



**THE CENTER FOR POPULAR MUSIC
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, MURFREESBORO, TN**

ROBERT F. "BOB" MENASCO COLLECTION

18-017

Creator:

Menasco, Robert F. (1918-1974)

Type of Material:

Manuscript Materials, Photographic Negatives

Physical Description:

.3 linear feet of 123 black and white photographic negatives of varying sizes. Also contains one envelope with approximately 15 sets of notes that accompanied the negatives, including glassine envelopes, as well as modern "post-it" sticky notes.

Dates:

circa 1944-1954

Abstract (Descriptive Summary):

Collection of 123 black and white photographic negatives of varying sizes taken by Bob Menasco, circa 1944-1954, of musicians and radio broadcasters in and around Shreveport, Louisiana. Many of the individuals in the photographs were performers on or connected to the Louisiana Hayride radio show that appeared on KWKH.

RESTRICTIONS:

All materials in this collection are subject to standard national and international copyright laws. Center staff are able to assist with copyright questions. The donor has assigned the title of the materials to the CPM but has retained ownership of the underlying copyrights, publishing rights, and royalties. The CPM will administer the rights relating to the Robert F. "Bob" Menasco Collection, and in exchange for this administrative service, the donor will share 50% of any royalty revenues generated with the Center for Popular Music.

Provenance and Acquisition Information:

This collection was donated by Mr. Robert R. Menasco, son of the creator, Robert F. "Bob" Menasco. Center for Popular Music Director, Dr. Greg Reish, picked up the photographic negatives from Durham, North Carolina, on December 6, 2018.

Subjects/Index Terms:

Subjects

KWKH (Radio station: Shreveport, La.)
Louisiana hayride (Radio program)
Alamo (San Antonio, Tex.)
Stork Club (New York, N.Y.)
Country music radio programs
Country music
Musicians--Portraits

Names

Williams, Hank, 1923-1953
Williams, Audrey, 1923-1975
Williams, Hank, Jr., 1949-
Drifting Cowboys
York, Lum
Holmes, Clent
McNett, Bob
Franchini, Anthony
Pruett, Felton
Locklin, Hank
Franks, Tillman
Bailes Brothers
Johnnie & Jack
Anglin, Jack, 1916-1963
Warren, Paul (Fiddler)
Reeves, Jim
Martin, Emory, 1916-
Smith, Harmie
Williams, Billie Jean; aka Horton, Billie Jean
Martin, Grady, 1929-
Baum, Claude
Wright, Johnnie, 1914-2011
Wells, Kitty

Occupations

Mandolin players
Country musicians
Banjoists
Guitarists
Fiddlers
Radio broadcasters

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:

Photographer Robert F. “Bob” Menasco (1918-1974) was born in Amity, Arkansas and grew up in Glenwood, Arkansas. Menasco lost an eye as a child, but it did not hinder his urge to learn how to become a photographer following a family move to California. While out on the west coast, Menasco learned about the three-light, “glamour” studio lighting method.

Menasco relocated to Shreveport, Louisiana in the early 1940s where he established himself as a professional photographer. From 1942 until his death in 1974, he owned and operated Menasco Studios in Shreveport. His unique style as a portrait photographer, using a wooden Kodak studio camera, helped to make him one of the city’s most sought after artists for wedding, christening, and portrait shots. Menasco was also well known for taking outstanding photographs outside of the studio setting. His longtime friendship with David Kent of Shreveport’s KWKH radio provided him with a substantial amount of work taking promotional shots of radio station staff and musicians who played on the Louisiana Hayride radio show. Known as the “Cradle of the Stars,” the Hayride was the home of many legendary country music stars during the early years of their careers. Menasco photographed legends such as Kitty Wells, Johnny and Jack, the Bailes Brothers, and Hank Williams in the late 1940s. Along with these stars, Menasco also captured the likenesses of older performers such as Harmie Smith, or the side men and women who backed up the headliners.

