**The Black Portrait Photograph Collection**

**Summary information**

**Creator:** University of Delaware. Library. Special Collections

**Dates:** circa1860-1880, 1920

**Call number:** GRA 0140

**Language:** Materials entirely in English

**Abstract:** The Black Portrait Photograph Collection contains 11 portraits of black individuals and groups. The objects include nine tintypes and two crayon enlargements. The identity of the sitters and photographs currently remains unidentified, along with the locations and exact dates taken.

**Physical description:** 0.2s (1 box), 1 oversize box

**Notes**

**Biographical and Historical Notes:**

The Black portrait photograph collection contains portraits of Black individuals and groups, collected from various sources around 2019 and 2021 by the University of Delaware Library. Previously, these objects were not a part of one collection. The photographers, sitters, exact dates and locations are currently unidentified.

In spring 2021, students at the University of Delaware in the course AFRA647: Curating Hidden Collections and the Black Archive were able to use and put together the photographs in a cohesive collection, in a similar way as The Baltimore collection that is housed at the University of Delaware. With the help of students and staff, the photographs were able to be renamed, given updated metadata and be placed in an online collection.

The University of Delaware’s Special collections encourages any community involvement that can lead to further information about the photographs. In the event that any information regarding the identities of the individuals, location or identity of the photograph is known, please contact the Special Collections department at: <https://library.udel.edu/static/purl.php?askspec>.

**Scope and contents:**

The Black Portrait Photograph Collection contains 11 portraits of black individuals and groups. Nine of these photographs are tintypes, collodion image on japanned iron, and two photographs are crayon enlargements. Most of the photographs have little to no written text at all, making it challenging to trace location and identifiers of the sitters and/or the photographer. The tintypes are dated around 1860-1880, while the crayon enlargements are dated around the 1920s. Dates have been derived from aspects of dress and props.

Some of the photographs have a grave amount of deterioration due to lack of treatment. Most of the photographs can still be identified as being taken in a studio. Five out of the eleven photographs feature a posing chair with tassels, a product that was made from the 1860s onwards. Extensive information such as identity, location and dates still remain unknown.

**Names and subjects**

**Subjects**

African Americans—Portraits

Blacks—Portraits

Portraits, Group

Fashion photography

Children

Women

Men

**Formats**

Black-and-white photographs

Crayon enlargements

Photographs

Studio portraits

Tintypes (prints)

**Contents**

**Container list**

**Tintypes, circa 1860-1880**

Portrait of a man and woman: **box 1 f1**

[Portrait of four men, two seated, two standing]: **box 1 f1**

Portrait of a woman in a calico dress, seated on a chair: **box 1 f2**

[Portrait of a woman]: **box 1 f2**

**[**Portrait of a seated woman]: **box 1 f3**

[Portrait of a woman]: **box 1 f3**

[Portrait of a man with book]: **box 1 f4**

[Portrait of a seated woman and standing child]: **box 1 f4**

[Portrait of a seated young man wearing a felt hat]: **box 1 f4**

**Crayon enlargements, circa 1920s**

[Hand-colored portrait of a man in a bowler hat, circa 1920s]: **box 2 f1**

[Hand-colored portrait of a woman in a black dress]: **box 2 f2**

**Using these materials & other**

**Access Information:** This collection is open for research

**Preferred Citation:** GRA 0140, Black portrait photograph collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

**Related Materials in this Repository:** GRA 0135 Baltimore collection

**Conditions Governing Use:**

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**Processing Information:**

Processed and encoded by Kit Fluker, December 2020 and May 2021.

Anyone with information regarding the identities of the individuals in the photographs is asked to please contact the Special Collections department at: <https://library.udel.edu/static/purl.php?askspec>.