

African American Women in Chicago

Collection of photographs of African American Women in Chicago
c. 1942-1954

Title Statement

African American Women in Chicago African American Women in Chicago MSS 16797

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16797

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1554

Unit Date

c. 1942-1954

Mixed Materials [X032668462]

BW 58 (box)

Container

1 (folder)

Mixed Materials [X032668462]

BW 58 (box)

Container

2 (folder)

Language

English

source

Max Rambod

Extent

0.06 Cubic Feet Two letter-sized folders

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use

The collection is open for research use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Max Rambod, Inc. by the Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia Library on 01 March 2023.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16797, African American Women in Chicago, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Biographical / Historical

Lucy Flower Technical High School for Girls (Flower Tech), constructed in 1927, is significant as the only all-girl public school and the only female vocational school in Chicago's history. The school, is located in the residential Garfield Park neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois. Flower Tech was the only high school in Chicago run by a female superintendent, principal, and all-female faculty that catered to an entirely female student body. By combining home economics with technical training for the female workforce, the curriculum at Flower Tech exposed the paradox of women's high school education in 20th century America by offering gendered coursework for work in the home and the factory. As Chicago's only open-enrollment high school for girls, Flower Tech created an unparalleled education experience for African American, Anglo-American, and immigrant female students to study alongside one another. Flower Tech not only furthered career and college ambitions, but provided many students one of their only racially-integrated experiences in an otherwise segregated city.

Sources: Lucy Flower Technical High School for Girls. National Park Service. Accessed 27 June 2023. <https://www.nps.gov/places/lucy-flower-technical-high-school-for-girls.htm>

Content Description

This collection contains thirty-one photographs of young Black women in Chicago in 1940s-1950s.

The photographs document the youth of a young woman named Bea and several of her friends Nedra, Vera, and others. Included are class photographs from Forestville Elementary School and Lucy Flower Technical High School. Flower Tech was an integrated school for girls. There are photographs of their prom, jazz clubs, and the girls out on dates, celebrating, and having fun. The jazz club featured, is the Club De Lisa, which showcased many well-known performers in the era, such as Count Basie, Sun Ra, and many more, before its closure in 1958. There is a photograph taken at the Thumboogie located near Hyde Park, which featured jazz, bebop, soul, and Rhythm and Blues. It's co-owner was Joe Louis in the 1940's. Bea's friend, Vera is in a photograph dressed in a burlesque costume "Backstage at the Howard Theater in January 1953."

Some photographs are in partial album pages with captions; others are loose, usually with annotations on the back. Most are black and white silver gelatin prints.

Also included is a single page with drawings of a woman in a gown on the recto and verso with notes.

Keywords

Young adults

African Americans

Black-and-white photographs

Max Rambod