INVISIBLE HISTORY PROJECT

Drag IN CARROLLTON Collection

Finding Aid created by Sarah Craig.

**Abstract:**

The history of drag is long and complicated from its conception in Shakespearean theaters. Drag has always been backstage in American history whether it was acknowledged or not it continues to run parallel to history. Drag started with it its roots deep in the Shakespearean theaters of England where only men could act, it then went west to the vaudeville stages of America, from here it went underground during prohibition when strict gender rules were in place, it then made its reemergence in the 1960s still stay in the public’s eye to this day.

The history of drag starts in the 17th century Shakespearean theaters. The theaters of this time had a strong church connection. The acting was seen as a religious act and was only to be done by men. If the play featured any female roles, then they were filled by men that would don dresses and wigs and play the parts. If young boys were part of the troop, then they would often be given the women’s roles because of their stature and because their voices had not yet broken allowing them to reach higher octaves than the older men. The term drag is believed to originated in the theater from how then men’s dresses would drag across the floor (The different level).

From the times of Shakespeare, we move into the 18th and 19th centuries when drag queensas we know them today began to take shape. During this time as gender roles became more rigid. We see drag start to transform into a commentary on gender and sexuality. , In Victorian England, many men were put on trial for cross-dressing two of whom were called Stella Clinton and Fanny Park. In 1871 these two men were charged with cross-dressing in public. Charges like these were not uncommon for many crossdressers during this time where gender roles were ridged and any divergence from those roles was looked down upon.

From the 17th century, we move to the vaudeville stage. In the 20th century, many queens began to build up a fan base. One of the more popular queens of the time was that of Julian Eltinge. “Whereas many drag queens played on the fact they were men in women’s clothing, Eltinge (as she was often known) had many fans convinced she was not a character, but a genuine actress. Eltinge emerged from the world of vaudeville, known as a variety theatre in the UK, where cross-dressing was very popular. At the end of performances, he would remove his wig and reveal his gender to the crowd, often to cries of disbelief. Hugely popular, for more than 20 years, Eltinge’s career was very much on an upward trajectory, until variety acts fell out of favor in the 1930s. While there was tolerance, even celebration of drag and LGBT people in the USA during the 1920s and early '30s (known as the 'pansy craze'), American society became more reactionary in the mid-1930s, amid fears surrounding sex crime, which had a negative impact on the way drag was perceived” (BBC).

From the stages of Vaudeville Drag soon had to move underground when prohibition was enacted. These underground bars seemed to be the perfect place for social norms to wavier. This was seen especially in New York City, “drag flourished in Madison Square Garden, Greenwich Village, and at its most vibrant, in Harlem, where the Hamilton Lodge Ball drawing crowds of thousands to marvel at drag queens” (history extra). It was in the 1930s when the mayorship of New York changed that the drag once again found hardship. Under its new mayor, the areas where drag and gay life was flourishing became heavily policed. The city then banned female impersonation. This ban and the new laws were not taken lying down there was considerable backlash from the drag and gay community.

It was from here that we moving to the modern era of the drag queen. The backlash that was felt during the prohibition continued into the 1950s when the gay and drag communities rose to show heterosexual America that they were deserving of rights. During this battle for queer rights, Drag queens were pushed to the edges of the group. From here drag queens continued to act as activists. “drag queens were still fighting to express their art. Clubs such as Studio 54 and the Pyramid Club – and, starting in 1985, the event Wig stock – all became vibrant locations for the queer expression” (history extra). Today Drag can be seen in many different forms whether that is on a show like *Ru Paul’s Drag Race* or in-person shows. Drag as an art form continues to flourish.

The history of drag as we know it today is one of hardship and perseverance. From the beginning on the Shakespearean stage to that of vaudeville, the backlash and small victories of the modern-day history of drag is one that continues to this day.

**Scope and content:**

The records of The Drag in Carrolton include advertising posters from the Alley Cat Restaurant and bar, and the QSA student organization from the University of West Georgia, event photos from various Drag events in Carrolton. The strength of the collection is found in the event photos. These photos allow a glimpse in to what a show was like and how the community was involved with the shows.

