Finding aid for the

Marion Post Wolcott Collection, circa 1938-1990

AG 114

Finding aid updated by Alexis Peregoy, 2019
Marion Post Wolcott Collection, ca. 1938-1990

AG 114

Creator

Post Wolcott, Marion, 1910-1990

Abstract

Papers, ca. 1938-1990, of Marion Post Wolcott (1910-1990), photographer. The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence and reference material compiled by Wolcott during the last decade of her life. The collection also includes photocopies of correspondence between Wolcott and Roy Stryker, Director of the Historical Section of the Farm Security Administration, from 1938 to 1941. The originals of these letters are in the collection of the Photographic Archives at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. The collection is not fully processed.

Quantity/Extent

6 linear feet

Language of Materials

English

Biographical/Historical Note

Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographer Marion Post Wolcott was born in Montclair, New Jersey on June 7, 1910. After graduating from high school, Wolcott traveled to Paris to study dance; later, she studied child psychology in Vienna, where she met photographer Trude Fleischmann. Fleischmann encouraged Wolcott to pursue her photography professionally, and recommended the small Rolleiflex camera she used later during her FSA years. Upon returning to the states, Wolcott landed a cover on New York Times magazine and joined the New York Photo League, where she met Ralph Steiner and Paul Strand. Wolcott briefly worked for the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, where her assignments focused on fashion and society events for women. Steiner presented Wolcott’s work to FSA head, Roy Stryker, and wrote letters of recommendation for Wolcott alongside Strand after learning of Wolcott’s dissatisfaction at the Bulletin. Throughout her employment with FSA from 1938 to 1941, Wolcott produced a body of work totaling more than 100,000 images shot in New England, Kentucky, North and South Carolina and Mississippi. Wolcott’s work juxtaposed the lives...
of the wealthy at regular sporting and social events against the Dust Bowl of the South and the migrant farmworkers that inhabited those barren lands. Wolcott met Lee Wolcott in 1941 while visiting friends during a break from FSA, marrying soon after. Despite the time’s traditional focus on the husband’s career, Wolcott photographed many places she traveled with Lee, including Iran, Egypt, Pakistan and India. Wolcott photographed Native American children in New Mexico and 1970s counterculture in Isla Vista and Mendocino, California, but never produced a professional body of work after her employment with FSA. Wolcott assumed the roles of wife, mother and grandmother in Santa Barbara, California until her death in 1990.

Scope and Content Note

The strength of this collection resides in biographical reference material compiled by the artist during the last decade of her life. Photocopies of primary material written between 1938 and 1941, including Paul Strand’s letter recommending Wolcott to Roy Stryker as well as copies of the correspondence between Wolcott and Stryker from her years with the Farm Security Administration, are supported by notes and recollections generated by the artist in the 1980s for public lectures and symposia. Correspondence documents relations between the artist and historians, curators, and gallery owners working on exhibitions and publications regarding her work. Additional correspondence documents the photographer’s friendships with her fellow F.S.A. photographers Jack Delano, Ralph Steiner, Arthur Rothstein, and Russell Lee, as well as photographers Gay Block, Jack Fulton, and Linda Conner.

This collection has been arranged into four series: Correspondence A-Z; Activity Files; Biographical Reference Material; and Additions. The artist's original filing system has been followed as closely as possible.

The Correspondence series is arranged alphabetically by correspondent name. Included are letters, memorandums, postcards, and invoices with friends, galleries, museums, writers, and curators. A selected index for this series follows.

The Activity Files series is divided into Writings about Wolcott, Book Projects, Exhibitions, Lectures, and Interviews. Included are correspondence, manuscripts, clippings, articles, exhibition announcements, lecture notes, interviews, and other materials that document Wolcott’s various activities.

The Biographical Reference Material series is divided into Biographical Material, Lecture Material, Reference Material, and Clippings. The included information was compiled by Wolcott for personal reference. The Clippings subseries includes exhibition reviews and notes on photography and FSA.

The Accruals series is composed of materials received in 2005 and 2012 and is currently unprocessed. It contains a medallion from the Allen F. Hawley Society at Pomona
College in Claremont, California (given to all first time annuity and trust donors who make a significant monetary contribution to the college) and seven ¾ inch videotapes from NBC’s Today Show of interviews with Walcott.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as follows:

- **Series 1: Correspondence**
- **Series 2: Activity Files**
- **Series 3: Biographical Material**
- **Series 4: Accruals**

Names and Subject Terms

Wolcott, Marion Post, 1910-1990 [http://vocab.getty.edu/ulan/500002522]

Restrictions

**Conditions Governing Access**

Access to this collection requires an appointment with the Volkerding Study Center.

**Conditions Governing Use**

It is the responsibility of the user to obtain permission from the copyright owner (which could be the institution, the creator of the record, the author or his/her transferees, heirs, legates or literary executors) prior to any copyright-protected uses of the collection.

The user agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Arizona Board of Regents, the University of Arizona, Center of Creative Photography, including its officers, employees, and agents, from and against all claims made relating to copyright or other intellectual property infringement.

Provenance

The collection was acquired as a gift from Marion Post and Lee Wolcott in 1988 and 1990, and Robin Moore, Wolcott’s granddaughter, in 2005.

Preferred Citation

Marion Post Wolcott, circa 1938-1990. AG 114. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.
**Processing Information**

The collection was processed in 1991 by Louise Stover. The finding aid was updated by Caroline Ross in 2018 and completed by Alexis Perego in 2019.

