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Pola Negri Papers

Pola Negri

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Negri, Pola, "Pola Negri Papers" (2018). *Finding Aids*. 3.
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Inventory of the Pola Negri Papers

Collection Number SC 16
Blume Library Special Collections

StMU
Saint Mary's University of San Antonio
One Camino Santa Maria
San Antonio TX 78228-8530 USA
Phone: 210-436-3011
www.stmarytx.edu

Descriptive Summary

Creator Pola Negri
Donor Pola Negri, donor number: 1979.1
Pola Negri Estate, donor number 1987.1
Title Pola Negri Papers
Inclusive Dates 1920s-2008
Bulk Dates 1960s-1980s
Call Number SC 16
Languages English and Polish
Extent 5 cubic feet
Abstract The Pola Negri Papers concern her film career (1955-1980), her two published writings (1958-1984), and her personal and family life (1955-1987). The collection appears to have accumulated from the years she lived in San Antonio, Texas (1957-1987) with a small number of keepsake items dating from her life before then.

Administrative Information

Restrictions to Access

None

Usage Restrictions

There are no restrictions beyond normal handling procedures

Alternative Form of Material

None

Custodial History

Pola Negri donated her film-related memorabilia to Saint Mary's University in stages beginning with her personal copies of her films. In 1980 she donated albums of press clippings for use of the Cinema-Arts Seminars of Saint Mary's University. Pola Negri remained in possession of her papers until her death in San Antonio, Texas on August 1, 1987. Her lawyer distributed the papers after her demise according to her directions. Reverend Louis Reile, the director of the Cinema-Arts Seminars was instrumental in securing this collection. He invited Pola Negri to the first of his "HemisFilm" festivals in June 1968, presenting her with an award addressed: "To Miss Pola Negri for her extensive contribution to artistic international cinema, June 5, 1968." This began a long-term relationship leading to the bequest of her papers to St. Mary's University.

Processing Information

Initial processing occurred sometime during the 1990s by undisclosed volunteers. It appears items from Reverend Louis Reile's papers concerning Pola Negri were interpolated with items received from the Negri estate. The collection was given final arrangement and this finding aid was composed by Bro. Lawrence Scrivani, SM in 2016.

Preferred Citation

Pola Negri Papers, Saint Mary's University of San Antonio, Texas

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Catalog Headings

Related materials may be found under the following headings in online catalogs:

Negri, Pola, 1899-1987

Actors—United States—Biography

Actors—Poland—Biography

Silent films—History and criticism

Related Collections at Blume Library

Mariusz Kotowski Collection on Pola Negri, SC 35

Related Published Materials

Kotowski, Mariusz. *Pola Negri: Hollywood's first femme fatale* (2014)

Delgado, Sergio, 1961-. *Pola Negri: temptress of silent Hollywood* (2016)

Related Materials at Other Repositories

Archives of the Marianist Province of the United States, San Antonio, Texas:

Unpublished biography of Pola Negri by Rev. Louis Reile entitled *Pola, the Woman I Loved*, held by the

Trinity University, San Antonio:

These consist of ornamentally bound books from Ms. Negri's personal library with subjects concerning the decorative arts, theater history and European literature. There is nothing about her life or work among them. There is also a bronze statue of Pola and photographs of her with university officials at the time of the donation.

Biographical Note

Pola Negri (d 1987) was the stage name of a film star of the silent screen era noted for her romances on and off the screen with stars such as Rudolph Valentino and Charlie Chaplin. She was born Apolonia Barbara Chalupiec at Janowa, Poland. Her birth was reported variously as being in 1894, 1897 or 1899. The Library of Congress recognizes December 31, 1894, however her passport cites December 31, 1899. Pola was a childhood name for her, and she took the name Negri from an Italian poet who was a girlhood idol. She made her stage debut in Warsaw in 1913. A year later she was appearing in Polish movies and then went to Germany to act in films there. After one of her German films, *Passion*, became a hit in New York, she came to the United States in 1923 and quickly became a star. Her career climaxed with such films as *Forbidden*

