



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Emil Carlsen and
Carlsen Family Photographs, circa 1885-
circa 1930, in the Archives of American Art

Anna Rimel

Funding for the processing of this collection was provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund. Glass plate negatives in this collection were digitized in 2019 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Women's Committee.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Emil Carlsen and Carlsen family photographs
Identifier:	AAA.carlemil
Date:	circa 1885-circa 1930 (bulk 1910-1930)
Extent:	1.6 Linear feet
Creator:	Carlsen, Emil, 1853-1932
Language:	English Collection is in English.
Summary:	The photographs of Emil Carlsen and the Carlsen family measure 1.6 linear feet and date from circa 1885 to circa 1930, with the bulk from circa 1910 to circa 1920s. Included in this collection are 169 glass plate negatives, black and white copy prints of all glass plate negatives, and four plastic safety negatives. Some descriptive annotations by Emil Carlsen are included.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Emil Carlsen and Carlsen family photographs were donated to the Archives of American Art on June 28, 1995, by Elizabeth M. Campanile of Campanile Galleries, Inc., which were purchased from the Dines Carlsen Estate.

Processing Information

The collection was fully processed and a finding aid prepared by Anna Rimel in 2014 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund.

Preferred Citation

Emil Carlsen and Carlsen family photographs, circa 1885-circa 1930, bulk 1910-1930. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment. Glass plate negatives are housed separately and closed to researchers.

Conditions Governing Use

The Emil Carlsen and Carlsen family photographs are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical / Historical

Painter Emil Carlsen (1853-1932) was born Soren Emil Carlsen in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1853. He studied architecture at the Danish Royal Academy for four years, and also painted alongside cousin and painter Viggo Johansen, one of Denmark's most notable painters. In 1872, he immigrated to the United States where he worked as an architectural assistant and as an assistant for Danish marine painter Laurits Bernhard Holst (1848-1934) in Chicago, Illinois. After studying in Paris for several years, he set up a painting studio in New York and then Boston, then spending two years (1887-1889) as the Director of the San Francisco Arts Association School. In 1891, he moved back to New York and taught at the National Academy of Design until 1918. He spent most of his time with his family at their vacation home in Falls Village, Connecticut when he didn't have teaching commitments in New York, where they also kept an apartment. In 1904, after struggling to become known for his work for many years, he was elected as an associate of the New York National Academy; he won the Shaw Prize from the Society of American Artists; and was awarded the Gold Medal at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis for his still-life "Blackfish and Clams". Carlsen is best known for his still-life paintings and has been called "The American Chardin." Before purchasing his own property in Falls Village, Carlsen stayed often with friend and painter J. Alden Weir (1852-1919) at his farm, painting landscapes.

After deciding to make a career in painting rather than architectural design, Carlsen spent many years experimenting and finding his style. His paintings during 1872-1874 reflected his time spent assisting Laurits Bernhard Holst, and were in the style of traditional Danish marine paintings. Struggling financially, Holst arranged for Carlsen to receive his studio when Holst moved back to Denmark in 1874. At the recommendation of Chicago sculptor Leonard Wells Volk, Carlsen became an art instructor at the now Chicago Arts Institute, though he left for an opportunity to study classical painting for 6 months in Paris, where he spent time studying the painting of Jean-Baptiste-Simeon Chardin.

After Paris, he moved to a boarding house in New York, and then spent several years in Boston where he had his first exhibit at the Boston Art Club. In 1879 he moved back to New York and set up a studio, supplementing his painting with work as an engraver. During the 1880s Carlsen began becoming known for his still-life paintings, and commission work sent him to Paris again, this time for two years. He was commissioned by T. J. Blakeslee to produce bright flower paintings which were popular at the time, creating about one per month. Other American dealers began wanting his flower paintings as well, but Carlsen soon grew bored and returned to New York, refusing to paint any more flowers for Blakeslee, in 1887. It was during this time that Carlsen developed an interest in still-lives with Chinese porcelain. His time in Paris also saw a brightening of his landscapes, as was the European style of the time. In the late 1800s he also became interested in painting white objects, such as porcelain, ceramics, garlic cloves, clothing, etc.

