

Doris Ulmann photographs, 1914-1934

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Ulmann, Doris, 1882-1934
Title	Doris Ulmann photographs
Dates	1914-1934 (bulk) 1914 1934 1914-2010 (inclusive) 1914 2010
Quantity	69.8 linear feet, (152 containers (15 flat boxes, 28 flat legal clamshells, 1 phase box, 108 negative boxes))
Collection Number	PH038
Summary	Doris Ulmann (1822-1934) was a New York photographer. The collection consists of vintage prints, proof prints bound in albums, and glass-plate negatives primarily featuring portraits of notable people, craftspeople, and farmers. The collection also includes reference prints and negatives reproduced from Ulmann's original negatives.
Repository	University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives. UO Libraries--SCUA 1299 University of Oregon Eugene OR 97403-1299 Telephone: 541-346-3068 spcarref@uoregon.edu
Access Restrictions	Collection is open to the public. Collection must be used in Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room. Collection or parts of collection may be stored offsite. Please contact Special Collections and University Archives in advance of your visit to allow for transportation time. Glass plate negatives and lantern slides are restricted due to the fragility of the format. All decisions regarding use will be at the discretion of the curator for visual materials.
Additional Reference Guides	See the Current Collection Guide for detailed description and requesting options.
Languages	English

Historical Note

Doris Ulmann (1882-1934) was born in New York City. In 1900 she was enrolled in the school of the Ethical Culture Society. After graduation, Ulmann enrolled at Columbia University's Teacher's College where she fell under the tutelage of photography instructor Clarence H. White. White was a founding

member of Photo-Secession in 1902 and a recognized leader of the Pictorialist movement. Though sympathetic to Pictorialism, Ulmann began to depart from its standard form in her photographic work.

By 1918 she began to pursue portraiture as her primary focus. Using her Park Avenue apartment as a studio, Ulmann photographed many well-known writers, intellectuals, and artists. Ulmann's work was featured in several fine press books: *Twenty-four Portraits of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University* (1920), *A Book of Portraits of the Medical Department of Johns Hopkins University* (1922), and *A Portrait Gallery of American Editors* (1925).

Ulmann's initial reputation was built upon her portraiture of prominent sitters, but the major work of her life involved photographing rural people of the South. By 1925, Ulmann began to take trips outside of New York City in search of subjects. These outings led her to photograph Dunkard, Mennonite, and Shaker communities in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York. During this period Ulmann traveled to the Southern Highlands region of Kentucky where she took thousands of photographs in rural, isolated communities. These images were published in Allen Eaton's book, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands* (1934). Ulmann also photographed the Gullahs of the Sea Islands and tidewater areas of South Carolina and Georgia. Seventy-two of these images appear in Julia Peterkin's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1934).

Until her death she made yearly trips to photograph in remote regions of Appalachia with her assistant John Jacob Niles. Doris Ulmann died on August 28, 1934.

Content Description

Series 1: Prints includes 304 original matted prints. Of these prints, approximately half are platinum prints that were mounted and signed by Ulmann; the others are silver gelatin prints developed by Samuel H. Lifshy, a New York commercial photographer, after Ulmann's death at the request of the Ulmann Foundation. The prints are 6.5 x 8.5" mounted onto approximately 11.5 x 14.25" boards with window mats.

The subject matter of the prints includes portraits in studio settings of famous figures and of rural residents from Appalachia and the South. The matted prints are organized into subseries based on the depicted setting and project: 1.1: Studio portraits and 1.2: Rural photography. Many of these portraits appear in Ulmann's published books of photogravures and these are described in 1.1 Studio portraits when available. Many of the celebrity portraits also include an inscription and signature of the sitter on the front of the mat.

Prints in Subseries 1.2: Rural photography generally have no formal titles assigned by Ulmann and includes some still lifes and landscapes in addition to the portraits. In both subseries, names of sitters have been described when available.

Series 2: Albums includes 81 albums containing over 10,000 proof prints assembled by the Doris Ulmann Foundation. These proof prints were printed between 1934 and 1937 by S. H. Lifshy after Ulmann's death from her original glass plate negatives. The albums were annotated with dates of capture and sitter's names by the Ulmann Foundation.

