Contributing Institution: USC Libraries Special Collections
Title: McElmurry and Larrinaga family papers
Creator: Larrinaga, Mario
Creator: Larrinaga, Isabelle
Creator: Larrinaga, Norma Fae
Creator: McElmurry, Charles O.
Identifier/Call Number: 7122
Physical Description: 4.35 Linear Feet 7 boxes
Date (inclusive): 1920-2005
Abstract: A collection of family papers documenting two generations of the McElmurry and Larrinaga family. Mario Larrinaga immigrated from Mexico to Los Angeles and—in collaboration with his brother Juan Larrinaga—worked as a designer, art director, and painter of set backgrounds in Hollywood, working at RKO Pictures, Universal, and other major film studios. Larrinaga is most recognized for painting the set backgrounds for the original King Kong (1933) film. After retiring from his work in the film industry, Larrinaga moved to Taos, New Mexico, and co-founded Gallery A. Isabelle Larrinaga (née Verda Clark) came to Los Angeles from Iowa to work as a dancer. Isabelle most likely met Mario on the set of a film where she was working as a chorus dancer. Norma Larrinaga, daughter of Isabelle and Mario, was born in Los Angeles and raised in Bel Air. As a child, Norma was a competitive figure skater and concert pianist. Norma later taught piano and worked as a fashion illustrator in Santa Barbara. Charles McElmurry, Norma's husband, was raised in Venice, California, worked at Disney after high school, then served in the U.S. Marine Corps art department. Subsequently, McElmurry attended the Chouinard Art Institute with support from the GI Bill, which is where he met Norma. McElmurry later worked as a freelance artist for Jay Ward Studios in Los Angeles. The collection includes family photographs, scrapbooks, correspondence, and certificates. The collection also holds some of Mario Larrinaga's sketches and illustrations for his work on various films and publications, including King Kong (1933) and Seven Wonders of the World (1956).

Language of Material: English

Scope and Contents
A collection of family papers documenting two generations of the McElmurry and Larrinaga family. Mario Larrinaga immigrated from Mexico to Los Angeles and—in collaboration with his brother Juan Larrinaga—worked as a designer, art director, and painter of set backgrounds in Hollywood, working at RKO Pictures, Universal, and other major film studios. Larrinaga is most recognized for painting the set backgrounds for the original King Kong (1933) film. After retiring from his work in the film industry, Larrinaga moved to Taos, New Mexico, and co-founded Gallery A. Isabelle Larrinaga (née Verda Clark) came to Los Angeles from Iowa to work as a dancer. Isabelle most likely met Mario on the set of a film where she was working as a chorus dancer. Norma Larrinaga, daughter of Isabelle and Mario, was born in Los Angeles and raised in Bel Air. As a child, Norma was a competitive figure skater and concert pianist. Norma later taught piano and worked as a fashion illustrator in Santa Barbara. Charles McElmurry, Norma's husband, was raised in Venice, California, worked at Disney after high school, then served in the U.S. Marine Corps art department. Subsequently, McElmurry attended the Chouinard Art Institute with support from the GI Bill, which is where he met Norma. McElmurry later worked as a freelance artist for Jay Ward Studios in Los Angeles. The collection includes family photographs, scrapbooks, correspondence, and certificates. The collection also holds some of Mario Larrinaga's sketches and illustrations for his work on various films and publications, including King Kong (1933) and Seven Wonders of the World (1956).

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Preferred Citation
[Box/folder no. or item name], McElmurry and Larrinaga family papers, Collection no. 7122, Regional History Collection, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift of Eric Webster, May 14, 2021.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Dancers -- United States -- 20th century -- Archival resources
Family archives -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources
King Kong (Motion picture : 1933)
Motion picture art directors -- Archival resources
Motion picture set designers -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources
Certificates
Identity cards
Personal correspondence
Photograph albums
Photographs
Scrapbooks
Larrinaga, Isabelle -- Archives
Larrinaga, Mario -- Archives
Larrinaga, Norma Fae -- Archives
McElmurry, Charles O. -- Archives

Isabelle Verda Clark (Isabelle Larrinaga)
Box 3, Folder 1 Handwritten inventory listing Isabelle Verda Clark material
Box 1, Folder 1 Photo album pages from Isabelle and Mario’s honeymoon on Catalina 1919
Box 1 Dance career scrapbook
Box 3 Photographs, marriage and death certificates, family correspondence, and other material

Mario Larrinaga
Box 4, Folder 1 Handwritten inventory listing Mario Larrinaga material
Box 1, Folder 2 Color sketch of crowd scene and thumbnail illustrations by Mario Larrinaga for unknown film
Box 1, Folder 3 Empire magazine cover with illustration by Mario Larrinaga 1952-05-18
Box 1 Three photographic portraits of Mario Larrinaga on cardstock
Box 4 Photographs, sketches and illustrations, family papers, and material relating to King Kong (1933)

Norma and Charles McElmurry
Box 2, Box 5, Box 6, Box 7 Processing Information
Unlike the collection materials relating to Mario and Isabelle Larrinaga, the material relating to Norma and Charles McElmurry did not come with handwritten inventories describing each item. However, all of the materials grouped under this record were previously housed in a single bankers box labeled “Norma and Charles McElmurry.” This material includes family photographs, correspondence, yearbooks, notes, greeting cards, and formal certificates belonging to Norma and Charles.