Paradise (1924) and *Hotel Imperial* (1927) which made her the prototype of the dark-haired seductress. She appeared in about twenty U. S. films before the advent of sound in the late 1920s. Her thick accent became a handicap and induced her to return to Europe where she tried to salvage her film career in Germany. Negri twice married wealthy men – a count and a prince. She returned to the United States in 1941. After living in Los Angeles for years, she moved to San Antonio in 1957 with heiress and former radio personality Margaret L. West. For a time, they lived in the Menger Hotel, later buying a large home in the Olmos Park district of San Antonio. After the death of West in 1963, Pola Negri engaged in numerous civic activities including membership on the board of directors of the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra and the San Antonio Little Theater. Her last film appearance was in *The Moon Spinners* (1964), made in London for the Disney Studio. Negri lived her last years in semi-seclusion. She was immensely proud of her film career. She died in her sleep on August 1, 1987 at the Northeast Baptist Hospital in San Antonio from an inoperable brain tumor complicated by pneumonia. After a rosary service in San Antonio, her remains were sent to Los Angeles for burial. (Source: *Houston Chronicle*, August 3, 1987: Section 3 page 10 and *LifeTimes*, January-February 2008: 14-15)

Pola Negri's Addresses in San Antonio

417 Mandalay Drive	1970
Chateau Dijon, 7731 Broadway, C-214	1975

Persons Mentioned in the Papers

Secretaries of Pola Negri

Because of physical disability during her last years, Pola Negri relied on secretaries to conduct her correspondence.

Marion Marsh	1972
Myrna DeLoach	1973
Marlene Stanford (Mrs. William Stanford)	1978-1980
Mary L Ovenshine	1980-1981
M. Smith	1983
Jan Organ	1986

Legal Council

Gilbert M. Denman, Jr. of Denman, Franklin & Denman, 711 Navarro Street, Suite 535, San Antonio. The Negri correspondence includes both formal and personal correspondence, the latter signed "Gibbo" [Gilbert] Denman.

Father Louis Reile, SM

Reverend Louis Reile, SM (1925-2003) taught at Saint Mary's University in San Antonio and beginning in 1968 hosted an annual film festival which he called "HemisFilm" as an allusion to the HemisFair held in San Antonio at that time. The HemisFilm was a product of the Center for Cinema Studies operated by Reile at Saint Mary's University.

Mrs. Margaret West

Close personal friend and roommate of Pola Negri in Hollywood and San Antonio

Ellen Beaucamp

Granddaughter of Pola Negri

Collection Overview

The Pola Negri Papers concern her film career (1955-1980), her two published writings (1958-1984), and her personal and family life (1955-1987). The collection appears to have accumulated from the years she lived in San Antonio, Texas (1957-1987) with a small number of keepsake items dating from her life before then. The collection includes a wide range of record formats including albums of news clippings and photographs, personal and professional letters, contracts, film awards received, and personal mementos. The letters include fan mail especially about her *Memoirs of a Star* which was published in 1970 and about which she continued to receive letters in several languages until four years before her death. At some point in the past, some letters and photographs from Father Louis Reile were mingled with the Pola Negri Papers. As much as possible, these have been put into subseries but not separated from the collection.

Arrangement of Collection

Series 1: Film Career

- 1.1 Correspondence
- 1.2 News Clippings
- 1.3 Film Career Mementos

Series 2: Negri Writings

- 2.1 *Memoirs*
- 2.2 *Reve au Cinema*

Series 3: Personal and Family Papers

- 3.1: Correspondence
- 3.2: Donations to Institutions
- 3.3: Personal Interests
- 3.4: Obituary and Estate
- 3.5: Religious Devotional Materials
- 3.6: Personal Effects

Series 4: Photographs

- 4.1: Pola Negri Center for Cinema Centers
- 4.2: Pola Negri Personal Photographs

