THE CENTER FOR POPULAR MUSIC  
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, MURFREESBORO, TN

ROBERT F. “BOB” MENASCO COLLECTION 18-017

Creator:  
Menasco, Robert F. (1918-1974)

Type of Material:  
Manuscript Materials, Photographic Negatives

Physical Description:  
.3 linear feet of 123 black and white photographic negatives of varying sizes. Also contains one envelope with approximately 15 sets of notes that accompanied the negatives, including glassine envelopes, as well as modern “post-it” sticky notes.

Dates:  
circa 1944-1954

Abstract (Descriptive Summary):  
Collection of 123 black and white photographic negatives of varying sizes taken by Bob Menasco, circa 1944-1954, of musicians and radio broadcasters in and around Shreveport, Louisiana. Many of the individuals in the photographs were performers on or connected to the Louisiana Hayride radio show that appeared on KWKH.

Restrictions:  
All materials in this collection are subject to standard national and international copyright laws. Center staff are able to assist with copyright questions. The donor has assigned the title of the materials to the CPM but has retained ownership of the underlying copyrights, publishing rights, and royalties. The CPM will administer the rights relating to the Robert F. “Bob” Menasco Collection, and in exchange for this administrative service, the donor will share 50% of any royalty revenues generated with the Center for Popular Music.

Provenance and Acquisition Information:  
This collection was donated by Mr. Robert R. Menasco, son of the creator, Robert F. “Bob” Menasco. Center for Popular Music Director, Dr. Greg Reish, picked up the photographic negatives from Durham, North Carolina, on December 6, 2018.
Subjects/Index Terms:

Subjects
KWKH (Radio station: Shreveport, La.)
Louisiana hayride (Radio program)
Alamo (San Antonio, Tex.)
Stork Club (New York, N.Y.)
Country music radio programs
Country music
Musicians--Portraits

Names
Williams, Hank, 1923-1953
Williams, Audrey, 1923-1975
Williams, Hank, Jr., 1949-
Drifting Cowboys
York, Lum
Holmes, Clent
McNett, Bob
Franchini, Anthony
Pruett, Felton
Locklin, Hank
Franks, Tillman
Bailes Brothers
Johnnie & Jack
Anglin, Jack, 1916-1963
Warren, Paul (Fiddler)
Reeves, Jim
Martin, Emory, 1916-
Smith, Harmie
Williams, Billie Jean; aka Horton, Billie Jean
Martin, Grady, 1929-
Baum, Claude
Wright, Johnnie, 1914-2011
Wells, Kitty

Occupations
Mandolin players
Country musicians
Banjoists
Guitarists
Fiddlers
Radio broadcasters
Agency History/Biographical Sketch:
Photographer Robert F. “Bob” Menasco (1918-1974) was born in Amity, Arkansas and grew up in Glenwood, Arkansas. Menasco lost an eye as a child, but it did not hinder his urge to learn how to become a photographer following a family move to California. While out on the west coast, Menasco learned about the three-light, “glamour” studio lighting method.

Menasco relocated to Shreveport, Louisiana in the early 1940s where he established himself as a professional photographer. From 1942 until his death in 1974, he owned and operated Menasco Studios in Shreveport. His unique style as a portrait photographer, using a wooden Kodak studio camera, helped to make him one of the city’s most sought after artists for wedding, christening, and portrait shots. Menasco was also well known for taking outstanding photographs outside of the studio setting. His longtime friendship with David Kent of Shreveport’s KWKH radio provided him with a substantial amount of work taking promotional shots of radio station staff and musicians who played on the Louisiana Hayride radio show. Known as the “Cradle of the Stars,” the Hayride was the home of many legendary country music stars during the early years of their careers. Menasco photographed legends such as Kitty Wells, Johnny and Jack, the Bailes Brothers, and Hank Williams in the late 1940s. Along with these stars, Menasco also captured the likenesses of older performers such as Harmie Smith, or the side men and women who backed up the headliners.

Scope and Content:
123 black and white, large format photo negatives of varying sizes taken by photographer Robert F. “Bob” Menasco during the course of his work with KWKH radio in Shreveport, Louisiana. The collection includes promotional photos taken in Menasco’s studio, as well as images made at musical performances, radio studios, and private homes. The collection features many early career images of country music legends such as Hank Williams, Kitty Wells, and Jim Reeves.

Some images are duplicates, so please contact the CPM Archivist for the full inventory list that includes descriptions of envelopes and notes, as well as access to low-resolution thumbnails of the images.

