Guide to the Gifford Collection Documentary Materials, 1897-1996

Title
Gifford Collection Documentary Materials  (P 218-SG 7)

Dates
1897-1996 (inclusive)
1926-1957 (bulk)

Creator
Gifford family.

Summary
The Gifford Collection Documentary Materials consist of paper records, artifacts, and ephemera documenting the Gifford Family’s activities as photographers in Oregon. The Gifford Family included four notable Oregon photographers spanning three generations: Benjamin A. Gifford; his son, Ralph, and Ralph's wife, Wanda; and Ralph and Wanda's son Ben L. Gifford.

Quantity
3.7 cubic feet (8 boxes, including 3 oversize boxes)

Restrictions on Access
Collection is open for research.

Oregon State University Libraries, University Archives
121 The Valley Library
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331-4501
Phone: 541-737-2165
Email: archives@oregonstate.edu
Web: http://archives.library.oregonstate.edu/

Finding aid prepared by Lawrence A. Landis; updated by Elizabeth Nielsen, 2011.
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Biographical Note
The Gifford Family is considered Oregon's first family of photography. Beginning in 1888, when Benjamin A. Gifford emigrated to Portland from Kansas, they began a photographic tradition that lasted into the 1950s and spanned three generations. Benjamin A. Gifford worked as photographer in Portland and The Dalles, Oregon, from the late 1880s until about 1920, when his son Ralph took over his studio in Portland. In 1936, Ralph became the first photographer of the newly established Travel and Information Department of the Oregon State Highway Department, a position he held until his death in 1947. After her husband's death, Wanda Muir Gifford took over the family's photography business and continued to take and sell photographs through the mid-1950s. Ben L. Gifford, the son of Ralph I. and Wanda Gifford, joined his mother in the family's business in early 1950s and also worked for a Salem photography studio from 1951 until 1955. Three generations of Gifford photography began to come to a close when Ben took an engineering job with the State Highway Commission in 1955.

Arrangement

Content Description
The Gifford Collection Documentary Materials consist of paper records, artifacts, and ephemera documenting the Gifford Family's activities as photographers in Oregon. The documentary materials include biographical information on each photographer and other family members, business records, publications that include Gifford photographs, technical manuals and catalogs for photographic and motion picture equipment, artifacts, and ephemeral materials created for the Giffords' photography business. The ephemeral items include envelopes, invoices and order forms, business cards, and labels. The bulk of the business records is correspondence with magazines, other publications, and stock houses regarding purchase and use of Gifford images. A descriptive booklet about the Fred Archer School of Photography in Los Angeles is also included.

Preferred Citation
Gifford Collection Documentary Materials (P 218-SG 7), Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

Custodial History
The materials were donated to the Oregon State University Horner Museum in 1986 by Ben L. and Beth Gifford.

Acquisition Information
The materials were transferred from the Oregon State University Horner Museum to the University Archives in July 1996.

Additional Reference Guides
Finding aid available online.
Finding aid available online in the Northwest Digital Archives (NWDA).

Related Material
This is one component of the Gifford Photographic Collection (P 218) held by the OSU Archives. Other components are: Benjamin A. Gifford Photographs (P 218-SG 1); Ralph I. Gifford Photographs (P 218-SG 2); Ralph I. Gifford Motion Pictures (P 218-SG 3); Wanda Gifford Photographs (P 218-SG 4); Ben L. Gifford Photographs (P 218-SG 5); and Gifford Collection Photographs by Unknown or Other Photographers (P 218-SG 6).

The Archives holdings include several collections documenting photography instruction at Oregon State, including the Robert E. McDole Papers and the John Garman Photographic Collections (P 095).
Subjects
This collection is indexed under the following headings in the OSU Libraries Catalog. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog (http://oasis.oregonstate.edu) using these headings.

Organizations

Topics
Landscape photography--Oregon.
Photographers--Oregon.
Photography--Equipment and supplies.
Photography--Oregon.
Photography--Processing.
Photography--Studios and dark rooms.
Photography--Study and teaching--California--Los Angeles.
Portrait photography--Oregon.
Selling--Photographs.

Geographical Names
Oregon--Description and travel.