Series 3: Secondary material primarily includes copy reference prints and negatives reproduced from Ulmann's glass negatives after the collection was acquired by UO Libraries. These are organized by creator, including prints and negatives created by David Featherstone and prints, negatives, and slides created by UO Libraries or unnamed creators.

David Featherstone (b. 1945) is the author of *Doris Ulmann: American portraits* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) and the prints in this series were created during his research on the book. There are 383 prints of 100 images and 10 negatives by Featherstone. This series also includes a twenty-first century portrait of one of Ulmann's sitters, Frances Stiles Whitener, in her old age holding Ulmann's photos of her as a youth.

Series 4: Negatives includes glass plate negatives. These are the only remaining known Ulmann negatives.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Property rights reside with Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries. Copyright resides with the creators of the documents or their heirs. All requests for permission to publish collection materials must be submitted to Special Collections and University Archives. The reader must also obtain permission of the copyright holder.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Doris Ulmann photographs, PH038_[item number], Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.

Alternative Forms Available

Selected items are available online in the [Doris Ulmann photographs, 1920s-1934](#) in Oregon Digital.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The Doris Ulmann photographs are arranged in four series:

Series 1: Prints, 1916-1934. Series 2: Albums, circa 1915-1934. Series 3: Secondary material, circa 1934-2010. Series 4: Negatives, circa 1915-1934.

Series 1: Prints is arranged in two subseries:

Subseries 1.1: Studio portraits, 1916-1931 and Subseries 1.2: Rural photography, circa 1917-1934. Studio portraits are arranged into headings by title of publication when possible. Within headings, items are arranged alphabetically by name of sitter. Rural photography is arranged alphabetically by title or name where identified.

Series 2: Albums is arranged numerically by unique identifier of albums.

Series 3: Secondary material is arranged alphabetically.

Series 4: Negatives is arranged numerically by unique identifier of negatives (enumeration assigned by Ulmann Foundation prior to acquisition).

Custodial History

After Ulmann's death in 1934, the contents of her studio were placed in storage at Columbia University. The artist's will had established a foundation of five trustees to administer the disposition of her collection. One of the first acts of the Ulmann Foundation was to oversee the development of the negatives that Ulmann made during her final trip to Appalachia. To do so, they enlisted the help of S.H. Lifshay, a New York commercial photographer. After developing these most recent negatives, Lifshay then turned his attention to creating proof prints from the vast archive of glass plate negatives.

The proof prints of the 10,000 negatives were then mounted in albums. Allen Eaton, chairman of the Ulmann Foundation, and John Jacob Niles, Ulmann's assistant during her Appalachian tours, annotated the albums. In addition to creation of these proof prints, prints were created for Berea College in Kentucky. Approximately three thousand prints, largely of Appalachian subjects, were delivered to Berea. The task of developing negatives, printing proof prints and assembling them in the albums, and preparing prints for Berea was finally completed in 1937.

The Ulmann archive—the glass negatives and albums of proof prints as well as her personal collection of platinum prints—remained in storage at Columbia University until the early 1950s when the University, needing more storage space for its own collections, asked the Foundation to attend to its removal. Martin Schmitt, former curator of Special Collections (1948-1978) at the University of Oregon Library, became aware of the archive and had concern for its preservation. A number of institutions expressed interest in portions of the collection; only the University of Oregon made a commitment to maintaining the entire collection. The Ulmann Foundation welcomed the offer from Oregon. After successful negotiations between Columbia University, the Ulmann Foundation, and the University of Oregon, arrangements were made for the transfer of the collection to the University of Oregon.

Despite concern for maintaining the congruity of the collection, prior to the transfer of the archive, the Foundation decided for what were termed "practical reasons" to reduce the weight of the shipment: approximately seven thousand glass negatives were destroyed. These lost images are preserved only in the remaining proof prints. The surviving archive—the glass plate negatives, proof prints, and original platinum prints—was shipped to the University of Oregon in June 1954. Concurrent with the Oregon shipment, the Foundation deposited approximately twenty-five hundred platinum prints from Ulmann's personal collection at the New York Historical Society.

Acquisition Information

Gift of the Doris Ullman Foundation, 1954. Featherstone prints gift of David Featherstone, 2006. Whitener portrait gift of Marsha Franklin Whitener, 2012.

