



THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI RESEARCH CENTER-KANSAS CITY

K0642

William L. Fambrough, Sr. (1916-1983) Photograph Collection

1940s-1970s

100 photographs, 2100 negatives

Negatives and prints recording events and people taken by Fambrough, a Kansas City African-American professional photographer.

BIOGRAPHY:

William Fambrough's experiences as a photographer date back to his childhood in Kansas City when he received a Brownie camera as a gift from his family. Born on September 22, 1916, in Little Rock, Arkansas, Fambrough spent most of his life in Kansas City, attending elementary school and earning his diploma from Lincoln High School in 1935. After graduation, he decided to pursue a career in photography by studying graphic arts at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. In 1942, World War II and Fambrough's decision to join the 829th Aviation Engineers of the U.S. Army Air Force interrupted his studies. Three years in the military did not diminish his aspiration to be a professional photographer. Upon his return to Missouri, he finished his degree at Lincoln University under the GI Bill. He was married to Yvonne Wills for thirty years, and the couple had one son, William Fambrough Jr., born in 1954.

The elder Fambrough lived and worked as a photographer in Kansas City for most of his life. He worked on a freelance basis for many years but spent most of his career at the *Kansas City Call* as staff photographer and engraver. The *Kansas City Star* also printed Fambrough's work but gave credit to the *Call*, not the photographer. From the 1950s through the 1970s, Fambrough took thousands of photographs of almost every aspect of African American life in Kansas City. During his career, Fambrough's signature style of capturing the image he wanted with a single attempt earned him the nickname "One-Shot Fambrough."

PROVENANCE:

This gift was received from Thomas A. Webster as accession KA0400 on January 29, 1987.

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PREFERRED CITATION:

Specific item; folder number; *William L. Fambrough, Sr. (1916-1983) Photograph Collection (K0642)*; The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-KC].

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DESCRIPTION:

Included in the more than two thousand negatives and prints are images of social club meetings, political rallies, sporting events, weddings, and historic sites. People captured on film by Fambrough include teachers, housing officials, dancers, mechanics, athletes, children, and even *Kansas City Call* newspaper carriers. The photographs are arranged by category and sub-categories, alphabetically.

INVENTORY:

PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION: (in office)

- Folder 1: Index of Photographs
- Folder 2: Businesses: *Associations, Bars, Diners, Furniture, Real Estate, Rental Service, Detective, Soft Drink* (32)
- Folder 3: Church (1)
- Folder 4: Civic/Fraternal Organizations: *Antlers (IBPOE of W), Koran, United Fund, YMCA* (32)
- Folder 5: Civil Rights: *Integration, NAACP, Racism, Urban League* (16)
- Folder 6: Dance: *Show, Social, Studio* (31)
- Folder 7: Dinners: *Unidentified Groups* (12)
- Folder 8: Fashion (11)

- Folder 9: Funerary (1)
- Folder 10: Government Offices, Activities (Non-political): *Courthouse, Legislative, Post Office* (4)
- Folder 11: KC Call (3)
- Folder 12: KCK Fire Department (1)
- Folder 13: Medical/Dental (5)
- Folder 14: Military/Veterans: *American Legion, Personnel (Air Force, Army, Navy)* (10)
- Folder 15: Music: *Individual with Instruments, Vocal Groups* (5)
- Folder 16: Office Negatives: *Fambrough Exhibit*
- Folder 17: Political Activity: *Eisenhower, Hearnese, Symington, Wheeler* (8)
- Folder 18: Portraits: *Couples, Groups, Individuals* (64)
- Folder 19: Schools: *Bands, Classroom Scenes, Drill Teams, First-Aid Classes, Graduation, Lincoln University, ROTC, Science Fair* (22)
- Folder 20: Scouts: *Explorers* (1)
- Folder 21: Sports: *Baseball (KC Monarchs), Basketball, Bowling, Boxing, Football, Tennis* (14)
- Folder 22: Street Scenes/Housing (4)
- Folder 23: Transportation: Air, Train (4)
- Folder 24: Unions: *American Federation of Teachers* (2)
- Folder 25: Weddings/Anniversaries/Birthdays (19)
- Folder 26: Miscellaneous (32)

NEGATIVES (in office)

ORGANIZATIONAL: (see also: Athletics, Sports, KC Call, and Dance.)