Series 5: Phonograph Disc Collection

Series 6: Cinematic Film

Series 7: Personal Library

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series 1: Film Career

1.1: Correspondence, 1955-1980

Box 2 Folder 01	Polish Roman Catholic Union of America	1955
Box 2 Folder 02	Walt Disney Studios, <i>Moon Spinners</i>	1963-1964
Box 2 Folder 03	German Film Award (<i>Deutsche Filmpreis</i>)	1964
Box 2 Folder 04	California Institute of Arts	1967

Box 2 Folder 05	Fr. Louis Reile and Pola Negri Correspondence	1970-1983
Box 4 Folder 1B	<i>Filmotecka Polska</i> (Polish Film Association)	1973
Box 4 Folder 1C	<i>Kurier Polski</i> (Polish language periodical)	1973
Box 2 Folder 06	Pola Negri Film Festival	1975
Box 2 Folder 07	Rosemary Association Award, Tom Fulbright	1975
Box 2 Folder 08	Polish American Congress of Texas	1975-1977
Box 2 Folder 09	Patrick Mahoney (Hollywood personage)	1976
Box 2 Folder 10	Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences	1977
Box 2 Folder 11	Polish Arts & Culture Foundation	1980

1.2: News Clippings and Promotions, 1921-1980

Box 2 Folder 12	Negri Clippings	1921, 1968-1978
Box 2 Folder 13	Negri Clippings	1980-1988
Box 2 Folder 14	Negri Clippings	1994-2008
Box 2 Folder 15	Negri Film Festivals	1968-2003
Box 1 Album 01	Miss Pola Negri Press Cuttings	1963-1972
Box 1 Album 02	Pola Negri [red leather album of clippings]	1970-1978
Box 1 Album 03	Pola Negri [red leather album of clippings]	1922-1968
Box 4 Folder 1A	Serialized <i>Memoirs of a Star</i> in <i>Kurier Polski</i>	1973
Box 4 Folder 1A	<i>Mazurka</i> from <i>Illustrieriev Film-kurie</i> (German)	1930
Box 4 Folder 04	<i>Life</i> Magazine “Lost” movie stars article	Feb 1980

1.3: Film Career Mementos, 1914-1980s

Box 2 Folder 16	Filmography or list of Pola Negri film scripts	1914-1943
Box 2 Folder 17	HemisFilm Award Certificate	1968
Box 2 Folder 18	Handwritten Tribute with Red and White ribbons Is this the “Large handwritten tribute from David C. Barton, Jr.”	No Date
Box 2 Folder 19	Career Mementos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Autographed 20th Century Fox TV photo of M*A*S*H cast o Facsimile of a photo of Rudolph Valentino with dedication to Pola o San Antonio Little Theater <i>Dracula</i> program (1952) 	1920s-1980s
Box 3	Red silk breast band with gold tassels reading: <i>“Der unvergleichlichen grossen Tragödin Pola Negri Gesamtverband der österreichischen Filmkaufmannschaft”</i> (To the incomparable, great Tragedian Pola Negri; Board of the Austrian Film Industry Association)	No Date
Shelf V5	Award from <i>Deutscher Filmpreis</i> , plaque	1964
Box 5B vault V10I	HemisFilm Tower Trophy or “Hemi” Trophy designed and fabricated by Father Franz Schorp, SM from Texas walnut.	1968
Shelf V5	Article from <i>San Antonio Express and News</i> on a board “Actress Pola Negri Gets Award”	1968
Box 3	Tom Fulbright Rosemary Award Association plaque To “Hollywood’s First International Star,” 11 x 15 inches See Box 2 Folder 7 for related correspondence	1975
Box 4 Folder 02	Sheet music for Negri film By Peter Kreuder, four pages, two handwritten, one signed	1935
Box 4 Folder 03	Sheet music for Negri film (4 copies)	1931

The ballad *Paradise* from Pola Negri in *A Woman Commands*

Series 2: Negri Writings

2.1: *La Vie et Le Reve au Cinema* by Pola Negri, 1958

Historical Note: *La Vie et le Rêve au Cinéma* was published in Paris by Albin Michel, Editeur, in a numbered printing of 200 copies. This appears to have been a pictorial booklet. Pages from it can be seen among Negri's personal albums.