Scope and Content:

123 black and white, large format photo negatives of varying sizes taken by photographer Robert F. “Bob” Menasco during the course of his work with KWKH radio in Shreveport, Louisiana. The collection includes promotional photos taken in Menasco’s studio, as well as images made at musical performances, radio studios, and private homes. The collection features many early career images of country music legends such as Hank Williams, Kitty Wells, and Jim Reeves.

Some images are duplicates, so please contact the CPM Archivist for the full inventory list that includes descriptions of envelopes and notes, as well as access to low-resolution thumbnails of the images.

Collection Contents: (Item List):

The following item list reflects the arrangement and numbering of the order of the scanned images (both negatives and envelopes) of the Bob Menasco Collection. There is a basic description of the image.

| <u>Item #</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|----------------------|--|
| 001 | Johnnie & Jack |
| 002 | Unknown mandolin and guitar player |
| 003 | Louisiana Hayride executive holds poster |
| 004 | Harmie Smith and the Ozark Mountaineers |
| 005 | Harmie Smith and the Ozark Mountaineers |

006 Harmie Smith and the Ozark Mountaineers
 007 Harmie Smith and the Ozark Mountaineers
 008 Man and a woman with clock radio with KENT microphone
 008a Glassine envelope that housed negative 008
 009 Unidentified mandolin and guitar player with instruments in studio with
 KTBS microphone
 009a Glassine envelope held negative 009 (front)
 009b Glassine envelope held negative 009 (back)
 010 Johnnie Bailes
 010a Glassine envelope held negative 010 (front)
 011 Johnnie Bailes
 011a Glassine envelope held negative 011 (front)
 012 Johnnie Bailes
 013 Johnnie Bailes
 014 Johnnie Bailes
 015 Johnny and Jack
 016 Unidentified mandolin and guitar player with instruments in studio with
 KTBS microphone
 016a Glassine envelope held negative 016 (front)
 017 Unidentified mandolin and guitar player with instruments in studio with
 KTBS microphone
 018 Unknown gospel quartet
 019 Unknown gospel quartet performing
 020 KWKH performance with twin fiddles, guitar, bass and piano
 021 Johnnie & Jack's touring automobile and trailer
 022 Billie Jean Williams and others (unidentified)
 023 Newborn Hank Williams Junior and Audrey Williams
 023a Post-it note attached to negative 023 (front)
 023b Post-it note attached to negative 023 (back)
 024 Newborn Hank Williams Junior and Audrey Williams
 025 Newborn Hank Williams Junior and Audrey Williams
 026 Newborn Hank Williams Junior and Audrey Williams
 027 Newborn Hank Williams Junior
 028 Newborn Hank Williams Junior
 029 Newborn Hank Williams Junior
 030 Newborn Hank Williams Junior
 031 Newborn Hank Williams Junior
 032 Newborn Hank Williams Junior
 033 Banjo player Emory Martin
 034 Banjo player Emory Martin
 035 Unidentified man in suit and tie
 036 Banjo player Emory Martin
 037 Unidentified man in suit and tie with KWKH poster
 038 Unidentified man in suit and tie
 039 Kitty Wells with guitar

