
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PC 100
Probasco Family
Photograph Collection, 1912-1981 (bulk 1920-1949)

DESCRIPTION

Photographs of the Probasco family, who owned and operated several businesses in the Mission Road/Ajo Way area of Tucson, mostly from the 1920s to the 1940s.

1 Box, .25 linear ft.

ACQUISITION

The collection was donated by Opha R. Probasco in January 1990.

ACCESS

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

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Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Archives Department.

PROCESSING

The collection was processed by Aubrey Carrier, intern, in April 2001.

ARRANGEMENT

Topical

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Roy Ottie Probasco was born September 16, 1888 in Iowa, to David and Alta Probasco. Alice "Allie" Mollahan was born August 17, 1892 In West Virginia to Cortez and Sara Folks Mollahan. Roy and Alice met and married in Colorado in 1912, where they homesteaded 160 acres and had five children, daughters Macel, Wyvonna and Bonnie, and twin sons Opha and Okey. After Roy was diagnosed with tuberculosis, he moved his family to Tucson, where he built and operated a combination grocery store, tourist court and gas station at the southwest corner of Mission and Ajo.

Roy sold the store in 1936 and subdivided the land contained within the streets Brown Drive, Mollahan Street, Probasco Drive, and Opha Road. The store was remodeled into the Wagon Wheel Bar, which burned down in the early 1940's. In 1946 Hank Conley bought the adjacent lot from Roy Probasco and built the Mission Club, which he relocated to the former site of the Wagon Wheel Bar early in the next decade. Roy Probasco repurchased the original Mission Club land and leased it to a Chinese family, who operated the Hilltop Grocery Store from the site. The building was partially demolished in 1963 when Ajo Road was widened; then the grocery store was relocated and Roy added to the partially demolished building to open Tojo's Bar.

Located on the east corner of Mission and Ajo, the Mission Swimming Pool was a favorite recreational spot for the Probasco children. Opha became a skilled diver and eventually won the Southern Arizona Diving Championship.

Roy and Allie Probasco died May 23, 1973, and October 16, 1987, respectively.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of mostly black-and-white photographs of family members, friends, and places important to the Probasco family. There are photographs of Roy and Allie Probasco, in 1912 and later; the Probasco children in the 1920s and 1981; the Probasco children at the Mission Pool, featuring Opha executing dives and handstands; the Mission Club, where Opha worked as a bartender during the 1940s; and a few images of Roosevelt Dam, circa 1946. There are photographs, taken about 1929, of the Ajo Junction gas station, grocery store, and tourist court. There are also photographs of family parade entries in the Tucson Rodeo Parade, in the 1920s and 1940, friend Bird Yoas, circa 1947, the Probasco home at 142 S. Brown Drive, and the Southern Pacific Band of Tucson, circa 1950.