

Ralph W. Frost

Glass-Plate Negative Collection

Windsor Historical Society

Creator: Ralph W. Frost, 1876-1958

Dates: 1900-1920

Extent: 25 glass-plate negatives; 1 linear foot

Accession #: 1989.23

Biographical Note

Although born in Lowell, Massachusetts, Ralph W. Frost (1876-1958) lived in Windsor, Connecticut for over fifty years. He was an undertaker at Smith and Frost, located in Windsor Center, as well as bartender and clerk at restaurants in Windsor and Hartford, including the Hotel Windsor, located just down the street from his undertaking business. He also served as a Windsor Justice of the Peace and an amateur photographer during the early 20th century. His photographs, including the 25 Windsor views in this collection, are of his friends, family, business associates, and neighbors.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains 25 glass-plate negatives photographed by Ralph W. Frost (1876-1958) between 1900 and 1920. The majority of the photographs were taken in the 1910s and focus on people and places in the Broad Street and Palisado Avenue areas in Windsor, CT. His images include engaging portraits of the Owen Eagan family, the Hotel Windsor staff and patrons, the Triano Barbershop, the Winpoq Fish and Game Club, and the Windsor Military Band. Two photographs of a flood on Palisado Avenue are found at the end of the collection.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in the order in which the negatives were arranged at the time of their donation, and the original numbering sequence has been maintained.

Box and Folder Lists

Box 1: Negatives 1-12

- Hotel Windsor
- Owen Eagan Family
- Nick Triano's Barber Shop

Box 2: Negatives 13-25

- Winpoq Clubhouse
- Windsor Military Band
- Flood on Causeway, Palisado Avenue

Related Materials in the Windsor Historical Society

Elaine Denson Collection (2008.4)

Family File – Eagan

Family File – Frost

Photo File – Eagan

Photo File – Fenton

Photo File – Fitch

Photo File – Phelps

Photo File – Wrisley

Photo File – Businesses – Barbershops

Photo File – Businesses, Restaurants and Hotels, Windsor House

Photo File – House, Broad Street 219

Photo File – Music, Bands, Windsor Military Band

Photo File – Organizations and Clubs – Winpoq Fish and Game Club

Photo File – Transportation, Horse – Drawn Vehicles

Photo File – Wars, Civil War

Photo File – Weather – Floods

Subject Files – Business, Hotels

Subject Terms

Eagan, Owen, 1864-1932

Fenton, Fred

Fitch, George

Frost, Ralph W., 1876-1958

Moise, Leonard, 1913-2003

Wrisley, Wallace G.

Windsor (Conn.)-Pictorial works

Objects History

Gelatin dry plate negatives were the first mass-produced, gelatin-emulsion negatives used in photography. The emulsion technology was invented in 1871 and gelatin dry plate negatives were first available in the United States in 1879. The plates were mass-produced in factories, making them cheaper and easier for photographers to use than earlier wet collodion negatives. They made photography an affordable hobby for the middle class and greatly increased the number of amateur photographers in the United States by the turn of the 20th century.

The Eastman Kodak Company was a major manufacturer of dry plate negatives, but many smaller manufacturers also produced negatives. The plates were sold in standard sizes and were packaged by the dozen in cardboard boxes. They were used from 1880 through the 1920s when film negatives became readily available.

Custodial History

Moise Lenard (1913-2003) donated this collection of glass-plate negatives to the Windsor Historical Society in 1989. Lenard was Ralph Frost's nephew by his second marriage (Ralph's second wife Anna Remillard was sister to Moise's mother Josephine). The photographs likely descended through family lines.

Lenard delivered the negatives to the Society in their original paper envelopes. Most of the envelopes were labeled; that information was copied into the Society's files in 1989 and used to identify and number the collection. The original envelopes were discarded after the information was copied.

Collection processed and finding aid prepared by curator Erin Stevic in December 2008. Finding aid edited by librarian Barbara Goodwin in 2009 and librarian/archivist Michelle Tom in 2016.