O. JAMES FOX
COLLECTION, 1945–2002

Collection Information
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Series Contents
Cataloging Information

Processed by
Pamela Tranfield
7 November 2002
revised by Dorothy Nicholson
May 2007

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org
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<th>COLLECTION INFORMATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>VOLUME OF COLLECTION:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 box of photographs, 4 OVA photograph boxes, 1 OVA box of color photographs, 12 color slides, 6 color negatives, 1 bound volume</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLLECTION DATES:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945–2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROVENANCE:</td>
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<tr>
<td>O. James Fox, 2191 Atkins Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RESTRICTIONS:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slides and negatives may be viewed with assistance of library staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COPYRIGHT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society. Please credit photographs and poems to O. James Fox.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALTERNATE FORMATS:</td>
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<td>RELATED HOLDINGS:</td>
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<td>ACCESSION NUMBER:</td>
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

O. (Oscar) James Fox was born 2 October 1914 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and raised in Lakewood, Ohio. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Miami University in 1937 and a master’s degree in education at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, in 1964.

Fox arrived in Indianapolis in 1945 as a volunteer with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). He was assigned to an urban work camp, part of Flanner House, a community center on the near west side of the city. Flanner House provided childcare, recreation, crafts and vocational training to Indianapolis’ African-American community. Fox would later work for Flanner House and the Marion County Health Department.

Fox was a freelance journalist before World War II. One of his first jobs in Indianapolis was to photo document the slum area of the near west side of the city. Fox became a familiar figure to the families living in the near west side neighborhood. This area was bordered by the Central Canal and Sixteenth Street, and included Indiana Avenue. Indiana Avenue was the cultural and commercial center for the African-American community until the early 1960s. Fox photographed buildings, street scenes, children, and families over a period dating from 1945 to circa 1960. He also wrote poetry associated with the photographs and his experiences living in an urban neighborhood.

In 2000 the Indiana Historical Society exhibited a series of Fox’s photographs as a gallery show, *Gone But Not Forgotten*.

Sources:
Correspondence, O. James Fox to Wilma L. Gibbs, 4 September 1999. Wilma L. Gibbs: Office Files.
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection includes black-and-white and color photographs and color slides made by O. James Fox between 1945 and circa 1960. The photographs depict scenes of African-American families, children, and the urban environment of the near west side of Indianapolis. The children were often photographed playing in yards, alleys, or along the Central Canal. Most photographs include at least one individual, sometimes at a distance or visible in a shadow. Neighborhood scenes, particularly those depicted in the color photographs, include views of Indiana Avenue. Other color photographs document activities in the Flanner House Cannery and a party involving women and children.

Other images related to Flanner House consist of eleven photocopied items. The images document construction of homes financed by Flanner House and family scenes. Families depicted include the Cleo Blackburn family. One image shows the office staff at Flanner House.

Photographs from this collection were used in a gallery show, Gone But Not Forgotten, at the Indiana Historical Society in 2000. Visitors identified a number of people and places in the photographs. Folder 15 in Box 1 photographs contains photocopies of identified images. These copies were made from images printed in the exhibit publication, also titled Gone But Not Forgotten.

Also included are nine individual poems and a book of poetry written by Fox. The individual poems were hung with images used in the 2000 exhibit. These pieces were written following his period of residence in Indianapolis. The book of poetry, Falling Leaves, contains non-Indiana images, including street scenes and landscapes in Fox’s native Ohio.
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<tr>
<td>[Scenes Along the Canal]</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>[Neighborhood Scenes] (3 of 3)</td>
<td>Photographs: Box 1, Folder 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Neighborhood Scenes] (1 of 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Neighborhood Scenes] (2 of 2)</td>
<td>OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Indiana Avenue, 7 May 1956 (2 of 2)</td>
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[Scenes at a Party]  OVA Color Photographs:
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[Scenes at a Party Negatives]  4x5 Color Polyester Negatives: 1–6

[Portraits of Children] (1 of 3)  Photographs:
                                  Box 1, Folder 9

[Portraits of Children] (2 of 3)  Photographs:
                                  Box 1, Folder 10

[Portraits of Children] (3 of 3)  Photographs:
                                  Box 1, Folder 11

[Portraits of Children] (1 of 3)  OVA Photographs:
                                  Box 1, Folder 4