He married Luella May Ruby, a young model, in 1896, and his son Dines Carlsen was born in 1901. From 1900-1932, Carlsen favored a subdued color palette in his work. As still-life paintings fell out of vogue, he also painted more landscapes and marines, favoring Falls Village, Connecticut; Windham, Maine; and Port Washington, New York.

He died in New York at the age of 78, in 1932.

Scope and Contents

The photographs of Emil Carlsen and the Carlsen family measure 1.6 linear feet and date from circa 1885 to circa 1930, with the bulk from circa 1910 to circa 1920s. Included in this collection are 169 glass plate negatives, black and white copy prints of all glass plate negatives, and four plastic safety negatives. Some descriptive annotations by Emil Carlsen are included.

Also included are approximately 54 original glass plate negative sleeves containing contextual and descriptive information about the images penned by Emil Carlsen, which have been kept with their respective copy prints. Within the collection, 29 black and white copy prints and four plastic safety negatives were produced by the Smithsonian Archives of American Art from nitrate negatives no longer with the collection. Photographs include Emil Carlsen and his family, landscapes and animals, buildings and industrial exteriors, and artwork.

One third of the collection is made up of photographs of the artist and his family. Images of Emil Carlsen show the artist at work in his studio, painting outdoors, and enjoying time with his wife, Luella May Carlsen, and his son, Dines Carlsen. Also included are many photographs of Luella May and Dines over the years, alone and together. Additionally, Windham is listed as the town where several photographs of a very young Dines and Luella May were taken. The location of the rest of the photographs, when provided, is Port Washington.

Over half of the glass plate negatives depict landscapes, mostly of trees and various interiors and exteriors of the woods of Port Washington, New York. Landscape photographs also depict cornfields, a meadow, fences and roads, hills and mountains, boats and a marina, horses, and cattle.

Buildings and industrial exteriors contain multiple views of the exteriors of several houses and barns; cityscapes; a sand pit and quarry containing wooden building structures, equipment, and wagons.

Photographs of artwork include images of Emil Carlsen's painted landscapes, still-lives, a single self-portrait, and two seascapes.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series. Photographs are arranged by subject. Cross reference numbers have been provided to match copy prints with their respective glass plate negative originals housed separately in Series 6.

- Series 1: Photographs of People, circa 1890s-circa 1920s (31 folders; Box 1)
 - Series 2: Photographs of Buildings and Industrial Exteriors, circa 1885-circa 1930 (7 folders; Box 1)
 - Series 3: Photographs of Landscapes and Animals, circa 1885-circa 1930 (20 folders; Boxes 1-2)
 - Series 4: Photographs of Artwork, circa 1885-circa 1930 (18 folders linear feet; Box 2)
 - Series 5: Miscellaneous Notes, circa 1920s (1 folder; Box 2)
 - Series 6: Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1885-circa 1930 (1 linear foot; Boxes 3-4)
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Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Artists at or with their work
Artists' studios -- Photographs

Types of Materials:

Copy prints
Glass plate negatives
Photographs

Names:

Carlsen, Dines
Carlsen, Luella May

Container Listing

Series 1: Photographs of People, circa 1890s-circa 1920s

31 Folders (Box 1)

Included here are photographs of Emil Carlsen and his wife, Luella May Carlsen, and son, Dines Carlsen, though the bulk of the series contains photographs of Luella May and Dines, together and individually. Several photographs capture Emil with Dines as a baby; posed in his studio; painting on a rocky seaside using a travel easel/painting kit; and sitting on or near several trees in open fields.

Luella May Carlsen has been photographed over the course of about 30 years, and is depicted sitting and standing in the woods and indoors, both alone and with Dines. One candid photograph shows Dines and Luella May lost to smiles and laughter. There are also several portrait shots of Luella May wrapped in a blanket and robe, some with a small bird perched on her shoulder. The earliest image of Luella May is noted as "Mrs. C, dark corner," in which she appears to be about to walk away while casting a sideways glance at the camera, standing in a living or dining room.

Photographs of Emil Carlsen's son, Dines Carlsen, have been taken over the span of 15 to 20 years, from a baby to a young man, both with his mother and alone, playing, painting, and laughing. Only two photographs circa 1915 (taken from damaged glass plate negatives) show the whole family together indoors next to a large framed painting, with Emil sitting in an overstuffed chair, looking at the painting, and Dines and Luella May standing behind him --the photograph appears to have been taken from just outside a doorway. Also included are three images of an unidentified boy, possibly Dines Carlsen, as well as an unidentified man.

