DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN
NEW YORK

NEW YORK CITY OFFICE:
405 LEXINGTON AVE., 62ND FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10174

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3201

April 7, 1999

Ms. Mary Myszkiewicz
President
Allentown Art Festival
65 New Amsterdam Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14216

Dear Ms. Myszkiewicz:

As part of its bicentennial celebration, the Library of Congress is creating a Local Legacies program to celebrate the history and culture of areas across the country. I have suggested that the Library include your organization in this exhibit. Someone from the Library should be in touch with you shortly to discuss this matter further. In the mean time, if you have any questions, please feel free to call my State Director, Ross A. Frommer, at (212) 661-5150. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Patrick Moynihan

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
BICENTENNIAL
1800-2000

LOCAL
LEGACIES

April 15, 1999

Ms. Mary Myszkiewicz
65 New Amsterdam Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14216

Dear Mary,

It was a pleasure talking with you today. Here is the Local Legacies information package. As the Library of Congress's Local Legacies Project Liaison–and I'm here to help answer any questions you may have and to help your documentation project go as smoothly as possible. We are so pleased that Sen. Moynihan has selected the Allentown Art Festival as one of New York State's official Local Legacies–and that you have agreed to document this unique local culture.

Please read over the information in the folder–particularly the "Guidelines for Participants" brochure which describes the types of documentation we are asking you to provide. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call, fax, or e-mail me. I'll check in with you from time to time just to see how things are going and to see if you need any assistance that I may be able to offer.

Within the next week or so, I'd appreciate it if you would send me (e-mail, fax, or regular mail) a brief description (as little as one paragraph will do nicely) of the project. Local Legacies projects are really about how tradition/local culture/local heritage is passed down from generation to generation. In this case, how the art festival affects the community–you told me lots of wonderful things on the phone.

In May 2000 all Local Legacies participants and participating representatives and senators will be invited to the Library of Congress for a huge celebratory event. I'll keep you posted on the event and its exact date as plans become more firm.

Once again, congratulations. I look forward to receiving the documentation about the Allentown Art Festival which will become part of the Folk Archives collections of the Library of Congress.

Sincerely,

Peter Seligman
Library of Congress
Local Legacies Project Liaison

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
BICENTENNIAL
1800-2000

LOCAL
LEGACIES

Dear Local Legacies Participant:

Thank you for participating in the celebration of the Library of Congress's Bicentennial in 2000.

The Library of Congress is the nation's library, and for nearly two centuries we have held your cultural heritage. Found among our collections, which are used by researchers from all parts of the world, are the papers of 23 presidents, photographs taken during the Civil War, comprehensive materials on the civil rights and women's suffrage movements, and maps that document the founding of the country. Our materials for the blind and physically handicapped have a readership of more than 780,000.

As one of the selected Local Legacies, your project will join the collections in the American Folklife Center and be preserved by the Library of Congress for generations to come. It will be available to researchers and lifelong learners as a representative example of the culture of your part of the country at the end of the 20th century. We will share selected materials as widely as possible by placing them in a special section of our popular Web site at www.loc.gov/.

Since the Library of Congress has asked each Member of Congress to lead the Local Legacies effort in his or her state or district to create documentation for the program, please note that all activities, including selection, development and publicity, are to be directed or coordinated by the Congressional office.

Please familiarize yourself with the materials in this kit.

It contains "Guidelines for Participants," which are detailed instructions to guide you throughout your project.

The "Publicizing Your Local Legacy" document is a guide to media relations. This document also contains legal guidelines.

We hope you enjoy your Local Legacies experience as a celebration of your district's distinctive culture and as part of a larger celebration of the richness and diversity of this nation's peoples. The Library is eager to receive your projects, and we will make every effort to ensure your success.

Sincerely,

Jo Ann C. Jenkins
John Y. Cole
Co-Chairs, Library of Congress Bicentennial Program

Bicentennial Program Office • 800-707-7145 • 202-707-2000 • fax 202-707-7440 • bicentennial@loc.gov

Daniel Patrick Moynihan
New York

United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

September 20, 2000

Dear Mary ,

I do thank you for the kind note and sending the shirt and pin from the Allentown Art Festival. It is a well deserved honor for the festival to be named a *Local Legacy*!

Thank you for thinking of me.

Sincerely,

Ms. Mary M. Myszkiewicz
Allentown Village Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 1566 Ellicott Station
Buffalo, New York 14205

FROM THE OFFICE OF

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan

New York

For immediate release: 1/10/00
contact Jim Kane at 716/551-4097

Moynihan Designates Allentown Arts Festival "Local Legacy"

Library of Congress to feature event in heritage project, on web site, and in archives

U. S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York (D-New York) announced today that the Allentown Arts Festival will be featured by the Library of Congress as one of the nation's prime examples of American folk life. The selection is part of the Local Legacies project, the centerpiece activity marking the 200th birthday of the Library of Congress. A celebratory event to highlight the Local Legacies project will be held at the Library of Congress sometime in May 2000.

The selection of the Allentown Arts Festival as one of the nation's Local Legacies was part of a nationwide search by the Library of Congress for which members of Congress were asked to find significant cultural events and traditions that have been important to or representative of their district or state as the new century begins. Senator Moynihan designated a select list of five New York State events and traditions, including the Arts Festival. Library of Congress Liaison Peter Seligman said the Allentown Arts Festival "is precisely the kind of local heritage event the Library of Congress is looking for."

Members of the Allentown Village Society are responsible for assembling the festival documentation that will be donated to the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress will then digitize a portion of the documentation and share it electronically, free of charge over the Internet, through its American Memory/National Digital Library Program. The Library collects in a variety of formats, including video, sound, print, manuscript and electronic.

The Allentown Arts Festival, in its 43rd year, has grown into one of the country's largest and most respected outdoor art and craft shows. The Festival is held every year on the second full weekend in June in the streets of what has now become the Allentown Historic Preservation District.

The Library of Congress is America's national library and oldest federal cultural institution. The national celebration of the Library's Bicentennial will focus on the important role that libraries play in our democratic society. The goal is to inspire creativity in the century ahead by stimulating greater use of the Library of Congress and of libraries across the country.

Other events or traditions designated by Senator Moynihan and announced as Local Legacies by the Library of Congress include: Winter Olympics at Lake Placid (Olympic Regional Development Authority); Summer at Jones Beach (New York State Parks); "Immigrant Life in New York" (Lower East Side Tenement Museum); Little Falls Canal Celebration (Little Falls Canal Celebration Association) and the Allentown Arts Festival (Allentown Village Society Inc., Buffalo).

#

CITY OF BUFFALO
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ANTHONY M. MASIELLO
MAYOR

NEWS RELEASE

For Release: Immediate
Date: January 10, 2000

Contact: Peter K. Cutler
851-5841

BUFFALO PARTICIPATES IN *LOCAL LEGACIES* PROJECT TO MARK LIBRARY OF CONGRESS BICENTENNIAL

Allentown Village Society, Inc., producers of Allentown Art Festival, to be documented and preserved for future generations by U.S. Library of Congress.

BUFFALO (1/10/00) – Mayor Anthony M. Masiello and representatives from Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's office today announced that the Allentown Art Festival will represent the city of Buffalo in the National *Local Legacies* project of the Library of Congress Bicentennial celebration. Senator Moynihan nominated the Allentown Art Festival as one of New York State's official *Local Legacies.*

The *Local Legacies* project is designed to document and pay tribute to the nation's rich cultural heritage. The Library of Congress is fostering community projects to ensure that future generations will have access to important cultural "snapshots" of American tradition, folklore and everyday life.

"The Allentown Art Festival has been a fixture on the city's cultural landscape for over forty years," stated Mayor Masiello. "It is fitting that such a tremendous arts festival that has contributed significantly to our entire city and region should be recognized by the Library of Congress. Thanks to the key support of Senator Moynihan, this local legacy will demonstrate to future generations of Americans the depth and diversity of our city's cultural landscape."

In its 43rd year, the Allentown Art Festival has grown into one of the country's largest and most respected outdoor art and craft show. The festival is held every year on the second full weekend in June in the streets of what has now become the Allentown Historic Preservation District.

The Mayor and James Kane of Senator Moynihan's local office welcomed representatives from the Allentown Village Society to City Hall to review the final submission for this honor.

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THE ALLENTOWN ART FESTIVAL
BUFFALO, NEW YORK

"It is art that makes life..."
- Henry James

In Buffalo, New York, on one special weekend each June, it is indeed art that makes life for the tens of thousands of people who visit the Allentown Art Festival. Since its modest beginnings as a small art show in 1958, the Allentown has become not only Buffalo's urban rite, but a symbol for the enduring character of this re-emerging rustbelt region. It has earned an important place in Buffalo's cultural and social life and a national reputation for excellence.

The Allentown Art Festival is especially remarkable, having persevered and prospered for over 40 years largely due to the members of the Allentown Village Society, Inc., whose active number of unpaid volunteers has seldom grown beyond 30. Their labors have borne fruit beyond the annual Allentown Art Festival weekend and beyond the boundaries of the Allentown neighborhood of Buffalo.

Once, a small art show was a catalyst for the vibrant rebirth of the unique part of the city of Buffalo called "Allentown".

THE ALLENTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

To understand the legacy of the Allentown Art Festival to the City of Buffalo, one should know the unique place that the Allentown community holds in the City.

Allentown occupies about one-half square mile near downtown Buffalo. Its origins date to 1827, when Lewis Allen purchased 29 acres of farmland along the then-northern border of the village of Buffalo. The cow path on his land eventually became Allen Street. The heart of

Allentown lies at the intersection of Allen Street and Delaware Avenue, one of Buffalo's main thoroughfares.

