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Trowbridge & Beals Photograph Collection ca. 1923-1936 DADA 009

Title: Trowbridge & Beals Photograph Collection

Creator: Raymond W. Trowbridge; Jessie Tarbox Beals

Inclusive Dates: ca. 1923-1936 (0.6 cu.ft.)

Extent: .3 cu. ft.

Containers: 1 OVA box

Language of Materials: Materials entirely in English.

Preferred Citation:

Trowbridge & Beals Photograph Collection, Drawings and Documents Archive, Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries

Biographical Note:

Trowbridge

Raymond W. Trowbridge (1886-1936) was an architect prior to his arrival in Chicago in 1908, and he practiced as an architect in Chicago until 1923. A debilitating health problem of uncertain nature (perhaps scoliosis) forced him to stop practicing architecture and to turn instead to photography, which had previously been his hobby. His photographic commissions came from architects and their clients. He was single when he died and had no heirs. Hedrich-Blessing, architectural photographers, purchased the glass negatives from his estate. Hedrich-Blessing later gave the plates to the Chicago Historical Society.

Jessie Tarbox Beals

Jessie Tarbox Beals (1870-1942) is regarded as the first woman press photographer. A schoolteacher originally, she became a full-time photographer around 1900. She was hired as a news photographer by the *Buffalo Inquirer and Courier* in 1902 and was the official photographer for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. She lived and worked in New York City between 1905 and 1928, becoming well known. Her photographs on a wide variety of subjects were published in magazines such as *Vogue*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Town and Country*. In 1928 she moved to California, then back to New York after the stock market crashed. Looking for a source of income in Chicago in 1932 or

1933, she “latched onto the architects who thought her a dream girl for the way she photographed their beloved houses.” By 1936 she was again in New York, where she continued to work until her death. Her works are in many major photographic collections in the United States, including the New York Historical Society, the Museum of the City of New York, the International Museum of Photography in Rochester, New York, and the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College.

Walcott & Work

Russell S. Walcott, a Chicago native, studied at Princeton University and overseas. He practiced architecture independently in Chicago in the 1920s. Several of his designs for houses in the northern suburbs of Chicago were published between 1923 and 1927 in *American Architect* and *Architectural Record* magazines. Robert Work was associated with architect David Adler from 1917 to 1928. Walcott and Work teamed up some time thereafter and remained partners until 1936, when Walcott moved to Tryon, NC. Work continued to practice in Chicago.

Sources:

“House of Russell S. Walcott, Winnetka, Ill.,” *American Architect* 126 no. 2455 (24 September 1924): plates 109, 110.

“The Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Ettlinger near Cary, Illinois, *Country Life* (New York) 70 (October 1936): 42-43.

“Planned for a Lot: the Home of Mr. Arthur Wheeler, in Sterling, Illinois...,” *House & Garden* 73 (January 1938): 53.

“House Beautiful’s Thirteen Annual Small House Competition,” *House Beautiful* 83, no. 2 (February 1941): 29.

Alexander Alland, *Jessie Tarbox Beals, First Woman News Photographer* (New York, 1978).

“Beals, Jessie Tarbox. Photographs, 1896-1941: A Finding Aid,” Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College, 1988, <<http://oasis.harvard.edu/html/sch00047.html>>.

Eileen Flanagan, Prints and Photographs Division, Chicago Historical Society, orally, 16 May 1996.

Scope and Contents:

The collection consists of 51 photographs of fashionable suburban houses in northern Illinois and Wisconsin taken between about 1923 and 1936 by Raymond W. Trowbridge, Jessie Tarbox Beals, and an unidentified photographer. Twenty-one or 22 houses are depicted, all of them recently constructed. Many (perhaps all) were designed by architects Russell S. Walcott, Robert Work, and the firm Walcott & Work. The houses whose locations are known are in Winnetka, Evanston, Lake Forest, Cary, and Sterling, Illinois, and Fish Creek, Wisconsin.

Thirty-five of the photographs were taken by Trowbridge, fifteen by Beals, and one by the unidentified photographer. All but one are sepia-toned prints matted or mounted on boards. The images range in size from 6” x 9” to 9.5” x 12.5”. The boards are 12” x 16” or smaller.

The mats for most of the Trowbridge photographs bear his mark (his name in red letters on a black rectangle), stamped below the right margin of the print. On one set of photos, which are

mounted rather than matted, the back bears a stamped name and address: "Trowbridge, 737 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois." Beals either signed the mounts or printed her mark in pencil, on the front. The backs are stamped, "Jessie Tarbox Beals, Chicago, Ill." in most cases, or occasionally "Jessie Tarbox Beals, Hotel Allerton, Chicago, Ill."

RELATED HOLDINGS:

The Prints and Photographs Division of the Chicago Historical Society holds Trowbridge's glass plate negatives and a list of his clients.

Major collections of Beals's photographic prints and negatives are at the New York Historical Society, the Museum of the City of New York, and the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Radcliffe College. The Schlesinger Library also holds a collection of Beals' papers. Most of the house and garden photos acquired by the Schlesinger Library were given to the Frances Loeb Library of the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Conditions Governing Access:

This collection is open for research.

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Custodial History:

The Trowbridge & Beals Photograph Collection was received by Archives and Special Collections as a donation from Robert J. Work, Ball State University Architecture Library in 1978

Accruals: No additions are expected.

Processing Information:

Collection processing completed 2004/5/19 by Andrew R. Seager.

Finding aid created 2004/5/19 by Andrew R. Seager, revised 2009/5/26 by Carol A. Street.

Arrangement:

The Trowbridge & Beals Photograph Collection is arranged alphabetically.

Controlled Access Headings:

Photographs

Trowbridge, Raymond W., 1886-1936

Beals, Jessie Tarbox, 1870-1942

Walcott, Russell S.

Photographer, press

Houses--Illinois—1920s

Houses--Illinois—1930s

Houses--Wisconsin—1920s

Houses--Wisconsin—1930s
Drawings, architectural (visual works)