Researchers should note that descriptive annotations taken verbatim from glass plate sleeves are in quotes. Also, photographs are described largely by groups, and some photograph descriptions have been added for clarity.

Photographs are arranged by subject. Cross reference numbers have been provided to match copy prints with their respective glass plate negative originals housed separately in Series 6.

Box 1, Folder 1	Emil Carlsen, circa 1905-circa 1908 <i>3 copy prints</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "E. C. in field" • "E. C. under apple tree, Port Washington" • In front of tree
Box 1, Folder 2	Emil Carlsen Posed in Studio, circa 1920 <i>4 copy prints</i>
Box 1, Folder 3	Emil Carlsen, circa 1920s <i>3 copy prints (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting on tree • Painting at seaside
Box 1, Folder 4	Emil Carlsen Painting at Seaside, circa 1920s <i>1 negatives (photographic) (Safety negative taken from nitrate negatives)</i>

- Box 1, Folder 5 Emil and Dines Carlsen, circa 1902
3 copy prints
- "E. C. and D. C."
 - "E. C. and D. C. with ball"
- Box 1, Folder 6 Emil, Luella May, and Dines Carlsen, circa 1915
2 copy prints
- Box 1, Folder 7 Luella May and Dines Carlsen, circa 1901
1 copy print
- Box 1, Folder 8 Luella May and Dines Carlsen, Port Washington, circa 1902
2 copy prints
- "M. C. and D. C."
 - "D. C. and M. C., blurred, Port Washington"
- Box 1, Folder 9 Luella May and Dines Carlsen, Windham, circa 1906
1 copy print
- "M. C. and D. C., Windham"
- Box 1, Folder 10 Luella May and Dines Carlsen Laughing, circa 1909
1 copy print (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)
- Box 1, Folder 11 Luella May and Dines Carlsen in Woods, circa 1909
2 copy prints (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)
- Box 1, Folder 12 Luella May and Dines Carlsen, circa 1909
2 copy prints (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)
- With boats
 - Looking in window
- Box 1, Folder 13 Luella May and Dines Carlsen with Boats, circa 1909
1 negatives (photographic) (Safety negative taken from nitrate negatives)
- Box 1, Folder 14 Luella May and Dines Carlsen at Seaside, circa 1917
1 copy print (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)
- Box 1, Folder 15 Dines Carlsen, with Dah, circa 1901
2 copy prints
- "Dah and D. C."
 - "Dah and D. C., Port Washington"
- Box 1, Folder 16 Dines Carlsen, circa 1902-circa 1904
2 copy prints
- "D. C. in long clothes"
 - "D. C. sitting on wall, Windham"

- Box 1, Folder 17 Dines Carlsen Portrait, circa 1909
2 copy prints (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)
- Box 1, Folder 18 Dines Carlsen in City Feeding Pigeons, circa 1909
1 copy print
- Box 1, Folder 19 Dines Carlsen in City Playing Tennis, circa 1910
2 copy prints (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)
- Box 1, Folder 20 Dines Carlsen Indoors, circa 1917
3 copy prints (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)
- In front of screen
 - With camera
- Box 1, Folder 21 Dines Carlsen Indoors with Camera, circa 1917
1 negatives (photographic) (Safety negative taken from nitrate negatives)
- Box 1, Folder 22 Luella May Carlsen, circa 1890s
2 copy prints
- "Mrs. C. dark corner"
 - "Mrs. C. in field, Port Washington"
- Box 1, Folder 23 Luella May Carlsen in Woods, circa 1904
2 copy prints
- "M. C. in wood interior, Port Washington"
 - "M. C. in woods"
- Box 1, Folder 24 Luella May Carlsen, circa 1906
1 copy print
- "M. C., full length, Port Washington"
- Box 1, Folder 25 Luella May Carlsen, circa 1906
2 copy prints
- "M. C. in grass under oak, Port Washington"
 - "M. C. under oak"
- Box 1, Folder 26 Luella May Carlsen in Woods, circa 1912
4 copy prints
- Box 1, Folder 27 Luella May Carlsen, circa 1920s
6 copy prints
- Portrait in studio with bird
 - With car
 - At seaside
- Box 1, Folder 28 Luella May Carlsen, circa 1920s

