Guide to the Seema Weatherwax photographs M0868

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2006
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URL: http://library.stanford.edu/spc
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Department of Special Collections and University Archives
Title: Seema Weatherwax photographs
creator: Weatherwax, Seema, 1905-2006
Identifier/Call Number: M0868
Physical Description: 3 linear ft.
Physical Description: 3 box(es)
Date (inclusive): 1933-1993
Abstract: Seema Aissen Weatherwax was a photographer and social activist who was part of the Film and Photo League, worked with Ansel Adams in Yosemite, and shot Woody Guthrie and migrant workers at a California FSA camp. Collection contains prints and negatives, as well as an original typescript by her husband John Weatherwax.
Access
Collection is open for research; materials must be requested at least 36 hours in advance of intended use.
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Preferred Citation
Seema Weatherwax photographs, M0868. Dept. of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.
Biography / Administrative History
Emigrating from Tsarist Russia with her parents in 1913 to escape persecution and the conscription act, Seema Aissen graduated from high school and began studying science courses in Leeds, England. A few years after her father's death, her mother took the three daughters to Boston to join relatives, and Seema became involved in photography. She moved to Southern California in 1929, lived in Tahiti for a year, and upon returning to Los Angeles joined the Film and Photo League in 1934. Ansel Adams asked her to run his darkroom in Yosemite in 1938. The following year she assisted Adams with the first Camera Workshop in Yosemite. In 1941 Seema met the writer Jack Weatherwax, and together with folk singer Woody Guthrie visited the Shafter Farm Security Administration Camp, managed by noted civil rights advocate Fred Ross. At Shafter she photographed Dust Bowl refugees and their surroundings. The Weatherwaxes moved to Santa Cruz, California in 1984. Following the death of her husband, Seema continued her activism, including working with the NAACP and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and at the age of 95 organized the first exhibition of her work. She passed away in 2006, two months shy of her 101st birthday.
Scope and Content of Collection
Collection contains prints and negatives of the 1933 Long Beach earthquake (commercial prints not by Weatherwax) ; Woodie Guthrie, Fred Ross, and the Shafter farm labor camp, 1941 ; a Los Angeles labor demonstration, 1945 ; the Hollywood strike, 1945 ; and many formal and informal photographs from the Yosemite camera workshops with Ansel Adams and Edward Weston, 1941-1942. Also included is a 24-page typescript, "The Queen of Montgomery Street," by her husband, John M. Weatherwax.
Related Materials
University of California, Santa Cruz also holds a collection on Seema Weatherwax. The Archives of American Art holds a collection of John Weatherwax papers related to Rivera and Kahlo.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Agricultural laborers--California.
Demonstrations--California.
Earthquakes--Long Beach.
Photography.
Shafter (Calif.)
Yosemite
Weatherwax, Seema, 1905-2006
Adams, Ansel, 1902-1984
Ross, Fred, 1910-1992
Series 1. Photographs

box 1, folder 1  Long Beach Earthquake, 1933 (photographer unknown) 1933
  Physical Description: 53 photos in 16 sheets

box 1, folder 2  Yosemite, Ansel Adams Camera Workshop 1938 - 1940
  Physical Description: 19 sheets
  Scope and Contents
  Lee Warren, Ansel Adams' secretary, First Camera Workshop, Bests Studio, Yosemite, Seema's Apartment, Party at Studio in Yosemite, Ansel Adams in Yosemite, Seema Weatherwax, Virginia Adams 1993

box 1, folder 3  I am an American Day, Los Angeles 1940 - 1950
  Physical Description: 15 sheets (photographs and negatives)

box 1, folder 4  Sir Lancelot, Trinidad Performers 1940 - 1950
  Physical Description: 8 sheets

box 1, folder 5  Demonstrations for Jobs, Los Angeles, 1945
  Physical Description: 6 sheets

box 1, folder 6  Hollywood Strike 1945, Shafter Farm Camp Negatives 1941
  Physical Description: 22 sheets

box 1, folder 7  Russian Delegates to the U.N. Conference 1945
  Physical Description: 5 sheets

box 1, folder 8  Shafter Farm Labor Camp 1941
  Physical Description: 4 photographs in 4 sheets

box 1, folder 9  Shafter Farm Camp, the Californians Magazine [1 of 2] 1941
  Physical Description: 14 photographs, 15 sheets

box 1, folder 10  Shafter Farm Camp, The Californians Magazine [2 of 2] 1941
  Physical Description: 11 photographs in 11 sheets

box 1, folder 11  Return to Shafter Farm Camp, 1994 1994
  Physical Description: 26 color photographs in 10 sheets

Series 2. Papers

box 1, folder 12  Typed Labels for Shafter Camp Photographs 1991
box 1, folder 13  Notes for Filmstrip: El Camino Viejo, nd
  Physical Description: 4 typed sheets

box 1, folder 14  Script for "Who Wants War?Who Wants Peace?"[in English and Spanish] nd
  Physical Description: 18 typed sheets
Series 2. Papers

box 1, folder 15  American Negro History filmstrip script  nd
                   Physical Description: 4 typed sheets

box 1, folder 16  Correspondence, U.S. Dept. of Interior 1983
                   Physical Description: 2 typed sheets

box 1, folder 17  Typescript by Jack Weatherwax, “The Queen of Montgomery Street”  nd
                   Physical Description: 24 typed pages

box 1, folder 18  Correspondence, various  nd
                   Physical Description: 61 typed pages
                   Scope and Contents
                   correspondence re Woody Guthrie photographs, obituaries of Fred Ross, correspondence
                   regarding The Californians article, Biographical sketch of Seema Weatherwax

box 1, folder 19  The Californians Magazine (2) 1992, 1993
                   Physical Description: 2 issues of The Californians Magazine
                   Scope and Contents
                   typed biographical sketch of Seema WeatherwaxThe Californians, Vol.9 No.4, The
                   Californians, Vol.10, No.4

Series 3. Matted photographs

box 2, folder 1  Portraits, people 1942 - 1946
                   Physical Description: 6 matted black and white photographs
                   Scope and Contents
                   baby in yard, 1944, Ansel Adams, 1946, Lee Warren (2) 1946, Gypsy Mary - Las Vegas,
                   1942, Old Miner - Las Vegas, 1942

box 2, folder 2  Yosemite, High Sierras 1938 - 1941
                   Physical Description: 6 black and white matted photographs
                   Scope and Contents
                   High Sierras, Storm Yosemite, Storm Yosemite, 1938, Yosemite, 1940, Yosemite, 1941,
                   High Sierras 11,000 feet, 1946

box 2, folder 3  Nature, Scenes from Train 1940 - 1946
                   Physical Description: 4 black and white matted photographs
                   Scope and Contents
                   Scene from Train, 1946, Scene from Back of Train, 1946, Untitled, 1940, Monterey, 1946

Series 4. Audio-visual Materials

   Conditions Governing Access
   The Media materials require at least two weeks advance notice to use in order to allow staff
   time to have use copies made from the original items.

box 3, othertype 1  El Taller de Grafica Popular  nd
                   Physical Description: 1 filmstrip

box 3, othertype 1  California’s Gold  nd
                   Physical Description: video
                   Scope and Contents
                   Episode #601, “Weed Patch”
box 3, othertype 2

**Taller de Grafica Popular 1996**

- **Physical Description:** video
- **Scope and Contents**
  - Taller de Grafica Popular, Who Wants War, Who Wants Peace