Box 2 Folder 20	Contract for translation of <i>Le Reve</i> into German	1958
Box 2 Folder 20	Facsimile of title page of <i>Le Reve</i>	No Date

2.2: *Memoirs of a Star* by Pola Negri, 1970

Historical Note: The Pola Negri memoirs were published originally in English and then translated and published in French, Spanish, German and Polish. Among her book collection are copies of the English, French and Polish language versions.

927.92/N385	<i>Memoirs of a Star</i> , New York: Doubleday & Company,	1970
927.92/N385	<i>Mémoires d'une Star</i> , Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, Traduit de l'américain par Pierre Girard et Patrick Manchette	1970
927.92/N385	<i>Pamiętnik gwiazdy</i> , Warszawa: Czytelnik,	1976
Box 2 Folder 21	Correspondence regarding <i>Memoirs of a Star</i>	1970-1984
Box 4 Folder 1A	Clippings from <i>Kurier Polski</i> of <i>Memoirs of a Star</i> The <i>Kurier</i> serialized the <i>Memoirs</i> in the Polish language	1972-1973
Box 4 Folder 1C	Correspondence with <i>Kurier Polski</i> about the <i>Memoirs</i>	1972-1973

2.3 Untitled Novel, 1980s

Historical Note: There exists a letter dated June 12, 1984 from Lawrence Peel Ashmead, the executive editor of Harper Row Publishers, expressing his interest in the novel on which she was working at that time.

Series 3: Personal and Family Papers

3.1: Correspondence

Box 2 Album 02	Letters	1955-1977
Box 2 Folder 22	Letters	1965
Box 2 Folder 23	Letters	1979-1980
Box 2 Folder 24	Letters	1981
Box 2 Folder 25	Letters	1982
Box 2 Folder 26	Letters	1983
Box 2 Folder 27	Letters In this folder: Autographs of Archbishop P F Flores and Henry Cisneros	1984
Box 2 Folder 28	Letters In this folder: Autographs of Henry Cisneros (Mayor) and Elizabeth Taylor; Polish card addressed to Chalupiec Apolonia	1985
Box 2 Folder 29	Letters	1986-1987
Box 2 Folder 30	Letters	no dates
Box 2 Folder 31	Fan Letters	1970-1987
Box 2 Folder 32	Christmas Cards (unsent), addresses	no dates
Box 2 Folder 33	Christmas Cards (received)	1965-1985
Box 2 Folder 34	Christmas Cards (received)	1985
Box 2 Folder 35	Birthday cards	1985