Related Materials

A 1957 audio interview with Ulmann's assistant John Jacob Niles giving a biographical account of Doris Ulmann and their project is available in the [University Archives sound recordings collection \(UA 180\)](#). A digitized copy of Niles's interview is available online in [Oregon Digital](#), restricted to on-campus access only.

Detailed Description of the Collection

[Guide to the Doris Ulmann photographs](#)

Doris Ulmann photographs, 1914-1934
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv938750>

Series 1: Prints, 1916-1934

This series includes 304 original matted prints. Of these prints, approximately half are platinum prints that were mounted and signed by Ulmann; the others are silver gelatin prints developed by S. H. Lifshay, a New York commercial photographer, after Ulmann's death at the request of the Ulmann Foundation. The majority of the prints are 6.5 x 8.5" mounted onto 11.5 x 14.25" boards with window mats.

The content of the prints primarily include portraits in studio settings of famous figures and of rural residents from Appalachia and the South.

This series is arranged into subseries based on the depicted setting and project including Studio portraits and Rural photography.

Container(s)		Description	Dates
		Subseries 1.1: Studio portraits	1916-1931
		This subseries includes portraits of famous or celebrity figures and portraits taken in a formal studio setting. Many of these portraits appear in Ulmann's published books of photogravures and these are described when available. Many of the studio portraits also include an inscription and signature of the sitter on the front of the mat. Studio portraits are arranged into headings by title of publication when possible. Within headings, items are arranged alphabetically by name of sitter where identifiable.	
		The Faculty of the College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University in the City of New York	1916-1919
Box	Folder		
1	1	Burton-Opitz, Russell	1918
1	1	Butler, Nicholas M.	1918
1	1	Darrach, William	circa 1918
1	2	Fordyce, John A.	1919
1	2	Gies, William J.	1918
1	3	Hibbs, Russell A.	1919
1	3	Huntington, George S.	1918
1	4	Jacobi, Abraham	1916

Container(s)		Description	Dates
1	4	Jobling, James W.	1918
1	4	Lambert, Adrian V. S.	1919
1	5	Lambert, Samuel W.	circa 1918
1	5	Longcope, Warfield T.	1919
1	6	Painter, Harry McMahon	1918
1	6	Palmer, Walter W.	1918
1	7	Prudden, T. Mitchell	1918
1	7	Starr, M. Allen	circa 1918
1	7	Tilney, Frederick	1918
1	8	Weir, Robert F.	1918
1	8	Wood, Francis Carter	1918
1	8	Zinsser, Hans	1919
		A Book of Portraits of the Faculty of the Medical Department of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore	1919-1922
Box	Folder		
2	1	Bloodgood, Joseph C.	circa 1922
2	1	Cullen, Thomas S.	circa 1922
2	2	Goodnow, Frank J.	circa 1922
2	2	Hooker, Donald Russell	circa 1922
2	2	Jones, Walter	1922
2	2	Smith, Winford H.	circa 1922

Container(s)		Description	Dates
2	3	Theobald, Samuel	circa 1922
2	1	Abel, John J.	1919
2	3	Welch, William H.	circa 1922
2	3	Williams, John Whitridge	circa 1922
2	3	Young, Hugh H.	circa 1922
A Portrait Gallery of American Editors			1923-1925
Box	Folder		
2	4	Abbott, Lawrence F.	circa 1925
2	4	Davis, Robert H.	circa 1925
2	4	Hapgood, Norman	1923
2	5	Herford, Oliver	circa 1925
2	5	Hoffman, Arthur Sullivant	circa 1925
2	5	Long, Ray	circa 1925
2	6	Villard, Oswald Garrison	circa 1925
2	6	Van Doren, Carl	circa 1925
2	6	Walsh, Richard J.	circa 1925
General			1916-1931
Box	Folder		
2	7	Adler, F.	1916
2	7	Alexander, ---	circa 1916-1925
2	7	Axson, Stockton	1919

