

S0455 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991)
Papers, 1934-1978
38 Folders

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S0541 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), Photograph Collection
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S0665 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), Color Photographs
S0702 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), Arch Construction Photographs
S0717 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), Photograph Addenda
S0732 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), 120mm Photograph Collection
S0733 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), 35mm Photograph Collection
S0794 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991) Papers Addenda, 1954-1987
S0836 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), Photographic Prints, 1936-1956

Arthur Witman donated his papers to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection-St. Louis on August 27, 1984.

A native of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, Art Witman began his career in photography during four years of service in the U. S. Army Air Force, 1923-1927. He spent the following years working as an aerial photograph mapper in Texas and teaching in Chanute, Illinois.

Witman joined the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* as a news photographer in October 1932. He pioneered the use of 35mm cameras in news photography for the *Post* in the mid 1930s. Witman also worked as a photographer for the Society page. In October 1944, the *Post* assigned Witman to the staff of its Sunday rotogravure supplement, *Pictures* magazine. He specialized in local and regional stories in color as well as black and white. Witman's career documented a wide range of St. Louis and Missouri history. In addition to covering county fairs, chowder festivals, national bird and dog field trials and fox hunts, his assignments included Winston Churchill's 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Ku Klux Klan revivals in Georgia, a group of religious rattlesnake handlers in Kentucky, R. Buckminster Fuller's geodesic Climatron at the Missouri Botanical Garden and the presidential campaigns of Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson.

In 1945 Witman organized the St. Louis Press Photographers Association, an organization dedicated to improving the professional status of photographers. The following year he helped found the National Press Photographer's Association. Witman served two consecutive terms as president of the NPPA, 1954-1958. During his terms, he became a vocal critic of the American Bar Association's prohibition of news photographers in the courtroom. His efforts helped moderate the effects of that ban in several states. Witman also wrote a column for NPPA's publication, *The National Press Photographer*, from 1954-1955. Witman also joined Sigma Delta Chi, the fraternity of journalism professionals, and became a contributor to its journal, *The Quill*.

Documenting the construction of the St. Louis Arch for *Pictures* became Art Witman's longest and most noted assignment. Witman visited the construction site frequently from 1963 to 1967. He was the only news photographer on permanent assignment at the construction. He also had complete access at the site and took photographs from all heights and angles. He primarily worked with slide film, but also used a Panox camera, the only one of its kind in St. Louis, to create photographs covering 140 degrees horizontally.

Witman received the Joseph A. Sprague Memorial Award from NPPA in 1952, the UMC School of Journalism Honor Award in 1964 and became a five-time winner of the annual TWA writing and photography competition. After a long and distinguished career, Art Witman retired from the Post in 1969. He died at his home in Richmond Heights on August 13, 1991.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Art Witman papers do not contain photographs or negatives. WHMC maintains a separate index of Witman's photographs. This collection supplements the photograph index. It contains Witman's correspondence, book reviews, newsclippings, articles and speeches from 1934 to 1978. The collection contains *Post-Dispatch* Society sections, 1934-1937 (f.16 & 17), including an article written by journalist Virginia Irwin and illustrated by Witman's photographs; copies of *Pictures* magazine, 1938-1967 (f. 15, 29), including issues with Witman's Arch photographs, 1963-1967 (f. 29.)

The correspondence (f.4-9) provides manuscript documentation of Witman's photograph assignments. It primarily consists of acknowledgements and thank-you letters from participants in events photographed by Witman, such as the DuQuoin State Fair and a poetry reading by Carl Sandburg in 1953, letters from the *Post-Dispatch* (f.4) and correspondence with *Time/Life* (f.25). It includes a letter from a public relations firm passing on R. Buckminster Fuller's suggestion that Witman photograph the Missouri Botanical Garden's geodesic Climatron to include the moon in its background, establishing "a possible ideational relationship." Other correspondents include: Harry Truman; St. Louis mayors, A. F. Kaufmann and Joseph Darst; and photographer Edward Steichen.

The papers also contain: an article on Winston Churchill's 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech; Witman's "President's Corner" column for the National Press Photographers' Association, 1954-1955; newsclippings of Witman's work prior to his assignment to *Pictures*, including printed photographs of the St. Louis Police Courts; the business agent of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 1, who called a brief strike in retaliation for Witman's photographing him with two revolvers displayed while discussing union grievances with employers; fires at Goodwill Industries and Ralston-Purina; and jazz trombonist Jack Teagarden (f.13 and 20.) The collection also includes articles written by Witman on the use of news cameras in the courtroom (in issues of *The Quill*, a professional journalist fraternity magazine); a photographic essay on the "Bundles for Britain" campaign Witman contributed to an issue of *Town and Country*, June 1941 (f.26), photographs of the St. Louis Browns and the president of Parks Air College in East St. Louis that Witman contributed to the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1944 (f.28); and issues of *PD Notebook*, 1952-1956 (f.14), a news journal about *Post-Dispatch* and KSD personnel with articles about Witman.

