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Finding aid for the
Beaumont and Nancy Newhall collection, 1930 - 1983

AG 48

Beaumont and Nancy Newhall collection, 1930 – 1983

AG 48

Creators

Newhall, Beaumont, 1908-1993

Newhall, Nancy

Abstract

Correspondence, writings, and subject files, 1930 - 1983, of Beaumont Newhall (1908 - 1993), and Nancy Newhall (1908 - 1974), art historians, curators, teachers, and authors. Includes correspondence with noted photographers Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, and others; published and unpublished manuscripts by Nancy Newhall concerning Ansel Adams, such as *Death Valley* (1953), *The Eloquent Light* (1963), and "The Enduring Moment" (circa 1971); writings by Beaumont Newhall including *Photography: Essays and Images* (1980) and his revised and enlarged edition of *The History of Photography* (1981); and printed materials relating to their wide interests.

Quantity/ Extent

9.5 linear feet

Language of Materials

English

Biographical/ Historical Note

Beaumont Newhall

Beaumont Newhall was born in Lynn, Massachusetts on June 22, 1908. Degrees in art history from Harvard (A.B. in 1930, M.A. in 1931) led to a brief stint as a lecturer at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, then a position in the Department of Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art. After further studies at the Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie, University of Paris and the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, Newhall was hired as the librarian at MOMA in 1935. In 1937, Newhall presented "Photography 1839-1937," an exhibition surveying the history of the medium that he had prepared at the invitation of Alfred H. Barr, the museum's director. An expanded version of Mr. Newhall's catalogue essay was published by the museum the following year as "Photography: A Short Critical History." A Guggenheim Foundation fellowship in 1947 enabled Newhall to enlarge this essay into a book, now titled "The History of Photography, 1839 to the Present." Revised by Newhall several times over the

next 35 years, this book has become a standard general history of photography. Newhall was appointed the first curator of photography at MOMA in 1940, a position he held until 1945. From 1948 to 1958 Newhall was curator of the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House. He was its director from 1958 to 1971, during part of which time (1968-1971) he also professor of Art at State University of New York at Buffalo. In 1971, he moved to Albuquerque, where he became professor of Art at UNM until 1984. He was appointed professor emeritus upon his retirement. He died at his home in Santa Fe, from complications from a stroke, February 26, 1993.

Nancy Newhall

Nancy Newhall, née Nancy Wynne, was born in Lynn, Massachusetts on May 9, 1908. As a photography critic, conservationist, and editor, she was an important contributor to the development of the photograph book as an art form. Newhall attended Smith College and was a member of the Art Students League of New York. Her career began when in 1943 she became acting curator of the photography department at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, substituting for her husband, Beaumont Newhall, the photography historian and founder of the department, while he was in military service. A founding member of *Aperture* magazine, Newhall helped to conceptually shape the publication and was a frequent contributor. She collaborated with many of the photographic luminaries of the day—Ansel Adams, Edward and Brett Weston, Paul Strand, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Minor White—writing text to accompany their images for magazine articles and books. Newhall died following a rafting accident while vacationing with her husband in Grand Teton National Park on July 7, 1974.

Scope and Content Note

These papers represent one important segment of the personal papers of Nancy Newhall, and to a lesser extent those of Beaumont Newhall. These letters and writings were culled by Beaumont Newhall, and were sent to the Center after Nancy Newhall's death in 1974. They were intended to complement the archive of Ansel Adams which had already been committed to the Center. Some of the Nancy Newhall papers were at one time integrated into the Adams archive, but an attempt has been made to return those papers to this collection. Researchers should, however, consult both collections, especially the correspondence series.

The bulk of the material in this collection relates to the career of Nancy Newhall and begins in the late 1930s and continues until her death in 1974; a lesser amount of material is present for Beaumont Newhall, especially his *Photography: Essays and Images*, and his final revision of *The History of Photography*. The general correspondence, 1942-78, contains personal and business correspondence between the Newhalls and editors, publishers, artists, curators, museums and universities. Since the Newhalls worked together and often on similar topics, much of the personal correspondence is directed to both of them.

However, in the specific business and subject files, the material is directed to that person with a major concern in the particular project. A selected index has been prepared to cover the many personal and institutional names in this correspondence. In addition, a selected index has been made for the Adams-Newhall letters. Adams often sent many small postcards to the Newhalls; these cards were separated from the letter-size correspondence and filed together chronologically.