Box 2 Folder 36	Personal Stationery samples	no dates
<u>3.2: Donations to Institutions</u>		
Box 2 Folder 37	Museum of Modern Art, Hollywood Museum	1958-1964
Box 2 Folder 38	Trinity University, San Antonio	1964-1980
Box 2 Folder 39	Saint Mary's University, San Antonio	1970-1980
<u>3.3: Personal Interests</u>		
Box 2 Folder 41	Family Genealogy: Polish documents 2 marriage certificates, 2 baptismal records, 3-page genealogy	1939
Box 2 Folder 43	Receipts for transfers of funds	1972-1986
Box 2 Folder 48	News clippings about subjects of interest to Pola Negri	1972-1986
Box 2 Folder 44	Women's Suffrage United Nations First Day of Issue	1973
Box 4 Folder 07	First Day of Issue Philatelic Materials John F Kennedy Memorial; various cinema related commemoratives	1969-1975
Box 2 Folder 45	Travel Documents	1975
Box 2 Folder 46	Ellis Island Centennial	1984
Box 2 Folder 47	Political Affiliation	1984-1986
Box FS21-1	Republican Presidential Task Force Charter Member	1984
Box 2 Folder 42	Letter of Ellen Beaucamp (Pola's granddaughter) This letter was addressed to Father Louis Reile. It appears to have been mingled with the Negri Papers at a later time. It includes a photograph of a family outing and a news clipping.	1989
Box 2 Folder 40	Memorial cards, mementos of Mrs. Margaret West	No Dates
<u>3.4: Obituary and Estate</u>		
Box 2 Folder 49	Obituaries	1987-1988
Box 2 Folder 50	Correspondence about Pola Negri	1987-2005
Box 2 Folder 51	Pola Negri Medical Records from Dr. Houston Wade, MD	1987-1990
Box 2 Folder 52	Negri Estate	1988
<u>3.5: Religious Devotional Materials</u>		
Box 3	24 holy cards with flowers from Jerusalem	
Box 3	Epiphany bread	
Box 3	Booklet on Our Lady of Czestochowa	
Box 3	Picture of the Last Supper	
Box 3	Certificate of Saint Joseph Benefactor Society	
Box 3	Perpetual Mass Association certificate from P. Negri	
Box 3	Certificate of membership in Pious Union of St. Anthony	
Box 3	Green scapular	
Box 3	3 missal leaflets	
Box 3	Novena to the Holy Spirit	
Box 3	Various prayer cards, holy pictures	
Box 3	Devotional books	

3.6: Personal Effects (Objects)

Box 1	Wallet of red leather	
Box 3	document holder (empty)	
	IFACS certificate (framed)	1968
Box 4 Folder 05	Certificate of Honorary Citizenship, City of Los Angeles	1973
Box 3	Heritage Award by Polish Heritage Society plaque	1975
Box 3	Copper repousse image of Our Lady of Czestochowa	1976
	Awarded by the Polish Arts & Culture Foundation of San Francisco	
Box 3	Polish Arts & Culture certificate (framed) 1980	
Box	Statue of Liberty Commission certificate (signed by Gerald Ford) 1984	
Box 4 Folder 06	Republican Presidential Task Force flag dedication	1985?
Box 4 Folder 08	First Day Cancellations (9) on Cinema related subjects	1964-1975
	Philatelic Items are gift to Pola Negri from Seymour M. Kessler	
Box FS24-3	Calendar with images of "Our Lady Queen of Poland"	1983
Box FS21-1	Diploma from Republican Presidential Task Force	1984
Box FS21-1	Portrait of Pola Negri on a calendar by Bank PLO SA	Dec 1985
Box FS21-1	Etching of Pola Negri by Cal B Champion	1980

Series 4: Photographs

4.1: Pola Negri Center for Cinema Studies

Historical Note: The Pola Negri Center for Cinema Studies was the creation of Father Louis Reile who is featured in most of these photos. Some of the large format photos (8 x 10 inch) have captions attached.

Box 2 Folder 53	Copy photos of Negri film posters and portraits (color)	1920s-1960s
Box 2 Folder 53	Pola Negri in profile before 1928, copy photo black/white	
Box 2 Folder 54	HemisFair Tribute to Pola Negri	June 15, 1968
Box 2 Folder 55	Father Louis Reile photos of Pola Negri	1968-1980
	These are captioned, black & white, 8 x 10 inch glossies	
Box 2 Folder 56	Fr. Louis Reile with Pola Negri materials at St. Mary's U	1980 (?)
	These are black & white, 5 x 3 inch snapshots	

4.2: Pola Negri Personal Photographs

Box 1 Album 04	Personal photographs, album red leather with gold trim, 3 ¼ x 4 ¼ inches	
Box 1 Album 05	Personal photographs, album red leather with gold trim, 9 ½ x 11 ¾ inches	
Box 1 Album 06	Pola and her mother, pocket fold, red leather with gold trim 4 x 5 inches	
Box 1	Pola and her mother, gold frame with red leather mat, 7 x 9 inches	
Box 4 Folder P1114	Pola Negri portrait 11 x 14 inches (2 copies)	
Box 4 Folder P1114	Pola Negri and Basil Rathbone in costume 11 x 14 inches (4 copies)	
Box 4 Folder P1114	Pola Negri and Rod La Roque (1936) 11 x 20 inches	
Box 4 Folder 07	Congressional members autographed by Bob Dole and John Heinz	

