working on feature films along with the extensive Pacific Islander community based in Hollywood, California. The McIntire brothers younger sister, Kahala McIntire (1925-2003) "stowed away on a ship at the age of 15 to work on the continent as a professional hula dancer." The McIntire's were well known performing in Hollywood, California, Chicago, Illinois, and at Radio City Music Hall in New York City, New York. The McIntire's recorded "hundreds of songs with fellow Hawaiian musicians and with popular non-Hawaiian artists such as Jimmie Rodgers and Bing Crosby."

The liner notes from Lani McIntire's "Aloha Hawaii" album read, "You'll hear Lani McIntire broadcasting twice a week, over a 190-station Mutual Broadcasting System network. You'll see him at the Hotel Lexington in New York City-or at another of American's famous night spots. (He's played at the Biltmore Bowl and the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, the Book Cadillac Hotel, Detroit, the Congress Hotel, Chicago, and many others).

As you listen, you'll soon know why Lani is called, "King of Hawaiian Music". In a few minutes, the exotic, native rhythm . . . the soothing, haunting melodies . . . will create for you a vision of lush, tropical islands, of star-studded skies and warm, romantic nights.

Lani would have to be a native Hawaiian, born with that rhythm in his blood, to play the way he does-his mother was Hawaiian, his father Scotch, and he was born in Honolulu. But he didn't start his musical career until he joined the Navy, where he began playing the saxophone. He soon switched to the guitar-which he now plays as he leads his orchestra.

"When I got my discharge from the Navy," McIntire explains, "I went to Hollywood and for eight years worked in movies. Mostly, my contributions could be heard but not seen-although finally I did appear with Bing Crosby in several pictures."

Composer, arranger, guitarist, singer-Lani McIntire has many unusual talents that stamp him as one of the most versatile of all orchestra leaders." ("Aloha Hawaii" album cover, undated)

Lani Ellen McIntire (1934-), daughter of Al McIntire and Jean Alice Mayo (1897-?) a white woman who acted in silent films and was an equestrian rider, dancer, and vocalist, continued the family performing tradition. Lani Ellen was raised in the Hawaiian community and performed hula during her family's entertainments from a young age. Lani Ellen performed dance professionally into the 1970s. She appeared on television and in Hollywood films such as, "Around the World in 80 Days" (1956). Lani Ellen was married to (1) "Freddie" Letuli Olo Misilagi (1919-2003) an American Samoan entertainer, who began dancing at the age of 15 and was described in his obituary as the "father" of the fire knife dance. Letuli later was elected village senator in 1977 and "was re-selected to the Samoan Senate in 1993."

Sources

National Museum of American History, Acquisition Information Sheet, July 17, 2021, Archives Center Control File #1511.

"Chief Letuli Olo, 84, of Samoa; Father of the Fire Knife Dance", obituary, The New York Times, July 31, 2003, Section B, page 9.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of photographs and ephemera relating to and collected by the McIntire family of Hawaiian musicians as well as materials from fellow performers. Photographs of Lani McIntire and members of his orchestra as well as those of his brothers, and niece Lani Ellen McIntire are numerous. There are programs, newspaper articles, postcards, advertisements, sheet music, and one album cover. The collection dates from the early 20th century to the late 20th century and is a comprehensive collection documenting the extensive career of the McIntire family and those that worked with them, and performers they worked with in motion pictures, night clubs, and hotels.

The collection also, "documents Lani E. McIntire's craft and career as one of the most prolific professional practitioners of Pacific Islander dances in the mid-20th century. She traveled the United States and parts of the world with Native Hawaiian and Samoan troupes, and carefully documented their travel and work." The collection critically documents, "the Hollywood Pacific Islander community that established the "Polynesian Club" scene in Hollywood [California], as well as of the Pacific Islander communities that did the same work in New York City [New York], New Orleans [Louisiana], and other metropolitan areas in the United States."

This collection includes "candid "on the road" photographs, photographs of members of these communities socializing together during their off-time, as well as publicity photographs that together document the work as well as the cultural expressions of Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander musical entertainers. The portion of the collection that originated with Jean Alice Mayo documents the early years of filmmaking in Silent Era Hollywood. These photographs consist of "on set" candid, publicity photographs, "head-shots" of various celebrities, glamour photographs, and documentation of early stuntwomen.

Source

National Museum of American History, Acquisition Information Sheet, July 17, 2021, Archives Center Control File NMAH.AC.1511.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into two series.

