

Charles F. Berg photographs collection, 1900-1974

Overview of the Collection

Title	Charles F. Berg photographs collection
Dates	1900-1974 (inclusive) 1900 1974
Quantity	2 cubic feet, (1,029 photographs and 122 safety negatives in 3 boxes; 15 photographs in 1 album; and 1 glass lantern slide)
Collection Number	Org. Lot 103
Summary	Photographs collected by Charles F. Berg (1871-1932) and his son, Forrest Talbot Berg (b. 1901), owners and operators of Charles F. Berg Company, a major women's apparel store in Portland, Or. The photographs depict the stores owned by the company, as well as its predecessors, as well as store events, fashions, sales, and personnel, 1900-1974.
Repository	Oregon Historical Society, Davies Family Research Library Davies Family Research Library Oregon Historical Society 1200 SW Park Avenue Portland, OR 97205 Telephone: 503-306-5240 Fax: 503-219-2040 libreference@ohs.org
Access Restrictions	The collection is open to the public.
Languages	English.
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Historical Note

Charles F. Berg Company was first established as Lennon's in Portland, Or. in 1907 when the San Francisco retailer by that name purchased John Allesina's Umbrella Store at 309 Morrison Street. Charles F. Berg joined the firm that same year and moved to Portland to manage the new store. Berg sold women's specialty items such as umbrellas, gloves, and hosiery at Lennon's until 1921, when he became sole owner of the Portland store and changed its name to Charles F. Berg. Shortly thereafter, he expanded the store to include moderately priced to better women's apparel and opened shops at other downtown locations. "Who's Your Hosier?" and "Glovingly Yours" became well-known advertising slogans for the stores.

Forrest Berg joined the staff in 1922 to manage the store's newly opened Ready-to-Wear Department. At a time when most stores catered to the "mature woman," he saw a market for younger fashions, and under his direction, Berg's became a leader in selling apparel in smaller sizes to younger women. The store formed the first college board in the Pacific Northwest in 1924 and, in the early 1940s, added high

school boards. These students boards, which were representative of local colleges and high schools, were employed as sales clerks on alternate Saturdays throughout the year. Board members were also actively involved in sales promotions such as fashion shows and "Date with Dad" nights. The 1920s also saw the introduction of the "Chumley" label. Later the slogan "Chumley Young Fashions" was adopted.

In 1929 Charles Berg leased and significantly renovated in the art deco style Dolph Building at 614 S.W. Broadway, and in 1930, the store moved to that location. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Sites in 1983. In response to the growth of west suburban Portland, Charles F. Berg, Inc. purchased the Dark Horse store in Beaverton in 1960. Renamed The Charles F. Berg Dark Horse, the Beaverton store operated with the same merchandise and took part in the same promotions and employee activities as the downtown Portland store. Forrest T. Berg sold the company to Rusans, a Washington clothing chain, in 1975.

For additional historical background, such as explanations of special store promotions and staff activities, see Folder A in Box 1. Included there are descriptions of store activities provided by Doris Wills Setzer, formerly Vice President and Chief Executive Officer of Charles F. Berg, Inc. Ms. Setzer provided valuable assistance in organizing and identifying photographs in the collection.

Content Description

This collection consists of photographs, dating from 1900-1974, that were collected by Charles F. Berg (1871-1931) and his son, Forrest Talbot Berg (b. 1901), owners and operators of Charles F. Berg Company, a major women's apparel store in Portland, Or. The collection includes images of the downtown Charles F. Berg stores as well as their predecessors, the John Allesina Umbrella Store and Lennon's, and the Charles F. Berg Dark Horse, a branch store in Beaverton, Or. Photographs of store interiors, displays, and promotions illustrate changes in fashion, market emphasis, and merchandising techniques during the history of the company. Images relating to store personnel document efforts by the management to motivate employees and encourage good relations between executive and sales personnel.

The works of numerous Portland commercial photographers, including Ackroyd Photos, Allen J. DeLay, Columbia Studio, and Photo Arts, are represented in the collection. Photographs dating from the 1960s are primarily color snapshots photographed by members of the store's personnel department. There is also one lantern slide in the collection.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

The Oregon Historical Society is the owner of the materials in the Research Library and makes available reproductions for research, publication, and other uses. Written permission must be obtained from the Research Library prior to any use of reproductions. The Society does not necessarily hold copyright to all the materials in the collections. In some cases, permission for use of reproductions may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright holders.

Preferred Citation

Charles F. Berg photographs collection, Org. Lot 103, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into the following series:

Series A: Background information

Series B: Predecessor stores, 1900-1916

Series C: Charles F. Berg stores, circa 1920-1974

Series D: The Dark Horse store, Beaverton, Or., circa 1960-1974

Acquisition Information

Library accession no. 14599 (Photo accession no. 1978D092); Library accession no. 17706 (Photo accession no. 1986D036); and Library accession no. 17654 (Photo accession no. 1986D019).

Separated Materials

Manuscript materials were separated into the Charles Forest Berg papers, Mss 2512, in the Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series A: Background information

Box-folder1/A

Contains clippings, press releases, publicity material, and typescript letters from Doris Wills Setzer on the history of the Charles F. Berg Company.

Series B: Predecessor stores, 1900-1916

6 items.