Forms of Materials in the Collection
Ephemera.
Oil paintings (visual works)

Other Creators
Fred Archer School of Photography (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Gifford, Benjamin A.
Gifford, Ben L.
Gifford, Ralph I.
Gifford, Wanda.
Series Outline

Series I. Gifford Family Biographical Information, 1897-1996
Series II. Business Records, 1926-1957
Series III. Fred Archer School of Photography Information Booklet, circa 1950
Series IV. Publications with Gifford Photographs, 1902-1987
Series V. Technical Manuals and Equipment Catalogs, circa 1937 - circa 1953
Series VI. Signs, circa 1940
Series VII. Oil Portrait of Ralph I. Gifford, circa 1940
Series VIII. Ephemera, circa 1905 - 1964
Series IX. Artifacts, circa 1936-1947
Detailed Description of the Collection

Box

Series I. Gifford Family Biographical Information, 1897-1996
Series I includes biographical information for Gifford Family members and consists primarily of photocopies that were provided by the family when the photographs were donated to Oregon State University. The documents include obituaries as well as news articles and other compilations of biographical information.

Benjamin A. Gifford, 1929-1993
Rachel M. Gifford, 1973
Ralph I. Gifford, 1946-1947
Wanda M. Gifford, 1989
Ben L. Gifford, 1944-1996
Excerpts, "History and Genealogy of the Gifford Family in America (1626-1953)", 1984
My Story of the Last Indian War in the Northwest, 1954
Gifford Family Scrapbook , 1897 - circa 1968
News clippings about Ralph I. Gifford and Ben L. Gifford, 1944-1947

Series II. Business Records, 1926-1957
Series II consists primarily of correspondence documenting the Gifford Family photography business during the 1930s-1950s, especially the purchase of photographs by various publications.

Correspondence, 1926-1957
Letter to Benjamin A. Gifford from W.T. Jordan of Maryhill, Washington, regarding information about one of Gifford's Native American photographs taken in the area, September 1926
Letter to Ralph Gifford from Universal Pictures Corporation regarding motion picture assignment at Mt. Hood, September 1934
Letters of recommendation for Ralph Gifford working at the State Highway Commission, July 1936
Letter and photograph to Ralph Gifford from Sgt. F.L. Boulier, Sept. 1944
Letter of condolence to Wanda Gifford from State Parks Superintendent S.H. Boardman regarding Ralph Gifford's death, June 1947
Letter to State Highway Dept. from Ben L. Gifford regarding state photographer tests, January 1957
Correspondence with magazines, other publications, and stock houses, 1936-1956
American Fruit Grower Magazine, 1950-1956
A-D
E-L
M-Z and unclassified
Customer consent slips, 1949
Exhibition records for The New Oregon Trail motion picture, 1942
Image log, Ralph Gifford and Ben L. Gifford [Includes original and photocopy.]
Ralph Gifford expense log, 1940-1947
Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association meeting program, June 1947
Lists of magazines using freelance photographs, undated
Jersey Spring Show program, May 1951
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#### Series III. Fred Archer School of Photography Information Booklet, circa 1950

Series III consists of a booklet with information about the Fred Archer School of Photography in Los Angeles, California, including facilities, faculty, the 2-year course of study, and admissions requirements. Ben L. Gifford attended the Fred Archer School in 1950-1951.

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#### Series IV. Publications with Gifford Photographs, 1902-1987