Over the years, the Allentown neighborhood has been home to a number of famous Buffalonians, including Millard Fillmore, Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain), actress Katherine Cornell as a girl, and author F. Scott Fitzgerald in his childhood.

In 1901, Theodore Roosevelt was inaugurated President of the United States following the assassination of President McKinley at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. The site of the inauguration was the Ansley Wilcox Mansion on Delaware Avenue, just up the block from Allen Street. Today, the Wilcox Mansion is the Theodore Roosevelt National Historic Site, and Allentown, with its wealth of unique American architecture, is one of the nation's largest historic preservation districts.

In 1958, when the idea of an outdoor art show was no more than that, the Allentown neighborhood was in decline. There was no National Historic Site, no National Historic Preservation District, and not many people recognized the architectural treasures obscured by years of neglect. The Allentown Art Festival helped change that.

Ten years later, one of the founders of the festival was able to respond to a critic in a letter to the editor:

> As people in general and artists in particular, in areas besides Western New York spoke more and more about the Allentown Festival, the reputation of Buffalo as just a sprawling, dirty, polluted, unenlightened city began to fade and phrases like the new art culture and the art explosion were mentioned with Buffalo. Certainly the Allentown area which was on the verge of deterioration, which is common in so many areas on the downtown fringes, started to perk up.

> Now the Allentown area is considered a prime neighborhood and the art center of Western New York.
>
> Harold Goldstein, Buffalo Evening News, June 28, 1968.

Four years later, the Courier Express Sunday Magazine of June 4, 1972 featured the Allentown Art Festival. An editor's note to the lead article by Nancy Tobin Willig, entitled "Next Weekend All Roads Lead to Allentown", observed:

> Allentown is a little out of place for Buffalo even though it lies near the heart of the City. Unlike the Queen City's more familiar faces - the ethnically distinguishable north, south, east and west sides - Allentown lacks a recognizable genealogy.
>
> It is a cluster of shops, boutiques, antique stores, bars, restaurants and pre-Depression wood frame and brick buildings which are remarkably resilient to age. It is also people whose lifestyles are a departure from the traditional patterns of a city built largely along the lines of immigrant neighborhoods.
>
> It has a reputation as the center of the counterculture in Buffalo, for hippies and their descendants. The Allen St. - Elmwood Ave. area, according to police, also is one of the crossroads of illicit drug traffic.
>
> Allentown's allure, though, is difficult to stereotype. Many 'straight,' traditional businesses are located in Allentown. And, in recent years, interest in refurbishing the older homes in the area has spread, attracting new residents, young families, successful businessmen and others to settle there.
>
> One of Allentown's widely accepted attractions is its annual Art Festival. Courier Express art critic Nancy Tobin Willig previews that event in the following article. And in a companion story, a Buffalo executive who refurbished one of Allentown's old houses for his family home tells why he settled in the neighborhood.
>
> Buffalo Courier Express, Sunday Magazine, June 4, 1972.

In the companion story "The Rebirth of a Neighborhood", E. Alfred Osborne extolled the virtues of his chosen place of residence and concluded:

> When you visit the Art Festival, discover the architectural treats of Allentown that lay hard by Delaware Ave. Perhaps you will find a townhouse waiting to be restored. Or Allentown's hidden beauty.
>
> Buffalo Courier Express, Sunday Magazine, June 4, 1972.

Over the years, the Allentown Art Festival has been the occasion for the introduction of tens of thousands of people to the Allentown neighborhood. Many have later chosen to live or open a business there.

By the 25th anniversary year of the Festival, the headline for a lead newspaper story read:

> Proud, diverse Allentown welcomes festival.
>
> Buffalo Courier Express, June 12, 1982

The Allentown Art Festival has given identity and brought recognition to a once decaying neighborhood and has had an important role in its revitalization, while giving the City of Buffalo its largest cultural event.

THE BEGINNING

In the spring of 1958, Jason Natowitz called together a small group of other Allentown business owners to propose an event to stimulate business in the neighborhood. The meeting gave birth to the Allentown Village Society. By August, plans were in place for a September outdoor art show on the streets of the area.

Although the artists and craftsmen participating in the event numbered no more than 50 locals, and although the Allentown Village Society went $450 into the red to produce it, 20,000

people attended over the two days of the show. Louis Cherenzia, another of the founders, now a nonagenarian, recalled the first edition, "It was rated as the most colorful cultural event in Buffalo since the Pan-American Exposition."

"The Buffalo Art Festival," as it was then named, was a cultural if not a financial success. Mr. Natowitz and his friends recognized its potential, and a second edition was planned for June, 1959. In Buffalo, the second weekend in June has been Art Festival weekend ever since.

"The Buffalo Art Festival" quickly came to be identified with its location and informally called "The Allentown Art Festival;" by 1966, the informal name had become formal. The 1966 Mayoral Proclamation recognizing the event called it, for the first time, the "Allentown Outdoor Art Festival." In a June 5, 1967 letter, Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller wrote, "I am delighted to hear that the Allentown Outdoor Art Festival is increasing in scope year by year, and has now developed into one of the largest outdoor art events in the Great Lakes Area."

THE FLOWER CHILD

In the early years, the vision of the Allentown Village Society for Buffalo's Art Festival had yet to become focused:

> This is a non-juried show, the main object is to encourage artists and craftsmen, not to pass judgment on their abilities. This, after all, is a matter of personal opinion.
>
> Harold Goldstein in a 1960 promotional release.

> We hope eventually that a month long festival of the fine arts, music, drama and the dance will grow out of the arts Festival, something that will show Buffalo as really culture minded.
>
> Jason Natowitz, Buffalo Evening News, June 15, 1961.

By the mid 1960's, the Festival offered much more than art:

> Pictures galore and fun in store at Buffalo's Allentown Art Festival this coming Saturday and Sunday. Curbside ballet, fashion shows, folk singers and sidewalk cafés, and new equipment of the Buffalo Fire Department will be on display on Virginia Place throughout the show. Come on down!
>
> 1966 publicity release for the 9th Annual Allentown Outdoor Art Festival.

By 1969, the prestigious Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra had joined the party and played at the 12th Annual Festival.

By the mid 1960's, the Festival's reputation as a venue for people-watching had also become established:

> Where can any Buffalonian see a gala array of oil paintings, watercolors, pastels and ceramics? Where can he see people dressed in slacks and gowns and smiles and frowns? The answer is easy: at the Ninth Annual Allentown Art Show.
>
> Buffalo Courier Express, June 12, 1966.

The art and crafts exhibited were as reflective of the times as were the long-haired men and tie-dyed, body-painted women who created them or populated the streets of Allentown. The creative work of the 60's included "legalized pots," "protest collages" and a "black is beautiful" exhibit.

By 1961, the number of exhibitors had grown to 225, by 1964 to 400, by 1968 to 500 and by 1970 to over 600. The exhibitors began to come from well beyond Buffalo and upstate New York, from many states and Canada. By the end of the decade, the official crowd estimates for the event reached 250,000.

As the '60's came to a close, the Allentown Art Festival had blossomed into a free-spirited flower child.

> The Allentown Art Festival is an unusual phenomenon, perhaps the only one of its kind. It is a combination of Coney Island, Williamsburg, Fourth of July, family picnic, funhouse, fireman's carnival, art museum, hobby house, 5 & 10 cent store jewelry department, sophisticated ladies and casual dressers with a tolerable amount of art tucked in between.
>
> D.K. Weinbrenner, professor of art at Buffalo State College, Buffalo Courier Express, June 7, 1970.

Not everyone approved of the flower child, however:

> The Allentown Hobby Fair - I refuse from now on to call it an art festival - is over, but the migraine lingers on...a juried exhibition is the only remedy...".
>
> Jean Reeves, art critic, Buffalo Evening News, June 22, 1968.

WATERSHED I

In 1970, the 13th Allentown Art Festival played on the same weekend as the 9th Annual Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition, just an hour and 20 minutes away. Toronto's mayor William Dennison joined Buffalo's mayor Frank A. Sedita as his guest on Sunday at the festival.

> Toronto's Outdoor Art Exhibit is to the Allentown Art Festival as a tea party is to a rock festival.
>
> Jean Reeves, art critic, Buffalo News, June 20, 1970.

The visit of Mayor Dennison to Buffalo, the juxtaposition of the two cities' quite different art shows, and the tensions between establishment and youth cultures in America at the beginning of the '70's combined, profoundly changing the Allentown Art Festival:

Incidentally, Mayor Dennison was thrilled with the Allentown Festival and, thank God, he didn't get into the finale mess. He loved the Gabriel's Gate bistro of host Leonard Silveri which was crammed with important citizens at a reception for him and Mayor Sedita.

He said that he wished Toronto would have a great fun and art fair like ours. And an hour later we had that disgraceful donnybrook. I was there and saw it. And to quote Allentown Festival Chairman Charles L. Grafasi who moved into the melee at top speed:

"I asked people in the area to get away, to move out. Instead they moved right into the action. Gas doesn't know who's who...it goes in all directions. I thought the police did a wonderful job of containing it. I saw one policeman with five people clawing on his back."

One of the Courier Express photographers on the scene declared that gas was released long before the police got a supply of it via the ambulances. And he said that he saw a policeman knocked to the ground by a bottle. The policeman was an older man and when he hit the ground a young fellow swarmed over him, hitting him.

Anne McIlhenney Matthews, Buffalo Courier Express, June 17, 1970.

What came to be called the "Allentown Art Festival riot" resulted from a disturbance in a bar that spilled onto Allen Street after the Festival had ended. It was unrelated to the Festival, but the aftermath was predictable. The headlines from newspaper articles, columns and editorials told the story:

- Police urge officials of Allentown Society to "forget the Festival".

Buffalo Evening News, April 8, 1971.

