

Garment Industry Oral History Collection (SC229)

Introduction

This collection contains DVDs and transcripts that were created as part of a Kansas City Garment Industry History Project. The collection consists of oral history interviews and supplemental audiovisual materials related to the Garment Industry.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Kansas City Garment Industry History Project
Title: Garment Industry Oral History Collection
Dates: 1938-2020 and n.d.
Size: 1 linear foot, 2 boxes
Collection Number: SC229

Donor Information

Gift, 2011, Sybil K. Kahn.

Citation Note

Garment Industry Oral History Collection (SC229), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Administrative Information

Additional form available: The oral history interviews have been digitized and can be found on KCHistory.org.

Related Collections: Additional materials related to the Garment Industry can be found by searching KCHistory.org.

Historical Sketch

When Kansas City was incorporated as the City of Kansas in 1853, the area that would later become the garment district was first platted as a residential area. The major wholesale district at the time was located in the West Bottoms. Then the landscape of the city was changed in the late 1880s when a major construction boom began transforming some of the residential areas into commercial properties. Wholesale companies began building new buildings around 8th Street and Broadway and thanks to Kansas City's location as a central transportation hub, the industry continued its rapid development.

It was during the years following the end of World War I when the garment industry began taking shape within the wholesale district. Buildings that housed the garment factories were concentrated within an area that stretched between 6th and 11th streets and Washington and Wyandotte streets. Kansas City's garment factories took on

contracts for the Army and Navy during World War II. During the years following the end of the war, Kansas City's seamstresses and designers dominated the national garment industry with Kansas City having one of the largest garment districts in the nation and the being the second largest industry in Kansas City.

As with many industries, mechanization and modernization changed the landscape for the garment industry in the late 20th century. Department store chains started putting small clothing shops out of business and local garment production became more costly with rapidly changing styles that required more expensive means of production. By the end of the 1970's, Kansas City's bustling garment industry had vanished.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains DVDs and transcripts that were created as part of a Kansas City Garment Industry History Project. The DVDs show oral history interviews conducted as part of the project. Supplementary transcripts were created and added to the collection when the interviews were digitized for the Kansas City Public Library's Regional Oral History Website project. Additional DVDs that were donated with the collection have assorted video, audio, and photographs relating to the garment industry.

Signed release forms are kept in the staff collection folder.

Series 1: Transcripts of Oral History Interviews, 2020 and n.d

This series consists of transcripts of the garment industry oral history interviews. One folder contains five transcripts that were donated with the collection. There are two folders that contain a transcription for every interview in the collection and were done as part of the garment oral history digitization project. Transcripts within each folder are arranged alphabetically by the last name of the person being interviewed.

Series 2: Oral History Interviews, 2004-2011 and n.d.

This series consists of discs that contain video of oral histories done as part of a project to document Kansas City's garment industry. The discs are arranged alphabetically by the last name of the person being interviewed.

Series 3: Additional Media Related to Garment Industry History, 1938-2009 and n.d.

This series consists of discs with assorted video, audio, and photographs relating to the garment industry. They are arranged by type of content.

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Transcripts of Oral History Interviews, 2020 and n.d.

- f. 1 Transcripts accessioned with the collection – Mary Lou Chalmers; Steve Chick; Rosa Guarino; Marshall Miller; Sally Schwenk, n.d.
- f. 2 Transcripts created as part of the Oral History Digitization Project (Alderman – Lerner), 2020
- f. 3 Transcripts created as part of the Oral History Digitization Project (Lighton – Zarr), 2020

Series 2: Oral History Interviews, 2004-2011, and n.d.

