In Our Path: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Diann Benti.
Photo Archives
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
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Overview of the Collection

Title: In Our Path

Dates (inclusive): approximately 1982-1995

Collection Number: photCL 480

Creator: Gates, Jeff, 1949-

Extent: 46 photographs : gelatin silver prints ; images 11 x 14 in., mounts 16 x 20 in.

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Language: English.

Note: Finding aid last updated on May 29, 2014.

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Preferred Citation
In Our Path. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance
Acquired from Jeff Gates in 2007.

Historical Note
Jeff Gates (born 1949) began photographing the construction and community impact of the Century Freeway in Los Angeles, California, in 1982 and 1983. The 18-mile freeway (also known as Interstate 105 and the Glenn Anderson Freeway) runs east-west from near El Segundo and the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to Norwalk, and bisects the communities of Hawthorne, Willowbrook, Lynwood, and Downey.

Planning for the freeway began in the late 1950s, but was stalled when homeowners in the path of the proposed route and other plaintiffs sued the State in 1972. The plaintiffs won an injunction against further development that lasted until 1981, when the Final Consent Decree was issued. Construction began in 1982, and the freeway opened on October 14, 1993.

Gates's initial set of 19 photographs, entitled In Our Path, was exhibited in the Downey Museum of Art in 1983. In 1984, Gates received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship for the series. In the early 1990s, the law firm of Hall & Associates commissioned a second set of photographs of the construction area from Gates. The two sets of photographs were exhibited together at the Downey Museum of Art and El Camino College in 1995. A photograph from the series was included in This Side of Paradise: Body and Landscape in L.A., an exhibit at the Huntington Library in June 2008.

Scope and Content
In Our Path contains two series of black-and-white photographs by Jeff Gates that chronicle the construction and impact of the I-105 Century Freeway in Los Angeles, California, between 1982 and 1983 and later from 1990 and 1995. The first set of 19 images focus primarily on the initial condemnation and relocation of houses and property in the proposed path of the freeway in the early 1980s. The later set of 27 images document the continued construction in the early 1990s and the opening of the freeway.

Each set of photographs is accompanied by a letterpress title page, introduction, and numbered descriptive notes by the photographer.
Arrangement
The photographs are arranged numerically in the two series according to the original image numbers assigned by the photographer.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Subjects
Wilson, Pete, 1933-- Photographs.
California. Dept. of Transportation -- Photographs.
Abandoned houses -- Photographs.
Construction workers -- Photographs.
Dwellings -- California -- Los Angeles -- Photographs.
Express highways -- California -- Los Angeles -- Photographs.
Express highways -- Social aspects -- California -- Los Angeles -- Photographs.
Relocation (Housing) -- California -- California Century Freeway -- Photographs.
Roads -- California -- Los Angeles -- Design and construction -- Photographs.
Swimming pools -- Photographs.
Vacant lands -- Photographs.
Transportation -- California -- Los Angeles -- Design and construction -- Photographs.
California Century Freeway (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Downey (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Hawthorne (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Los Angeles (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Norwalk (Calif.) -- Photographs.

Forms/Genres
Documentary photographs.
Photographs.
Box 1

photCL 480 Part I, 1982-1983

Physical Description: 19 photographs in 1 box

Scope and Content

This set of 19 loose prints documents the Century Freeway project from 1982 to 1983. The images consist primarily of the exteriors of condemned buildings with boarded-up windows, vacant yards, and relocated houses on flat-bed trucks. Image 19 includes a dog corpse in a yard. The photographs are accompanied by a letterpress title page, introduction, and numbered descriptive notes by the photographer.

Image titles transcribed from the accompanying "Notes on Photographs."

Part I Photographs:

• (1) Downey, California
• (2) Norwalk, California (Aerial photograph)
• (3) Downey, California
• (4) Downey, California (Aerial photograph)
• (5-8) Downey, California
• (9) Downey, California (Vacant field with foundation remnants)
• (10) Downey, California
• (11) Hawthorne, California
• (12) Downey, California (Backyard swimming pool with painted palm trees)
• (13) Hawthorne, California (Boundary of the Century Freeway right-of-way)
• (14-18) Los Angeles, California
• (19) Downey, California

Box 2

photCL 480 Part II, 1990-1995

Physical Description: 27 photographs in 1 box

Scope and Content

This set of 27 loose prints documents the Century Freeway project from 1990 to 1995. The images consist of views of vacant lots, construction workers, the unfinished freeway, runners on the highway participating in the "Run of the Century" race, and the October 14, 1983, Opening Day Festivities, including a photograph of California Governor Pete Wilson and officials during the pledge of allegiance. The photographs are accompanied by a letterpress title page, introduction, and numbered descriptive notes for images 1-11 by the photographer.

Image titles for 1-11 are transcribed from the accompanying "Notes on Photographs."

Part II Photographs:

• (1-2) Century Freeway Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program
• (3) Morning Rush Hour
• (4) Willco Dump near Normandie and Imperial
• (5) Hawthorne Terrance Replenishing Housing Project
• (6) Run of the Century
• (7-11) Opening Day Festivities
• (12-27) [Untitled images of construction area]