

South Central Business Association Records

The South Central Business Association was a local business organization located in the area of 31st and Troost. It was one of the first strong business sections apart from downtown. Their records cover the business concerns of that area of town from 1919 to 1969.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: South Central Business Association

Title: South Central Business Association records

Dates: 1919-circa 1990, bulk 1919-1969

Size: 15 linear feet, 19 boxes, 19 original scrapbooks unprocessed, additional unboxed items

Location: SC39, P14

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Additional physical form available: Scrapbooks also available on microfilm. Most photographs are digitized.

Acquisition information: Gift, 1969, South Central Business Association officers. Later donations made in 1994, 2001, 2004 by last president Gordon Henke.

Custodial history: Photographs in collection were separated at the time of initial processing and placed in P14.

Citation note: South Central Business Association records (SC39, P14), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Pubic Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

The South Central Business Association was founded in 1919, concerned with the business area of the city radiating from 31st Street and Troost Avenue. Concerns of the area as street repairs, lighting and local transportation brought the group together initially. It is considered to be Kansas City's first outlying shopping center area. Garrett L. Smalley, editor of the *Kansas City News-Press*, sent out the first call to organize. Other early names associated with the organization include Charles Ricker, John Sears, George Buchanan, Julian Davidson, and Joseph C. Wirthman. The group was dissolved in 1969 and was located at 505 Wirthman Building at the time.

N. Emerson Paton was the organization's secretary for 45 years, starting in 1924. It is thought that he arranged for at least 1,800 speakers for the group during his years of service. (Information for this short history of the group came from an article that appeared in the *Kansas City Times*, October 10, 1969.)

Scope and content note

The collection contains primarily scrapbooks, photographs, and the organization's records as found in correspondence, minute books, and miscellaneous items. The core of the collection is 44 scrapbooks meticulously kept by the association's executive secretary, N. Emerson Paton. Because of his longevity as secretary, there is a consistency in the quality of the scrapbooks that date from 1924 to 1967. Each scrapbook is the same size with the same cover and arranged basically in chronological order.

When processing of the collection started, the beginning scrapbooks were in very poor condition and were photocopied as well as possible. It was determined to photocopy a large portion of the earliest scrapbooks and discard the originals retaining any photographs and ephemeral items contained therein. This was done up to 1950. For further preservation, all of the scrapbooks were microfilmed. Except for the very earliest ones, the original scrapbooks were filmed, then photocopied.

Items found within the scrapbooks include newspaper clippings, photographs, brochures, flyers, correspondence, and a variety of ephemeral items. Some basic indexing for scrapbooks covering the years 1935-1938 is available and was done at the time of processing.

The content of the scrapbooks centers on the group's geographical location which was vital to the association. Business news of the area is prominent as well as personalities associated with the area. The luncheons and dinners sponsored by the association are also featured. Many times well-known personalities were featured luncheon speakers and they included people from the local area as well as nationally. Not only were business, civic, educational and church leaders included but well-known entertainers were frequent guests. South Central Business Association was also a booster for the sports teams, especially the Kansas City Blues baseball team. Mr. Paton left in the scrapbooks his correspondence with well-known personalities of the day. The photographs found were excised and placed in a separate container for better preservation and placed in P14. The microfilm of the scrapbooks is available in the department and is kept in the "Miscellaneous and Historical" category of microfilm.

The collection contains over 900 photographs, primarily 8" x 10" and black and white with varying other sizes. Many of the photographs are portraits of people, most being luncheon speakers. Some are identified and many are not at the time of processing. There are also photographs depicting the 31st and Troost area as well as the association's luncheon activities. Also included are a number of panoramic photos primarily of special outings, annual dinner, events, etc. These photographs were placed in the Photograph Special Collections area and were assigned as P14.

The rest of the organization's holdings include some separate correspondence which is dated 1922 to 1963. Correspondence is also found in the scrapbooks. Four bound minute books were donated in 1994 and cover the years 1924-1969 and are contained in two boxes. There is a hand written chronological subject index for each minute book. Miscellaneous items include a few artifacts and various types of other ephemeral items. All together, the collection gives a comprehensive history of the group.

According to a newspaper clipping from the *Kansas City Times*, Oct. 10, 1969, the bulk of the collection was donated to the Missouri Valley Room of the Kansas City Public Library in 1969 by the club's officers just before the last regular

luncheon of the group. This donation included all of the scrapbooks, the photographs which were loose as well as attached in the scrapbooks, and some other miscellaneous material. A second donation was made in 1994 by the organization's last president, Gordon Henke. This donation included the association's minute books. Mr. Henke also gave a second donation in 2001 which included meeting announcements, correspondence from the 1920's and a 1930 roster of members. Again in 2004 he donated a photograph, a Walt Disney movie "Dumbo" figure and accompanying certificate.