The *posters* range in size and content. The largest of the posters are from the Ally Cat bar and Restaurant. It advertises an upcoming Drag show. The other posters are from the QSA student organization the posters advertise the annual drag performance that the group sponsors. Two posters from QSA are of prominence they are framed and featured the signatures of the performers. All posters are arranged in the order they were donated.

The *event photos* range in subject. The photo was broken down into two groups advertising photos and photos from events. The photos of advertising feature the advertisements from the Ally Cat Bar and Restaurant. These advertisements feature various groups that were performing. The event photos feature photos from both the Alley Cat and the QSA. These photos feature various performers as well as members of the QSA organization. These photos were broken into two groups and then left in the order that they were donated.

**Key terms**

Alley Cat, QSA, Pussy Cat Cabaret, Luna C, Mavis, The Luna, and Mavis Show Drag, Georgia, Carrollton Drag in Carrollton, University of West Georgia, Drag Show, Queer Student Alliance, LAMBDA, Pride, UWG.

**Content:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MSS# | OBJECT | DONER | DESCRIPTION | Count |
|  | **BOX 1** |  |  |  |
|  | **IMAGES I ADVERTISEMENT PHOTO** | LUNA C. |  | 30 |
|  | I.a photo of Ally Cat poster. | LUNA C. | Picture of a pink Ally Cat poster from January 18th. Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather, Lauren, Syraj, Mavis, Vanessa. Luna C |  |
|  | I.b photo of Ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a multi-colored poster for Thursday, May 18th Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather, Lauren, Syraj, Mavis, Vanessa. Luna C |  |
|  | I.c photo of Ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a brown and pink poster for May 19th Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather, Lauren, Syraj, Mavis, Vanessa. Luna C |  |
|  | I.d photo of Ally Cat poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a multi-colored poster for January 17th Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather, Lauren, Syraj, Mavis, Vanessa. Luna C, Ivana |  |
|  | I.e photo of Ally Cat poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a brown and pink poster for May 19th Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather Daniel, Sable Shepard Deonna Sage |  |
|  | I.f photo of Ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | picture of a blue, purple, and pink poster May 16th Features Heather Daniels Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers, Heather Daniel. Syraja, Lauren, Mavis, Ivana, Vanessa, Luna C |  |
|  | I.g photo of Ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a tan poster October 17th Feature Heather, Lauren, Luna C. Syraja, Mavis, Vanessa |  |
|  | I.h photo of ally cat poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a brown and pink poster for may Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather Daniel, LunaC. Syraja, Lauren Lamasters |  |
|  | I.i photo of ally Cat poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a green poster featuring Heather Daniels |  |
|  | I.j photo of ally Cat poster | LUNA C. | picture of a multi-color poster Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather, Lauren, Syraj, Mavis, Vanessa. Luna C |  |
|  | I. k photo of ally cat poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a brown and pink poster for November 17th Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather Daniel, mavis, Luna C, Syraja, Lauren La masters. |  |
|  | I.l photo of ally Cat poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a pink Ally Cat poster from March 16th. Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather, Lauren, Syraja, Mavis, Luna C |  |
|  | I.m Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | Picture of a brown and pink poster from august 18th Features the Pussy Cat Cabaret features performers Heather, Lauren, Syraja, Mavis, Luna C |  |
|  | I.n Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | Black poster with a green holly wreath with yellow grits in the center ahead in a plastic bag. The text on the poster reads "If this drag show doesn’t make your skin crawl...it's on TOO TIGHT G.R.I.T.S GHOULS RAISED IN THE SOUTH DECEMBER 19TH, 2019 10:00 PM AT THE ALLEY CAT 18+ $5 COVER. HOSTER BY MAVIS CARY AND LUNA C. STARING SALIVA GODVA, ANGEL FAZCE AND SISTER MILKY JUCY |  |
|  | I.o Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | Rainbow poster with black text the reads "TAP TAKEOVER THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20 7-10 DRAG SHOW AT 9:30 $5 cover. Free pint glass with purchase. |  |