The Charles F. Berg store was preceded by the John Allesina Umbrella Store, which was located at 309 Morrison, Portland, Or. before 1907, and Lennon's, which was located at 309 Morrison Street in Portland, Or. from 1907-1921.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	John Allesina Umbrella Store	1900
1/1	Lennon's	1916 and undated

Series C: Charles F. Berg Store, circa 1920-1974

966 items.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/2	Buildings--309-313 Morrison Street store	circa 1921; 1923; undated
1/2	Buildings--The Waist Shop at the Portland Hotel	circa 1920-1929
1/2	Buildings--6th and Washington Street store	circa 1926; undated
1/3	Buildings--6th SW Broadway store--Exteriors	1968; undated
1/3-6, 3/16	Buildings--6th SW Broadway store--Interiors, miscellaneous	circa 1920-1969
1/7	Buildings--6th SW Broadway store--Interiors, Christmas decorations	1939; circa 1960-1969; 1973
1/8	Buildings--6th SW Broadway store--Interiors, flood damage caused by broken water pipe	1957
1/9-1/11	Fashions--Window displays	1924-1974
1/12, 3/16	Fashions--In-store displays and modelling	1966; 1968-1969
1/13-1/16	Fashions--Fashion shows	1923-1924; 1949; 1957-1958; undated
1/17	Fashions--Special promotions and displays	circa 1965; 1967-1968
1/18	Fashions--Rose Festival Court	circa 1940s
1/19	Fashions--Miscellaneous See also scrapbooks in the Charles F. Berg papers, Mss 2512.	undated
1/20	Special events and sales--Charity sales	1974
1/21	Special events and sales--"Date with Dad"	circa 1960s

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/22	Special events and sales--Fiftieth anniversary celebration	1956
1/23	Special events and sales--George Washington's Birthday sale	1938; 1951-1952; 1956; 1968; undated
3/17	Special events and sales--Goodwill donation sale	undated
1/24	Special events and sales--Opening of Park Street addition	circa 1960
1/25, 3/15	Special events and sales--Re-opening of bridal salon on the third floor	1974
1/26	Special events and sales--"Who's Your Hosier" sale	1972
1/27	College and high school board activities--College Board	1930-1940
1/28-1/32, 3/8	College and high school board activities--Hi Board See also scrapbooks in the Charles F. Berg papers, Mss 2512.	1960; 1967-1970; 1973; undated
2/1, 3/26	Personnel--Charles F. Berg President of Charles F. Berg, Inc., 1921-1932.	1907; 1920; circa 1930; undated
2/2-2/4	Personnel --Forrest Talbot Berg President of Charles F. Berg, Inc., 1932-1975.	1954-1955; 1968; 1970-1971; 1974; undated
2/5-2/6	Personnel--Staff	1926; 1967-1969; 1971-1973; undated
2/7	Personnel--Sales and service awards--\$100,000 sales club	undated
2/8-2/9, 3/21	Personnel--Sales and service awards--service pin awards	circa 1950-1979
1/9a	Personnel--Activities--World War II activities Includes photographs of launch of landing craft LCI 741 at Commercial Iron Works and the store sponsored party for the crew in 1944, as well as sales promotions to raise money to	1943-1944

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	send cigarettes to Oregon and Washington men in the South Pacific in 1943.	
2/10, 3/14	Personnel--Activities--Rose Festival floral displays created by members of the store's staff	1969-1975
2/11, 3/13	Personnel--Activities--Make and Bake sale	1974
2/12-18, 3/1-3	Personnel--Activities--Christmas parties	1944; circa 1950-1969
3/5	Personnel--Activities--Costume party	circa 1950s
3/6	Personnel--Miscellaneous	undated

Series D: The Dark Horse store, circa 1960-1973

90 items

The Dark Horse store was located at 10 N. E. Canyon Road (now 12345 SW Canyon Road), Beaverton, Or.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
3/7, 3/22	Building--Exteriors	1960
Album		
Album 782	Building--Interiors	1960
Box/Folder		
3/8	Builsing--Interiors	circa 1960-1979
Album		
Album 782	Special events--Store opening	1960
Box/Folder		
3/23	Special events--Rose Festival floral displays	undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
3/9, 3/24	Special events--Men's Night	1968
3/14	Special events-- <i>Seventeen Day</i>	1970
3/11	Personnel--Portraits	1969; 1973; undated
3/12	Personnel--\$100,000 Sales Club See also 2/6.	1973

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Fashion merchandising--Photographs
Retail trade--Employees--Oregon--Portland--Photographs
Stores, Retail--Oregon--Portland--Photographs

Personal Names :

Berg, Charles F., 1871-1932--Photographs
Berg, Forrest Talbot, b. 1901--Photographs

Corporate Names :

Charles F. Berg, Inc. (Portland, Or.)--Photographs.

Geographical Names :

Portland (Or.)--Buildings, structures, etc.--Photographs.

Form or Genre Terms :

Lantern slides
Photographic prints
Safety film negatives

Other Creators :

Personal Names :

DeLay, Allen J.
(photographer)
Ackroyd Photos (Portland, Or.)
(photographers)
Photo Arts (Portland, Or.)
(photographers)
Columbia Studio (Portland, Or.)
(photographers)

2006



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Creative Commons Licenses in Archives West:
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/cc-attr.shtml>