- Allentown Festival group asks support.
Buffalo Courier Express, April 9, 1971.

- Can't Festival be saved?
Buffalo Evening News editorial, April 10, 1971.

- New Art Festival rules proposed.
Buffalo Courier Express, April 11, 1971.

-Allentown art group spurns site switch.
Buffalo Courier Express, April 11, 1971.

- Allentown group makes last effort to save Festival.
Buffalo Evening News, April 12, 1971.

- Week's reprieve sought for Allentown Festival.
Buffalo Evening News, April 13, 1971.

- Allentown issue put off one week; sponsors "elated".
Buffalo Evening News, April 14, 1971.

- Despite all its faults, we need the Festival.
Karen Brady, Buffalo Evening News, April 14, 1971.

- Approval urged for Allentown Art Festival.
Buffalo Courier Express editorial, April 15,1971.

- Make sure Art Festival less of a carnival, Sedita advises.
Buffalo Evening News, April 16, 1971.

- Art Show plans still up in air.
Buffalo Courier Express, April 18, 1971.

- Petition opposes Art Festival.
Buffalo Evening News, April 20, 1971.

- Art Show to be eyed by Council.
Buffalo Courier Express, April 20, 1971.

- Limited Art Festival approved by Mayor.
Buffalo Evening News, April 21, 1971.

- Restructured Allentown event okayed - action taken by Council.
Buffalo Courier Express, April 21, 1971.

-Allentown show is saved.
Buffalo Evening News editorial, April 23, 1971.

The 1970 "riot" and its aftermath were a watershed in the history of the Allentown Art Festival. The threatened loss of the Festival made everyone realize that the flower child of the '60's had become an important element in the fabric of life in Buffalo. A process started to make it possible for the Allentown Art Festival to prosper over the 30 years since. That has not always been easy, but the unpleasant events and lessons of 1970-71 provided a foundation for this Local Legacy.

Part of the quiet negotiations between the Allentown Village Society and the City of Buffalo was a close examination of all aspects of the Festival. The result was a scaled-back event, with about half the number of exhibitors, no craft exhibitors, no live entertainment, and a better-defined event area.

> It seems as if quality finally has been substituted for quantity in the Allentown Art Festival. This year, the size of the Show has been almost halved, cut down to 300 exhibiting artists from a past high of about 600. The Show has at least doubled in quality if such an intangible can be measured.
>
> Nancy Tobin Willig, Buffalo Courier Express, June 20, 1971.

Although the size and content of the Festival was significantly reduced, public support remained unabated, with an estimated 220,000 people attending the 14th annual edition. Editorial leads in both major newspapers told the story:

- Allentown reprieve vindicated.
Buffalo Evening News, June 21, 1971.

- Scaled-down, decorous art show merits cheer.
Buffalo Courier Express, June 22, 1971.

In 1972, crafts returned to the Festival, and the number of exhibitors increased to 400. A Sunday afternoon concert by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra was the only live entertainment. That Sunday crowd was the largest one-day attendance thus far.

> Sunday, upwards of 150,000 people - black, white, Indian, Puerto Rican, Chinese, some from motorcycle clubs and West Side gangs, old, young and in between - jammed together shoulder to shoulder on Delaware Ave. between W. Tupper and North.

Timothy J. Baker, Buffalo Courier Express, June 13, 1972.

Harold Goldstein, President of the Allentown Village Society, commented, "We had the greatest variety of people, the greatest number of people everywhere, and everywhere you looked people were smiling. It might set a precedent, it would be a wonderful thing."

Buffalo Courier Express, June 13, 1972.

City officials and the public recognized that the flower child had matured, and they highly approved. It became evident that the artists and craftsmen were also favorably impressed. The quality of the application pool began to improve, and the quality of the work accepted into the Festival showed that.

> A subtle artistic change marks the Allentown Art Show this year. It is very subtle, but very much in evidence.
>
> The Festival has improved.

Nancy Tobin Willig, Buffalo Courier Express, June 10, 1973.

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Improvement in the quality of the work accepted into the Festival has been an ongoing process. In 1969, Professor D.K. Weinbrenner wrote in the Buffalo Evening News:

> We have winced a little at times in seeing some of the "art" exhibited, yet there is no practical way to screen every bit of work shown.

By 1977, the Allentown Village Society had devised a practical way to screen the quality of work in advance. Since that year, the Society has retained an impartial panel of art and crafts professionals, who select the Festival exhibitors by reviewing slides of each applicant's work in a blind scoring and selection process. Preparation for jurying day takes many hours of volunteers' time over many weeks, but the results have been well worth the effort.

In 1993, the process was refined further by the implementation of a panel of independent street jurors, who monitor the work displayed on the street, insuring that it meets Festival standards. Those not meeting the standards are required to remove their non-conforming work and, in some cases, to leave the Festival entirely. The result has been high creative and artistic quality.

Although the artistic quality of the Festival appears assured, its integrity as an art festival has required continued vigilance by the Allentown Village Society and support from the City of Buffalo and County of Erie, lest it revert to the carnival that it was becoming during the 1960's.

WATERSHED II

As the '70's came to an end, the Buffalo Common Council passed a resolution authorizing merchants within the Festival boundaries to sell merchandise on the sidewalk during

the event. The Allentown Village Society feared that commercial sidewalk sales would undermine all that had been accomplished to improve the Festival over the decade.

A letter to the editor by a member of the public expressed the frustration also being felt by the volunteers of the Society:

> The Allentown Art Festival is the best thing that happens to Buffalo every year and each year the quality of the arts and crafts displayed has been upgraded. Last year's was the best ever and my husband and I spent the full two days at the Festival because of the sheer beauty and enjoyment of it. I also bought a painting and ring.
>
> I think it is outrageous that the Allentown area businessmen want to display their products on the sidewalk as part of the arts and crafts show! This is an arts and crafts show, not a bazaar, flea market or anything else. They can keep their stores open and not detract from the Festival, but for them to become part of it will destroy it. The Allentown Village Society does a superb job of creating a top-drawer quality art show attracting artists and craftspeople from all over the country. When we had something so great which is famous all over the country, why does the Common Council want to destroy it?
>
> Buffalo Courier Express, April 30, 1979.

Newspaper story headlines in the days leading up to that letter once again told the story:

- Allentown Art Show in peril as sponsors quit in dispute.
  Buffalo Evening News, April 21, 1979.

- Allentown Art Festival canceled.
  Buffalo Courier Express, April 21, 1979.

- Bid made to rescue Art Festival.
  Buffalo Evening News, April 22, 1979.

- Allentown group warns artists may pull out.
  Buffalo Evening News, April 23, 1979.

- Save Allentown Festival.
Buffalo Courier Express editorial, April 24, 1979.

- Allentown truce needed.
Buffalo Evening News editorial, April 25, 1979.

- Accord allows art show in Allentown to go on.
Buffalo Evening News, April 26, 1979.

A settlement was reached, providing that merchants would not conduct sidewalk sales, but that the Allentown Village Society would promote better visibility and access to their shops by not placing exhibitors in front of the shops of those who requested it. That policy has continued since; few have requested that accommodation.

During this episode, a sense of recognition emerged in the community that the Allentown Village Society had worked hard to present a quality art show and had developed the expertise to do that. The president of one suburban art organization expressed that view:

> The cancellation of the Allentown Art Festival would have been cause for great regret and disappointment. I can think of no other Buffalo event that offers so much and costs the taxpayers so little. After years of trial and error, the Allentown Village Society has the proven expertise and know-how to run an outstanding art festival.
>
> I do understand that every large event of this kind must have commercial support. However, as soon as an imbalance occurs and monetary interests dictate to the artists, then the integrity of the show is lost. The climate, the flavor will change, never to be regained.
>
> We at the Centennial Art Center of Hamburg have no effect on Buffalo politics, but we are a part of the Western New York cultural scene. As Buffalo culture goes, sooner or later the rest of the area must follow. For this reason, I feel a strong necessity to express our concern.
>
> Buffalo Evening News, letters to the editor, May 1, 1979.

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

The events of 1979, like those of 1970, ultimately were a blessing in disguise. The immediate benefit was a more cooperative and proactive approach to planning between the city and the Society. Then, in 1984, the Common Council passed an ordinance making it possible for all street event sponsors to have a reasonable measure of control over their event area. The legislative findings included a specific recognition of the contributions that events like the Allentown Art Festival make to the quality of life in the city.

The Common Council also recognized the necessity for enforceable rules to enable sponsors to conduct a well-planned and safe event. In the case of the Allentown Art Festival, invasions by unauthorized exhibitors and vendors, parasitic promotions on properties within the event area, and noise pollution from popular radio stations competing for ratings have become things of the past.

The Allentown Village Society has been able to control the problems that have plagued outdoor art shows elsewhere, resulting in the demise of some. Outdoor art show sponsors from other cities have, from time to time, consulted with the Allentown Village Society to learn how things are done in Buffalo.

There are some in the community who disagree with the way the Society does things. In 1992 and 1998, the president of the Common Council appointed committees of Council members, Allentown Village Society representatives and community representatives, to consider those views and to review the Festival operation. Both processes have been valuable in providing a forum for dialogue rather than debate, in providing an opportunity to evaluate what has been working well and what should be improved upon, and in bringing the community into the mix with government and event sponsors.

So far, the Allentown has passed muster. In fact, the majority of members of the business community have become supporters of the way the Festival is organized. Allentown merchants have commented that some of their best customers have discovered them while attending the Festival and later returned again and again at other times.

TODAY

Today, the Allentown Art Festival features about 450 juried exhibitors annually. Nearly every state and Canada - and even Europe - has been represented. Official crowd estimates have grown to over 400,000. Prize awards for the exhibitors submitting work for formal judging have grown to $16,000 annually.