American Royal

Businesses:

Attorneys
Automotive
Bankruptcy
Barber/Beauty Shops
Canvassing
Clothiers
Construction
Detective Agency
Finance
Funeral Homes
Furniture

- Furriers
- Grocery Stores
- Hotels
- Liquor Stores
- Lumber
- Music
- Newspapers/Printers
- Pharmacies
- Radio
- Realty
- Restaurants/Taverns
- Route Sales
- Taxis
- Trash Collection
- Miscellaneous Businesses

Church:

- Choirs
- Exteriors
- Interiors
- Salvation Army
- Tent Revival

Civil Rights:

- AAHPER
- Freedom, Inc.
- NAACP
- National Urban League
- Miscellaneous Civil Rights

Fraternal/Civic Organizations:

- Antlers (IBPOE of W)
- Boy's Club
- Junior Achievement
- Koran
- Masonic/Shriner
- Nurses of the Purple Cross
- Phi Delta Kappa
- Philander Smith
- Sertoma Club
- United Way
- YMCA
- Miscellaneous Fraternal/Civic Organizations

Government Offices, activities (non-political):

- Courthouse
- Job Corp
- U.S. Customs
- U.S. Post Office

KCK Fire Department:

Medical/Dental Services:

- Ambulance
- Clinics
- Conventions
- Dental
- Hospitals

Military/Veterans (see also "School, ROTC)

- Aircraft
- Air Force Personnel
- American Legion
- Am-Vets
- Army personnel, 40's and 50's
- Army personnel, post 1960
- Artillery
- Corp of Engineers
- National Guard
- Naval personnel
- Military/ Veterans, Miscellaneous

Music:

- Combos
- Individuals, various instruments
- Piano/organ
- Singer, w/ accompaniment
- Theatre
- Vocal groups

Police, Security, Law Enforcement:

- Burglary Scenes
- Car wrecks
- Motorcycle patrol
- Personnel
- Trial scenes

Political Activity:

- Campaigns
- Demonstrations
- Missouri Sesquicentennial
- Nixon

School: (see also athletics, sports, under non-organizational)

- Bands, drum major
- College level
- Drill teams, cheerleaders
- Elementary
- Faculty
- Graduation

ROTC
Science Fair
Secondary
Stage performances (see also "Dance" under non-organizational)
Vocational training

Scouts:

Boy Scouts
Cub Scouts
Girl Scouts

Unions:

American Federation of Teachers
Firefighters
Ladies Garment Workers

NON-ORGANIZATIONAL:

Advertising:

Furniture
Goetz Beer
Hair refiner
100 Pipers
several (in one negative)

Athletics, sports:

Baseball
Basketball
Boxing
Football (see also "School related; Drill team, Cheerleaders")
Fishing
Golf
Gymnastics
Swimming
Tennis
Track
Miscellaneous sports

Dance: (see also, "School: Drill teams")

Ballet
Baton
Show

Disasters:

Fire
Wind

Fashion:

Men
Women

Funerary:

Holidays:

- Christmas
- Easter

K.C. Call:

- Buildings
- Carriers
- Interior Views
- Reporters

K.C. Call, photos taken there:

- Adult females
- Adult males
- Children
- Couples
- Employees (?)

Parades: (see also "Fraternal/Civic organizations: for particular groups on parade and "Schools" for school parades)

Transportation:

- Airlines
- Airports
- Cars (wrecked)
- Trains

Street Scenes/Housing

- Apartments
- Derelicts
- Interiors
- Single-family dwellings
- Streets

Weddings/Anniversaries:

- Anniversaries
- Weddings

Miscellaneous:

- Awards
- Children
- Dinners
- Meetings
- Picnics
- Uncategorized

Miscellaneous Portraits:

- Couples
- Group
- Individuals