**Container List**

**Series 1: Correspondence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Amarillo Art Center Association, 1978-1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Amon Carter Museum, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Art Institute of Chicago, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Auctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Biddle, Susan [see also the White House]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Boddy, Julie, 1978, 1981, and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Brannan, Beverly, 1984, 1987-1989 [see also Library of Congress]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>California Museum of Photography [Riverside, CA], 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Center for Creative Photography [Tucson, AZ], 1983-1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Coke, Van Deren &amp; Joan, 1984, 1988-1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Connor, Linda, 1984-1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Family Correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>General Correspondence, 1960-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-22</td>
<td>General Correspondence, 1970-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>General Correspondence, Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Dater, Judy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Daytona Beach Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>East Street Gallery/ Bankruptcy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Frankel, Peg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Freund, Gisele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fresno Art Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Friends of Imogen Cunningham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Friends of Photography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fulton, Jack &amp; Diane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Goluts, Richard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hartnell College Gallery/Smith, Gary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I.C.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>IMP George Eastman House</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 Jussim, Estelle
12 LeClerc, Jacqueline/LoC
13 Lee, Russel & Jean
14 LoC
15 Liebermann & Saul Gallery
16 Light, Ken
17 Light Gallery/Schad, Tennyson
18 Simon Lowinsky Gallery
19 McKeichan, Margaret
20 Mark, Mary Ellen
21 Morgan, Barbara
22 Mother Jones
23 MOMA [NYC]/Szarkowski
24 MFA Houston/Tucker, Anne
25 Norfleet, Barbara
26 Norton Gallery of Art
27 Phoenix Gallery
28 Photographic Resource Center [Boston]
29 Rapport, Leonard
30 Roskam, Edwin & Louise
31 Rothstein, Author & Grace
32 S.F. MOMA/Coke, Van Deren
33 San Jose State University
1 Santa Barbara Museum of Art
2 Seagram’s Collection/ Richard Pare
3 Smith, Gary
4 Souza, Pete
5 Stein, Sally
6 Steiner, Ralph
7 Strauss, Fritz & Bert
8 Syracuse University/Light Gallery, “Women in Photography”
9 Tanner, Joan
10 Tucker, Anne
11 University Art Museum UC Berkeley/Amarillo Show
12 University of Louisville/ David Horvath, “FSA Photographers Look at Kentucky”
13 Vision of America at Peace/Witherill, Huntington
14 Wagner, Catherine
15 Welpott, Jack & Wendy Brook
Selected Index to Correspondence

Box    Folder
1-4    Amarillo Art Center Association, 1978-79
      Amon Carter Museum, 1984
      Art Institute of Chicago, 1990
      Biddle, Susan, n.d.  See also the White House
      Brannan, Beverly, 1984, 1987-89.  See also Library of Congress
      California Museum of Photography, (Riverside, CA), 1982
      Center for Creative Photography, (Tucson, AZ), 1983-89
      Coke, Van Deren & Joan, 1984, 1988-89
      Connor, Linda, 1984-86
      Davies, Jerry M., See Amarillo Art Center Association
      Demarais, Charles.  See California Museum of Photography
      Doud, Richard.  See Archives of American Art
      Kerwin, Liza.  See Archives of American Art
      Lippman, Irvin.  See Amon Carter Museum
      Northlight Gallery. (Phoenix, AZ), 1987, 1989
      Owen, Marion B.  See Archives of American Art
      Roark, Carol.  See Amon Carter Museum
      Turner, David.  See Amarillo Art Center Association
      Wolf, Sylvia.  See Art Institute of Chicago

Series 2: Activity Files

Subseries 1: Writings about Wolcott

Box    Folder
4      Correspondence, clippings, and article, “Double Exposure,” by Paul Hendrickson [published in the Washington Post Magazine], 1988
5-6

Subseries 2: Book Projects

Box    Folder
4      Borchert, James, Alley Life in Washington, 1980
5      Cohen, Stu, manuscript
8      Driskell, Julia
Subseries 3: Exhibitions

Box Folder
5 8-9 Exhibition announcements and clippings
6 1 Exhibition announcements

Subseries 4: Interviews

Box Folder
6 2 *American Photographer* interview conducted by Joan Murray, 1978
3 Archives of American Art Oral History Project interview conducted by Richard Doud, 1983
4 Foreign Service Spouse Oral History interview conducted by the Foreign Service Family Oral History Project, 1989
5 *Photo Metro* interview conducted by Paul Raedeke, 1985
6 Today Show, “Woman to Woman” interview conducted by Pat Mitchell, 1989
7 Miscellaneous interview fragments and notes, undated

Series 3: Biographical Reference Material

Subseries 1: Biographical Material

Box Folder
6 8-10 Personal histories, resumes and bibliographies
11 Biographical data for Lee Wolcott
12 Portraits of Marion Post Wolcott, ca. 1976, 1986
13 Inventories of prints, undated
14 Receipts and records relating to cameras and prints
15 Handwritten notes by and for Wolcott
Subseries 2: Lecture Material

Box    Folder
7    1-11  Lecture notes, undated

Subseries 3: Reference Material

Box    Folder
8    1    Lecture transcript, Women in Photography conference, Syracuse, NY, 1986
2-3  Wolcott/Stryker correspondence [photocopies]
4  Photocopies from Library of Congress of Wolcott photographs
5  “F.S.A. Stuff” [notes on the FSA]

Subseries 4: Clippings

Box    Folder
6    6-8  Clippings, circa 1976-1990

Series 4: Accruals

Note: These materials are unprocessed.

Box    Folder
9    [Unprocessed materials]