Correspondence

Series one: Correspondence, 1937 - 1983. Consists of handwritten originals, carbon copies, and photocopies of letters. There are many enclosures of other correspondence and printed materials in this series. Where possible, these enclosures were filed with the letters that they originally accompanied, otherwise they were filed chronologically with the general correspondence.

The bulk of the correspondence is between Nancy Newhall and Ansel Adams. Their letters, postcards, and telegrams are often lengthy; sometimes adding up to two or three notes a day. The topics of these letters are their joint projects including books, exhibitions, portfolios, and workshops; their personal acquaintances; and other matters. This correspondence includes many discussions, commentaries, and criticisms regarding contemporary developments in photography, conservation, and politics. The letters also serve as an index to the sundry assignments and proposed schemes of Adams and the Newhalls. A letter often extends into several typewritten pages itemizing the status of several concurrent projects, or relating their work schedules for the near future. This correspondence between good friends is frank, humorous, and detailed.

The Newhalls began a long friendship with Edward Weston around 1940. Through publications, exhibitions, and print sales, the Newhalls promoted Weston's work in the last two decades of his life. Before and after his death in 1958, Nancy Newhall, who was also Adams' appointed biographer, produced several monographs and articles about Weston. She had a decisive role in editing Weston's *Daybooks*, his personal diaries from the early 1920s onwards which were published in two volumes in 1961 and 1966. Beginning in 1937 with a letter from Weston to Beaumont congratulating him on his catalog for the exhibition "Photography 1839-1937" at the Museum of Modern Art, the correspondence between Weston and the Newhalls continues until 1945. The letters concern arrangements for meetings; mutual friends and adversaries; Weston's production of his books, prints, and numerous exhibitions; the intrusion of the war; the clan of cats in Carmel; brief observations on the activities of the Photo League; the Newhalls activities at the Museum of Modern Art, and later at the George Eastman House; and Weston's struggle with Parkinson's disease. These letters are photocopies of the originals which were given to the Museum of Modern Art by Beaumont Newhall.

Writings

Series two: Writings, ca. 1933 - 1981. Arranged alphabetically by author, and then chronologically. These files often contain correspondence, research materials, and

drafts of essays which relate to a particular topic, however, several of the files contain only fragments of the entire text.

The bulk of this series was authored by either Nancy or Beaumont Newhall, but there is a four page typescript, with corrections, by Ansel Adams titled "Statement for Camera Craft: f/64" which was written for publication in that periodical.

The writings of Nancy Newhall, 1937 - ca. 1971, are largely concerned with her projects done in conjunction with Ansel Adams. Of particular interest are the following titles: "The Photographer and Reality," ca. 1948, probably her first unpublished biography of Adams; *Mission San Xavier Del Bac*, 1953- 68, concerning the research and writing of an article and book on that mission near Tucson, Arizona; *The Eloquent Light*, ca. 1960s, her first published biographical volume on Adams covering his career from 1902 to 1938 and including her research notes and extracts from Adams' personal correspondence; *Fiat Lux: The University of California*, 1965-68, a comprehensive photographic essay which was commissioned for the centennial celebration of that institution; and "The Enduring Moment," ca. 1971, her unfinished second volume of Adams' biography documenting the middle years of his life.

There are only a few writings by Beaumont Newhall. These include some brief chronological notes outlining Adams' career; an article in French on Degas; a short introduction to the exhibition "Photo Eyes of the 20s"; and an inventory with photographs documenting a retrospective exhibition of the work of Brett Weston selected by the Newhalls. More complete are the final manuscript draft for *Photography: Essays and Images*, and drafts for the revised and enlarged edition of *The History of Photography*.

Subject files

Series three: Subject files, 1930 - 1983. Consists of clippings, correspondence, research notes, photocopies of printed materials, photographs, catalogs, and other items relating to a wide variety of activities by both Newhalls, but especially Nancy. These materials were sorted into artificial subject categories and relate to topics or organizations in which she had an interest. Selected headings in this group include architecture, conservation, the Sierra Club, photography, and radio.

