A Guide to the
Jefferson Street Photo Project Collection

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Background: In 1979, the Fisk University Department of Art solicited photographs pertaining to the history of Jefferson Street. The photos collected were used to establish an archive on local history and subsequently served as materials for an exhibit held in the Van Vechten Gallery.

Jefferson Street, so named for Thomas Jefferson, in many ways typifies the cultural growth of Nashville. Over the years, it has been a witness to the horse drawn carriages, street cars, the depression era, the turbulent 1960s, and so much more.

Jefferson Street began in the 1800s. As testament to its longevity, the John Geist and Sons Blacksmith Shop called Third Ave home for than one hundred years; 1886-2006. Aldolphus Heiman, an architect and Confederate Army colonel was also among the early inhabitants.

Continuing with the 1900s, there were many sights to behold: cobblestone streets, department stores, movie theaters, food markets, drugstores, churches, riots, parades, doctor’s offices, and residences. During the 1950s and 1960s, entertainment spots electrified the street with the sounds of B.B. King, Aretha Franklin and such novelty acts as Ironing Board Sam. Firehouse No. 11, once located on Twelfth Avenue, was one of the first black companies organized in the United States.

Of significant importance are the presence of Fisk University, Tennessee State University, and Meharry Medical College; all institutions of higher learning. These institutions have continued to reach out to the local and national communities through educational programs and activities.

The Jefferson Street Photo Project was directed by Robert Hall, former curator of the Van Vechten Gallery at Fisk University.

Scope and Content Note: The Jefferson Street Photo Project Collection consists of three archival boxes (1.5 linear feet). The small collection contains information concerning the formulation of the project, correspondence, taped interviews, and an abundance of photographs depicting historical Jefferson Street.
Jefferson Street Photo Project Collection

Inventory

Box 1

Purpose of Project – Local History Research Syllabus

f. 1. Purpose of Project
   2. Project Submission Form
   3. Correspondence -- 1979-1982
   4. Photographs -- Advertisement from the Blue Book of Colored Progress (Price's Pharmacy) 1932
   5. Photographs -- Advertisement from the Blue Book of Colored Progress (.L. Whittaker) 1932
   6. Photographs -- Beauty Parlor of Mrs. E. B. McLinn
   7. Photographs -- Firemen of Company #11
   8. Photographs -- John Geist Sr. and Family, circa 1889
   9. Photographs -- John Geist and Sons, circa 1910
  10. Photographs -- Green's Store
  11. Photographs -- Hale Grocery
  12. Photographs -- Hemphill Press
  13. Photographs -- Homes -- W. D. Fowler
  14. Photographs -- Homes -- Adolphus Herman
  15. Photographs -- Ed Reardon
  16. Photographs -- Homes -- J. W. Russell
  17. Photographs -- Homes -- Nick Stuart
  18. Photographs -- Homes -- 16th Avenue North
  19. Photographs -- Jefferson Street Festival
  20. Photographs -- Lewis Cab Company
  21. Photographs -- Otey's Discount Super Market (Sign)
  22. Photographs -- Otey's Quality Market
  23. Photographs -- Pearl High School Homecoming Parade, 1941
  24. Photographs -- People's Pharmacy
  25. Photographs -- Pleasant Green Baptist Church
  26. Photographs -- R & R Drive In Market
  27. Photographs -- Mrs. J. B. Singleton (in front of home)
  28. Photographs -- Terry's Market
  29. Photographs -- Whites Creek High School Marching Band (TSU Homecoming Parade, 1980)
  30. Photographs -- Unidentified
  31. Photographs -- Negatives
  32. Photographs -- Xerox Copies with Identification Forms
  33. Interviews -- Businesses -- 1979
  35. Proposal for Honors Colloquium
36. Student Papers Submission for Honors Colloquium
37. Local History Research Course -- Syllabus

Box 2

Notes – Miscellaneous Materials

f. 1. Notes
2. Permission to Use Photographs
3. References/Sources
4. Photograph Loan Form (completed)
5. Forms (blank)
7. List of Nashville’s Black Businesses -- 1925-1927, 1941
8. Miscellaneous Materials

Box 3

Books, Cassette Taped Interviews, and Resource Material

6. Resource Materials