

GUIDE TO THE MASON STUDIO COLLECTION

Collection Abstract: Approximately 20,000 images (negatives, glass negatives, and some prints) from the Mason Studio in Port Washington, New York. The images document the life of the town, including individuals and events from the 1920's through the 1970's.

Collection Title: THE MASON STUDIO COLLECTION

Inclusive Dates: ca. 1920-1975

Size: 32 Boxes (20 l.f.)

Source: Acquired in 1986

Prepared by: Janet West

Revised by: Francesca Pitaro, 2006

Repository: Port Washington Public Library Local History Center

MASON STUDIO

INTRODUCTION:

Stanley Gerard Mason (1895-1975) was Port Washington's local photographer, and the longtime proprietor of the Mason Studio, located on Main Street next to the Beacon Theater. Mason began his career as a movie photographer, and was able to open his own studio at 159 Main Street shortly after his move from neighboring Sea Cliff in 1921. Mason photographed important local figures, and placed the photos in the front window of his studio. According to journalist and local historian Ernie Simon, this method of advertising contributed tremendously to his success. Mason soon needed larger quarters, and he re-located to 118 Main Street. He remained in town until his retirement in 1959, when he sold his business to Val Gelo. In 1972, the studio was again sold, to Paul Ludica. Neither of these subsequent owners changed its name. Mason died in Ocean Ridge, Florida in 1975.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The Mason collection contains approximately 20,000 images (negatives, glass negatives, and some prints). The earliest photographs are undated, but appear to have been taken before 1920 (possibly in Sea Cliff); the most recent are from the 1970s. Mason's work documented the lives of many Port Washington residents and many town events. The images include: portraits of individuals and families; weddings (formal and candid shots); graduations; communions; bar mitzvahs; passport photos; interiors and exteriors of houses; buildings, businesses and restaurants; group portraits of members of sports teams, clubs and organizations; individuals in costumes and uniforms; parties; and parades.

Mason's original order (alphabetical by individual name) has been maintained; in some cases, photographs are arranged by subject.