There are several folders relating to the activities of Beaumont Newhall. Of exceptional interest is a 243 page photocopy of a course outline to a museum studies class at Harvard taught by noted curator Paul Sachs. Beaumont Newhall was a student in this class in the early 1930s. In addition, there are bibliographies of articles and monographs by Newhall, a brief listing of some books from his personal library donated to the Center in 1981, and his curriculum vitae current as of 1983. There are a few miscellaneous personal photographs in this series.

Arrangement

Series 1: Correspondence, 1937 – 1983

General, 1942-1983

Newhall, Nancy and Beaumont, 1952-1969

Adams, Ansel, 1937-1974

Weston, Edward, 1937-45

Series 2: Writings, circa 1933 – 1981

Adams, Ansel, ca. 1933

Newhall, Beaumont, 1947-1981

Newhall, Nancy, ca.1937-1971

Series 3: Subject files, 1930 – 1983

Series 4: Oversize Materials

Names and Subject Terms

Newhall, Beaumont, 1908-1993 [<https://lccn.loc.gov/n50004532>]

Newhall, Nancy [<https://lccn.loc.gov/n50004745>]

Restrictions

Conditions Governing Access

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

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright to images and writings by the Newhalls is held in trust. For permission to copy or publish copyrighted materials in the CCP collection, contact: David Scheinbaum, Co-Executor of the Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Estate, 369 Montezuma Avenue, Suite 345, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

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

This collection began as a gift from Beaumont Newhall to the CCP in 1975.

Preferred Citation

Beaumont and Nancy Newhall collection, 1930 - 1983. AG 48. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

Processing Information

Processed in spring 1985 by Roger Myers and Judith Leckrone. Revised September 1987. The finding aid was updated by Paloma Phelps in 2017.

Container List

Series 1: Correspondence, 1937 - 1983

Box Folder

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | General, 1942-83 Miscellaneous unknown and/or undated Between Nancy and Beaumont Newhall, 1944, 1952-1954, 1964, 1969 Adams, Ansel, n.d., 1937-46 |
| 2 | Adams, Ansel, 1947-1953 |
| 3 | Adams, Ansel, 1954-1961 |
| 4 | Adams, Ansel, 1962-1967 |
| 5 | Adams, Ansel, 1968-75 |
| 6 | Adams, Ansel, postcards, 1945-1974 |
| 7 | Weston, Edward, photocopies, 1937-57 |

Series 2: Writings, circa 1933 – 1981

Box Folder

- | | |
|---|--|
| 8 | Adams, Ansel: "Statement for Camera Craft: f/64," ca.1933 Newhall, Beaumont: <i>Southwest Log</i> , 1947. [Photocopy of manuscript account of trip to the southwest with Ansel Adams] "Degas Photographie Amateur," <i>Gazette Des Beaux Arts</i> , 1963 Notes by B. Newhall for a lecture on Adams at SUNY, 1970 "Eye of the 20's," statement on exhibition, 1970 "Voyage of the Eye: A Fifty Year Retrospective (1925-75) The Work of Brett Weston," 1975 <i>Photography: Essays and Images</i> , final ms., 1980 |
|---|--|

History of Photography, drafts chapters 1-16; notes and bibliography;
plate captions

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Newhall, Nancy:

"Introduction to France," circa 1937

"Maloney Book," correspondence, 1941-1945

"Maloney Book," illustrations list, circa 1942

"Maloney Book," manuscripts and books, circa 1942

"The Enduring Moment," research notes, circa 1943-1961

"The Enduring Moment," typed excerpts from Adams correspondence,
circa 1942-1963

"The Enduring Moment," drafts, circa 1940s

"Alfred Stieglitz," 1946

"Hors d'Oeuvre a la Russe," correspondence and text, 1946

Reminiscences of Musya Sheeler, circa 1946

"The Photographer and Reality: Ansel Adams," circa 1948

"Always the Far Horizon," correspondence, 1950-1951

"Always the Far Horizon," notes, 1951

"Always the Far Horizon," typescript dummy, 1951

"Death Valley," correspondence, 1952-55

"Death Valley," 1954

"The Pageant of History," 1953-55

"An Act of Dedication," pageant for Campfire Day, ca. 1953-71

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"Mission San Xavier Del Bac," correspondence, 1953-1969

"Mission San Xavier Del Bac," research notes and printed materials, 1953-
1969

"Mission San Xavier Del Bac," photocopy of manuscript with comments
by Father Celestine, 1954

