Smithsonian
National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Sioux City Ghosts Scrapbooks

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Sioux City Ghosts Scrapbooks
Date:	1920s-1983
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0634
Creator:	Williams, Franklin (Author) Sioux City Ghosts (Collector)
Extent:	0.5 Cubic feet (2 boxes)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Franklin Williams, Gift, 1997.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Cathy Keen, May 2001.

Preferred Citation

Sioux City Ghosts Scrapbooks, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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Biographical / Historical

The Sioux City Ghosts were an all-black fast-pitch softball team that toured the country in the 1920s and 1930s. For their pranks and antics on the field, they were often compared to basketball's Harlem Globetrotters. The team formed in 1925 as a boys' club which gathered to play softball. In 1931 they began touring. They gained a reputation and quickly drew large crowds. The team also played in Mexico and Canada. The team disbanded when World War II began, and many members served in the armed forces. After the war, few members rejoined, but the team kept going unti 1956.

Scope and Contents

A scrapbook and a photograph album detailing the day-to-day lives on the road of a barnstorming black softball team, five posters advertising appearances of the Ghosts, and a certificate. The scrapbook, kept by one of the players, Franklin Williams, contains his handwritten history of the team, a handwritten schedule, postcards from some of the cities they played in, greeting cards, restaurant menus, scorecards, and a large number of news clippings about games. The album contains photographs of the Ghosts playing, snapshots of cities they visited, street scenes, ballparks, families and friends, and tourist attractions.

Arrangement

Divided into 2 series.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

African American athletes
Softball
Softball players

Types of Materials:

Clippings -- 1930-1950
Photograph albums -- 1920-1970
Postcards -- 1930-1940
Posters -- 1930-1940
Scrapbooks

Places:

Iowa
Sioux City (Iowa)

Container Listing

Box 1	Scrapbook, 1930s
Box 1	Photograph Album, 1930s
Map-folder 1	Five posters advertising upcoming appearances of the Sioux City Ghosts
Map-folder 1	An certificate, issued to Franklin Williams by the Iowa Amateur Softball Association, recognizing him as a member of the Sioux City Ghosts, 1983