

# Philip A. Gambone Papers

The Philip Gambone Papers contain the working papers assembled by Mr. Gambone while doing research in preparation for writing a book on Kansas City architecture. The book was never completed and published.

## Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Philip A. Gambone  
**Title:** Philip A. Gambone papers  
**Dates:** 1972-1975  
**Size:** 2 boxes, 34 folders, approx. 600 notecards  
**Location:** SC99

## Administrative Information

**Restrictions on access:** Unrestricted access.

**Related collections in other repositories:** Philip Arthur Gambone papers, Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Kansas City (1172kc)

**Acquisition information:** Gift, circa 1974

**Citation note:** Philip A. Gambone papers (SC99), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri

## Collection Description

### **Biographical/Historical note**

The decade of the 1970s proved to be a productive time period for the researching and publishing of books on Kansas City architecture. Previous to this time, it appears the major book resource for local architecture was *There is No Limit: Architecture and Sculpture in Kansas City* by Giles Mitchell published in 1934. Two notable publications appeared in the mid-1970s: *Historic Kansas City Architecture* by the city's Historic Landmarks Commission published in 1975 and *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1976* by George Ehrlich published in 1976, revised in 1992. This SC99 collection centers around the architectural research done by Philip A. Gambone in the early 1970s, previous to these publications

Beginning toward the end of 1972, Philip Gambone began pursuing his desire to write a book with photographs concerning the architecture of Kansas City. It would include a survey of Kansas City's architectural heritage from the French beginnings in 1821 to just after World War I. He stated in a letter to Mr. Homer Wadsworth of the Kansas City Association of Trusts and Foundations that he "would like to devote full time to writing and photographing a book which would be a popular, albeit scholarly, exploration of the architecture of Kansas City and sociology behind it, from its earliest beginnings to the present day." (Folder 13, December 19, 1972)

Although not an architect himself, he considered himself a writer with a strong interest in architecture and photography. He was encouraged by others in this project and he pursued and won a grant from the Kansas City Association of Trusts and Foundations. He was awarded \$10,000 for a one year grant from September 1973 to August 1974 in order to research and write the book.

The Institute for Community Studies provided an office and the Missouri Valley Room at the Kansas City Public Library met many of his research needs. It must have become apparent soon into the project that one year was not enough time to accomplish the research needed and subsequent writing. Additional funds were secured from the Missouri State Council on the Arts.

In February of 1974, Gambone applied to the Hall Foundation for additional money and applied for a NEH grant in April of the same year. In the NEH grant he stated the book was to be called *Centropolis Revisited: A History and Interpretation of Architecture in Kansas City During Its First One Hundred Years*. But by May he had only completed two chapters and found "it increasingly difficult to produce the piece of work which I would want to do in order for the book to be published. When I started in September I had no idea of the complexity of the subject or the research necessary in order to do a first-rate job". (Folder 14, May 9, 1974) At this point he terminated his contract and moved on to other pursuits.

Before leaving the area, presumably sometime in 1974, he left with the Kansas City Public Library and the Missouri Valley Room his accumulated research material consisting of 34 folders of information and a box of index cards. He states in a 1975 letter addressed to the staff of the Missouri Valley Room, that he would like to return to Kansas City and at least write an article on the subject using the research materials. (Folder 23) This letter was sent from Cambridge, Massachusetts, and it is not known whether he returned as stated.

According to biographical information found with the collection, Mr. Gambone was born July 21, 1948 in Melrose, Massachusetts. He attended the Wakefield, Massachusetts public schools and graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College in 1970 with an A.B. in English. His first employment after graduating appears to be as a humanities teacher at Sunset Hill School in Kansas City, Missouri, where he stayed from September 1970 to June 1973. He considered himself a writer with a strong interest in architecture. It appears that Mr. Gambone left Kansas City in 1974 and moved back to the East coast area.

The collection does not identify his life any further than 1974 and thus does not give his future employment or accomplishments. An Internet search of his name does reveal a Philip A. Gambone as the recipient of the James E. Conway Excellence in Teaching Writing Award in 1990-91 given by Harvard University Extension School. It is believed he is the same person as writer Philip Gambone who has published numerous books of gay fiction

### **Scope and content note**

The collection consists of 34 folders assembled alphabetically by folder title in one box. These folder titles were selected by Mr. Gambone and have been retained during processing. Initially the folders were in no particular order and the processor assembled them in alphabetical order. In addition to the folders, there is one box of approximately 600 index cards which have been left in the order as found in the box. They appear to be divided roughly between Chapters 1-3 with various topics on the tabs. The folder labels and card index labels are included in the Collection Inventory below.

The folders contain: chapter revisions, information on various early architectural styles, correspondence concerning research and funding contacts, information pertaining to a few local buildings and architects, bibliographies, maps, areas of town as Quality Hill and the Plaza, etc. Information is both hand written and typed with photocopied articles in some folders as well as some unpublished papers. The note cards fit similar categories as the folders. There are 31 black and white photographs included and can be found in folders 16, 20, 23, and 25.

Those pertaining directly to Kansas City can be found in folder 25 and are of the New England Building as well as one of the Roslin Hotel.

Because Mr. Gambone's research was just in the beginning stages and never totally completed, the collection does not cover to any extent the architectural history of Kansas City. Those publications listed above in the first paragraphs represent much more completed local architectural history. Other publications in subsequent years have added to the body of publications. The Kansas City chapter of the American Institute of Architects published *Guide to Kansas City Architecture and Public Art*, 1979, revised in 2000 and the Historic Landmarks Commission published *Kansas City: a Place in Time* in 1977.