Container(s)		Description	Dates
2	8	Barnard, George Grey	circa 1916-1925
2	8	Bastedo, W. A.	1918
2	8	Bhattacharjee, Debendra Nath	1919
2	9	Borglum, Gutzon	circa 1916-1925
2	9	Bowlby, Sir Anthony	circa 1916-1925
3	1	Carrel, Alexis	1919
3	1	Casamajor, Louis	circa 1916-1925
3	2	Casey, F. D.	circa 1916-1925
3	2	Coronil, A.	1917
3	2	Cobb, Irvin S.	circa 1916-1925
3	3	Cook, Ansel G.	1919
3	3	Coolidge, Calvin	circa 1924
3	3	Cottle, Shubart and J----- S-----	1918
3	3	Cunliffe, John William	1917
3	4	Einstein, Albert	circa 1922-1930
3	4	Eliot, Charles W.	1920
3	5	Elliott, John Lovejoy	1917
3	5	Fineman, Irving	1931
3	6	Galloway, Herbert P. H.	1919
3	7	Gerster, Arpad G. Includes an original etching by Dr. Gerster, "The Hermit of Raquette Lake," 1892.	1916

Container(s)		Description	Dates
3	7	Gibney, Virgil P.	circa 1916-1925
3	8	Gibran, Khalil	1917
3	8	Gl---sh, Bernard	1919
3	9	Goldthwait, Joel E.	1919
3	9	Grausm--, T. M.	1916
3	9	---gruff, J. G.	circa 1916-1925
3	10	Henerl---, O.	circa 1916-1925
3	10	Harrison, Richard Berry	circa 1916-1925
3	10	H-lding, S.	circa 1916-1925
3	10	Ito, Michio	1919
4	1	Jacoby, George W.	circa 1916-1925
4	1	Johnson, James Weldon	circa 1916-1925
4	2	Jones, Sir Robert	circa 1916-1925
4	2	Kammerer, Frederic	1916
4	3	Kohler, Kaufmann	circa 1916-1925
4	3	Loeb, Jacques	1918
4	4	MacKaye, Percy	1925
4	4	Matthews, Brander	1925
4	5	Meltzer, Samuel J.	1919
4	5	Meyer, Willy	1916
4	5	Mumford, Lewis	circa 1916-1925

Container(s)		Description	Dates
4	6	Noguchi, Hideyo	1919
4	7	Ochtman, Leonard	1919
4	8	-omell, --	circa 1916-1925
4	8	Oppenheimer, Bernard S.	circa 1916-1925
4	8	Pearson, James J.	1919
4	9	Rom---, P. W.	1917
4	9	S--aph, Arnold	1919
4	9	S---dtmiller, --	circa 1916-1925
5	1	Shaffer, Newton M.	1918
5	1	Smith, Stephen	1919
5	2	St---, Byron	circa 1916-1925
5	2	Stetten, Dewitt	1916
5	3	Vaughan, J. C.	1919
5	3	Villiers, Frederic	1919
5	4	Weber, Max	1917
5	4	Whitman, Royal Emerson	1916
Box	Folder		
5	5-12	Unidentified	circa 1916-1925

Subseries 1.2: Rural photography

This subseries includes matted prints with few titles assigned by Ulmann. It includes some still lifes and landscapes in addition to the bulk of portraits of craftspeople, farmers, and residents of Appalachia and the South. Sitters have been identified when possible through inscriptions.

circa 1917-1934

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	Rural photography is arranged alphabetically by title or name where identified.	
Box	Folder	
6	1 Anderson, Ned and Sarah Owen Anderson, Saluda, NC	circa 1934
6	1 Campbell, Mr., farmer, Ary, KY	circa 1933
6	1 Connelly, Sarah, weaver-spinner, Brasstown, NC	circa 1933
6	1 Dunkard Woman	circa 1922
6	2 Hatcher, Sarah Alice, quilter, Wears Valley, TN	circa 1933-1934
9	Hensley, Mrs. Bonnie H. Logan and son John	circa 1933
	Folder	
6	2 Hensley, Hayden, Brasstown, NC	1933
6	3 Hipps Family, Top of Turkey, NC	circa 1934
6	3 Hipps, Mrs. James M., knitter, S. Turkey Creek, NC	circa 1934
6	3 Johnson, Emmadel, Brasstown, NC	circa 1933-1934
6	3 Lakes, Lucy, Berea, KY	circa 1933
6	4 A Land Owner	circa 1917-1934
6	4 Logan, John Drew	1933
6	4 McConny, Mrs Cassie, Mrs. Delia Beardin, Mrs. C. O. Wood, Dalton, GA	circa 1934
6	4 Miller, Old Man, Pine Log, NC	circa 1933-1934
6	5 Niles, John Jacob and Informant, Kingdom Come Valley, KY	1932
6	5 Noah's Ark	circa 1933

