

# Mary Lou Eisert Collection (SC165)

## *Introduction*

This collection contains photographs showing flood damage to residences and buildings in the Kansas City, Kansas area and a permit for Mary Lou Eisert to enter the flood area to regain property from her residence at 628 S. Coy.

## *Descriptive Summary*

Creator: Mary Lou Eisert

Title: Mary Lou Eisert Collection

Dates: 1951, n.d.

Size: 0.21 linear feet, 1 box, 9 folders, 50 photographs

Collection Number: SC165

## *Donor Information*

Received as a gift from Jeannine Paul on Aug. 18, 2010, who purchased the collection at a sale on Vivion Rd in Kansas City North on Aug. 15, 2010.

## *Citation Note*

Mary Lou Eisert Collection (SC165), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

## *Administrative Information*

Related Collections: Additional information on the 1951 flood and Armourdale District may be found in the Missouri Valley Special Collections local history collections. The department has numerous other photographs of the 1951 flood in the Kansas City metro area. These are available online and can be viewed by placing "1951 Flood" in the search box of the Local History Index. The department's newspaper clipping collection and vertical file also contain numerous local newspaper accounts of the flood. Film footage of the flood is available in the audio visual collection and other resources can be found by searching the library's online catalog.

## *Historical Sketch*

The 1951 flood was one of the most costly floods in Kansas history and one of the most devastating natural events to occur in the Kansas City area. Above normal precipitation in May and June culminated in massive flooding of the Kansas River into the Kansas City area on Friday, July 13, 1951. Flood waters over 17 feet deep topped levees protecting the Argentine and Armourdale districts in Kansas City, Kansas causing the evacuation of 15,000 people. Across the entire Kansas River basin, the financial impact was estimated at \$725 million dollars and over 500,000 people were displaced from their homes. When the water receded, residents were left

to clean up several feet of silt and muck and recover property. Hundreds of dead animals left a stench that lasted throughout the summer that was described as “sickening” by U.S. House Representative members touring Kansas City on July 22. In an effort to prevent such a disaster in the future, a series of 18 dams and water reservoirs were built across the Kansas River basin.

### ***Scope and Content Note***

This collection contains a permit to enter the flooded area of Kansas City, Kansas issued by the city on July 19, 1951 to Mary Lou Eisert, home owner/occupant of 628 S. Coy and signed by Chief of Police, Earl B. Swarner. The collection also provides images showing the damages caused by the 1951 flood in the Kansas City, Kansas area, specifically the Armourdale district. There are a total of 50 black and white images of varying sizes. Some photographs include notations on the back identifying individuals and homes featured. The photographer is assumed to be an occupant of 628 S. Coy. Friends and family such as Bud, Aunt Alice, Daddy and Grandma are noted on some images. Views include the interior and exterior of residences damaged by flood waters, individuals involved in clean-up efforts, buildings identified as Morse School, Christian Church and Thriftway/Armourdale Supermarket. Photographs in folders 1-5 are arranged by location indicated on the back of the photograph. These locations include the streets 9<sup>th</sup>, Shawnee, Coy, Pyle and Argentine Boulevard. Photographs in folder 6 have no identification notes. Photos in folders 7-9 originally came from 3 individual plastic spiraled photo albums (Jumbo Snapshots and Elko Snapshots) and are maintained in their original order. The last four photographs in folder 9 do not appear to be related to flood damage and feature a neighborhood street covered in snow.

### ***Collection Inventory***

- f.1 Flood Permit, 1951
- f.2 Photographs, 628 S. Coy, n.d.
- f.3 Photographs, 9<sup>th</sup> St., n.d.
- f.4 Photographs, Argentine Blvd., n.d.
- f.5 Photographs, Shawnee Ave., n.d.
- f.6 Photographs, misc., n.d.
- f.7 Photographs, homes & buildings, n.d.
- f.8 Photographs, misc., n.d.
- f.9 Photographs, misc., n.d.

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**Processed by Jennifer Huffman, intern, January, 2014**