

Center for Creative Photography

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Finding aid for the
Marion Post Wolcott Collection, circa 1938-1990

AG 114

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 Wolcott.

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 Peregoy in 2019.

Container List

Series 1: Correspondence

Box	Folder		
1	1	Amarillo Art Center Association, 1978-1979	
	2	Amon Carter Museum, 1984	
	3	Archives of American Art, 1965, 1983	
	4	Art Institute of Chicago, 1990	
	5	Auctions	
	6	Biddle, Susan [see also the White House]	
	7	Block, Gay, 1980-1983, 1986, 1990	
	8	Boddy, Julie, 1978, 1981, and undated	
	9	Brannan, Beverly, 1984, 1987-1989 [see also Library of Congress]	
	10	California Museum of Photography [Riverside, CA], 1982	
	11	Center for Creative Photography [Tucson, AZ], 1983-1989	
	12	Coke, Van Deren & Joan, 1984, 1988-1989	
	13	Connor, Linda, 1984-1986	
	14	Family Correspondence	
	15	General Correspondence, 1960-1961	
	16-22	General Correspondence, 1970-1990	
	23	General Correspondence, Undated	
	24	Delano, Jack, 1977, 1981-1990	
	25	Dater, Judy	
	26	Daytona Beach Community College	
	27	East Street Gallery/ Bankruptcy	
	2	1	Frankel, Peg
		2	Freund, Gisele
		3	Fresno Art Center
		4	Friends of Imogen Cunningham
		5	Friends of Photography
		6	Fulton, Jack & Diane
7		Goluts, Richard	
8		Hartnell College Gallery/Smith, Gary	
9		I.C.P.	
10		IMP George Eastman House	

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	
3	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
		Archives of American Art, 1965, 1983
		Art Institute of Chicago, 1990
		Biddle, Susan, n.d. See also the White House
		Block, Gay, 1980-83, 1986, 1990
		Boddy, Julie, n.d. 1978, 1981
		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
		Delano, Jack, 1977, 1981-90
		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	5-6	Correspondence, clippings, and article, "Double Exposure," by Paul Hendrickson [published in the Washington Post Magazine], 1988

Subseries 2: Book Projects

Box	Folder	
4	7	Borchert, James, <i>Alley Life in Washington</i> , 1980
	8	Cohen, Stu, manuscript
	9	Driskell, Julia

	10-11	Hurley, F. Jack, <i>Marion Post Wolcott: A Photographic Journey</i> , 1989
5	1	Hurley, F. Jack, manuscript
	2	Hurley, F. Jack, first and second proof plates
	3	O`Neal, Hank, <i>A Vision Shared: F.S.A. Photographs 1935-43</i> , 1976
	4	Stein, Sally
	5	Bearse, Ray, draft of Carl Mydans book
	6	Miscellaneous
	7	Cady, Frank, poems inspired by FSA photographs

Subseries 3: Exhibitions

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

Subseries 4: Interviews

Box	Folder	
6	2	<i>American Photographer</i> 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	<i>Photo Metro</i> 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]