



Guide to the Gifford Collection Photographs by Unknown or Other Photographers, circa 1915-1955

Title

Gifford Collection Photographs by Unknown or Other Photographers (P 218-SG 6)

Dates

circa 1915-1955 (inclusive)
1935-1950 (bulk)

Creator

Gifford family.

Summary

The Gifford Collection Photographs by Unknown or Other Photographers consists of images created and assembled by the Gifford Family. Many of the photographs may have been taken by Ralph I. Gifford, his wife Wanda, or his son Ben L. in the course of their photographic work. The photographs include portrait photographs; scenic views of Oregon landmarks; and images of agriculture, primarily in the Willamette Valley, and public buildings and businesses in Salem, Oregon.

Quantity

0.5 cubic feet, including 273 photographs (6 boxes, including 2 oversize boxes.)

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research.

Oregon State University Libraries, University Archives
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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

The Gifford Collection Photographs by Unknown and Other Photographers are arranged in two series: I. Unknown Photographers, circa 1915-1955 and II. Other Photographers, circa 1930-1955.

Content Description

The Gifford Collection Photographs by Unknown or Other Photographers consists of images created and assembled by the Gifford Family. They include images for whom the photographer is not identified as well as a few images that were taken by other (non-Gifford family) photographers. Many of the photographs described as "unknown photographer" may have been taken by Ralph I. Gifford, his wife Wanda, or his son Ben L. in the course of their photographic work, but there is not enough information provided with the images to specifically and confidently determine the photographer. The images include portrait photographs; scenic views of Oregon landmarks; and photographs of agriculture, primarily in the Willamette Valley, and public buildings and businesses in Salem, Oregon. Of special note are a set of photographs of Berg's Supermarket in Salem, Oregon, and images of canning and food processing operations for green beans, mushrooms, and strawberries.

Images by other photographers primarily depict Oregon scenes such as the Columbia River Gorge and Highway, the Hood River Valley, and the Fossil Beds. Photographers include the Photo-Art Commercial Studios and the Angelus Commercial Studio in Portland.

Most of the images in this collection (about two-thirds) are prints without accompanying camera negatives; the remainder of the collection is camera negatives. These include 4x5, 5x7, and 120 film negatives and several nitrate negatives. Only a few items have both a camera negative and print of the same image.

Preferred Citation

Gifford Collection Photographs by Unknown and Other Photographers (P 218-SG 6), Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

Custodial History

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

Acquisition Information

The photographs 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 Documentary Materials (P 218-SG 7).

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.

Topics

Agriculture--Oregon.
Fruit processing plants--Oregon.
Landscape photography--Oregon.
Portrait photography--Oregon.
Vegetable processing plants--Oregon.

Geographical Names

Cascade Range.
Pacific Coast (Or.)
Salem (Or.)

Forms of Materials in the Collection

Film negatives.
Nitrate negatives.
Photographic prints.

Other Creators

Gifford, Ben L.
Gifford, Ralph I.
Gifford, Wanda.

Series Outline

Series I. Unknown Photographers, circa 1915-1955

Series II. Other Photographers, circa 1930-1955

Detailed Description of the Collection

Box

Series I. Unknown Photographers, circa 1915-1955 (176 prints and 86 negatives)

Series I consists of photographs that were assembled by the Gifford Family, for which the photographer is not specifically identified and is therefore considered unknown. Many of these images may have been taken by Ralph, Wanda, or Ben L. Gifford, but there is not enough information to confidently determine the photographer. However, similar images of some subjects depicted in these series are part of other components of the Gifford Photographic Collection, which may be helpful in identifying the photographer. The images include portrait photographs; scenic views of Oregon landmarks, such as the Oregon coast and the Cascades; and images of agriculture in the Willamette Valley and public buildings and businesses in Salem, Oregon. Only a few of the images in this series are available as both a camera negative and print.