|  | I.p Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | rainbow tie-dye poster with the Words" PRIDE NIGHT WITH MAVIS AND LUNA 10/11/2019,9 PM ALLY CAT, NO COVER FEATURING SARAYA SIS, VANESSA LOVE DUPREE BLAKE, APHRODITE MASTERS |  |
|  | I.q Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A purple and green poster with white text that reads "THEMAVIS AND LUNA SHOW PART III: IN 3D 9/8/2108 10:30 PM @ THE ALLY CAT STARRING IVANA PIRAHNNA VANESSA LOVE SALIVA GODIVA KABBALAH LIPSYNC BATTLE TO THE DEATH AUDIENCE WINNER RECEIVES PRIZE SPONSORED BY BLACKWATER INK. |  |
|  | I.r Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A Purple pink and teal poster with light blue and green text that reads " THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW 1/31/2019 10:30 PM @ THE ALLY CAT 18+$5 COVER. HOSTED BY MAVIS GARY, LUNA C. STARRING SYRAJA DUPREE ALEX SUREZ SEMAJ ONYX COXRING DOTTIE COM. 120 NEWNAN ST. CARROLLTON. GA |  |
|  | I.s Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A multicolored poster with orange and red text. that reads " THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW 6/27/2019 10:30 PM @ THE ALLEY CAT 18+ $5 COVER. HOSTER BY MAVIS AND LUNA C STARING WILLOW VALENTINE LINSAY POPAPILL, MR. ELLE AYE, SAGE ALUMINUM, WITH SPECIAL GUEST COURTNEY CHANCE. |  |
|  | I.t Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A green poster with pink text and green text that reads THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW 2/28/2019 10:30 PM @ THE ALLYCAT 18+ $5 COVER 80'S HORROR NIGHT HOSTED BY MAVIS AND LUNA C. STARRING VANESSA LOVE, VIDEOTRONIC JEN D'QUEER. PERK A. SAX |  |
|  | I.u Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A poster with a building background with pink and red text that reads " THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW PROUDLY CELEBRATING A YEAR OF TERROR 7/25/2019 10:30 PM @ THE ALLY CAT 18+ $5 COVER HOSTED BY MAVIS GARY AND LUNA C. STARING SALIVA GODVIA, BELLATRIX, SISTER MILKY JUICY, ANGEL FAZCE |  |
|  | I.v Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A red poster with a Santa holding an ax in the background and black text that reads THE MAVIS AND LUNA C. SHOW PART VI: SATAN CLAWS 12/15/2018 10:30 P, @ THE ALLEY CAT, HOSTED BY LUNA C. IVANA PIRAHNA STARRING VANESSA LOVE COURTNEY CHANCE D' KNIGHTEN DAY LINDSAY POPAPILL |  |
|  | I.wPhoto of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A blue poster with a face in the background with green and pink text that reads THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW 9/14/2019 10:30 PM @ THE ALLEY CAT 18+ $5 COVER HOSTED BY MAVIS GARRY AND LUNA C, STARTING PERKA $EXXX JERICHO KANE HONEY MINT AND COLA FIZZ |  |
|  | I.x Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A pink and green and yellow text that reads THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW 8/30/2019 10:30 PM @ THE ALLEY CAT 18+ $5COVER HOSTER BY MAVIS GARY AND LUNA C STARING EDNA ALLEN HOE JEN D'QUEER PAEGE TURNER EDEN CAKES WITH SALIVA GODIVA |  |
|  | I.y Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A PINK AND GREEN POSTER WITH PURPLE AND PINK TEXT THAT READS " THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW 3/30/2019 10:30 PM @ THE ALLEY CAT 18+ $5COVER HOSTER BY MAVIS GARY AND LUNA C STARING SALVIA GODIVA IVANA PIRAHANA LUNA ROSSA ANGEL FAZCE WITH SPECIAL GUEST MELODY MADNESS |  |
|  | I.z Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A blue poster with white text reads "THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW PART V THANKSKILLING 11/24/2018 10:30 PM @ THE ALLEY CAT HOSTED BY MAVIS GARY AND LUNA C STARING IVANA PIRANNA VANESSA LOVE SALIVA GODVA JACKSON RIMS -DAY APHRODITE. LIPSYNC BATTLE TO THE DEATH (AUDIENCE WINNER RECEIVES MYSTERY PRIZE) |  |
|  | I.aa Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A pink poster with white and blue text that reads THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW 4/27/2018 10:30 PM @ THE ALLEY CAT HOSTED BY MAVIS GARY AND LUNA C STARING SYRAJA VANESSA LOVE COURTNEY CHANCE EMERY DUFFY WITH SPECIAL GUEST TROUBLED TEETH PREFORMING ADN 12:00 AM LYPSYNC BATTLE TO THE DEATH AUDIENCE WINNER RECEIVES PRIZE SPONSORED BY BLACKWATER INK |  |
|  | I.bb Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A green poster with a humanoid figure in the back with white text the reads " THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW PART IV: HALLOWEENIES 10/27/2018 10:30 PM @ THE ALLEY CAT HOSTED BY MAVIS GARY AND LUNA C STARING SYRAJA VANESSA LOVE SISTER MILKY JUICY ANGEK FAZED. LIP SYNC BATTLE TI THE DEATH AUDIENCE WINNER RECEIVES PRIZE SPONSORED BT BLACKWATER INK |  |
|  | I.cc Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A multicolored poster with pink, blue and green text that reads THE LUNA AND SALIVA SHOW PART IV: HALLOWEENIES 5/29/2019 10:30 PM @ THE ALLEY CAT HOSTED BY LUNA C AND SAVIA GODIVA STARING IVAN PIRAHNA VANNESSA LOVE DUPREE LINDA TRAVESTI PANDA BERRY WITH SPECIAL GUEST D' KNIGHTEN DAY |  |
