

Donation of the Month

Howard Fowler Photographs



State Line, Highway 71 photograph taken
by Howard Fowler
Donated by Owen Clardy, 1975.265.2.27

Over the years, there were several professional photographers working in Rogers, Arkansas. Howard Fowler was a professional photographer with a studio called the Art Shop which was located on First Street. Fowler worked primarily from the 1920s through the 1950s and during his career, he photographed many subjects. His work included “posed” or studio portrait photographs, photos of area scenery, roads, and wildflowers. In 1930, he was commissioned to do photographs for a National Geographic magazine article on Ozark flowers. In a letter from the Peerless Engraving Company in Little Rock, Arkansas, the company praised Fowler on his fine, clear photographs which made the printing process much easier. In the scenic photograph shown here, Fowler captured the view of the state line between Arkansas and Missouri on Highway 71.



Apple Blossom float photograph taken
by Howard Fowler
Donated by Jon Sager, 1989.59.22

He was also spent time photographing the Apple Blossom Festivals. During the 1920s, the Apple Blossom Festival was held for a few days in Rogers every April. Northwest Arkansas was a leading producer of apples in the early twentieth century and the festival celebrated the booming success of the apple industry. Orchard tours, marching bands, dances, elaborate floats, costumes, and a chosen queen were all part of the festival activities. Fowler took many photographs of the floats during the parades; he would perch on a roof to get the best shots. He also took photos of floats decorated by out of town schools and sent those schools a print free of charge. The photo featured here is of a float in the 1925 festival parade.



Eastman Kodak No. 2A Brownie Model B Camera
Donated by Dixie Yoakum, 1989.49.3

Fowler seemed to be known for his generosity; his prices were said to be reasonable and he often sent photographs to some of the region's larger newspapers in Tulsa, Joplin, and Kansas City to use free of charge. His generosity also extended to the younger crowd; as a boy in the 1920s, a local man remembered Fowler renting Kodak Brownie cameras to children for 25 cents a day. Fowler would load the film and then later develop it for 25 cents a roll. Extra rolls of film were 10 cents. The camera shown here is an Eastman Kodak No.2A, Model B Brownie camera from the early 1920s. This is probably similar to the cameras Fowler rented to children around Rogers. Fowler also happened to be an amateur weather forecaster; a deep interest in weather and forecasting led him to keep a variety of gauges at his shop and provide information to local citizens.

Source Information:

The George Eastman House Brownie Collection, George Eastman House, featured on www.geh.org/fm/brownie/htmlsrc/mE13000357_ful.html

Howard Fowler file, Rogers Historical Museum Research Library.

Photographs and Brownie camera, Rogers Historical Museum Collection.