

Jack T. Franklin photographs

1986.001

**Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Sarah
Leu through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden
Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.**

Last updated on April 28, 2014.

African American Museum in Philadelphia

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Summary Information

Repository	African American Museum in Philadelphia
Creator	Franklin, Jack T., 1922-2009
Title	Jack T. Franklin photographs
Call number	1986.001
Date [bulk]	1956-1990
Date [inclusive]	1925-2009
Extent	140 linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Jack T. Franklin (1922-2009) was a Philadelphia-based photojournalist and photographer known for his pictures of 1960s Civil Rights events. The Jack T. Franklin photographs, 1925-2009 (bulk 1956-1990), consist of over 500,000 negatives and photographs that document almost every social, cultural, and political event in the Philadelphia's African American community during Franklin's lifetime, as well as all of the major events of the 1960s Civil Rights movement. The collection includes contact sheets and prints, negatives, and color photographs.</p>

Biography/History

Jack Theodore Franklin was born in Philadelphia in 1922. At about the age of 11, he received his first camera as a gift from his older sister (Eloise Owens Strothers) and from then on could barely be separated from it. During World War II, Franklin served as photographer for the United States 1862nd Aviation Engineers in the South Pacific and later studied photography at the U.S. Army Signal Corps Photographic Center in Astoria, New York, where he became an instructor. He returned to Philadelphia after the war and became active in documenting social events and political activities in the city, in addition to being employed as a photographer and darkroom technician at Merlin Studios in Philadelphia. Franklin embarked on his journalistic career as a staff and freelance photographer for *The Philadelphia Tribune* (the oldest African American newspaper in the country), *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines, and *The Pittsburgh Courier*. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Philadelphia Bulletin* and *The Philadelphia Daily News*, as well as other local and national publications and book publishers, purchased and published his photographs.

For decades he photographed political and social movements, including rallies, protest marches, and leaders of the Civil Rights Movement in Philadelphia, as well as in the south, becoming a major figure in photojournalism. He photographed the 1963 March on Washington; the 1965 Girard College Protests, led by lawyer and President of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Cecil B. Moore, against the discriminatory policy of Girard College; the first major Black Power Rally, held in Philadelphia in 1966; and political rallies and events with guest speakers such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Jesse Jackson and Stokely Carmichael, among others.

Throughout his career, Franklin photographed many notables including Thurgood Marshall, Cassius Clay (aka Muhammad Ali), Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King, Malcolm X, Sidney Poitier, Julie and Harry Belafonte, James Baldwin, Rev. Leon Sullivan, Sammy Davis, Jr., Lena Horne, as well as Presidents Johnson, Nixon and Ford and Senator Robert F. Kennedy. He photographed many performers at the State and Uptown Theaters in Philadelphia, as well as other area venues, including Smokey Robinson and The Miracles, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Patti LaBelle, Stevie Wonder, Sam Cooke, The Jackson 5, Nat King Cole, Josephine Baker, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, The Dixie Hummingbirds and The Ward Singers.

Jack T. Franklin died in Philadelphia in 2009.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of over 500,000 negatives and photographs that document almost every social, cultural, and political event in Philadelphia's African American community during the years that Jack

Franklin was active as a photographer (1960s-1990s), as well as many of the major events of the 1960s Civil Rights movement in the United States. About 1,000 of the images, mostly relating to Civil Rights, well-known entertainers, or other topics of high interest, have been digitized and are available on the African American Museum in Philadelphia's website at <http://aampmuseum.pastperfect-online.com>.

Most of the collection is organized into three series: I. Contact sheets and prints, II. Black and white negatives, and III. Color photographs. There are also two World War II albums of the military base and island natives in Guam, where Franklin was stationed; some Franklin family photographs, circa 1920s-1950s; research on Franklin, including obituaries of him, audiocassette interviews, and publications in which his photographs appeared; correspondence with other organizations putting together Franklin exhibitions; camera equipment; and copies of Franklin's photographs on slides, CDs, and in a computer database.

Series I, Contact sheets and prints, is organized into three subseries: A. Chronological, B. Alphabetical, and C. Subjects. The largest section in the Subjects subseries is Civil Rights, which is further divided by event, person, or topic. Many of these images have been digitized and are available online. Other subjects in the subseries include celebrities, churches, and businesses.

Series II, Negatives, is divided into two series: A. Chronological, B. Alphabetical. There are a few negatives from the 1940s and 1950s, but they are mostly from 1960 to 1990.

Series III, Color photographs, consists of 4"x5" prints labeled in groups by subject or date but in no discernible order, ranging from 1990 to circa 1997.

Administrative Information

African American Museum in Philadelphia

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Sponsor

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Access Restrictions

Contact African American Museum in Philadelphia for information about accessing this collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Gift of Jack Franklin (AAMP.1986.001).

Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact African American Museum in Philadelphia directly for more information.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials Note

African American Museum in Philadelphia: Eloise Owens Strothers papers.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Guam
- Philadelphia (Pa.)
- Washington (D.C.)

Personal Name(s)

- Franklin, Jack T., 1922-2009

Subject(s)

- African American civil rights workers
- African American photographers
- African Americans
- Civil rights movements
- Photographers
- World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--Pacific Area