Series 5: Phonograph Disc Collection

Historical Note: Pola Negri donated the phonographs disc collection in 1970. Fr. Louis J. Blume and Fr. Louis Reile accepted the collection on March 21, 1970.

Box 2 Folder 57	"Pola Negri's Library of Collectors Records"	No Date
	Thermofax list of record titles, 12 pages on 6 leafs	
Vault	Phonograph Discs	

Series 6: Film Reels

16mm Film Reels

These films were in the personal possession of Pola Negri.

- Shelf 17E *Stagecoach* (1939)
- Shelf 17E *Carmen* (also known as *Gypsy Blood*) – 2 reels (1921)
- Shelf 17E *Sumurun* – 2 reels (1920)
- Shelf 17E *Hotel Imperial* – 2 reels
- Shelf 17E *Mazurka* (German)
- Shelf 17E *Passion* – 2 reels (1920)
- Shelf 17E Excised footage from *Paradise*; b/w footage of sheet music
- Shelf 17E Small reel labeled “b/w original”

Transcriptions to Video Tape

- Self 14L St. Mary's U. produced video tapes transcriptions of the cinematic film: *Mazurka*, *Sumurun*, *Gypsy Blood*, *Hotel Imperial*, *Madame Dubarry*
- Self 14L JV/Sony series:
 - Gypsy Blood* (3 copies); *Madame DeBarry* (2 copies); *Passion*; *Hotel Imperial* (2 copies); *Mazurka* (2 copies, German soundtrack); *One Arabian Night* (2 copies); *Summer 1800*; *Spanish Dancer*; *Sappho*
- Self 14L Large tapes: *Hotel Imperial* (2); *Mazurka* (2); *Sumurun* (2); *Carmen* (2)
Small tape: *Breaking Silence*
- Self 14L 1 reel of music for “*Paradise*” from *A Woman Commands* (1931)

Series 7 Personal Library

- Box 5 *New Catholic Edition of the Holy Bible* (Catholic Book, NY: 1949)
- Box 5 *Fulton J. Sheen Sunday Missal* (Hawthorne Books, NY: 1961)
- Box 5 *Saint Joseph Continuous Sunday Missal* (Catholic Book, NY: 1961)
- Box 5 *Key of Heaven: A Manual of Catholic Devotions* (New York: 1947)
- Box 5 *The Catholic's Pocket Prayer Book* (H Proost, Thunhout: 1934)
 - Addressed to “Margaret” [Mrs. Margaret West?]
- Box 5 *Baltimore Catechism No. 3* (Buffalo, NY: 1933)
- Box 5A *Langenscheidt Universal Worterbuch Italienisch-Deutsch*, (1931)
- Box 5A *The Laws of Prosperity* by Kenneth Copeland (Fort Worth: 1974)
 - Highlighted and bookmarked
- Box 5A *Presidential Strategy Series 1985*, audio cassette
- Box 5A Engraving plate “Pola Negri”
- 927.92/N385 *Memoirs of a Star*, by Pola Negri; Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1970 [Accession number: 73-40]
- 927.92/N385 *Mémoires d'une Star*; Pola Negri; traduit de l'américain par Pierre Girard et Patrick Manchette; Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1971 [accession:]
- 927.92/N385 *The Lubitsch Touch: A Critical Study* by Herman G. Weinberg; revised edition New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1971; autographed inscription from author to Negri
- 927.92/N385 *Pola Negri Pamiętnik gwiazdy*; Tłumaczył Tadeusz Evert Posłowie napisał Jacek Fuksiewicz; Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1976