The proceeds of the Festival have been put back into the community of which it has become such an important part. Included are the following:

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- Community beautification projects have been funded, including planting several blocks of trees on Allen Street and the erection of two Victorian street clocks in Allentown.

TOMORROW

On June 10th and 11th, 2000, the 43rd Allentown Art Festival will blossom in the streets of Buffalo. In 2001, Buffalo will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Pan-American Exposition of 1901, and the 44th Festival will be part of that celebration. The members of the Allentown Village Society are beginning to realize that the 50th Festival is just around the corner.

We never thought of ourselves as creating a local legacy until Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan nominated the Allentown Art Festival for inclusion in this remarkable celebration at the Library of Congress. In 1982, Jack Foran wrote in the Buffalo Evening News:

> Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, the Allentown Outdoor Art Festival is a survivor. Not just in years, but because of controversies and criticism - some of it art criticism - its weathered....
>
> But eventually people began to realize - even art critics - that art wasn't the only concern of the Allentown festival. It was the premier people-watching event of the year in Buffalo. It was a festival of life in the city. A celebration of summer.
>
> Buffalo Evening News, June 6, 1982.

That is quite a nice legacy after all.

Buffalo, New York
December 31, 1999



Robert Dunn, Buffalo Courier Express, April 15, 1971



McLeod, Buffalo Evening News
April 26, 1979

THROUGH THE EYES OF "BUFFALO BURT"



Buffalo Evening News, June 8, 1974



Buffalo Evening News, June 11, 1977



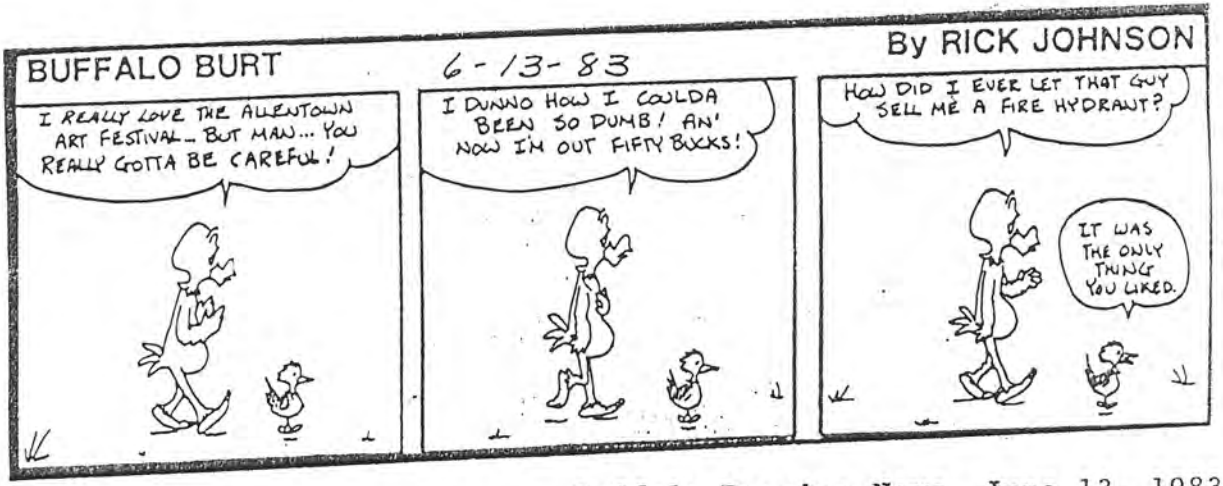
Buffalo Evening News, June 11, 1978



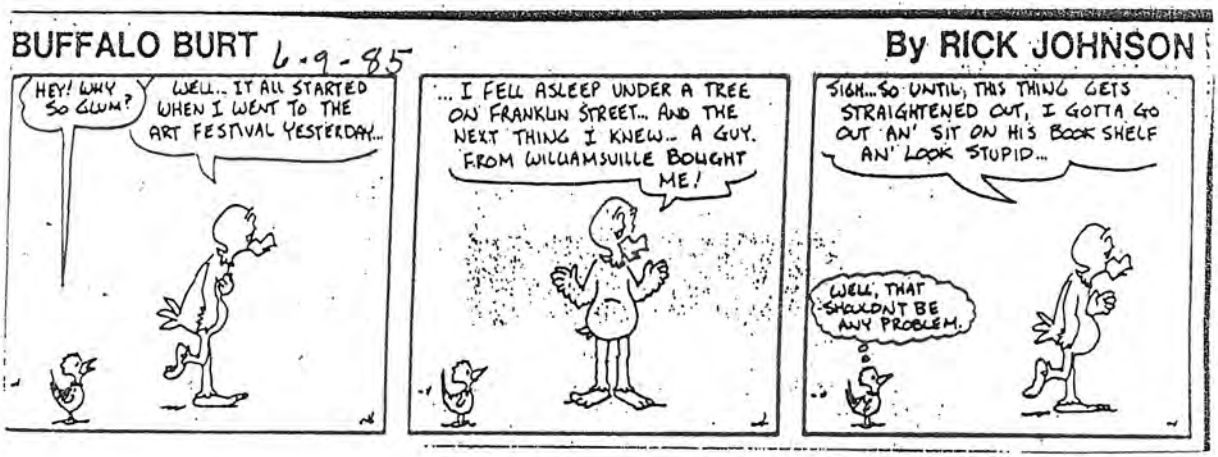
Buffalo Evening News, June 10, 1979



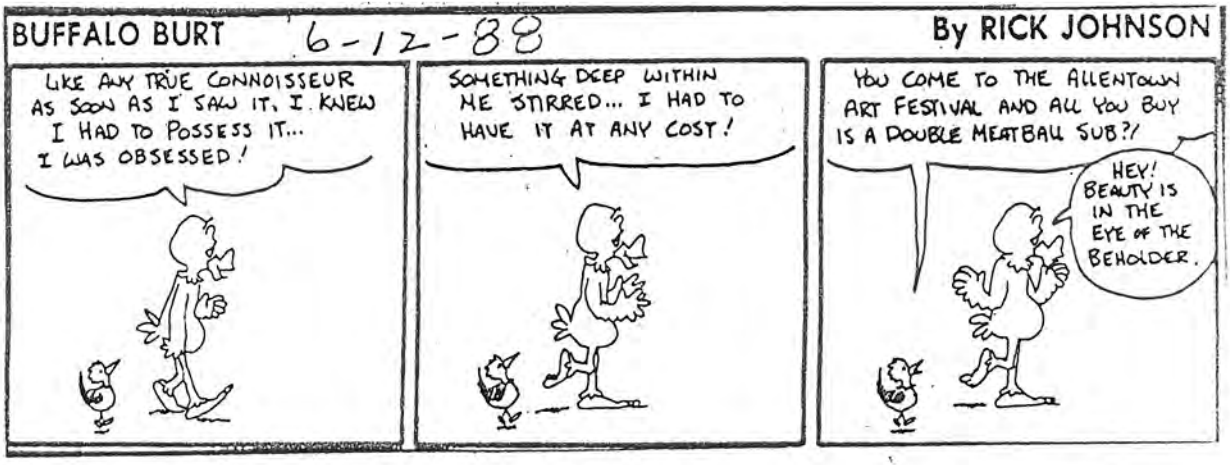
Buffalo Evening News, June 13, 1982



Buffalo Evening News, June 13, 1983



Buffalo Evening News, June 9, 1985



Buffalo Evening News, June 12, 1988

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A VOLUNTEER NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
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http://Allentown.Buffnet.net

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Buffalo's
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Outdoor Art Festival

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sean Dennis Hill	Author of the Local Legacy History of the Allentown Art Festival, Buffalo, N.Y.
Mary M. Myszkiewicz	Team Leader, Research and Photography Compiler of the Local Legacy Project of the Library of Congress Bicentennial; Allentown Art Festival, Buffalo, N.Y.
Arline Scaffidi	Historian of the Allentown Village Society,Inc.
Elizabeth Millette	Research Assistance, Founding Member of the Allentown Village Society,Inc.
Molly Myszkiewicz Vendura	Computer and Artistic Assistance, Graduate Student Volunteer.

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President *Vice President* *Treasurer* *Rec. Secretary* *Corres. Secretary*

Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Founded 1862
25 Nottingham Court · Buffalo, New York 14216-3199 · 716-873-9644 · Fax: 716-873-8754

December 1, 1999

Mary Myszkiewicz
Allentown Village Society
449 Franklin Street
Buffalo, NY

Dear Ms. Myszkiewicz:

Just a reminder that the photo reproductions of the Allentown Art Festival cannot be used for any publications or websites without written permission from the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Library.

Please make the Library of Congress aware of the necessity to contact us if they wish to use these images for other purposes, including websites.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours truly,

Linda M. Kennedy

Linda M. Kennedy
Assistant Librarian

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Photo Descriptions

1 Delaware Avenue and Allen Street, 1884
Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Collection

2 Second Allentown Art Festival, 1959
The corner of Allen and Franklin Streets

3 Some art work displayed on Franklin Street, 1961
Thomas Myszkiewicz, a volunteer, standing in the background

4 Art work displayed on Delaware Avenue at the corner of Allen Street. The University Club in the background, 1961

5 Art on Allen Street, 1961

6 More art on Allen Street, 1961

7 Art, the people and the cars on Allen Street, 1961

8 A group gathered to watch and admire, as an artist works on a pastel portrait of a young man, 1961

9 Delaware Avenue and Allen Street, 1967

10 A very busy Allen Street near Elmwood Avenue, 1970
Read the banners in the background, a sign of the times.

11 Some good art work in the foreground, 1971
What are those sculptures in the background?

12 Delaware Avenue and Allen Street, 1979
Note, no more cars on the street, just lots of people.

13 Delaware Avenue looking south toward Allen Street, 1981
Beginning to see awnings over the art work
Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Collection

14 Delaware Avenue, with the lovely Twentieth Century Club in the background, 1984. No cars, but this lady has very comfortable transportation. Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Collection

15 The 27th Annual Allentown Art Festival banner goes up.
I don't think that's one of our volunteers. 1984
Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Collection

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16 The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Historic Site in the background. My, how the fashions have changed from turn of the century, to the sixties, to the eighties. Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Collection, 1984

17 Art, food and fun for everyone. Some great "Break-Dancing" on the street, 1984. Sure wish our volunteers could move like this. Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society

18 George Snyder of New Hartford, N.Y. demonstrates how he handmakes a broom while two onlookers watch with interest. Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Collection, 1984

19 They walked and shopped until they dropped. The Allentown area of Downtown Buffalo has many nice green areas where one can sit under a tree and watch the world go by. Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Collection, 1984

20 The crowd scene, Delaware Avenue looking south toward Allen Street,1998. The Buffalo News, photographer, Charles Lewis. The artists now have state-of-the-art tents and the street is blooming with large trees again.