|  | I.dd Photo of ally Cat Poster | LUNA C. | A multicolored poster with white and blue text that reads THE MAVIS AND LUNA SHOW PART IV: HALLOWEENIES 6/29/2018 10:30 PM @ THE ALLEY CAT HOSTED BY MAVIS GARY AND LUNA C STARING IVANA PIRAHNA VANESSA LOVE DOTTIE COMM MYSTERY MEAT LYPSYNC BATTLE TO THE DEATH AUDIENCE WINNER RECEIVES PRIZE SPONSORED BT BLACKWATER INK |  |
|  | **IMAGES II ALLEY CAT DRAG EVENT PHOTOS** | LUNA C. |  |  |
|  | II.a Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | MAVIS GARY PERFORMANCE |  |
|  | II.bDrag event Photo | LUNA C. | MAVIS GARTY AT ALLEY CAT |  |
|  | II.c Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | Luna C 1st Show April 21, 2016 |  |
|  | II.d Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | Luna C 1st Show (2) April 21, 2016 |  |
|  | II.e Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | GRITS group shot Apocalypse Show Jan 16th 202 |  |
|  | II.f Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | GRITS first show group December 19th, 2019 |  |
|  | II.g Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | Vanessa Love performance. |  |
|  | II.h Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | Vanessa Love performing in Alley Cat |  |
|  | II.iDrag event Photo | LUNA C. | Mavis Gary performing in Alley Cat |  |
|  | II.j Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | Luna C. performance shot |  |
|  | II.k Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | Luna C. performance 2 |  |
|  | II.l Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | Ivana Pirahna and Mavis Gary |  |
|  | II.m Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | Group Shot October 20, 2016 |  |
|  | II.n Drag event Photo | LUNA C. | Dinky D, Ivana Pirahna, and Mavis Gary outside Alley Cat |  |
|  | **UWG DRAG EVENT** |  | SPRING 2018 |  |
|  | III.a UWG drag event photo |  | backstage shot |  |
|  | III.b UWG drag event photo |  | group shot. |  |
|  | **BOX 2** |  |  |  |
|  | ADVERTISING POSTER | ALLEY CAT, | A 24x36 multicolored poster featuring pink, yellow, and black with black and white lettering the text on the poster reads " red hare brewing company drag show tap take over @ The Alley Cat Thursday, July 19. 6-10" in a red box in bottom right Text reads " Featured beers: Soft J, Gem City Classic, Tangerine SPF 50/50 Aint That A Peach, Well Bless Her Tart. " on the left side of the poster there is a bipedal rabbit wearing a blue and yellow dress and hat. | 1 |
|  | **BOX 3** |  |  |  |
|  | ADVERTISING POSTER QEER STUDENT ALLIANCE(QSA) FORMERLY LAMBDA | Talia Young | 12x18 black poster with pink and white text that reads from top to bottom "Drag super Heros Lambda's 10th annual drag show Thursday, March 28, 6 pm Townsend Center - Free admission doors open ar 5:30, get tickets at the door." in the background is a feminine figure with pink glove and pants. The poster has red, orange. green, and blue heart border. The poster has been, signed by Johnny Go' Lucky, K.T., Kitty Love Antoinette, Hayden Fury, Destiny Brooks, Angelia D'Paige Brooks, TJ Furry, Iysis, H.D. Poster is in a black frame. | 1 |
|  | ADVERTISING POSTER QEER STUDENT ALLIANCE(QSA) FORMERLY LAMBDA | Talia Young | 12x18 black poster with pink and white text that reads from top to bottom "Drag superhero’s Lambda's 10th annual drag show Thursday, March 28, 6 pm Townsend Center - Free admission doors open ar 5:30, get tickets at the door." in the background is a feminine figure with pink glove and pants. The poster has red, orange, green, and blue heart border. The poster has been, signed by Johnny Go' Lucky, K.T., Kitty Love Antoinette, Hayden Fury, Destiny Brooks, Angelia D'Paige Brooks, TJ Furry, Iysis, H.D. posters are unframed. | 2 |
|  | ADVERTISING POSTER QEER STUDENT ALLIANCE(QSA) FORMERLY LAMBDA | Talia Young | 12x18 black poster with pink and white text that reads from top to bottom "Drag Superheroes Lambda's 10th annual drag show Thursday, March 28, 6 pm Townsend Center - Free admission doors open at 5:30, get tickets at the door." in the background is a feminine figure with pink gloves and pants. The poster has red, orange, green, and blue heart border. | 1 |
|  | ADVERTISING POSTER QEER STUDENT ALLIANCE(QSA) FORMERLY LAMBDA | Theresa Rochowski | Green ombre poster with purple and dark blue text that reads'' Lambda @UWG presents DRAG IT OUT! 9th Annual Drag Show Thursday, March 29@7pm Townsend Center Admission is FREE, get Tickets at the Door. Doors open at 6:30. In the center of the poster is a photo of a drag queen with half a face in drag makeup and half a face without. the poster was signed by K.T Angelia D'Paige Brooks, K.T, Kitty Love Antoinette, Heather Daniels, Destiny "the body" Brooks, Ailyn Oz, Shanna B. | 1 |