- 12 Electric generating station at night (3 4x5 negatives)
- 12 Profile of a man sitting and drinking (2 4x5 negatives)
- 12 Long shot of a farm (2 4x5 negatives)
- 12 A soldier and his family (5 4x5 negatives)
- 12 Mural in the state capitol (4x5 negative)
- Portraits of people
- 62 Tilda and cat (5x7 negative)
- 62 Tilda alone (5x7 negative)
- 62 Pinkey (5x7 negative)
- 62 Baby Hagedon (5x7 negative)
- 62 Colgan boys (4 5x7 negatives)
- 62 Harlan's mother and father (2 5x7 negatives)
- 62 Dalby copy negatives of old photos (2 5x7 negatives)
- 7 Portrait of a young girl (4 prints)
- 7 Portraits of a young woman (3 prints) [Two shoulder portraits and one view in swimsuit.]
- 7 Portrait of young woman with lace scarf on dress
- 7 Portrait of a young woman in a swimsuit
- 7 Portraits of U.S. Navy officers (4 prints)
- 7 Man standing in front of a wall [Snapshot print.]
- 7 Wedding photo -- Helen Mulkey [Snapshot print.]
- 12 Portrait of an older man (4x5 negative)
- 12 Woman sitting at picnic table built into rock hillside (4x5 negative)
- 12 Woman walking with a child; Mt. Hood in background (5 4x5 negatives)
- 7, 12 Painting of a U.S. Army officer (print and 4x5 copy negative)
- 12 Man standing in front of trees (4x5 copy negative)
- 7 Portrait of an older man
- 7 Dinner at Silver Falls Lodge, 1947
- 7 Military officers standing next to Japanese Zero airplane (2 prints)
- 7 Jeeps with rocket launchers in action, World War II? (2 prints)
- Two men and a woman
- 7 Eating dinner

- 7 Holding fish [Perhaps paying for a lost wager.]
- 7 Group sitting in a yard eating watermelon [Photograph taken at night.]
- 7 Young woman with a flower hat sitting in an orchard under a tree in bloom
- 7 Copy photo of a family group, circa 1900
- 7 Coos Head Lighthouse at Cape Arago, Charleston, Oregon
- 7 North Head Lighthouse at Ilwaco, Washington?
- 7 Man viewing haystack rocks from cliff
- 7 Skiers at Mt. Hood (2 prints)
- 7 Two women with waterfall in background
- 7 Hot springs near near Lakeview, Oregon
- 12 Two girls standing near edge of cliff, Oregon Coast (2 4x5 negatives)
- 12 Man and woman watching waves break, Oregon Coast (4x5 negative)
- 12 Two men fishing in a river (2 4x5 negatives)
- 7 Three people on a dock with their fishing catch
- 7 Pack horses and riders in a meadow; mountain in background
- 7 Man and a woman on horseback with dog running in front of them; Mt. Hood? in background
- 12 Military officers: eating, at logging site, at desks (11 4x5 negatives)
- 12 Man releasing fish at fish hatchery (4x5 negative)
- 12 Painting of a man with a horse and cart (4x5 copy negative)
- 12 Central Oregon river? Three Sisters in the background? (2 4x5 negatives)
- 7 Flag on back of boat on the Columbia River?
- 7 Trucks on a highway, Willamette Valley, Oregon?
- 7 Highway embankment near underpass covered with grass and flowers
- 7 Highway through an unidentified town
- 7 Applying asphalt on a road? [Close-up view.]
- 7 Laying gravel on a road bed, circa 1921
- 7 State Capitol
- 12 State Library Building (4x5 negative)
- 7 Branch of cherry blossoms
- 7 A young prune orchard on the Red Hills of Marion County [Copy print of published photograph and caption.]
- 12 Old farmhouse (3 4x5 negatives)
- 12 House on a hillside in the woods (2 4x5 negatives)
- 7 Front yard of a house
- 7 School or state office building
- 7 Stucco apartment complex
- 7 Men working a sheep herd, Central Oregon?
- 7 Hen and chicks
- 7 Copy print of four cattle photographs
- 7 Two calves grazing on a field
- 7 Sunsets (3 prints)
- 7 Onion field
- 7 Man shocking grain
- 7 Panoramic view of a farm
- 7 Boy hoeing a garden
- 7 Tomato packing operation
- 7 Blackberry patch at dusk
- 7 Flower garden (2 prints)
- 7 Scotty tractor with plow attachment
- 7 Woman driving front end loader loaded with gravel
- 12 View of creek and mountains (3 4x5 negatives)
- 12 View of trees and mountain (4x5 negative)
- 12 Rock slide or blasting? (4x5 negative)
- 12 Aerial view of forested mountains (4x5 copy negative)
- 7, 12 Basalt formation next to highway (print & 2 4x5 negatives)