There have been other publications dealing with local architects, specific buildings both still standing and torn down, and popular "then and now" books. The newspaper clipping collection in Missouri Valley Special Collections is also helpful for architectural research.

### **Collection Inventory**

#### **Box 1 – Folders**

##### **Folder 1 - Architects, K.C.**

- Photocopies of pages concerning architects from the book *A Condensed History of the Kansas City Area Its Mayors and Some V.I.P.s* by George Fuller Green.

##### **Folder 2 - Bibliographies**

- Miscellaneous sources

##### **Folder 3 - Boone [Family]**

- Handwritten notes on various Boone family members as well as lists of local references/historians

##### **Folder 4 - Bungalows**

- Notes and photocopied pages

##### **Folder 5 - Chapter 1, Additions and Corrections**

- Includes photocopies of magazine articles; a paper entitled "Centropolis Revisited: A Personal Interpretation of Architecture in Kansas City During its First One Hundred Years" by Philip Arthur Gambone; handwritten notes; photograph reproduction entitled "Elevation Dela Facade Du Quay Du Batiment Des R. Vrseli nes", and typed versions of Chapter 1.

##### **Folder 6 and 7 - Chapter 1, Drafts**

- Includes handwritten drafts and notes, typed drafts and notes, and photocopied articles

##### **Folder 8 - Chapter 2, Notes**

Folder 9 - **Chapter 2, Drafts (Handwritten)**

Folder 10 - **Chapter 3**

- Six pages of handwritten text

Folder 11 - **Cincinnati [Ohio]**

Folder 12 - **Coates House**

- Correspondence between Gambone and Chamber of Commerce in Beatrice, Nebraska; photocopy from *American Architect and Building News*, Dec. 24, 1887 of theatre and hotel at Beatrice, Nebraska with similar style to Coates House in Kansas City.

Folder 13 and 14 - **Correspondence**, 1972-74 (Arranged by date) plus NEH grant application

Folder 15 - **1850 (and before)**, miscellaneous items

Folder 16 - **Huronion (Ontario, Canada)**, includes one photograph of Huronion village, Ontario, Canada

Folder 17 - **Independence [Missouri]** - Contains one issue of *Jackson County Historical Society Journal*, v.15, #3, September 1973

Folder 18 - **Kessler** - Photocopies of drawings of Kessler for "Reservation and The Paseo" and "West Terrace," copies from Harvard University

Folder 19 - **Landmarks, 1922** - Letter and a typed list headed "Kansas City-- Landmarks, 1922", 6 p.

Folder 20 - **Log Cabin Arch.**

- Miscellaneous items as reports, correspondence, photocopied newspaper clipping and articles, photograph, etc. Includes a list of log cabins in Kansas City. Photograph is drawing by Rudolph Kurz entitled "Trading house for the Omahaws" obtained from the Smithsonian.

Folder 21 - **Maps - Lists** - Photocopy of "Stranger's Guide to Kansas City, Missouri"

Folder 22 - **Midland Hotel** - Photocopy of partial article from the *American Architect and Building News*, March 24, 1888

Folder 23 and 24 - **Miscellaneous Items**

- Includes 8 small black & white photographs (Folder 23) of early houses taken from published sources, correspondence with Missouri Valley Room employees, list, reproduction of early map and scene from the Huntington Library in California (Folder 23), newspaper clipping, Chouteau family genealogy, and report on the cataloging of blueprint archives.

**Folder 25 - New England Building**

- Includes 19 black & white, snapshot size (3 1/2" x 5") photographs, both exterior and interior detail views of the New England Building and one of the Roslin Hotel located at 1204 Washington Street (1972 Kansas City directory), presumably taken by Gambone and one 8" x 10", black & white full exterior of the New England Building. Also a copy of the Register of Historic Places form for the building is included in this folder.

Folder 26 - **Plaza** - Contains copy of *The Plaza Golden Years*, special souvenir issue, 1972

Folder 27 - **Polk, W.W., arch.** - Contains two photocopies from *American Architect and Building News*, Dec. 17, 1887, Willis J. Polk design and Feb. 4, 1888, W. W. Polk/Willis J. Polk design of Smith residence, Kansas City, Mo.

**Folder 28 - Quality Hill**

- Contains newspaper clipping and article "Historical Preservation: VIII, Highway replaces homes of 'Quality Hill'"

Folder 29 - **St. Joseph** - Miscellaneous items

**Folder 30 - St. Louis**

- Contains correspondence, newspaper clipping, 1973-74 map, brochure, etc.

Folder 31 - **Van Brunt & Howe** - Sketch of residence of Mr. J.J. Mastin, Kansas City, Mo. from *American Architect and Building News*, Dec. 3, 1887

Folder 32 - **Western Arch. - late 19th c.** - Photocopies of articles from various sources

Folder 33 - **"Westernization"** - paper entitled "Incidents of the 'Knob Hill' or Aristocratic Residence Quarter of Kansas City of Early Days"

Folder 34 - **Xerox Copies** - Various photocopied articles and maps as well as handwritten notes

**Box 2 - Note Cards** - Divider tab labels as they appear in the box

- Brick; Pre-Fab; Churches; Boone; Illus.-Photo.; Additions-Chap. I; French-New Orleans, Louisiana; architecture; books/magazine/notes; Spaniards; Fort Cavagnial and Kaskaskia; Jesuit; quotes/notes; miscellaneous; biography; Westport; working; Chapter II - biblio.; Chapter III; St. Louis; K.C.-described; streets-grading; log cabins, etc.; frame; and urbanization of the West

Processed by Special Collections Librarian Sara Nyman, Fall 2006.