040 Kitty Wells with guitar
 041 Kitty Wells with guitar
 042 Kitty Wells with guitar
 043 KWKH country singer, Harmie Smith, sings to new born Hank Williams, Jr.
 043a Envelope held negative 043
 044 Jim Reeves
 045 Jim Reeves
 046 String band performance on KWKH
 047 Unknown group of musicians in a studio gather around the KWKH
 microphone
 048 Unknown group of musicians in a studio gather around the KWKH
 microphone
 048a Envelope that held negatives 047-049
 049 Unknown group of musicians in a studio gather around the KWKH
 microphone
 050 Harmie Smith
 051 Harmie Smith
 052 Harmie Smith
 053 Harmie Smith
 054 Hank Williams leaning against door
 055 Kitty Wells with guitar
 056 Kitty Wells with guitar
 057 Johnnie & Jack and their band circa late 1940s
 058 Johnnie & Jack and their band circa late 1940s
 059 Johnnie and Jack's touring car
 060 Billie Jean Horton
 061 Hank Williams and Billie Jean Horton
 062 Hank Williams leaning against door
 063 Hank Williams and Billie Jean wedding in Shreveport
 064 Hank Williams and Billie Jean wedding in Shreveport
 065 Photo of Hank Williams and Billie Jean and three other unknown people
 066 Photo of Hank Williams and Billie Jean and three other unknown people
 067 Hank Williams and guitarist Grady Martin seated at a table with two
 unidentified women
 068 Hank Williams leaning against door
 069 Hank Williams leaning against door
 070 Studio portrait of seated Hank Williams and wife Billie Jean
 071 Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
 072 Johnny and Jack advertisement for Southern Maid donuts
 072a Envelope held negative 072
 073 Hank Williams and guitarist Grady Martin seated at a table with two
 unidentified women
 074 Portrait of Hank Williams
 075 Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
 076 Portrait of Hank Williams

077 KWKH country singer, Harmie Smith, sings to newborn Hank Williams, Jr.
 078 Photograph of Harmie Smith and his band
 078a Post-it note relating to Hank Williams negatives
 079 Photograph of Harmie Smith and his band
 080 Photograph of Harmie Smith and his band
 081 Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
 082 Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
 083 Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys
 084 Studio portrait of Hank and Audrey Williams
 085 The Drifting Cowboys
 086 Studio portrait of Hank Williams
 087 Studio portrait of Hank Williams
 088 Studio portrait of Hank Williams
 089 Studio portrait of Hank Williams
 090 Studio portrait of Hank Williams
 091 Studio portrait of Hank Williams
 092 Studio portrait of Hank Williams
 093 Studio portrait of Hank Williams
 094 Studio portrait of Hank Williams
 095 Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys
 096 The Drifting Cowboys
 097 Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys
 098 Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys
 099 Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys
 100 Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys
 101 Studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 102 Studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 103 Studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 104 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 105 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 106 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 107 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 108 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 109 Studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 110 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 111 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 112 Studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 113 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 114 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 115 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 116 Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
 117 Photo portrait of Johnnie Bailes of the Bailes Brothers
 117a Glassine envelope that held negative 117
 118 Studio portrait of Audrey Williams
 118a Post it note relating to photos of Hank, Audrey and Hank Jr. Williams

- 119 Studio portrait of Audrey Williams
- 120 Studio portrait of Audrey Williams
- 121 Studio portrait of Audrey Williams
- 122 Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
- 123 Scrap of glassine envelope referencing photographs of Johnny Horton.
There were no negatives of Horton in this collection.

Arrangement:

Materials arrived at the Center for Popular Music with no distinct original order. Photographic negatives were scanned and placed in mylar sheets in a ring binder in the order they arrived at the CPM. Original envelopes and notes are stored in an archival envelope. The inventory notes if they had any connection to context or original order of a specific set of negatives.

Location:

Manuscript collections are located with other manuscript materials in the archival stacks, filed by accession number.

Related Materials:

The Center holds other manuscript collections and individual items pertaining to country music during this time period and the Louisiana Hayride. Some notable materials include the Charles K. Wolfe Audio Collection, especially tapes:
WOLFE-01078, WOLFE-01081 – Don Cusic interviews Kitty Wells, Johnny Wright
WOLFE-00387 – Shot Jackson interview
WOLFE-01074 – Interview with Johnny Wright
WOLFE-00349 – Interview with Tillman Franks

The Center also holds other prominent photographic materials related to country music in their collection, including the Alan L. Mayor Collection.

Processed by John J. Fabke, March – June 2019.