21 Allentown Village Society President, Mary M. Myszkiewicz, welcomes artists at the Artists Reception and Awards Ceremony. 1997

22 Award winning crafter, Eileen LaPorte, demonstrates her basketmaking ability, 1997.

23 An artist displaying his talents during the Festival, 1997

24 A patron indicating her choice. "This is going home with me." 1999

25 A visitor inspects a basket, one of many designs in this booth. 1999

26 Beautiful, handmade pottery is definitely a part of the show, 1998.

27 A reception held in the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Historic Site (Wilcox Mansion). Sean D. Hill, past President andChairman of the Executive Board of the Allentown Village, makes a presentation to Louis Cherenzia, artist, one of the founders, and second President of the A.V.S. Other members pictured: center, Daniel E. Hannah,Treasurer; Patricia Smith; Richard Sasala.

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28 42st Annual Allentown Art Festival, Opening Ceremony (1 to r) Sylvia Goldstein, one of the earliest members; H. Robert Hodge, past President; Mary M. Myszkiewicz, President; The Honorable Anthony M. Masiello, Mayor of Buffalo.

29 The small Allentown Village Society,Inc. keeps its volunteer members busy year round. Here, they are seen measuring and numbering sites on Delaware Avenue. They are (1 to r): Marion Simms, Scholarship Chair; Thomas Milone, Vice-President and Security Chair; Patricia Frizelle, A.V.S. photographer; Raymond Read, Judging Hall; Peter Schleidt, Entry and Placement Chair.

30 The Poster Contest Committee sorting the entries, March 1999. Pictured here (1 to r): Mary Myszkiewicz, President and Poster Chair; Delores Leon, Show Guide Chair; Florence Ragi, Chair of Judging Professionals; Raymond Read; Patricia Smith; Thomas Milone, Vice-President.

31 Many hands get the job done, June 1999. These busy people are (1 to r): Peter Schleidt; Janice Merrick, Computer Data Chair and Show Luncheon Chair; Kay Jones, Show Luncheon Associate Chair; Patricia Smith; Arline Scaffidi, Corresponding Secretary and Historian.

32 The Judging Hall, June 1999. The exhibitors who wish to compete for the more than $16,000 in prize awards enter their work here. There is something excellent here to please anyone's taste. Shown here, discussing some details are (1 to r): Melody F. Myszkiewicz, A.V.S. Purchase Award ($1000) Chair; Florence Ragi, Professional Judges Director; Elias Ragi, Security.

33 The Judging Hall, June 1999. Melody Myszkiewicz, Florence Ragi and Elias Ragi looking at the Purchase Award (Abstract) just voted on by the membership.

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So far, the Allentown has passed muster. In fact, the majority of members of the business community have become supporters of the way the Festival is organized. Allentown merchants have commented that some of their best customers have discovered them while attending the Festival and later returned again and again at other times.