- f. 4 Interview of Mary Agnes Alderman, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 5 Interview of Suzie Aron, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 6 Interview of Margie Bercu and Barbara Bloch, interviewed by Gary Swanson and Ann Brownfield, 2005
- f. 7 Interview of Barbara Bloch, interviewed by Michael Braude, 2010
- f. 8 Interview of Betty Brand, interviewed by Laura Ziegler, 2010
- f. 9 Interview of Ann Brownfield, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 10 Interview of Mary Lou Chalmers, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2010
- f. 11 Interview of Steve Chick, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2010
- f. 12 Interview of Sherman W. Dreiseszun, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2004
- f. 13 Interview of Skipper Feingold and Leo Feingold, interviewed by Sybil Kahn, 2010
- f. 14 Interview of Harvey J. Fried, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2004
- f. 15 Interview of Eileen Garry, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 16 Interview of Eileen Garry (Addendum), interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 17 Interview of DeSaix Gernes, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 18 Interview of Bob Gershon and Bruce Gershon, 2009
- f. 19 Interview of Marvin Gibian, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 20 Interview of Marshall Gordon, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 21 Interview of Rosa Guarino, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2010
- f. 22 Interview of Steve Hammer, 2008
- f. 23 Interview of Hal Hardin, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 24 Interview of Nancy Hipsh, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 25 Interview of Eddie Jacobs, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 26 Interview of Bill Kaiser, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2010
- f. 27 Interview of Bill Kort, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 28 Interview of Eugene Lebowitz, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 29 Interview of Michael Lerner, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 30 Interview of Linda Lighton, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 31 Interview of Mel Mallin, interviewed by Gary Swanson
- f. 32 Interview of Marshall Miller, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 33 Interview of Regina Pachter, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 34 Interview of David Singer Pesson, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 35 Interview of Elmer Price and Lou Lesky, 2007
- f. 36 Interview of Carl Puritz, interviewed by Gary Swanson and Ann Brownfield, 2005
- f. 37 Interview of Dale Rice, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 38 Interview of Esther Rudnick and Cy Rudnick, interviewed by Michael Braude, 2010

- f. 39 Interview of Margie Sackin, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 40 Interview of Eugene Salvay, 2011
- f. 41 Interview of Sally Schwenk, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2010
- f. 42 Interview of Inge Silverman, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 43 Interview of Bob Slegman, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2007
- f. 44 Interview of Alice Nast Statland, n.d.
- f. 45 Interview of Jerry Stovol, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 46 Interview of Rose Stolowy, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 47 Interview of Martin Unger, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 48 Interview of Seymour Weiner, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005
- f. 49 Interview of Marianne Young, interviewed by John Dvorak, 2011
- f. 50 Interview of Ralph Zarr and Ben Zarr, interviewed by Gary Swanson, 2005

Series 3: Additional Media Related to Garment Industry History, 1938-2009 and n.d.

- f. 51 Garment District Project Fundraising Video, 2007
- f. 52 Garment District Project Archival Training, 2006
- f. 53 36th Annual Costume Society of America National Symposium, n.d.
- f. 54 Documentary Interview of Sally Von Werlhof, Founder of Salamander Fashion Company, 1983
- f. 55 KCUR Interview with Walt Bodine, Kelly Weiss, Jan Whitaker, and Bill Worley on Department Stores in Kansas City, n.d.
- f. 56 Media Coverage of Arrow Fabricare on Regis and Kelly TV Show, 2002
- f. 57 Documentary of Spadina Avenue, the Hub of the Garment Industry in Toronto, n.d.
- f. 58 HBO Documentary “Schmatta: Rags to Riches to Rags” about the garment industry, 2009
- f. 59 “Chillicothe Hats” photos of garments, ca. 2007
- f. 60 Historical documents and photographs related to Woolf Brothers Inc., and family, n.d.
- f. 61 Video of Kentucky Derby Winner, Lawrin (bread on Woolford Farms), 1938
- f. 62 Historical documents and photographs related to Hollander and Son, world’s largest fur dressers and dryers, n.d.
- f. 63 Hollander art images, n.d.

Processed by Kara Evans Flinn, Special Collections Librarian/Archivist, July 2021.