Collection Contents: (Item List):
The following item list reflects the arrangement and numbering of the order of the scanned images (both negatives and envelopes) of the Bob Menasco Collection. There is a basic description of the image.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>001</td>
<td>Johnnie &amp; Jack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002</td>
<td>Unknown mandolin and guitar player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>Louisiana Hayride executive holds poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>Harmie Smith and the Ozark Mountaineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005</td>
<td>Harmie Smith and the Ozark Mountaineers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Harmie Smith and the Ozark Mountaineers
Man and a woman with clock radio with KENT microphone
Glassine envelope that housed negative 008
Unidentified mandolin and guitar player with instruments in studio with KTBS microphone
Glassine envelope held negative 009 (front)
Glassine envelope held negative 009 (back)
Johnnie Bailes
Glassine envelope held negative 010 (front)
Johnnie Bailes
Glassine envelope held negative 011 (front)
Johnnie Bailes
Unidentified mandolin and guitar player with instruments in studio with KTBS microphone
Glassine envelope held negative 016 (front)
Unidentified mandolin and guitar player with instruments in studio with KTBS microphone
Unknown gospel quartet
Unknown gospel quartet performing
KWKH performance with twin fiddles, guitar, bass and piano
Johnnie & Jack’s touring automobile and trailer
Billie Jean Williams and others (unidentified)
Newborn Hank Williams Junior and Audrey Williams
Post-it note attached to negative 023 (front)
Post-it note attached to negative 023 (back)
Newborn Hank Williams Junior and Audrey Williams
Newborn Hank Williams Junior and Audrey Williams
Newborn Hank Williams Junior and Audrey Williams
Newborn Hank Williams Junior
Newborn Hank Williams Junior
Newborn Hank Williams Junior
Newborn Hank Williams Junior
Newborn Hank Williams Junior
Banjo player Emory Martin
Banjo player Emory Martin
Unidentified man in suit and tie
Banjo player Emory Martin
Unidentified man in suit and tie with KWKH poster
Unidentified man in suit and tie
Kitty Wells with guitar
Kitty Wells with guitar
KWKH country singer, Harmie Smith, sings to new born Hank Williams, Jr.
Envelope held negative 043
Jim Reeves
Jim Reeves
String band performance on KWKH
Unknown group of musicians in a studio gather around the KWKH microphone
Envelope that held negatives 047-049
Unknown group of musicians in a studio gather around the KWKH microphone
Harmie Smith
Harmie Smith
Harmie Smith
Harmie Smith
Hank Williams leaning against door
Kitty Wells with guitar
Kitty Wells with guitar
Johnnie & Jack and their band circa late 1940s
Johnnie & Jack and their band circa late 1940s
Johnnie and Jack’s touring car
Billie Jean Horton
Hank Williams and Billie Jean Horton
Hank Williams leaning against door
Hank Williams and Billie Jean wedding in Shreveport
Hank Williams and Billie Jean wedding in Shreveport
Photo of Hank Williams and Billie Jean and three other unknown people
Photo of Hank Williams and Billie Jean and three other unknown people
Hank Williams and guitarist Grady Martin seated at a table with two unidentified women
Hank Williams leaning against door
Hank Williams leaning against door
Studio portrait of seated Hank Williams and wife Billie Jean
Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
Johnny and Jack advertisement for Southern Maid donuts
Envelope held negative 072
Hank Williams and guitarist Grady Martin seated at a table with two unidentified women
Portrait of Hank Williams
Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
Portrait of Hank Williams
KWKH country singer, Harmie Smith, sings to newborn Hank Williams, Jr.
Photograph of Harmie Smith and his band
Post-it note relating to Hank Williams negatives
Photograph of Harmie Smith and his band
Photograph of Harmie Smith and his band
Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys
Studio portrait of Hank and Audrey Williams
The Drifting Cowboys
Studio portrait of Hank Williams
Studio portrait of Hank Williams
Studio portrait of Hank Williams
Studio portrait of Hank Williams
Studio portrait of Hank Williams
Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys
Studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
Studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
Half-length studio portrait of country singer, Jim Reeves
Photo portrait of Johnnie Bailes of the Bailes Brothers
Glassine envelope that held negative 117
Studio portrait of Audrey Williams
Post it note relating to photos of Hank, Audrey and Hank Jr. Williams
119  Studio portrait of Audrey Williams
120  Studio portrait of Audrey Williams
121  Studio portrait of Audrey Williams
122  Portrait photograph of Hank and Audrey Williams
123  Scrap of glassine envelope referencing photographs of Johnny Horton.
     There were no negatives of Horton in this collection.

**Arrangement:**
Materials arrived at the Center for Popular Music with no distinct original order. Photographic negatives were scanned and placed in mylar sheets in a ring binder in the order they arrived at the CPM. Original envelopes and notes are stored in an archival envelope. The inventory notes if they had any connection to context or original order of a specific set of negatives.

**Location:**
Manuscript collections are located with other manuscript materials in the archival stacks, filed by accession number.

**Related Materials:**
The Center holds other manuscript collections and individual items pertaining to country music during this time period and the Louisiana Hayride. Some notable materials include the Charles K. Wolfe Audio Collection, especially tapes:
WOLFE-01078, WOLFE-01081 – Don Cusic interviews Kitty Wells, Johnny Wright
WOLFE-00387 – Shot Jackson interview
WOLFE-01074 – Interview with Johnny Wright
WOLFE-00349 – Interview with Tillman Franks

The Center also holds other prominent photographic materials related to country music in their collection, including the Alan L. Mayor Collection.