Series IV consists of publications that include photographs by the Gifford Family photographers, primarily in the 1940s and 1950s; several of the publications featured Gifford photographs as the cover images.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Snap Shots on the Columbia</em>, 1902</td>
<td>[Photocopy; see Benjamin A. Gifford Photographs (P 218-SG 1) for original.]</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Neah-Kah-Nie Mountain: The Most Beautiful Spot on the Pacific Coast</em>, 1910</td>
<td>by Lewis M. Head, 1910</td>
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<td><em>Events Illustrated</em>, March, June &amp; August 1938</td>
<td>[March, June Published by Beaver Engraving Co.]</td>
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<td><em>The Exhaust</em>, December 1938</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Oregon State Employee</em>, August-September 1944</td>
<td>[Cover photos by Ralph I. Gifford.]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon Tuberculosis Association annual report, 1946</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Oregon State Employee; Salem Cherry Festival program</em>, May-June 1947</td>
<td>[Cover photos by Ralph I. Gifford.]</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Along the Union Pacific Railroad</em>, July 1947</td>
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<td>International Evergreen Empire; tourist brochure on Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, circa 1947</td>
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<td><em>The County Officer</em> magazine, June 1949</td>
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<td><em>Public Works</em> magazine, December 1950</td>
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<td><em>Oregon Jersey Review</em>, Winter 1951</td>
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<td>The Northwest Calendar for Engagements, 1954</td>
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<td><em>Oregon: Cool green vacation land</em>, tourist brochure, undated</td>
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<td>Snogo snow removal ad, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undated tear sheets from <em>Pacific Pathways, National Geographic</em> and unidentified publication, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspapers with Gifford photographs, 1938-1984</td>
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<td>OSU Foundation 1986-87 annual report, 1987</td>
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### Box 72

#### Series V. Technical Manuals and Equipment Catalogs, circa 1937 - circa 1953

Series V consists of manuals and catalogs assembled by the Giffords for photography and motion picture film equipment and photographic processing. Information about cameras, lenses, and projectors as well as photograph films, papers, and processing are included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual/ Catalog</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formulas notebook, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporary Strobolar Seven Instructions (electronic flash unit), circa 1953</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Ansco Formulas on Black and White Photography</em>, 1946-1948</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Ansco Photographic Papers: Their Properties, Processing and Application</em>, 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better Photography Made Easy <em>(Ansco)</em>, 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choosing Film for Your Camera for Black and White Photography <em>(Ansco)</em>, 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>Color Photography Made Easy <em>(Ansco)</em>, 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Book of Formulas for Eastman Professional Films and Plates</em>, May 1938</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kodak Data Books</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Formulas and Processing</em>, 1946 and 1952</td>
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<td><em>Kodachrome and Kodacolor Film</em>, 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Kodak Lenses: Shutters and Portra Lenses</em>, 1948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exposure and Your Camera, C.I. Jacobson, 1948</td>
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</table>
Box

Series VI. Signs, circa 1940
Series VI includes two signs created and used by Ralph Gifford. One is a sign for the darkroom door reminding visitors to knock; the second is a list of postcard sets available for purchase.

71 Darkroom sign
71 Postcard list

Box

Series VII. Oil Portrait of Ralph I. Gifford, circa 1940
This framed portrait was painted by Lola Schroeder.

Series VIII. Ephemera, circa 1905 - 1964
Series VIII consists of materials created for the Giffords' photography business and includes envelopes, invoice and order forms, business cards, and labels. Extra postcards and view sets created by Ralph Gifford are part of this series. Original paper sleeves that housed negatives when they were received by the Archives are included. Duplicates of a Benjamin A. Gifford advertisement include color transparencies and color photocopies made in the late 1990s.

Benjamin A. Gifford advertisement, circa 1905
(4 frames of 120 color film transparencies)
(71 color photocopies)
72 Ralph Gifford envelope from film business, circa 1930
72 Ralph Gifford, circa 1940
72 Covers for Scenic Oregon Album Prints
72 Business cards
72 Labels for photoplaques
72 Photo order form
72 Oregon in Miniature sets envelopes
72 Letterhead, Travel Information Department, Oregon State Highway Commission
72 Ben and Beth Gifford Christmas card mock-ups, 1964 and undated
80 Photographic products and business forms, circa 1935-1945 [Includes extra postcards, view sets (in envelopes), blank invoice forms, business cards, and photoplaque labels.]
81 Original negative sleeves, circa 1920-1955 [Includes original negative sleeves for photographs made by Ralph I. Gifford, Wanda Gifford, and Ben L. Gifford.]
Box

**Series IX. Artifacts, circa 1936-1947**

Series IX consists of rubber stamps used by Ralph Gifford for labeling the backs of photographic prints and several signed mats separated from the accompanying photographic prints.

- 70  Ralph Gifford rubber stamps for labeling backs of photographs, circa 1936-1947
- 78  Signed Gifford mats, circa 1936-1947