6 copy prints (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)

- In robe and blanket, indoors

Box 1, Folder 29

Luella May Carlsen, circa 1920s

2 copy prints (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)

- Sitting in the woods

Box 1, Folder 30

Unidentified Boy, circa 1910s

3 copy prints

- "Boy on horse, Port Washington"
- "Oak in wood with boy"

Box 1, Folder 31

Unidentified Man, circa 1910s

1 copy print (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)

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Series 2: Photographs of Buildings and Industrial Exteriors, circa 1885-circa 1930

7 Folders (Box 1)

Included here are photographs of old houses and barns, as well as several of industrialized sand pits/quarry and cityscapes depicting different levels of construction and building, probably in New York City where the Carlsen's lived.

Researchers should note that descriptive annotations in quotes were taken verbatim from glass plate sleeves.

Photographs are arranged by subject. Cross reference numbers have been provided to match copy prints with their respective glass plate negative originals housed separately in Series 6.

Box 1, Folder 32	Old House, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>2 copy prints</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Old House with corn stalks"• "Old Barn, Port Washington"
Box 1, Folder 33	House, Exteriors, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>5 copy prints</i>
Box 1, Folder 34	House, Exterior, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>1 copy print (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)</i>
Box 1, Folder 35	Old Barn, Port Washington, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>2 copy prints</i>
Box 1, Folder 36	Stone Crusher and Quarry, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>2 copy prints</i>
Box 1, Folder 37	Sand Pit, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>2 copy prints</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Sand pit, Port Washington"• "Wagon in sand pit"
Box 1, Folder 38	Cityscapes, Construction, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>3 copy prints</i>

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Series 3: Photographs of Landscapes and Animals, circa 1885-circa 1930

20 Folders (Boxes 1-2)

Found here are images of varying landscapes, though most depict trees and woods. Port Washington is noted as the primary location of the landscape photographs of pastures with cattle and horses, cornfields, meadows, and boats/marinas. Also here are images of landscapes with rolling hills and mountains with large, expansive skies, as well as a couple of images of woods surrounding waterfalls.

Researchers should note that descriptive annotations in quotes were taken verbatim from glass plate sleeves.

Photographs are arranged by subject. Cross reference numbers have been provided to match copy prints with with their respective glass plate negative originals housed separately in Series 6.

Box 1, Folder 39	Cattle, Port Washington, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>2 copy prints</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cattle, Port Washington" • "Young bull, Port Washington"
Box 1, Folder 40	Cattle, Port Washington, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>2 copy prints</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cattle in pasture, Port Washington" • "Cow lying in field, Port Washington"
Box 1, Folder 41	Horses, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>2 copy prints</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Team and wagon (double exposure) P. W." • "Road with buggy, Port Washington"
Box 1, Folder 42	Boats, Port Washington, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>4 copy prints</i>
Box 1, Folder 43	Roads and Fences, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>3 copy prints</i>
Box 1, Folder 44	Hills and Mountains, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>5 copy prints</i>
Box 1, Folder 45	Hills and Mountains with Cloud-Filled Skies, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>12 copy prints</i>
Box 1, Folder 46	Meadow and Field, Port Washington, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>2 copy prints</i>
Box 1, Folder 47	Cornfields, Port Washington, circa 1885-circa 1930 <i>4 copy prints</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cornfield with oak, Port Washington" • "Landscape with shocks - P. W."

