



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the African American Family Photograph Collection

NMAH.AC.1127

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Collection Overview

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|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Repository: | Archives Center, National Museum of American History |
| Title: | African American Family Photograph Collection |
| Date: | circa 1900-circa 2000 |
| Identifier: | NMAH.AC.1127 |
| Creator: | Old Glory Antique Marketplace (Collector) |
| Extent: | 1 Cubic foot (3 boxes) |
| Language: | English . |
| Summary: | The collection consists of black-and-white, sepia-toned and color photographs documenting the lives of African Americans from about the 1920s to the 1980s. It is contained in four albums. |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Purchased from the Old Glory Antique Marketplace in 2008.

Processing Information

Processed by Leah Blue (volunteer), 2009; supervised by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist.

Preferred Citation

African American Family Photograph Collection, ca. 1950-ca. 2000, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Scope and Contents

The collection documents African American people in a variety of settings, from work and leisure to school photographs and domestic activities. It covers approximately a sixty-year period, from 1920-1980. Many of the photographs are set in various cities in Pennsylvania, including Pittsburgh, but there are photographs from other cities as well, such as Atlantic City, New Jersey and New York City, New York. Parts of the collection appears to document the same places, persons and families, but the majority of the people are not identified. There are many

photographs that can be linked to a place or a time period, but not to each other. The photographs are largely undated. Captions written in quotation marks on photograph sleeves represent actual captions that are written on the photographs. Captions presented without quotation marks are processor findings and notations.

Series 1, Photograph Albums, circa 1920-1978; undated, includes four photograph albums with some loose photographs.

Matty Vannall Album, circa 1920-1960; undated, is a black, spiral-ringed, photograph album. The photographs in this album feature many unrelated people, but one African American female subject named Matty Vannall appears frequently. The album seems to be dedicated to her, in the sense that she is documented the most and at various points in her life, though the presentation is not chronological. There are also several photos of a woman named Romaine Gardner, but she does not seem to appear without Vannall. There are pictures of Vannall and Gardner as young adults and middle-aged women, and there are more pictures of Vannall as an elderly woman. Vannall is also pictured with an unidentified Caucasian child for whom she might have been a caregiver, and there are several small portraits of him in the album. At some point Vannall worked as a nurse, and there are group photos of her with her fellow nurses in period uniforms from the 1940s, along with photographs of her as a nurse in her older years. A series of loose photographs shows a day at the beach with family or friends during the 1930s. Those and other loose photographs from this series may be found in box three.

Volume Two, circa 1920-1978; undated, is a book-bound, photograph album covered in gold-colored fabric with embroidered emblems. The outer covers of the album are in good condition, but all of the photographs have been removed for preservation purposes. A copy was made of the photographs in their original positions in the album, but all of the photographs may now be found in box three. The original pagination of the album has been retained as much as possible. Though there are two miniature portraits that are presumably from the 1920s, and some black-and-white photographs from the 1950s, the series is set predominately during the 1970s. Of note is a series of school portraits of an African-American girl identified as "Ruth" and two black-and-white pictures featuring The Atlantic City Tavern.

Volume Three, circa 1940-1970; undated, is a coverless and backless photograph album with a spiraled, metal binding down the side with black and white photographs. The photographs are largely single subject, with some subjects appearing in multiple photographs. For instance, two women, identified as "Marlene" and "Shy", are featured separately, but they appear multiple times in various styles of dress. Also included are African American people at leisure and children at play, and a senior graduation photograph taken at the Pennsylvania Industrial School. There are a number of loose photographs of an unnamed circus performance and a football game of the Pittsburgh Steelers versus the Indianapolis Colts. Of note is a candid photo featuring Terry Bradshaw, LC Greenwood and Larry Brown and two unidentified males sitting in a groundskeeper's cart. Though two of the men are unidentified, all of the men were presumably players for the Pittsburgh Steelers. The exact location of this photograph is unknown, but it appears to be a stadium. This photograph and other loose photographs from this series are also located in box three.

Slade Family Album, circa 1960-1970; undated, is a black, book-bound photograph album. These photographs document roughly a ten-year period in the lives of the Slade family. The series is set in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, though there are some photographs set in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The album focuses largely on Evelyn Slade (maiden name "Dennis"), the owner of the original album. An inscription by her is written on the back panel of the album. Included are photographs of her, her husband Roland and their children, as well as relatives at various events, from family picnics to parties, and a trip to the Empire State Building in New York City. Family friends are also included. Another highlight of the series is a group of photographs of the Atlantic City Tavern's "Atlantic City Football Extravaganza," celebrating a game featuring the Pittsburgh Steelers and the New York Jets. There are also a group of graduation photos given to Roland Slade by his friends before his graduation from Fifth Avenue High School circa 1968 or 1969. Of particular note is Ed Fleming, a former National Basketball Association player for the Rochester Royals. There are photographs of him and his wife, as well as a newspaper article announcing the birth of their daughter, Cynthia Eileen. Loose photographs from this series may also be found in box three.

Series 2, Photographs, circa 1920-1980; undated, includes a series of photographs that are not connected to any of the photograph albums. The photographs are separated by decades, with one section for 1920 and 1930, one section for 1940 and so on, until 1980. There are single-subject and multiple-subject photographs; some are portraits and some are candid. The photographs are set in homes, outdoor landscapes and schools and feature family barbeques,

Christmas and New Year's celebrations, reunions and school performances. Of interest is a photograph taken at a dance for the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization (1960), a postcard of The Cottage at Bauder's in Cloyne, Ontario (1920-1930), and two photographs of an adolescent couple dressed for a formal event (1980). There is also an aerial photograph of Logan Field, Baltimore, Maryland's first municipal airport. The photograph is dated 1941, Logan Field's last year of operation, as it was replaced that same year by Harbor Field.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series.

Series 1, Photograph Albums, circa 1920-1978; undated

Series 2, Photographs, circa 1920-1980

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- African American families
- African Americans -- History -- 20th century
- Portraits -- 20th century
- Portraits -- African American children
- Portraits -- African American women

Types of Materials:

- Photographs -- 20th century
- Portraits -- African American men
- Studio portraits

Container Listing

Series 1: Photograph Albums, circa 1920-1978; undated

| | |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 2 | Volume One, circa 1920-1960; undated |
| Box 2 | Volume Two, circa 1920-1978; undated |
| Box 3 | Volume Three, circa 1940-1970; undated Notes: Includes hand fans. |
| Box 3 | Volume Four, circa 1960-1970; undated |

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Series 2: Photographs, circa 1920-1980; undated

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|-------|---------------------------------------|
| Box 1 | Photographs, circa 1920-1960; undated |
| Box 1 | Photographs, circa 1920-1980; undated |
| Box 1 | Photographs, circa 1940-1970; undated |
| Box 1 | Photographs, circa 1960-1980; undated |
| Box 1 | Photographs, circa 1920-1930; undated |
| Box 1 | Photographs, circa 1950 |
| Box 1 | Photographs, circa 1970 |
| Box 1 | Photographs, circa 1980 |

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