Series 1: Photographs, 1920-1960, undated

Series 2: Scrapbook Pages, Personal Papers, and Ephemera, 1929-2011, undated

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- American Polynesia -- Hawaiian Islands
- Dancers
- Entertainers -- United States
- Hawaiian guitar
- Hawaiian guitar music
- Motion picture studios -- California -- Hollywood
- Orchestras -- 1930-1940
- Singer-Songwriters

Types of Materials:

Ephemera -- 20th century
Photographs -- 20th century
Scrapbooks -- 20th century

Names:

Hawaiians (Musical group : Lani McIntire)
McIntire, Lani
Misilagi, "Freddie" Letuli Olo, 1919-2003

Occupations:

Photographers -- California -- Hollywood

Container Listing

Series 1: Photographs, 1920-1960, undated

Scope and Contents: Photographs were originally housed in sleeves in four 3-ring notebooks "photograph albums", and a box of loose photographs. These notebooks contained ephemera and photographs and were arranged in no particular order. Scrapbook pages, personal papers, and ephemeral material was separated out and are contained in Series 2. Many photographs are publicity shots, headshots, promotional photographs, and photographs taken for news stories. There are a limited amount of candid, unposed photographs. Photographs include: Lani McIntire and his Orchestra his brothers Richard McIntire, Alfred McIntire, Alfred's daughters Lani Ellen McIntire and Rose "Kahala" McIntire, etc. One notebook contained photographs assembled by Jean Mayo, Alfred's wife who worked in vaudeville with such celebrities as Rudolf Valentino and in motion pictures in Hollywood during the Silent Film Era. She was the sister of Frank Mayo, silent film director and actor. The series is arranged by notebook.

Subseries 1.1: Jean Mayo Photograph Album (vaudeville, silent film, circus, and Wild West show), 1923-1933, undated

Box 1

Scope and Contents: Photographs of (listed at first instance): Richard McIntire, Lani McIntire, Buck Jones, Buster Crabbe, "Entertainers at the Anchor Bar Tijuana, Mex", Alice Jean Mayo, Ruth McIntire, Sol Bright, Cantina Palacio Palais Royal (Tijuana, Mexico), Frozen Justice (1929), Sheridan Stampede, Vera McGuinness, Rudolf Valentino, Jack Hoxie, Frank Mayo, unidentified.

Photographers: Bruno of Hollywood (Hollywood, California), Alfred's Studio (Los Angeles, California), Otto Linke (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), unidentified.

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| Box 1 | Photographs and Ephemera from Photograph Album, 1930-1939, undated |
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Subseries 1.2: Photograph Album I, 1930-1953, undated

Box 1

Scope and Contents: Photographs of (listed at first instance): Alfred McIntire, W. McIntire, Sam Kaki, Bob Vierra, Satema, Sol Hoopu, Tom Machedo, Kay Silva, Buddy Silva, Sol Bright, Alan Kila, Harry Baty, Telu, Momikai, Jimmy Tai, Haulani, George Kainapau, Bing Crosby, Lani McIntire, Bobby Nichols, "Lil" Joe Kekaucha, Al Ceballos, Archie Kahanu, Bob Matthews, Sam Kaeo, Eddie Bush, Band for Sonja Henie, Pua Almeida, Lani Ellen McIntire, Jenny "Napua" Wood, LeiLani Almeida, Ray Kuineg, Jimmie Rodgers "American's Blue Yodeler", Ship Room (Pasadena, California), Ethel Reiman, Benny Kaha, Anthony Asam, Babe Reid, Leilani Hut, Belmont Shores, Joe Kealoha, Mel Peterson, Bernie Kaai, Danny Kuaana, Glenn Langan, unidentified.

Photographers: United States Air Force, Bruno of Hollywood (Hollywood, California), Romaine, Roxane Studios (New York, New York), Haas-Schreiner Photo Roof Studio (San Francisco, California), Charlie Mihn, J. Allen Hawkins (Pasadena, California), G. Maillard Kessler, Maurice (Chicago, Illinois), Cliff Waters (Long Beach, California), Sam Crooks (Huntington Beach, California), Roberta Barrett, Jules Davis, Pete Fulmer (Laguna Beach, California), unidentified.

Subseries 1.3: Photograph Album II, 1920-1945, undated**Box 1**

Scope and Contents: Photographs of (listed at first instance): Alfred McIntire, Ray Kinney, Danny Kuaana, Mr. Rochester, Momikai, Luana Poepoe, Tutas Wilson, Sol Bright, Alan Kila, Harry Baty, George Kainapau, Lani McIntire, Bobby Nichols, Sam Koki, Jenny "Napua" Woodd, unidentified.

Photographers: Bruno of Hollywood (Hollywood, California), Keystone Photo Service (Los Angeles, California), John E. Reed (Los Angeles, California), Ed Sweeney Studio (Hollywood, California), unidentified.