Container(s)	Description	Dates
6 5	Old Virginia Type	circa 1925-1926
6 5	Owenby, Mary L.	circa 1933-1934
6 6	Pennland, Mrs., Brasstown, NC	1933
6 6	The Pump	circa 1917-1934
6 6	Reed, Jason	circa 1934
6 6	Regan, Aunt Lizzie, weaver, Gatlinburg, TN	circa 1933-1934
6 7	Ritchie, Aunt Cord, basketweaver, Hindman, KY	circa 1933
6 7	Ritchie, Frank and Jason, Clear Creek, Knott County, KY	circa 1933
6 7	Spinning Wheel, Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC	circa 1933-1934
9	Preparing for Baptism	circa 1929-1931
6-10	Unidentified	circa 1917-1934

Series 2: Albums, circa 1914-1934

This series includes 81 albums containing over 10,000 proof prints assembled by the Doris Ulmann Foundation. These proof prints were printed between 1934 and 1937 by S. H. Lifshy after Ulmann's death from her original glass plate negatives. The albums were annotated with dates of capture and sitter's names by the Ulmann Foundation

Albums are arranged numerically by the assigned unique identifier of albums.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
11	1-3	circa 1914-1934
12	4-6	circa 1914-1934
13	7-9	circa 1914-1934
14	10-12	circa 1914-1934

Container(s)	Description	Dates
15	13-15	circa 1914-1934
16	16-18	circa 1914-1934
17	19-21	circa 1914-1934
18	22-24	circa 1914-1934
19	25-27	circa 1914-1934
20	28-30	circa 1914-1934
21	31-33	circa 1914-1934
22	34-36	circa 1914-1934
23	37-39	circa 1914-1934
24	40-42	circa 1914-1934
25	43-45	circa 1914-1934
26	46-48	circa 1914-1934
27	49-51	circa 1914-1934
28	52-53	circa 1914-1934
29	54-55	circa 1914-1934
30	56-58	circa 1914-1934
31	59-60	circa 1914-1934
32	61-62	circa 1914-1934
33	63-65	circa 1914-1934
34	66-67, 69-70a	circa 1914-1934
35	70b-71b	circa 1914-1934

Container(s)	Description	Dates
36	72-74	circa 1914-1934
37	75	circa 1914-1934
38	76-79	circa 1914-1934

Series 3: Secondary material, circa 1954-2010

This series primarily includes copy reference prints and negatives reproduced from Ulmann's glass negatives after the collection was acquired by UO Libraries. These are organized by creator, including prints and negatives created by David Featherstone and prints, negatives, and slides created by UO Libraries or unnamed creators.

David Featherstone (b. 1945) is the author of *Doris Ulmann: American portraits* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) and these prints were created during research on the book. There are 383 prints of 100 images and 10 negatives by Featherstone.

This series also includes a twenty-first century portrait of one of Ulmann's sitters, Frances Stiles Whitener, in her old age holding Ulmann's photos of her as a youth.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
39-40	By David Featherstone	circa 1970-1985
41-43	By UO Libraries and others	circa 1954-2006
Folder		
43	3 Portrait of Frances Stiles Whitener	2010

Series 4: Negatives, circa 1914-1934

Box44-152

Access to these materials is restricted due to fragility of glass negatives.

This series includes Ulmann's original glass plate negatives.

Negatives are arranged numerically by unique identifier (enumeration originally assigned by Ulmann Foundation).

[Guide to the Doris Ulmann photographs](#)

Names and Subjects

Form or Genre Terms :

Photography, Artistic

Portrait photographs

Finding aid prepared by Alexa Goff

2018



<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>

About Creative Commons Licenses in Archives West:

<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/cc-zero.shtml>