- "Landscape with cornshocks"
 - "Corn shucks, Port Washington"
- Box 1, Folder 48 Landscape with House/Barn, circa 1885-circa 1930
4 copy prints
- Box 1, Folder 49 Clouds with Trees and Powerlines, circa 1885-circa 1930
1 copy print
- Box 1, Folder 50 Trees, Port Washington, circa 1885-circa 1930
3 copy prints
- "Oaks by river bank, Port Washington"
 - "Apple tree stump, Port Washington"
- Box 1, Folder 51 Elm in Field, Port Washington, circa 1885-circa 1930
2 copy prints
- Box 2, Folder 1 Oak Trees, Port Washington, circa 1885-circa 1930
4 copy prints
- Box 2, Folder 2 Woods, Exterior, circa 1885-circa 1930
2 copy prints
- Box 2, Folder 3-6 Woods, Interior, circa 1885-circa 1930
26 copy prints
- "Woods, interior, Port Washington"
- Box 2, Folder 7 Woods, Waterfalls, circa 1885-circa 1930
2 copy prints

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Series 4: Photographs of Artwork, circa 1885-circa 1930

18 Folders (Box 2)

Included here are photographs of primarily Emil Carlsen's paintings of still-lives and landscapes, with one photograph of a still-life composition later painted by Emil. Also included are one image of a still-life signed and dated by Dines Carlsen, and one image of a landscape by painter J. Alden Weir.

Emil Carlsen's son, Dines Carlsen, learned to paint from his father, and both spent time painting in the same studio. As a result, Dines' paintings mimic Emil's style, making unsigned works difficult to identify. In this collection, there are several photographs of undated landscape paintings by an unidentified artist, though probably painted by either Dines or Emil Carlsen.

Researchers should note that descriptive annotations in quotes were taken verbatim from glass plate sleeves. Also, photographs are described largely by groups, and some photograph descriptions have been added for clarity.

Photographs are arranged by subject. Cross reference numbers have been provided to match copy prints with their respective glass plate negative originals housed separately in Series 6.

Box 2, Folder 8	Painting by Emil Carlsen, Self Portrait, circa 1890s <i>1 copy print</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "E. C.'s self portrait (holding glass)"
Box 2, Folder 9	Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Landscapes and Flowers, circa 1885-1895 <i>3 copy prints (Prints taken from nitrate negatives)</i>
Box 2, Folder 10	Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Still Life, circa 1894 <i>1 copy print</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Still Life with Swan'
Box 2, Folder 11	Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Still Life, circa 1890s <i>3 copy prints</i>
Box 2, Folder 12	Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Still Life, 1920 <i>1 copy print</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'The Leeds Jug'
Box 2, Folder 13	Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Still Life, 1926-1929 <i>5 copy prints</i>
Box 2, Folder 14	Still Life Composition, circa 1929 <i>1 copy print</i>
Box 2, Folder 15	Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Landscapes, circa 1920s <i>3 copy prints</i>
Box 2, Folder 16	Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Seascapes, circa 1928 <i>4 copy prints</i>

- Box 2, Folder 17 Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Landscapes, 1928
4 copy prints
- Landscape with bridge
 - Landscape with waterfall
- Box 2, Folder 18 Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Landscapes, circa 1929-circa 1930
4 copy prints
- Landscape with horse and cows
 - 'Wood Pasture'
- Box 2, Folder 19 Paintings by Emil Carlsen, Allegorical Landscape, circa 1930
2 copy prints
- Box 2, Folder 20 Painting by J. Alden Weir, Landscape, circa 1908
2 copy prints
- Box 2, Folder 21 Painting by Dines Carlsen, Still Life, 1928
2 copy prints
- Box 2, Folder 22 Paintings, Landscapes, Artist Unidentified, circa 1915-circa 1925
5 copy prints
- Box 2, Folder 23 Painting, Still Life, Artist Unidentified, circa 1915-circa 1925
2 copy prints
- Box 2, Folder 24 Paintings, Landscapes in Woods, Artist Unidentified, circa 1915-circa 1925
4 copy prints
- Box 2, Folder 25 Paintings, Landscapes with Luella May Carlsen, Artist Unidentified, circa 1915-
circa 1925
4 copy prints

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Series 5: Miscellaneous Notes, circa 1920s

1 Folder (Box 2)

Found here is one unmatched glass plate negative sleeve with notes and annotations.

Box 2, Folder 26

Annotated Photonegative Sleeve, circa 1920s
Materials are arranged by subject.

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Series 6: Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1885-circa 1930

1 Linear foot (Boxes 3-4)

Series comprises 169 glass plate negatives from which the copy prints were taken.

Cross reference numbers have been provided to match the glass plate negative originals with their respective copy prints.

Glass plate negatives have been scanned.

Box 3 Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1885-circa 1930
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 4 Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1885-circa 1930
[Image\(s\)](#)

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