Collection Inventory

SC39

Box 1

- Correspondence, 1922 - 1970
- Miscellaneous items including Centertown Teen Club
- Newspaper clippings, 1950s-1970
- Pamphlets, newsletters, meeting flyers, etc.
- Membership rosters, past Presidents list, constitution and by-laws, dissolution papers

Box 2 - Minute Books

- Book #1 - 1924 - 1933
- Book #2 - 1933 - 1944
- Book #3 - 1944 - 1957

Box 3 - Minute Books

- #4 - 1958 - 1969

Box 4 and 5

- Program Notices, 1947 - 1961
- Program Notices, 1962 - 1969

Box 6 - Scrapbooks (Photocopies)

- Scrapbook #1 - 1924-1925
- Scrapbook #2 - 1926
- Scrapbook #3 - 1927

Box 7 - Scrapbooks (Photocopies)

- Scrapbook #4 - 1928
- Scrapbook #5 - 1929
- Scrapbook #6 - 1930

Box 8 - Scrapbooks (Photocopies)

- Scrapbook #7 - 1931
- Scrapbook #8 - 1932
- Scrapbook #9 - 1933

- Scrapbook #10 - 1934

Box 9 - Scrapbooks (Photocopies)

- Scrapbook #11 - 1935
- Scrapbook #12 - 1936
- Scrapbook #13 - 1937
- Scrapbook #14 - 1938

Box 10 - Scrapbooks (Photocopies)

- Scrapbook #15 - 1939
- Scrapbook #16 - 1940
- Scrapbook #17 - 1941

Box 11 - Scrapbooks (Photocopies)

- Scrapbook #18 - 1942
- Scrapbook #19 - 1943
- Scrapbook #20 - 1944

Box 12 - Scrapbooks (Photocopies)

- Scrapbook #21 - 1945
- Scrapbook #22 - 1946

Box 13 - Scrapbooks (Photocopies)

- Scrapbook #23 - 1947
- Scrapbook #24 - 1948

Box 14 - Scrapbooks (Photocopies)

- Scrapbook #25 - 1949
- Scrapbook #26 - 1st part, 1950

Miscellaneous Items

- 20 original scrapbooks - 1944, 1950, 2nd part - 1967
- Walt Disney *Dumbo* movie souvenir figurine and photograph
- South Central Business Association banner
- Wooden key - "Siloam Springs, Ark., 1933" with framed explanation
- Framed stationary letterheads from the 1920s
- Framed "Walt Disney in Kansas City" poster, Thank You Walt Disney, Inc., Phil Starke, artist, ca1990

P14

Box 1

- Folder 1 - Bartle, H. Roe - 5 photographs
- Folder 2 - Bolling, Richard - 3 photographs
- Folder 3 - Cookingham, L.P. - 2 photographs
- Folder 4 - Crawford, Joan - 3 photographs

- Folder 5 - Dalton, John - 5 photographs
- Folder 6 - Davis, Ilus - 2 photographs
- Folder 7 - Harlow, Jean - 4 photographs
- Folder 8 - Hightower, Rosella - 3 photographs
- Folder 9 - Kelley, Clarence - 2 photographs
- Folder 10 - Landon, Alf - 3 photographs
- Folder 11 - Liberace and brother George - 10 photographs
- Folder 12 - Milgram, Les - 8 photographs
- Folder 13 - Paton, E. Emerson - 10 photographs
- Folder 14 - Rand, Sally - 11 photographs
- Folder 15 - Truman, Harry S. - 2 photographs
- Folders 16 - 42 - Identified portraits, arranged alphabetically by last name

Box 2

- Folder 1 - Portraits, unidentified females, some autographed - 14 photographs
- Folder 2 - Portraits, unidentified males - military and police related - 11 photographs, 5 actually unidentified
- Folder 3 - Portraits, unidentified males - 11 photographs, 5 actually unidentified
- Folder 4 - Portraits, unidentified males - 11 photographs, 4 actually unidentified
- Folder 5 - Portraits, unidentified males - 11 photographs, 2 actually unidentified
- Folder 6 - Portraits, unidentified males - 11 photographs, 3 actually unidentified
- Folder 7 - Not Kansas City - 13 photographs
- Folder 8 - Ararat Temple - 10 photographs
- Folder 9, 10 - Awards and Presentations - 18 photographs
- Folder 11 - Bowling - 13 photographs
- Folder 12 - Buildings and towers - 12 photographs
- Folder 13, 14 - Churches - 2nd Church of Christ Scientist - 23 photographs
- Folder 15 - Events - 6 photographs
- Folder 16 - Fountains - 1 photograph
- Folder 17, 18 - Groups - 19 photographs
- Folders 19 - 20.5 - Kansas City Blues - 33 photographs
- Folders 21-25 - Meetings-Weekly luncheons - 44 photographs
- Folders 26, 27 - Miscellaneous - 20 photographs
- Folders 28, 29 - Outings - 18 photographs
- Folder 30 - Parking Meters on Troost - 3 photographs
- Folder 31 - Prison-Jefferson City, Missouri - 10 photographs
- Folder 32 - Sports - 1 photograph
- Folders 33, 34 - Stores and businesses - 14 photographs
- Folder 35 - Street railways-Electric, Troost - 7 photographs
- Folders 36, 37 - Streets and signs - 15 photographs
- Folder 38 - Transportation - 3 photographs

Box 3 - 37 folders - Photographs excised from Scrapbook #17, 1941 - Scrapbook #32, 1956, 227 photographs

Box 4 - 31 folders - Photographs excised from Scrapbook #33, 1957 - Scrapbook # 43, 1967 - 189 photographs

Processed initially by Special Collections Librarian Sara J. Nyman, 1992-93; additional processing as needed.