The George W. Cook Dallas/Texas Image Collection (Cook Collection), held by the DeGolyer Library, SMU, an important resource for research in Dallas and Texas history.

A native Dallasite, George W. Cook (1949-2012) was a life-long collector with a focus on Dallas and Texas primary sources. He had a special interest in photographs, postcards, advertising souvenirs, trade cards, family collections, art, postal history, and three-dimensional objects such as signs, glass, and architectural ornaments. He was also fascinated by the State Fair of Texas, the 1936 Texas Centennial, and the history of aviation.

The strength of Cook’s collection lies in its visual images (over 2,200 photographs and 12,000 postcards), but there are also significant manuscripts, bank notes, ephemera, books, pamphlets, broadsides, and objects related to the city of Dallas and Texas. Chronologically, the collection ranges from a promissory note signed by Davy Crockett in 1829 to photographs of carhops at Sivil’s drive-in in mid-century Dallas. There are approximately 20,000 items altogether – a rich collection with a wide range of materials related to Dallas and Texas history!
A few examples that show the breadth of the Cook Collection include

- a set of cased images of the John Oram family, ca. 1840s-1870s;
- a rare map of Oak Cliff, Dallas, ca. 1890;
- an annotated muster roll for Terry's Texas Rangers with a signed register of all veterans who attended the 1902 reunion;
- a photograph album of Texas Panhandle Farming, 1913-1917;
- an album, Graphic History of Negro Dallas Complied by Priscilla Art Club, 1932, containing photographs of identified African Americans, their homes, businesses, schools, and churches;
- a Tom Lea sketch for the mural in the Hall of State Building, at Fair Park, 1936;
- and nearly two dozen photographs of the Trinity River floods in 1908 and 1914.

Photographs and postcards include small Texas towns, as well as images of commerce and industry, topographical views, and urban development in Dallas and across Texas.

TexTreasures Digitization Grant
Hundreds of items from the George W. Cook Dallas/Texas Image Collection are being made available online. In October 2015, digitization of 1,317 photographs, documents, and ephemera from the collection began, thanks to a $25,000 TexTreasures grant. The program is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through a grant to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission TexTreasures program. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums.

DeGolyer Library
sites.smu.edu/cul/degolyer/

Dallas/Texas Image Collection Online
digitalcollections.smu.edu/all/cul/gcd