TODAY

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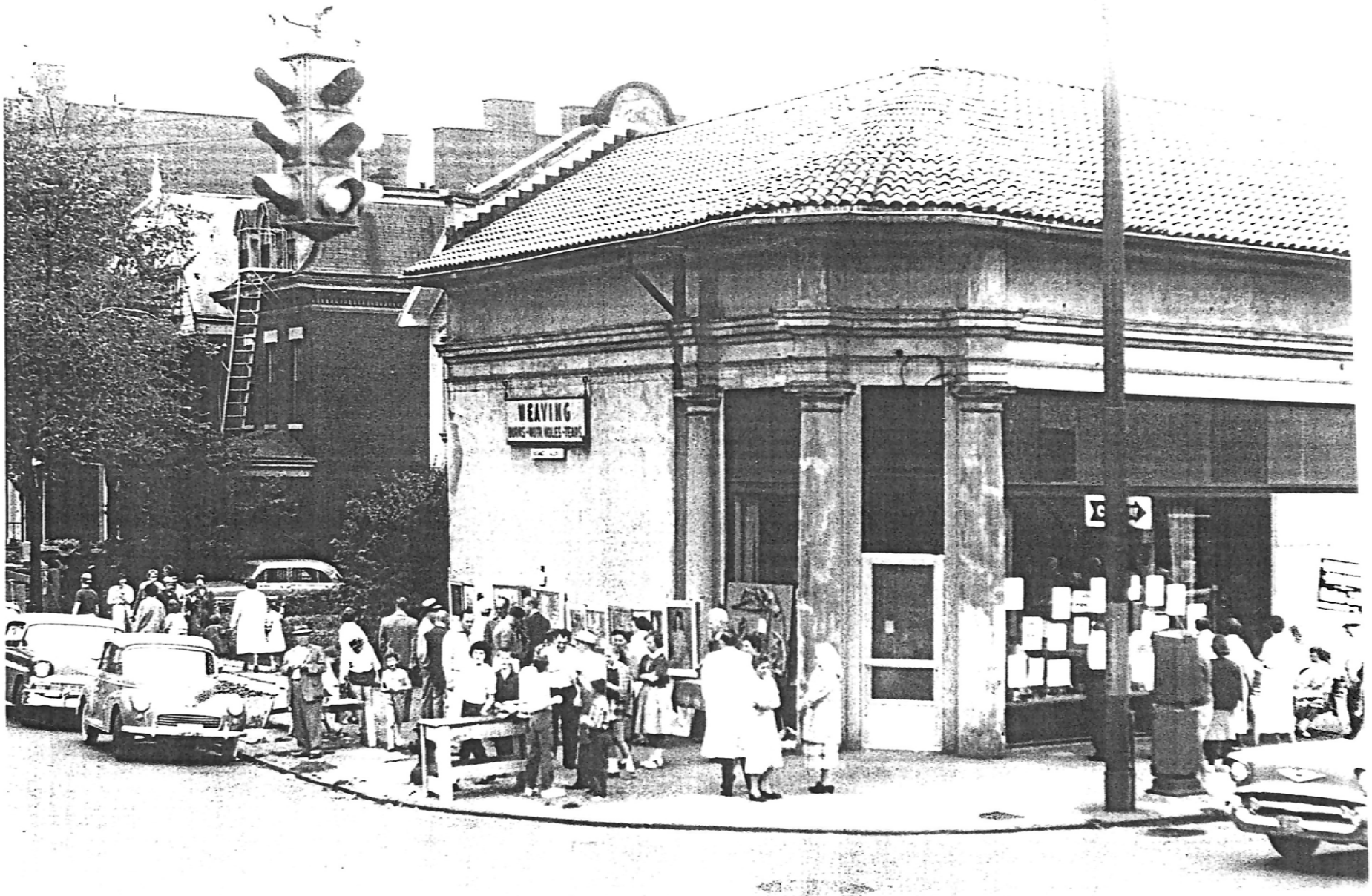
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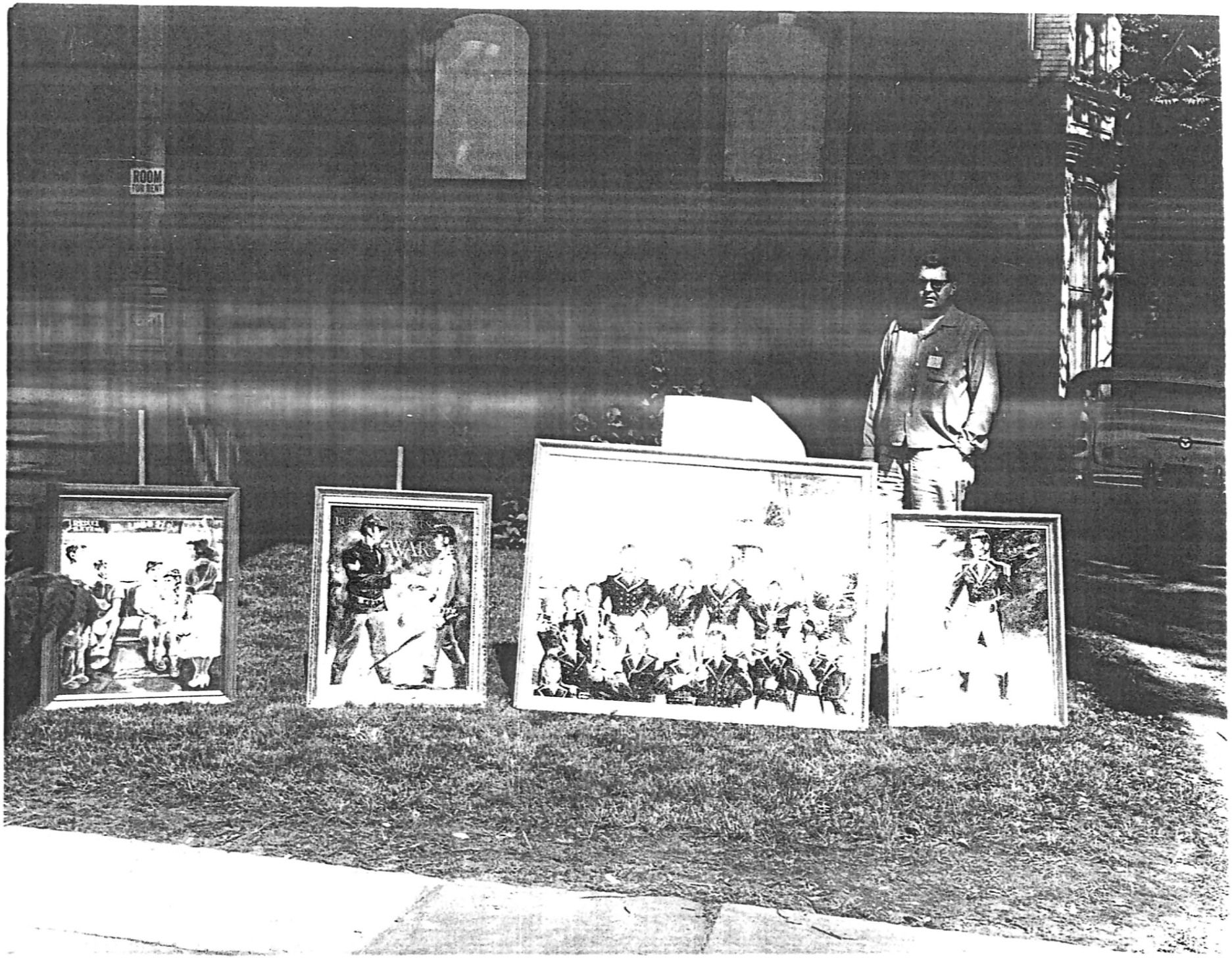
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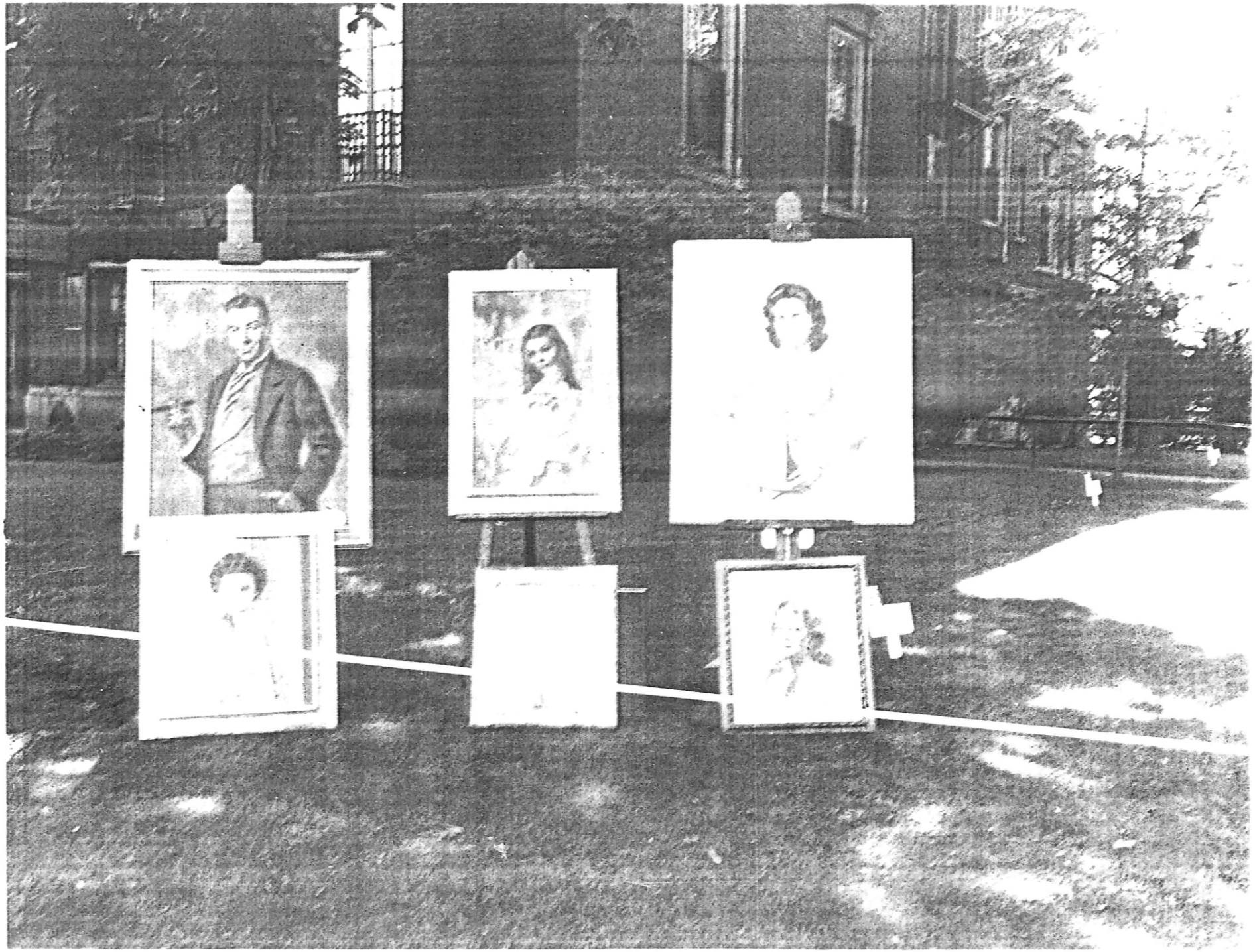
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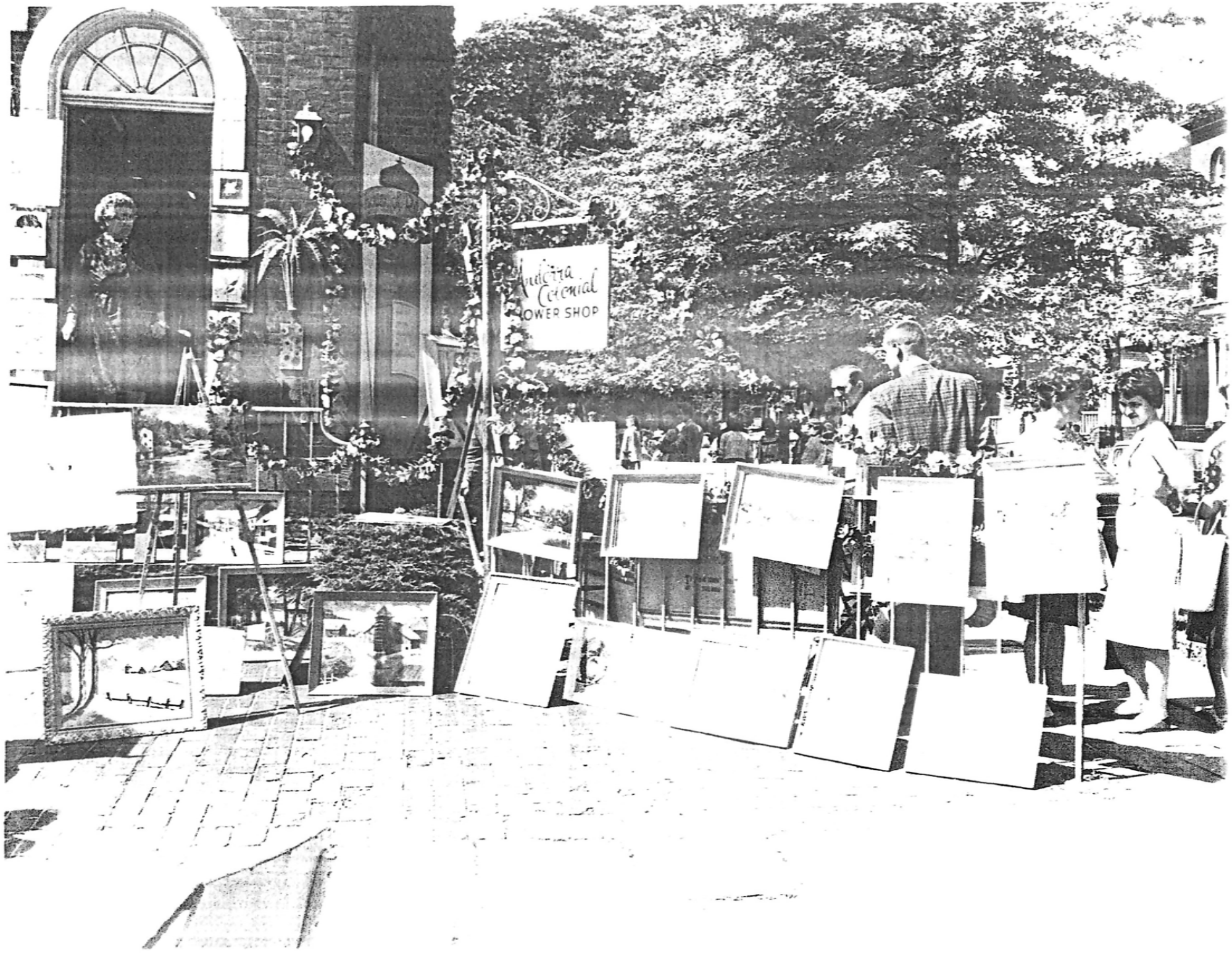