Over the course of processing this collection, I have learned two major things the first being how to properly process and archival collection. The second being the complicated history of drag and how it got to where we know it today.

The first major thing that I learned is how to properly process an archival collection. One of the first things that are needed when properly processing a collection is a deed of gift this certifies that the collection has been given in full to the institution. After this, the next step is to take the items out of the box and get a feel for the collection. Keeping in mind what order they were in inside the box. Once this is complete cataloging can begin. When cataloging it is important to keep in mind the order that you want to arrange the collection. During the cataloging phase, an individualized catalog number is assigned to each item in the collection. From here the next step is to place the item into archival boxes. From here a finding aid can be written. The second major thing that I learn is how complicated the history of drag can be. I learned that drag as we know it is a more recent evolution in the beginning drag started in Shakespearean theaters where acting was considered sacred and only men could participate in plays. I then learned that drag made its way to America on the vaudeville stages. Where individual queens became more popular. Then in the 1930s drag went underground during prohibition. When strict gender roles were in place. From here we see more of the modern drag queen make her appearance in the 1970s.

My overall experience in working with the collection is a positive one. I enjoyed going through the photographs and posters and getting to learn more about the archival process. I feel like this experience has helped prepare me more for the workforce. I enjoyed getting to learn more about drag and what it means to the LGBTQ+ community.

Bibliography

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Sarah C:

I think you did a great job on this finding aid. I would like to note a few things though: I do wish that you had been a bit more specific in your abstract. Sometimes I was unsure of when or where things were happening. I think the information regarding arrests and information related to policing could have been a bit more in depth. I also wonder if you discovered anything to do with womanless weddings – sometimes performed by military members in shows and sometimes by college fraternities in the US. I think drag performance is complicated and the sexual and gender meanings at play need to be fleshed out a bit.

Are the posters that we were flattening in the content list?

Finally, there are some little mistakes in grammar/mechanics/style that add up.

Overall, I do think you did a nice job. You came to processing days and I could tell you enjoyed the work you did. It has been a rough year for us all, but you made it! I really have enjoyed having you in classes! Have a great summer!

Grade: 88+3 (EC) = 91