F. Allan Morgan Collection

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Descriptive Summary

Title: F. Allan Morgan Collection

Dates: 1925-1945

Collection Number: 1993.0006

Creator/Collector: F. Allan MorganGrace Morgan F. Allan Morgan Photography Company

Extent: 38 boxes

Repository: UC Riverside. California Museum of Photography
Riverside, California 92501

Abstract: The F. Allan Morgan Collection is comprised of photography taken by Allan Morgan and Grace Morgan with the bulk of the work taken with in the 1930s. The collection is comprised of 23 boxes of gelatin silver film negatives and 15 boxes of prints, most of which are vintage. The majority of the subject matter is social realism, however there are also many salon-style photographs.

Language of Material: English

Access

Collection is open for research, by appointment.

Preferred Citation

F. Allan Morgan Collection. UC Riverside. California Museum of Photography

Acquisition Information

Part of the Bingham Collection, acquired in 1973

Biography/Administrative History

Due to being found in collection at the California Museum of Photography, we have no current resources for compiling biographical information on the F. Allan Morgan collection outside of what can be gleaned from the materials themselves. The F. Allan Morgan Photography Company was based in New York City, first at 15 East 59th Street, New York, NY then later moved to 28 Dogwood Terrace Livingston, New Jersey. Many of the prints within the collection were signed by either F. Allan Morgan or Grace Morgan, it is currently unclear what relation Grace had to Allan but the later address labels seemingly affectionately list him as F. Allan ‘Dad’ Morgan. While the majority of the prints seemed to be taken and exhibited by F. Allan Morgan, Grace Morgan took and exhibited numerous photos as well. Both Allan and Grace Morgan were active in photography clubs in New York as well as some in other New England states. In addition to exhibiting and teaching in these clubs Allan and Grace also traveled with them for photography outings visiting Florida, Cape Cod, Niagara Falls, and Washington D.C.

Scope and Content of Collection

The F. Allan Morgan Collection is comprised of photos taken by both Frank Allan Morgan and Grace Morgan. It is a found in collection, from 1993 at the California Museum of Photography. This collection is comprised of gelatin silver negatives and numerous vintage prints ranging from the late 1920’s to the early 1940’s. Unfortunately, many of the negatives suffer from vinegar syndrome, which is causing them to degrade. The majority of the photos display a dedication to social realism with particular focus on the great depression, subsequent poverty in New York City and its many relief programs. The F. Allan Morgan Photography Company Collection highlights conditions found within newly established social and financial aid programs created by the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration such as Dining halls, Social Welfare Camps, men’s homes, women’s homes, nursery schools as well as hospitals for the ill, elderly, and impaired. Morgan’s work was frequently published in newspapers, including the New York Tribune and New York Times, as well as magazines and charity publications. Many of these publications were saved in clippings and are viewable in the collection. Most frequently, Morgan’s work was published in a magazine entitled Better Times that chronicled many of the newly formed relief programs. This collection also contains pieces in which Allan Morgan has utilized montage; this was a subject he gave several lectures and lessons on at local photography clubs. He frequently used the technique for picturesque purposes often adding more dramatic shadows or skies to boating scenes. However, there are more elaborate usages of the technique within the collection as well. While the bulk of the images would be classified as social realism, the Morgans showed a particular interest creating in salon style works wherein they experimented with composition and lighting, another subject upon which Allan lectured extensively at various photography clubs in New England. These photos range from such oddities as an Abraham Lincoln impersonator to a roman centurion, both of which were used in print advertisements. Within the collection of negatives there is a large quantity of studio portrait photos, some of which were used in publication.

Indexing Terms
Social Realism
Montages
Great Depression
Boats and Boating
Squatter settlements
Public welfare--United States
Morgan, F. Allan
Morgan, Grace
New York (N.Y.)
Gelatin silver prints