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Guide to the Black Americana Collection

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Black Americana Collection

Dates: 1887-2008 Bulk Dates: 1980-2000

Collection number: MSS-2010-1-15

Creator: Sahl, Ted

Collection Size: 7 boxes,7 linear feet

Repository: San José State University. Library.

San José, California 95192-0028

Abstract: The Black Americana Collection 1887-2008 (bulk 1980-2000) is a collection of photographs, printed materials, textiles, and three-dimensional objects. The formats include historic postcards, news clippings, programs, sheet music, textiles, dolls, and figurines related to the African American experience. Some of these materials project racist attitudes towards the community during the 20th century. Ted Sahl, photo-journalist and collector, has documented the African American community in San Jose since the 1970s. The photographic materials include images of celebrities political rallies, and social events in San Jose, as well as a small photographic album that features African Americans living in Santa Cruz during the 1940s-1950s. The historic post-card collection illustrates the racists attitudes during the era of Jim Crow. This eclectic collection of black americana documents the struggles, achievements, and contributions of the African American community in American society and culture. This collection is arranged into three (3) series: Series I: Photographic Materials; Series II:

Physical location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

Copyright to the photographs created by Ted Sahl is assigned to the San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Director of Special Collections. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the SJSU Special Collections & Archives. Copyright restrictions may apply to digital reproductions of the original materials. Use of digital files is restricted to research and educational purposes.

Preferred Citation

Black Americana Collection, MSS-2010-1-15, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Stephanie Waslohn. Finding aid EAD encoded by Stephanie Waslohn. Reviewed by Danelle Moon.

Biographical History

Theodore (Ted) Sahl is an award winning local photographer in San José, California. Sahl has spent the last 30 years as a photojournalist, documenting social and political events in the Bay Area. Although best known for his involvement with the Santa Clara County Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community, Sahl photographed other social movements in the region, including the anti-nuclear demonstrations at the Lawrence Livermore Radiation Laboratory, Cesar Chavez and the Farm Labor Strikes in the 1970s-1980s, and the African American community in Santa Clara County. A champion of social justice, Sahl, used photography to document and empower marginalized communities.

Scope and Content

The Black Americana Collection 1887-2008 (bulk 1980-2000) is a collection of photographs, printed materials, textiles, and three-dimensional objects. The formats include historic postcards, news clippings, programs, sheet music, textiles, dolls, and figurines related to the African American experience. Ted Sahl, photo-journalist and collector, has documented the African American community in San Jose since the 1970s. The photographic materials include images of celebrities political rallies, and social events in San Jose, as well as a small photographic album that features African Americans living in Santa Cruz during the 1950s. The historic post-card collection illustrates the racists attitudes during the era of Jim Crow. This eclectic collection of black Americana documents the struggles, achievements, and contributions of the African American community in American society and culture.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into three (3) series: Series I: Photographic Materials; Series II: Printed Materials; Series III: Textiles and Three-dimensional Objects

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

African Americans in popular culture.

African Americans -- Race identity.

African Americans -- Collectibles.

Racism in popular culture -- United States.

Sahl, Ted

Photojournalists

Series I: Photographic Materials circa 1910-2008 (bulk 1980-2008)

Physical Description: 2 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

The material in this series consist of photographs focused on the African American experience. Included are photographs of African American subjects and political rallies taken by Ted Sahl, as well as a small photographic album that features African Americans living in Santa Cruz during the 1950s, and miscellaneous photographs taken by others. Sahl photographed African American schools, churches, community celebrations, and famous celebrities. Other photographs include political events such as the SJSU African American Faculty and Staff Association political marches and outreach events.

Box one contains one folder of miscellaneous photographs, and three binders. Sahl's original albums have been rehoused in archival binders. Number one depicts African Americans in Santa Cruz, which Sahl purchased from a local antique shop. The title of the album is "Jessie May" and dates between 1940-1950. Album number two is dated March 13, 2007, and includes newspaper articles on black gay veterans and the military "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Clay Wilson, a Korean War veteran, is featured in the article, and there are photographos of Marie Johson Calloway, a local African American artist. Album number three documents SJSU African American faculty and the student association protest for equal opportunity in higher education. It also includes images taken by Sahl of the Cesar Chavez monument opening ceremony on Sept. 4, 2008 at SJSU, and images of celebrities such as Angela Davis, Tom Bradley (former mayor of Los Angeles), Reverend Jessie Jackson, Bishop Tutu, Willie Brown, and OJ and Nicole Simpson.

Arrangement

Files are arranged alphabetically by format.

Box 1 Photographs and Album circa 1940-1950, 1980-2008

Oversized Photographic Prints circa 1910,1980-2008

Series II: Printed Materials 1889-2008 circa 1930-2000

Physical Description: 3 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series consists of magazines, postcards, and news clippings. A wide variety of attitudes towards African Americans throughout the twentieth century are represented within this series including Jim Crow era postcards and materials that celebrate the contributions of African American artists, writers and politicians in American society. A small collection of sheet music is included in this series varying from "negro spirituals" to "minstrel music" and tunes made popular by African American singers such as Ella Fitzgerald and Nat King Cole. Other notable materials include original "Coon Chicken" advertisements, a small collection of paper advertising fans depicting African Americans. Examples include a fan of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and a "Darkie Toothpaste" advertisement fan.

Arrangement

This series is loosely arranged by format.

Box 3	Postcard albums circa 1920-1950
Box 4	News clippings, printed fans, programs, pamphlets, sheet music 1889-2008
Box 5	Marketing images, postcard books, information cards 1915-2002

Box 2

Dolls and ceramic figurines n.d.

Series III: Textiles and Three-dimensional Objects, n.d.

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series is comprised of textiles, dolls, and ceramic figurines that depict African Americans. Included is a Sambo rag doll, a Mr. T doll, and a toy car produced by Disney for the amusement park ride "Autotopia" featuring a black figurine driver and rider.

Box 6	Dolls and ceramic figurines n.d.	
Box 7	Textiles, button, toy car, 1887-2000	