Subseries 1.4: Photograph Album III, 1950-1964, undated**Box 2**

Scope and Contents: Photographs of (listed at first instance): El Mirador Hotel (Palm Springs, California), George Kainapau, Alfred McIntire, Reggie Valencia, Pua Alameida, Ray Kinney, Tiana Tehiva Hudson, Luau at Ala Moana Park 1950, Lani Ellen McIntire, Chez Paree (Chicago, Illinois) 1957, Amy Lei Aloha, Jane Tiare, Beach Luau, Ralph Hanalei, The Hawaiian (Long Beach, California), Anita Kealoha, Freddie, Palm Springs Luau (Palm Springs, California), Luau Show (Catalina Island, California), Frank Sennes Moulin Rouge, Sahara Hotel (Las Vegas, Nevada), Moroni Medeiros, Jan Murray, Greenwood Brothers and Lani, unidentified.

Photographers: Ken Huthmaker, Alex dePaola, Photo Service (Los Angeles, California), Al Smith Photography (Paramount, California), DeMirjian (Hollywood, California), unidentified

Subseries 1.5: Loose Photographs, 1945-1960, undated**Box 2**

Scope and Contents: Photographs of (listed at first instance): Polynesian Society Luau 1947, Maile Haulani, Lani Ellen McIntire, Connie Steward, Kalu Clark, Momi Kealoha, Hotel Del Coronado (San Diego, California) 1948, Benny Kaha, Reggie Valencia, Farmers Market (Hollywood, California), Catalina Island Avalon (California), Whites Point Luau (California) 1947, Johnny Briith, Telu Mansfield, Aggie Auld, Kaulei Reiman, Joe Keane, Freddie Letali, The Ames Brothers (Ed, Gene, Vic, and Joe), The Tahitian Team, Teen Magazine at Trader Vic's (Beverly Hills, California), Samoan Production Polynesian Society Luau, Kaisers Hawaiian Village (Waikiki, Hawaii), Max Reid and his Coral Islanders, Nani Hart, Rocha Sisters, Naida, Polynesian Society Luau 1955, Lape, Manu, Bismark, Kuka Tuitama, Sam Koki, Nita and Peppi, Radio City Music Hall (New York, New York), Johnny and Jacqueline, The Vagabonds, Joan Taylor, Cocanut Grove Ambassador Hotel (Hollywood, California), Sahara Hotel (Las Vegas, Nevada), Lelani Hut (Belmont Shores), Kahala Brae (Palm Springs, California), Johnny Woodd (London, United Kingdom), Huntington Hotel (Pasadena, California), Wailani, Around the World in 80 Days, Waikiki Tavern (Waikiki, Hawaii), White's Point, Don the Beachcomber (Waikiki, Hawaii), Sua Troup, Los Globos (Mexico City, Mexico), Freddie Trenkler, Tani Marsh, Hilo Hattie, Harry Baty, Jane Kellar, unidentified

Photographers: Al Smith Photography (Paramount, California), J. Allen Hawkins (Pasadena, California), Miller's (Hollywood, California), William Eccles, Los Angeles Airport Photography (Los Angeles, California), John E. Reed (Hollywood, California), Nogrady (Paris, France), Maurice (Chicago, Illinois), Cliff Waters (Hollywood, California), L. D'Aloisio (Rome, Italy), Jimmy Dale Photo Service (Los Angeles, California), Billy Howell (Waikiki, Hawaii), Billie Geller (Las Vegas,

Nevada), Jose (Hollywood, California), Nagamine Photo Studio (Wailuku, Maui), Marion Parsons,
Ken Huthmaker, Angel Otero (Mexico), Mel Kilpatrick (Santa Ana, California), unidentified

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Series 2: Scrapbook Pages, Personal Papers, and Ephemera, 1929-2011, undated

Scope and Contents: This series contains scrapbook pages, personal papers such as correspondence, sheet music, clippings, programs, and ephemera. The series is arranged in chronological order. Scrapbook pages are fragile and should be handled with extreme care.

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| Box 3, Folder 1 | Scrapbook pages, 1929-1976 |
| Box 3, Folder 2 | Scrapbook pages, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 3 | Scrapbook pages, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 4 | Sheet music, 1938-1939 |
| Box 3, Folder 5 | Assorted programs, 1938-1974, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 6 | Clippings, 1938-2011, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 7 | Music Studio News, magazine, 1953 |
| Box 3, Folder 8 | Ephemera, 1954, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 9 | Soldiers of Fortune, "Aloha Means Goodbye" episode, shooting schedule, 1955 |
| Box 3, Folder 10 | Correspondence, 1958-1989 |
| Box 3, Folder 11 | Costume sketches, 1976 |
| Box 3, Folder 12 | "Aloha Hawaii" Lani McIntire and His Aloha Islanders, album cover, undated |

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