

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

Archives

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Finding Aid for

Maurice LaClaire Grand Rapids Authors Portraits,
and the Portraiture of Maurice and David B. LaClaire

Collection # 053

January 2009 version

Abstract

The Maurice LaClaire Grand Rapids Authors Portraits is a collection containing Twenty-nine(29) portrait photographs of leading Grand Rapids authors of the 1930's. The photographs were taken by Maurice LaClaire (1901-1969), an internationally known Grand Rapids photographer. The photos were exhibited at the Grand Rapids Public Library during Book Week in 1942. A reception & tea for these illustrated authors well help at the Library as well. The Grand Rapids Mirror featured these images in a series, along with a paragraph on the notable author, beginning in its May 1942 issue.

La Claire pioneered direct color portraiture in 1936, and afterward worked with the Kodak-Eastman Company in the testing of several color processes. His dye-transfer printing technique was developed in 1942. In Dec. 2003, a copy of the publication Photographic Portraiture by David B. LaClaire, was added to this collection. This publication includes images of Grand Rapids individuals, as well as national notables, taken by the father, Maurice or the son, David, from 1916 into the 2000's. An illustration on pg. 286 charts the LaClaire Dye Transfer Process against the Conventional Color Print Process.

Key Words: LaClaire, Maurice (La Claire, LeClaire)
Grand Rapids authors
Writers
Photography
LaClaire, David B.
Portraiture

Collection #: 053

Accession #: 1941.001 ; P2003.021

Donor: Maurice Carnes LaClaire, 1941.

Span dates: 1930s. ; 1916-2000's

Processor: Original processor, William C. Black, December, 1987. Box Summary, Marcella Beck, August 31,2000. Inventory, folders, reboxing, finding aid revision, R. Mayne 6/22/2002

Addition & finding aid revisions, R. Mayne, Dec. 2003

Size: 1.5 cu.ft. ;

Related Information

Select images from the book in Box 2 of this collection

<http://www.atlasbooks.com/marktplc/01003imageandtext.pdf>

Photographic Portraiture by LaClaire site

<http://www.atlasbooks.com/marktplc/01003.htm>

Box Summary

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Description of Contents</u>	<u>Box Description</u>
1	Portrait photos	print box 3.5 x 16 x 20.5
OVERSIZED SHELVING		
2	David LaClaire oversized book	print box 3.5 x 14 x 20

Scope and Content

The collection contains 28 13 x 10 in. photographs mounted in window mats, 18 x 14 in., sepia(?) prints, with images of 29 leading writers from Grand Rapids in the 1930s and 1940s. Image #21 contains 2 of the authors photographed together.

An article in the Grand Rapids Mirror, May 1942 (see Box 1) suggests that the Grand Rapids Public Library may have been the leader in the selection of these authors, and perhaps in commissioning the photos from La Claire. A reception and tea was held for those honored in the images, at the Library, during National Books Week in November 1941. The twenty nine individuals represent various types of authors, from scholarly to children's fiction, newspapers to short stories.

The original photographs that initially formed this collection are now supplemented by the book Photographic Portraiture, which documents two generations of the LaClaire Studio, and it's notable subjects.

Biography

Maurice Carnes LaClaire was born in Big Rapids in 1901. He developed an interest in photography while attending Ferris State. Upon graduation he moved to Grand Rapids and opened a photography studio. LaClaire pioneered direct color portraiture in 1936, and afterward worked with the Kodak-Eastman Company in the testing of several color processes. LaClaire presented one-man shows at the Marshall Fields Galleries in Chicago, at the Smithsonian, and at the Eastman House in Rochester, and won various national and international competitions for his color work. He died in Grand Rapids on October 25, 1970 at the age of 69.

Please See David LaClaire's book Photographic Portraiture for additional biographical information.

For published information on the Grand Rapids Public Library exhibit and event honoring the authors depicted in this collection, see:

“Local Authors Contribute to the World of Literature” **Grand Rapids Mirror**, May 1942

Contents

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
1		Portrait Photographs
	1	Allen, Roger / Roger Allen.
	2	Atwell, Willis W. / Willis Atwell
	3	Beets, Henry / Henry Beets
	4	Berkhof, Louis / Louis Berkhof
	5	Campau, Ethel L. / Ethel Campau
	6	Cheeryman, Myrtle Koon / Myrtle Cheeryman
	7	Collins, Kreigh / Kreigh Collins
	8	Dean, Ben / Ben Dean
	9	DeJong, David / David DeJong
	10	DeJong, Meindert / Meindert DeJong
	11	DeVries, Bess / Bess DeVries
	12	DuMond, Frank L. / Frank DuMond
	13	Ellis, Miss Grace / Grace Ellis
	14	Finney, Ethel / Ethel Finney
	15	Fideler, Raymond B. / Raymond Fideler
	16	Jewett, Xiora H. / H. Xiora Jewett
	17	Keck, Miss C. / Christine M. Keck
	18	Langereis, H.H.D. / Henry H.D. Langereis
	19	Murphy, George / George Murphy
	20	Needham, Margaret Masters / Margaret Masters Needham
	21	Pershbacher, Olga (with Dorothy Wilde) / Olga Pershbacher
	22	Pierson, Clara / Clara Pierson
	23	Slootmacher, Wilhelmina / Wilhelmina Slootmacher.
	24	Sparks, Frank M. / Frank Sparks
	25	Toole, Mrs. Don P. (H. Barleau, pen name) / Mrs. Don P. Toole
	26	Voelker, Paul F. / Paul Voelker
	27	Waterman, Philip F. / Philip Waterman
	21	Wilde, Dorothy (with Olga Pershbacher) / Dorothy Wilde
	28	Windoes, Ralph F. / Ralph Windoes
2		Photographic Portraiture / David B. LaClaire, 2003. Signed by LaClaire, this book is accompanied by the invitation to the book signing, Dec. 6, 2003 at Schuler Books & Music. Local History Book Coll. copy M779.2.L118p Not available, 1/2009