"Mission San Xavier Del Bac," rough drafts, 1954

"Mission San Xavier Del Bac," drafts, 1954

"Mission San Xavier Del Bac," carbon copy of final draft, 1954

"Mission San Xavier Del Bac," galleys, 1954

"Mission San Xavier Del Bac," copy of 1st edition, 1954

"This is the American Earth" (exhibit), correspondence, 1954-1958

"This is the American Earth" (exhibit), rough drafts, 1955-1959

"This is the American Earth" (exhibit), notes and text for display panels,
circa 1956-1958

"This is the American Earth" (exhibit), reviews, 1956-1958

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"This is the American Earth" (book), correspondence, 1959

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"This is the American Earth" (book), correspondence, Jan.-Aug. 1960
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"This is the American Earth" (book), 2nd ed. corrections, 1960
"This is the American Earth" (book), German translation and correspondence, 1962
"This is the American Earth" (book), German translation photocopy, circa 1962
"This is the American Earth" (book), reviews, 1966
"This is the American Earth" (book), sheet music, record album using Newhall's text, 1976, 1978 [moved to oversize]
Article on Ynez Mexia, 1955
John Muir Film, 1956
"The Negro Exhibit," progress report and correspondence, 1956
A Contribution to the Heritage of Every American, correspondence, 1956-1958
A Contribution to the Heritage of Every American, notes, research materials, 1957
A Contribution to the Heritage of Every American, galleys, fragments, 1957
A Contribution to the Heritage of Every American, reviews, 1957
"A Nation of Nations," correspondence and reviews, 1957
Masters of Photography, "Ansel Adams" chapter, circa 1958
"Portrait of the Universe," outline, circa 1959
"History of Yosemite," research notes, circa 1959
"The San Francisco Book," correspondence and outline, 1959
"Sanctuary in adobe," rough drafts, 1960
"Sanctuary in adobe," printers dummies, 1960
"Sanctuary in adobe," correspondence, 1960-1962
"The Eloquent Light," research notes, n.d.
"The Eloquent Light," research notes on family history, n.d.
"The Eloquent Light," research notes: typed extracts from Adams correspondence, 1920s
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"The Eloquent Light," bibliography, circa 1963
"The Eloquent Light," exhibition catalog, 1963
"The Eloquent Light," letters of congratulations and other correspondence, 1963-1964

- "Fiat Lux," Correspondence, 1965-1966
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"The Enduring Moment," chapter 2, "Images of America: tempest in a hall bedroom"
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"The Enduring Moment," chapter 6, "Bumper crop of ambrosia: observer in Carmel, San Francisco; the National Park Service"

"The Enduring Moment," chapter 6, "Bumper crop of ambrosia: snafu, affirmations"

"The Enduring Moment," miscellaneous

"Introduction to the *Persistence of Beauty*, 1969 [moved to oversize]

"Great Classics: Ansel Adams," 1969

The Tetons and the Yellowstone, book review, 1971

Series 3: Subject files, 1930 – 1983

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Architecture: clippings, notes, reprints, 1938, 1951, 1958

Art: Paul Sachs Museum Course, 1930 (4 folders)

Bibliographic: bibliography of Beaumont Newhall, 1971

Bibliographic: books by Beaumont Newhall, 1937-1983

Bibliographic: inventory of selected books and catalogues from Beaumont Newhall's library, 1981

Biographical: curriculum vitae of B. Newhall, 1983

Biographical: U.S. Army certificate of service of B. Newhall [photocopy], 1945

Conservation, general: clippings, 1960-1972

Conservation, general: misc. conservation group pamphlets, 1954-1971

Miscellaneous: brochures, announcements, circa 1960s

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Sierra Club: financial statements, 1963-1968

Sierra Club: miscellaneous, 1966

Sierra Club: newsletters, Finger Lake and Rochester groups, 1969-71

Sierra Club: outings, openings, exhibits, 1965-68

Sierra Club: publications: *The Argonaut*, 1965, 1969

Sierra Club: publications: book announcements, advertising, 1962-68

Sierra Club: publications: *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 1958
Sierra Club: publications: *The Southern Sierra*, 1968
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"This is the American Earth," sound recording of Wilkinson's cantata,
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Ivancovich, Jane

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