Guide to the Black Americana Collection MSS.2010.01.15

Stephanie Waslohn
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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library
San José State University
One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0028
special.collections@sjsu.edu
URL: http://library.sjsu.edu/sjsu-special-collections/sjsu-special-collections-and-archives
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Title: Black Americana Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MSS.2010.01.15
Physical Description: 3.0 boxes(4.5 linear feet)
Date (inclusive): 1887-2008 (bulk 1980-2000)
Abstract: The Black Americana Collection is a collection of photographs, printed materials, textiles, and three-dimensional objects related to the African American experience in northern California, and collected by Ted Sahl, a photo-journalist who practiced in San Jose.
Access
The collection is open for research.
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Processing Information
Collection processed and finding aid encoded in EAD by Stephanie Waslohn. Reviewed by Danelle Moon. Accruals were added to the collection by Victor Rodriguez II in June 2016.
Biographical History
Theodore (Ted) Sahl is an award-winning local photographer in San José, California. Sahl spent over 30 years documenting social and political events in the Bay Area through photojournalism. 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 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 series: Series I. Photographic Materials; Series II. Printed Materials; and Series III. Textiles and Three-dimensional Objects.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Racism in popular culture -- United States.
African Americans in popular culture.
African Americans -- Collectibles.
African Americans -- Race identity.
Box 1

Series I. Photographic Materials 1910-2008

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.

This box contains one folder of miscellaneous photographs and three binders. Sahl's original albums have been rehoused in archival binders. The first album is of 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. The second album is dated March 13, 2007, and includes newspaper articles on black gay veterans and the United States military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Clay Wilson, a Korean War veteran, is featured in the article, and there are photographs of Marie Johnson Calloway, a local African American artist. The third album 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 Jesse Jackson, Bishop Tutu, Willie Brown, and OJ and Nicole Simpson.

Arrangement
Files are arranged alphabetically by format.

Box 2

Series II. Printed Materials 1889-2008

Series Scope and Content Summary
This series consists of magazines, postcards, newscclippings, printed fans, programs, pamphlets, marketing images, postcard books, and information cards dating from 1915 to 2002. A wide variety of attitudes towards African Americans throughout the twentieth century is 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

Series III. Textiles and Three-dimensional Objects 1887-2000

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.