

## **S0702 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991)**

### **Arch Construction Photographs**

This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri](http://The State Historical Society of Missouri). If you would like more information, please contact us at [shsresearch@umsystem.edu](mailto:shsresearch@umsystem.edu).

Related collections:

S0455 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), Papers, 1934-1978  
S0541 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), Photograph Collection  
S0549 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), 35mm Photographs  
S0665 Witman, Arthur (1902-1991), Color 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**

This collection includes prints and negatives from Art Witman's work documenting the construction of the Gateway Arch.