The Witman papers also include Witman's photograph passes for Franklin D. Roosevelt's whistle stop tour (f.19), Eisenhower's inauguration (f.7), programs for balls organized by the Newspaper Guild and the St. Louis Press Photographers Association (f.20,21), bylaws and a constitution of the association (f.21), a St. Louis Zoo Guide book (f.22), two histories of the *Post*, and Witman's copy of a 1960 USAF Newpicture Guide. Witman's speeches (f.23), include the following topics: professional education, indoor photography, college publications, the NPPA, and courtroom photography.

FOLDER LISTING

BOX 1

1. Awards, 1959-1971
2. Book Reviews, 1948-1965
3. Churchill at Westminster College, Articles, 1946, 1965
4. Correspondence from Post-Dispatch Readers, 1963-1967
5. Correspondence, 1945-1949
6. Correspondence, 1950-1953
7. Correspondence, 1954-1956
8. Correspondence, 1957-1961
9. Correspondence, 1961-1969, 1978

BOX 2

10. *Early Photography in St. Louis* by Rudolph Schiller, nd.
11. Elgin Watch Ad, May, 1937
12. National Press Photographers' Association, President's Corner Column, 1954-1955
13. Newsclippings, 1936-1951
14. *P-D Notebook*, 1952-1953
15. *Pictures*, Photo Essays, 1938-1955
16. *Post-Dispatch* Society Section, 1934-1937
17. *Post-Dispatch* Society Section, 1934-1937

BOX 3

18. *The Quill*, Sigma Delta Chi Professional Journalistic Fraternity Magazine, 1956-1959, 1966
19. Roosevelt Itinerary, July 7, 1938
20. St. Louis Newspaper Guild, *Page One Ball* Program, 1950
21. St. Louis Press Photographers Ball Program, May 14, 1955
22. St. Louis Zoological Garden, Guide Book, 1941
23. Speeches, 1955-1956
24. The Story of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 1953, 1954
25. *Time/Life* Correspondence, 1954-1955
26. *Town and Country*, June 1941
27. *USAF Newpicture Guide*, November 1960

BOX 4

OVERSIZE MANUSCRIPTS

28. *Saturday Evening Post*, April 4 and September 30, 1944
29. *Pictures Magazine*, Arch Stories, 1963-1967
30. Newsclippings Scrapbook, 1930s

BOX 5

31. *Rotogravure*, 5/31/36
32. *Page One Ball*, 1946
33. Pulitzer Anniversary, 4/6/47
34. *Post-Dispatch* Personalities, 6/3/51
35. Packing House Cartoons, 7/8-13/52
36. *PD Notebook*, 4 & 7/55
37. Art Witman Obituary, *Post-Dispatch*, 8/14/91

38. *Post-Dispatch Pictures* sections:

- 6/23/46 "Ozark Float"
- 6/29/47 "Zoo Circus"
- 7/19/53 "Too Much Wheat"
- 7/18/54 "Jet Aerobatics"
- 4/28/57 "Jamestown Recreated"
- 6/1/58 "A Missouri Tour To An Old Red Mill"
- 11/1/59 "3-D Mapmaker"
- 10/13/63 "Air Force Academy Chapel"
- 4/26/64 "Lofty Job on the Riverfront"
- 10/20/64 "The Arch Resumes Skyward Climb"
- 3/07/65 "Landmark or Liability?"
- 4/25/65 "Critics in food research program"
- 7/4/65 "Upward With The Arch" multiple copies
- 10/10/65 "Sculpture in Shaw's Garden"
- 11/7/65 "The View From The Arch"
- 3/27/66 "The Busch Veldt in Florida"
- 4/24/66 "Crystal Gazing at Monsanto"
- 5/15/66 "Summer Fun At The Zoo"
- 7/24/66 "Nursing, a Profession of Pride"
- 3/5/67 "Checking Out an Arch Capsule" multiple copies
- 8/13/67 "House With Historic Flavor"
- 9/17/67 "Looking DOWN On The Build Up"
- 5/26/68 "The Effect of A Magnet"
- 6/2/68 "Glamour's Setting"
- 8/10/69 "A Look At Alaska"
- 9/7/69 "Alaska's Link To Antiquity"
- 5/10/70 "The Everglades: A Matter of Survival"
- 4/22/90 "Big Splash"

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