- 7 View of lake or reservoir; Mt. Hood? in background
- 7 Road next to mountain stream; Mt. Hood? in background
- 7 View of arid lands from mountain (2 prints)
- 7 Pasture, fence and mountains (Steens Mountain area?)
- 7 Man looking at rock formation, John Day fossil beds?
- 7 Crater Lake and Wizard Island in winter
- 7 Boat dock on lake
- 12 Boat at dock on lake (4x5 negative)
- 12 Deer walking through snow in a forest (2 4x5 negatives)
- 7 Courtroom in a courthouse [Possibly in new Marion County Courthouse.]
- 7 Aerial view of Salem bridges over the Willamette River, circa 1952
- 7 Aerial view of Willamette River and Salem downtown area, circa 1952
- 7 Aerial view of south Salem, circa 1940
- Capitol and early state buildings, Salem, circa 1915
- 60 Capitol (2 nitrate negatives)
- 60 Marion County Courthouse (2 nitrate negatives)
- 60 Pioneer monument (nitrate negative)
- 60 Unidentified building (nitrate negative)
- 7 Road under construction?
- 7 High dam on river in arid area [Snake River?]
- 7 Lake or reservoir in arid area
- 12 Dog lying on the ground (4x5 negative)
- 7 Three men playing cribbage (2 prints)
- 7 Women diving into a pool (2 prints)
- 7 Young boy in car merry-go-round
- 7 Group gathered in a living room
- 7 Man sitting at a desk (2 prints)
- 12 Man sitting in basement or utility room (4x5 negative)
- 7 Woman looking at map of Salem
- 7, 12 Children and older man in a swimming pool or water tank next to a greenhouse (5 prints and 2 120 negatives)
- 7, 76 Gnarled tree next to beachhouse door (3 prints)
- 7 Family group? at beach, Oregon Coast (5 prints)
- 12 View of coast (2 4x5 negatives)
- 12 Land survey map (4x5 copy negative)
- 12 Large stack of logs (4x5 copy negative) [#2504?]
- 12 Sheep grazing (4x5 copy negative)
- 7 Snow covered cabin
- 7 Snow covered garden and lawn?
- 7 Snow covered mountain, Eastern Oregon?
- 7 River and snow covered bluff
- 7 Deer hunters (2 prints)
- 7, 76 Barn, corral and men on horseback (3 prints)
- 7 Camp at base of mountain
- 7 Young boy holding fly rod and caught fish
- 7 Fishing boats in a river
- 7 Man holding catch of fish
- Berg's Supermarket, Salem (35 prints) [Includes views of store interior with and without shoppers including produce, meat, and shelves with canned foods and an aerial view of the store and parking lot. Some of the photos to taken (or printed) by McEwan's Photo Shops in Salem.]
- Canning and processing operations
- 7 Green beans, Santiam Cannery, Stayton (8 prints)
- 7 Mushroom growing and canning (7 prints)
- 7 Strawberry processing (2 prints)
- 7 Loading railroad cars with frozen food cases (2 prints)

- 7 Crop dryer (2 prints)
- 7 Cannery building
- 7 Man in office, December 1946
- 7 Silage?
- 7 Boys in a pole bean field (2 prints)
- 76 Welder
- 76 Southern Pacific steam locomotive going through downtown Salem, Oregon
- 76 Gnarled trunk of a grapevine?
- 76 Heceta Head lighthouse, framed by two trees
- 76 *Gem of the Sea*, ship in drydock
- 76 Marina views, Los Angeles? (3 prints)

Box**Series II. Other Photographers, circa 1930-1955 (11 prints)**

Series II consists of photographs assembled by the Gifford Family that were taken by other photographers. These include images of Oregon scenes such as the Columbia River Gorge and Highway, the Hood River Valley, and the Fossil Beds.

- 7, 77 *The Columbia Gateway: Bonneville Dam and Mt. Hood* (postcard print and hand colored mounted print) [Copyright 1938 by Samuel Lancaster.]
- 7 Man and woman viewing Columbia Gorge [Photo-Art Commercial Studios, Portland]
- 7 Mitchell Point tunnel, Columbia River Highway [Angelus Commercial Studio, Portland, #59380]
- 7 Apple orchards of the Hood River Valley nestling under the slopes of the eternally snow-clad Mt. Hood [Angelus Commercial Studio, Portland; courtesy Oregon State Highway Dept.]
- 7 Fossil beds, home of the pre-historic three toed horse, John Day Highway, Oregon [Sawyers Scenic Photos #C 12560]
- 7 Bull M M Prince Royal 17 [Photograph by Edward J. Saxton, Helena, Montana.]
- 7 Pharmacy? with Ralph Gifford's photomurals [Photo-Art Commercial Studios, Portland]
- 7 Woman harvesting commercially grown mushrooms [Photograph by Joseph Tompkins, Salem.]
- 77 Still life of fruit and flowers [By Charles Conkling.]
- 77 *Winter Shadows* [Photograph by Ray Atkeson; art print engraving by Hicks-Chatten Engraving Co.]