

Stilson, Harris H., Richmond film collection

Harris H. Stilson Richmond film collection
circa 1929-1933

Title Statement

Stilson, Harris H., Richmond film collectionA Guide to the Harris H. Stilson Richmond film collection, circa 1929-1933 M 575

Subtitle: A Collection in Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell, Virginia Commonwealth University, M 575

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Profile Description

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Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

M 575

Unit ID

/repositories/5/resources/664

Unit Date

circa 1929-1933

Mixed Materials

1 (box)

Mixed Materials

2 (box)

Language

English

Creator

Stilson, Harris, 1868-1934

source

Snow, Kitty

Extent

2 Linear Feet 2 record storage boxes

Extent

The physical film collection is comprised of twelve 16mm films, estimated at a total of 2,270 feet of film footage, dating from 1929 to 1933. The films include 10 rolls of 16mm black and white, positive and 2 rolls of 16mm Kodacolor safety film. All the films are acetate or diacetate, are silent, and derive from Kodak and Gevaert stock. Some films have tears, splices, and perforations, while others show signs of minor warping and curling. Of the twelve, 8 are on cores in the original boxes, which include the name of the local business, Galeski Optical, where Stilson purchased supplies. On the exterior of the boxes is hand-written information about the content. The remaining 4 are on aluminum reels, housed in canisters, which, through labels or hand-written markings, note the contents.

Repository

VCU James Branch Cabell Library

Administrative Information

Access restrictions

This collection is open for research.

Use restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisitions Information

Gift of Kathleen R. "Kitty" Snow, great-granddaughter of Harris Stilson, January 2012.

Preferred Citation

Harris H. Stilson Richmond film collection, circa 1929-1931, M 575, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

Biographical / Historical

Harris H. Stilson (1868-1934) was a Richmond streetcar motorman and amateur photographer. While traveling along his route, the West Clay Street line, he took photographs of the street scenes and the people. His photographs document early 20th century Richmond, especially the Jackson Ward and Carver neighborhoods. Stilson's photographs depict people in everyday situations as well as historic events. Stilson also made home movies which capture life in Richmond and portions of the Virginia Coast in the 1930s. Stilson's great-granddaughter Kathleen "Kitty" Snow created the non-profit organization Richmond in Sight to preserve and share this unique collection of photographs and films.

Content Description

This collection includes 12 films taken by Harris Stilson between 1929 and 1931, which provide a unique glimpse into the everyday life of Black and white residents of Richmond and Virginia during that time. The film collection documents a variety of places and events in and around Richmond and the Virginia coastal area, including Deltaville and Buckroe Beach. Highlights of the collection include bustling city street scenes, streetcars, and buildings; animals and circus acts at state fairs; farming in rural Virginia; leisure activities at local parks and beaches, among them Richmond's Byrd Park and Shields Lake; and footage of a silent film starring Thomas Edwin "Tom" Mix, considered one of Hollywood's first Western movie stars, shot in a local theater.

Keywords

Amateur films -- Virginia -- Richmond

City and town life -- Virginia -- Richmond -- 20th century

Richmond (Va.) -- Social life and customs -- 20th century

Amateur films

Video recordings

silent films

16mm (photographic film size)

Snow, Kitty

Existence and Location of Copies

Access copies of the films are available via [VCU Libraries Digital Collections](#).

Description of Subordinate Components

Stilson Film #1, Richmond, Virginia

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78513

Unit Date 1929-1930

Scope and Contents

Title on reel/box: Fair May at Morris and Deltaville and Buckroe, 1929 and 1930; Shield's Lake and Spring, 1930. Runtime: 00:11:35.

Stilson Film #2, Richmond, Virginia

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78511

Unit Date 1929-1931

Scope and Contents

Title on reel/box: On the Farm - Byrd Park and Scenes from Here and There. Also on the label in faded pencil: Shield Lake [illegible] 8-28-31. Runtime: 00:09:19.

Stilson Film #3, Michigan

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78514

Unit Date 1929

Scope and Contents

Title on reel/box: Homecoming Week 1929. In pencil: Nothing but Michigan pictures. Runtime: 00:11:06

Stilson Film #4, Michigan

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78510

Unit Date 1929

Scope and Contents

Title on reel/box: Homecoming week 1929 - Niagara Falls. Runtime: 00:05:40.

Stilson Film #5, Richmond, Virginia

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78512

Unit Date 1929-1930

Scope and Contents

Title on reel/box: Bathing Scenes at Shields Lake - Byrd Park Richmond VA. Runtime: 00:07:28

Stilson Film #6, Richmond, Virginia

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78515

Unit Date 1929-1930

Scope and Contents

Title on reel/box: Winter and Spring of 1929-1930, Fritz on [illegible], Children of R.E. Lee School. Runtime: 00:02:57.

Stilson Film #7, Richmond, Virginia

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78516

Unit Date 1929-1931

Scope and Contents

Title on reel/box: Flag raising and banquet. Written on the box flap is "Flag - VEP."

Stilson Film #8, Richmond, Virginia

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78517

Unit Date 1933 October 2-3

Scope and Contents

Runtime: 00:03:01. Notes on film reel container: At fair, Oct 5 + 6 - 1933, 50 ft roll Sunray film, 50 ft "[roll] Eastman "[film], round about Margaret and Ann [illegible],[illegible], State fair, Trained elephant, Zebra, Winter Garden Rev, High dive

Stilson Film #9, Richmond, Virginia

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78518

Unit Date 1931

Scope and Contents

Runtime: 00:03:06

Stilson Film #10 (commercial silent films)

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78519

Unit Date 1929-1931

Scope and Contents

Title on reel/box: Comedy Gang - On the Job "Tom Mix in the Escape" "Tom Mix in the Sheriff." Runtime: 00:02:46. Transcription of writing on film reel container: Howard Xmas 25, Tom Mix [illegible] Tom Mix in The Escape, Tom Mix and The Sheriff, 100 [illegible].

Stilson Film #11, Richmond, Virginia

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78520

Scope and Contents

Kodacolor film. Runtime: 00:05:07

Stilson Film #12, Richmond, Virginia

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/78554

Unit Date 1929-1931

Scope and Contents

Kodacolor film. Runtime: 00:04:30.