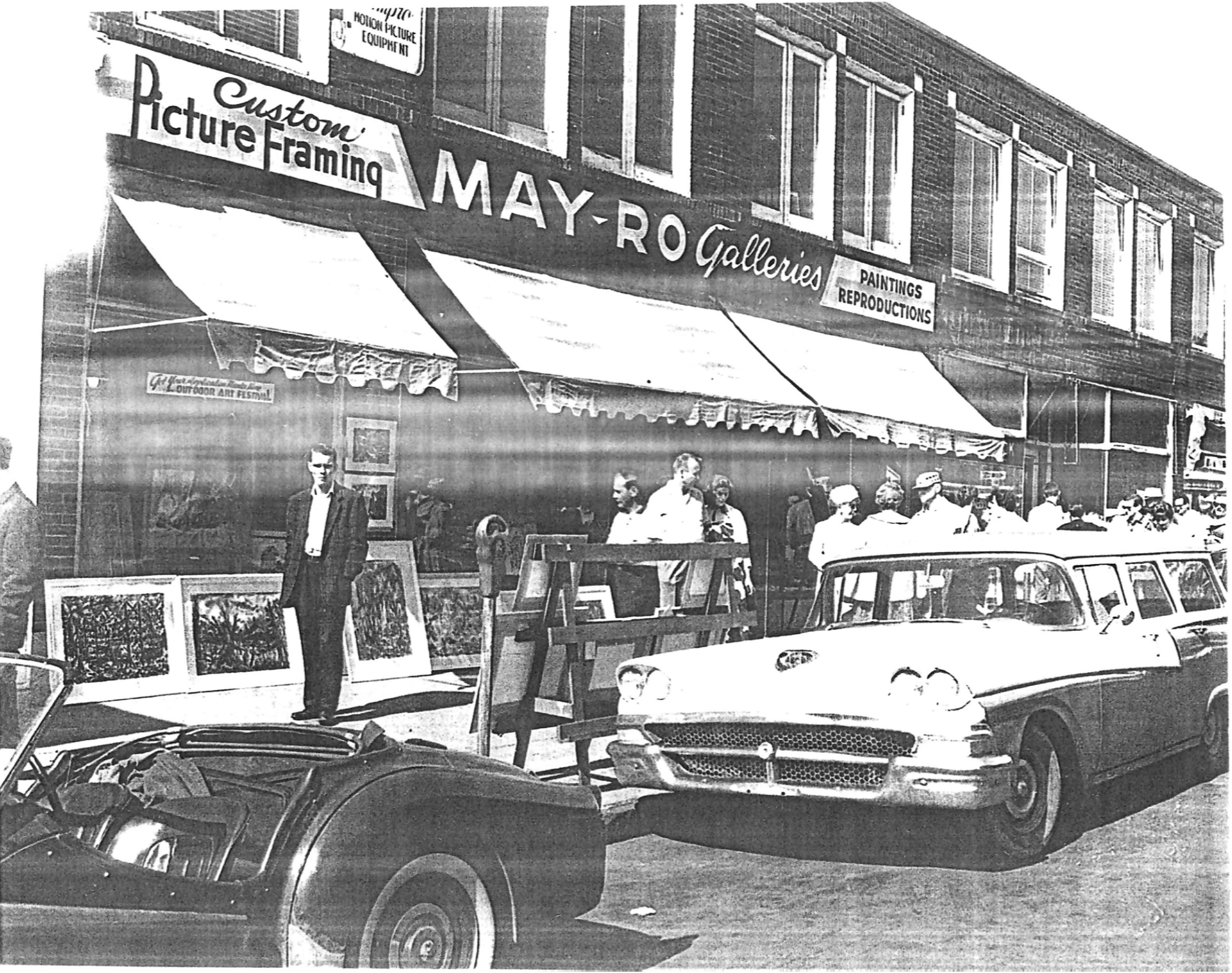
1959


ROOM
FOR RENT




Andorra Colonial
FLOWER SHOP

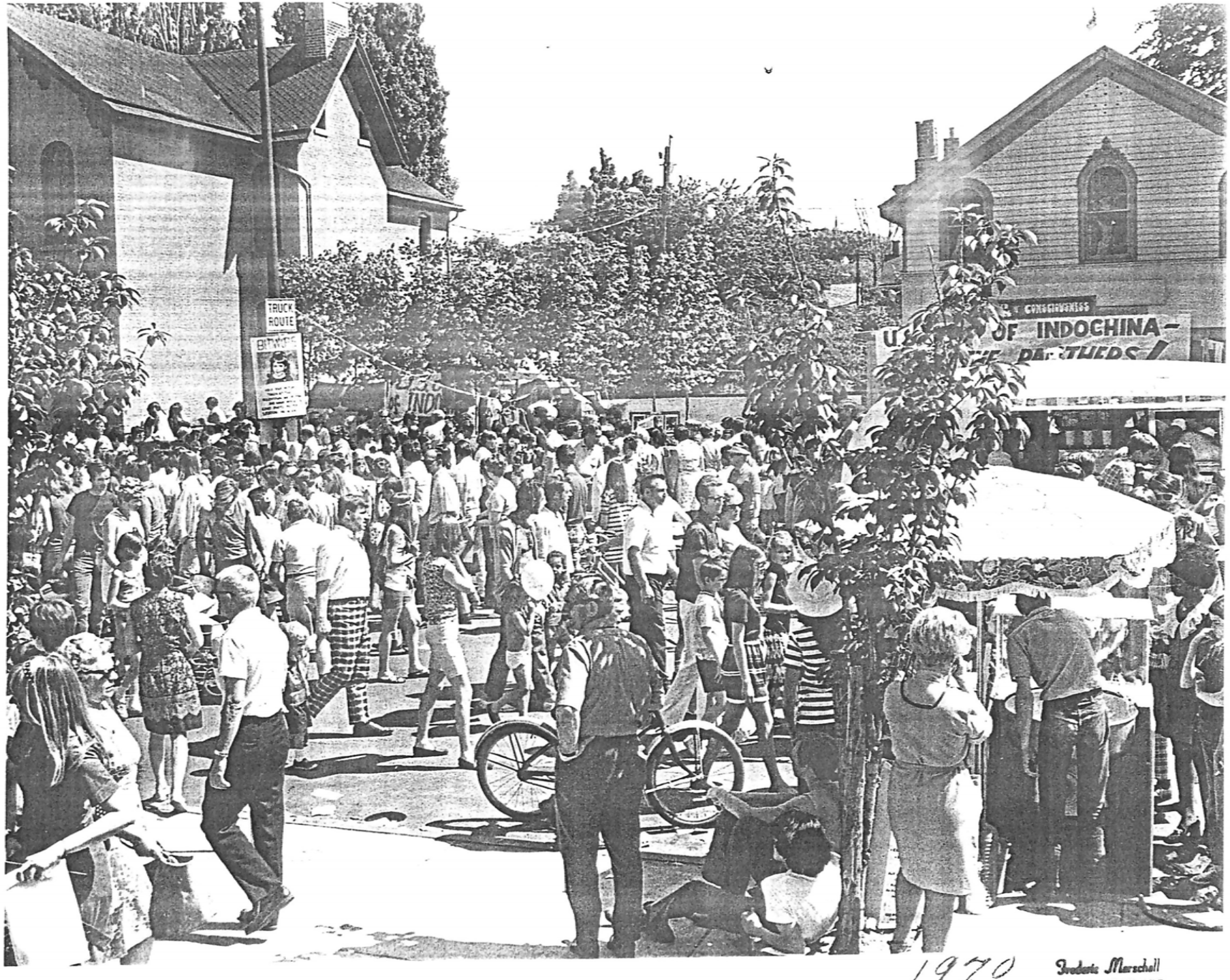
ART
Festival


MOTION PICTURE EQUIPMENT
Custom Picture Framing
MAY-RO Galleries
PAINTINGS
REPRODUCTIONS
OUTDOOR ART FESTIVAL

