



Howes Brothers Photographic Collection

ca.1882-1907

1 box (0.5 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 313

Collection overview

Alvah, Walter, and George Howes brothers traveled the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts in the last two decades of the 19th century, taking photographs of the residents and documenting the customs, fashions, architecture, industry, technology, and economic conditions of rural New England.

The Howes collection includes 200 study prints selected from 20,000 negatives held by the Ashfield Historical Society.

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Background on Alvah Howes

Alvah Howes (1853-1919) took up photography as a profession in the 1880s and in the years that followed, convinced his brothers Walter and later George to join him. Residents of Ashfield, Mass., the brothers were remarkably persistent and productive photographers, traveling throughout Western Massachusetts to photograph a panoply of daily life, work, and leisure over a career that spanned two decades.

In 1888, the Howes established a studio in Turners Falls, Mass., which Alvah operated until the business foundered following the Depression of 1893. The brothers resumed work in 1896, however they ceased touring in about 1902 and their production tailed off until they quit photography in about 1906. During their career, the Howes took over 20,000 dry plate images, creating one of the most extensive and important visual archives for the region.

Scope of collection

The Howes brothers, Alvah, Walter, and George, traveled the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts taking photographs of the residents, documenting pictorially the customs, fashions, architecture, industry, technology, and economic conditions of rural New England at the turn of the century. This collection consists of

200 study prints selected from 20,000 negatives on microfilm in the W.E.B. Du Bois Library (name and town index available with the microfilm). The original glass plates are housed in the Ashfield Historical Society, Ashfield, Massachusetts.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Copies of these study prints in whatever form can be obtained only by permission of the Howes Brothers Project, Ashfield Historical Society, Ashfield, Mass.

Provenance

Acquired from Ashfield Historical Society, 1980

Other formats available

A microfilm set (number 5121, reels 1-29) in the Du Bois Library's Microforms Area, includes all of the more than 20,000 Howes photographs in the Ashfield Historical Society's collection.

Location of Originals

The images in this collection were printed from originals held by the Ashfield Historical Society, Ashfield, Mass.

Bibliography

An article describing the collection is filed in Folder I of the box of study prints in the Archives:

Flint, Linda J., "Preserving Photos as a Historical Resource: the Howes Brothers' Photography," U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, 11593: Information Related to Responsibilities of the Secretary of Interior, vol. 5 no. 2 (June 1980), pp. 11-13.

See also: Alan Newman, ed., *New England Reflections, 1882-1907: Photographs by the Howes Brothers* (Pantheon Books, 1981)

Processing Information

Processed by SCUA staff.

Language:

English

Acknowledgments

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Copyright and Use (More information)

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Cite as: Howes Brothers Photographic Collection (MS 313). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Photographers--Massachusetts.
- Pioneer Valley (Mass.)--Photographs.

Contributors

- Howes, Alvah **[main entry]**
- Howes, Alvah.
- Howes, George.
- Howes, Walter.

Genres and formats

- Photographs.

Link to similar SCUA collections

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