[Portraits of Children] (2 of 3)  OVA Photographs:
                                  Box 1, Folder 5

[Portraits of Children] (3 of 3)  OVA Photographs:
                                  Box 1, Folder 6

[Portraits of Teenagers]  Photographs:
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[Portraits of Teenagers] (1 of 4)  OVA Photographs:
                                      Box 1, Folder 7

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[Portraits of Teenagers] (3 of 4)  OVA Photographs:
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[Portraits of Teenagers] (4 of 4)  OVA Photographs:
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[Group Portraits]  Photographs:
                   Box 1, Folder 13

[Group Portraits] (1 of 3)  OVA Photographs:
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[Group Portraits] (2 of 3)  OVA Photographs:
                           Box 2, Folder 4
[Group Portraits] (3 of 3)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 2, Folder 5

[Portraits of Young Women] (1 of 3)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 2, Folder 6

[Portraits of Young Women] (2 of 3)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 2, Folder 7

[Portraits of Young Women] (2 of 3)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 2, Folder 8

[Indiana Dentists]  
Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 15

People’s Revelation Spiritual Temple exterior (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 3, Folder 1

[Office, Flanner House] (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
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[Children in costumes] (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
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The Builder (photocopy)  
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In the Shop (photocopy)  
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Taking Shape (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 3, Folder 4

Cutting Stone (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 3, Folder 5

Masonry Work (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 3, Folder 6

Ready to Move In (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 3, Folder 7

A Happy Home (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 3, Folder 8

Safe When Nighttime Comes (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 3, Folder 9

Ready to Read (photocopy)  
OVA Photographs:  
Box 3, Folder 10
Good Night Prayers (photocopy)  OVA Photographs: Box 3, Folder 11

Cleo Blackburn Shows his Project to Fellow Ministers (photocopy)  OVA Photographs: Box 3, Folder 12

**Series 2: Color Slides, Flannery House Cannery, 1956**

**CONTENTS**

12 color slides  **CONTAINER**

Slide Storage:
Slide bin 1

**Series 3: Exhibit Photographs, 1945–Circa 1960**

**CONTENTS**

Star Reaching  OVA Color Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4

A Flower Grows on Missouri Street  OVA Color Photographs: Box 1, Folder 5

The Canal, 1948 [Boys Fishing]  OVA Photographs: Box 4, Item 1

Something of Value, 1946 [Girl with Doll]  OVA Photographs: Box 4, Item 2

Fishing for Crayfish, 1946  OVA Photographs: Box 4, Item 3

Newly Beloved, 1951 [Mother and Child]  OVA Photographs: Box 4, Item 4

106th Summer, 1947 [Old Woman]  OVA Photographs: Box 4, Item 5

The Garden Party, 1945  OVA Photographs: Box 4, Item 6

Carnival, 1945 [Night Shot of Ferris Wheel]  OVA Photographs: Box 4, Item 7

Allll Rrright [Three Boys at 12th Street Crossing]  OVA Photographs: Box 4, Item 8
Twin, 1945

Anniversary, 1950 [Party with Women, Children and Maid]

Spring Festival, 1948 [Girls Dancing as Flowers]

Winter Day II, 1946

Blizzard, 1947

12th Street Crossing, 1946

The World’s A Stage, 1946 [Children in Shadow, Clothes Line in Yard]

Emergency Run, 1947 [Old Fire Truck and Curious Onlookers]

Elk’s Parade, 1952 [On Indiana Avenue]

Ike Takes a Beach Head, Indiana Avenue, 1952

Diz to Play the Sunset, 1949

Series 4: Canal Photo Poems, 1987

CONTENTS

“Another Day, Another People”

“A Flower Grows on Missouri Street”

“Star Reaching”

“View from a Bicycle”

“Spring Will Come”
“I Want to be Loved”  BV 3559
“The Avenue as a Magician”  BV 3559
“Children’s Party”  BV 3559
“Now That Time Has Had It’s Say”  BV 3559

Series 5: Printed Material

CONTENTS  CONTAINER
[Exhibition, Background and Identification]  Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 14

Fox, O. James, *Falling Leaves*. Lakewood, Ohio:  BV 3559
CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:


2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.

3. Select "Call Number" from the “Search In:” box.

4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, P 0266).

5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.