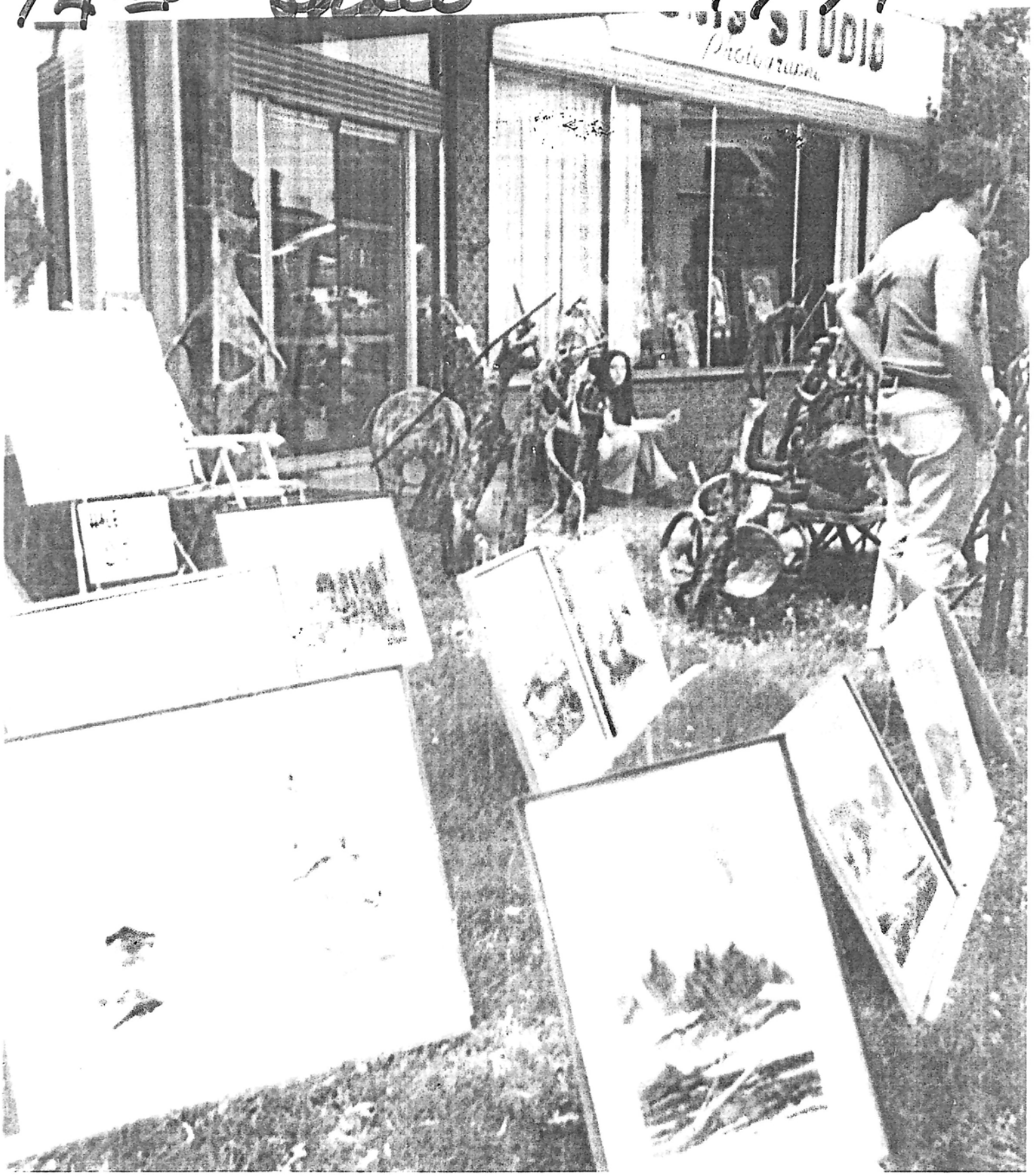




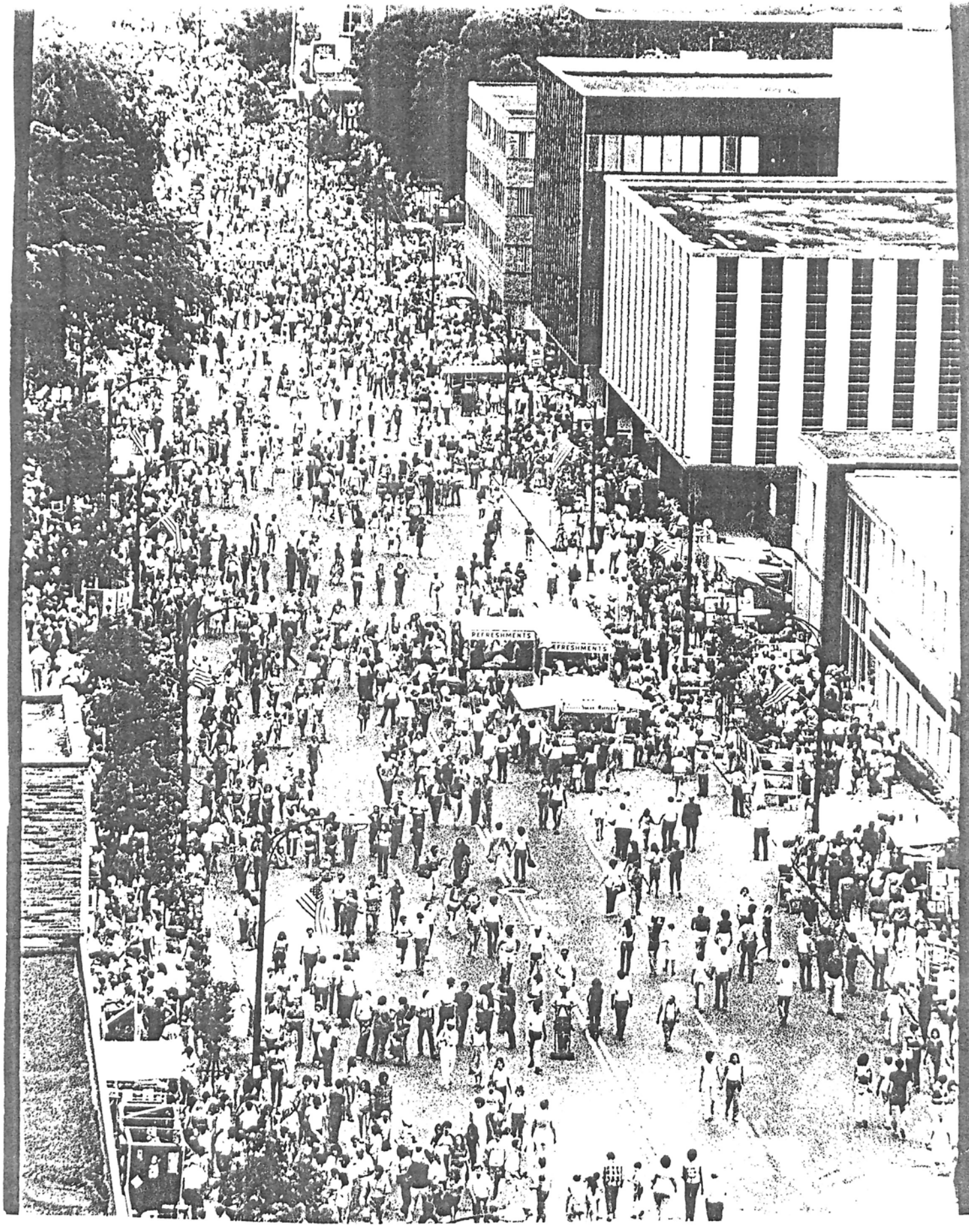
Theodore Marrs-Smith



1970 Frederic Marschall
PHOTOGRAPHER


14th Show
1971
STUDIO


384
AMC


REFRESHMENTS



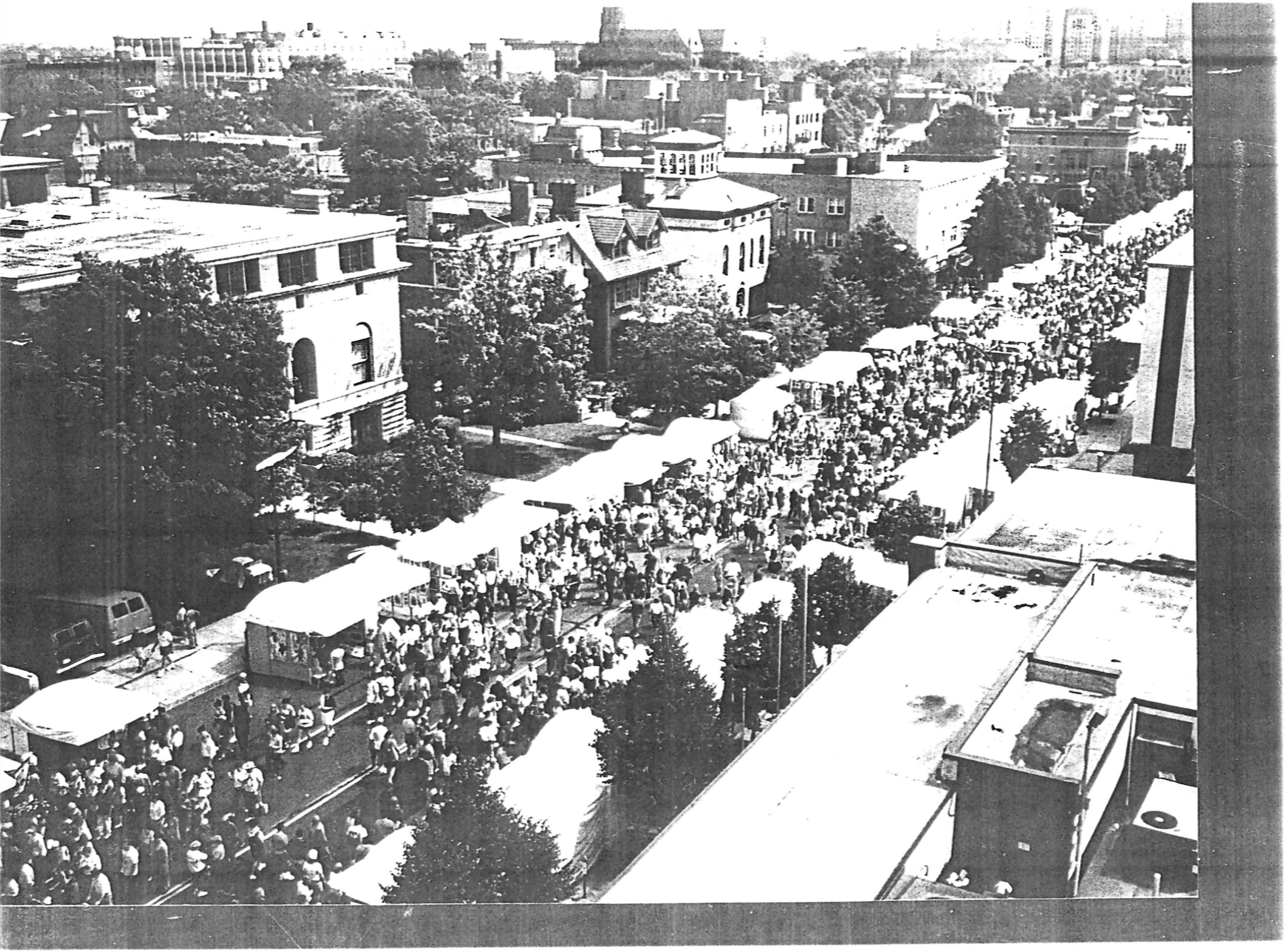
ALLENTOWN OUTDOOR
ART












T-SHIRTS
SNO KONES

