



Record Group:	Department of Agriculture
Subgroup:	Office of the Secretary
Series:	Photograph Collection, ca. 1880s-1983
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Institutional History

New Jersey's first effort to systematically gather statewide information regarding farming and animal husbandry came in 1872 with the creation of the State Board of Agriculture (P.L. 1872, chap. 546, p. 96). Under this legislation, the Board was given a mandate to investigate, gather and disseminate "information in regard to the great questions of farm economy, tillage, crops, stock, fertilizer, reclamation of land." By 1911, the Board's responsibility had been broadened to include enforcement of laws preventing the spread of tuberculosis in cattle (P.L. 1894, chap. 317, p. 475) and insect infestations in crops and nursery stock (P.L. 1911, chap. 22, p. 33).

When the Department of Agriculture (NJDA) was created in 1916, the responsibility for investigating, preventing and containing diseases in animals and plants in the farms, nurseries and agrarian businesses in the state was vested in the State Board, the new Secretary of Agriculture and Assistant Secretary, and the Department's three bureaus of: Animal Industry; Lands, Crops and Markets; and Statistics and Inspections (P.L. 1916, chap. 268, p. 561). Effective January 1st, 1949, the Department was reconstituted under the general reorganization of state government resulting from the 1947 State Constitution (P.L. 1948, chap 447, p. 1777). At that time, the Department was subdivided into: the State Board; offices of the Secretary and Assistant Secretary; four divisions—Animal Industry, Markets, Plant Industry, and Information; and a newly created Office of Milk Industry. The last-named agency absorbed the duties, staff and records of the former Milk Control Board, which was then abolished.

Today, the NJDA continues its mission to promote, protect and serve New Jersey's agriculture and agribusiness industries. In addition, the Department oversees school lunch programs, surplus federal food distribution, soil and water conservation, farmland protection, and agricultural education programs including the State Future Farmers of America Association.

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Content Note

Throughout its history, various offices within the Department of Agriculture used print publications in the form of press releases, pamphlets, bulletins and magazines to inform and educate. Public relations staff initially worked in the Secretary's Office, became the Bureau of Information in 1942, and the Division of Information in 1949. Photographs played an important role in providing illustrations of the latest innovations in farming and animal husbandry as well as documenting and celebrating the importance of farmers, farming and the growing agriculture business of New Jersey. Additional photographs were taken

to document and celebrate the NJDA's yearly convention, Agricultural Week, later dubbed New Jersey Farmers Week. In 1974, the Division of Information was abolished and its responsibilities (and photograph collection) were transferred to the Office of the Secretary, which in turn transferred the collection to New Jersey State Archives in 1984.

This series consists of over 14,000 prints and corresponding negatives taken generally from about 1920 to 1983, with a few images from as early as the 1880s. The photographs richly illustrate all aspects of agricultural life in New Jersey, providing images of farming techniques, produce, livestock, machinery and equipment. Individuals are portrayed in images of departmental and farm association activities, events and celebrations. Dairy princesses, blueberry queens are shown along with 4-H club or Future Farmer of America members with their prize-winning livestock. The collection documents industrial and manufacturing aspects of agriculture as well, from corporate giants such as Campbell's Soup Company to family-owned dairies and farm stands. The prints were filed in three distinct subseries—Prints by Subject, Individuals, and Agricultural/Farmers Week. There is great deal of overlap in subject matter between these subseries. For instance, one would likely find images of dairy princesses, farm equipment or specific types of produce in all three subseries. The several parts of the collection are described further as follows.

Prints by Subject – This subseries of prints consists of 7,160 photographs dating generally from the 1930s-1970s period (with a few earlier items). They are arranged by subject matter alphabetically (e.g., under Aerial Views, Bees, Cabbage, etc.). Most are 8"x10", black & white prints. This collection has recently been indexed, and partially imaged in a database and image bank available at wwwnet1.state.nj.us/DOS/Admin/ArchivesDBPortal/AgriPhotos.aspx.

Individuals – This subseries includes approximately 3,000 photographs, dating from ca. 1928 to 1983. Consisting mostly of 8"x10", black & white prints, through formal and candid portraits this part of the collection shows a cross-section of individuals connected with the mission of the NJDA. This includes department and other New Jersey government officials, scientists and educators; federal officials (such as David E. Lilenthal, Director of the Tennessee Valley Authority in the 1940s); and agricultural "notables" (such as Otto Stuck, "Magician and Dairyman").

Agricultural/Farmers Week – This subseries includes approximately 4,000 photographs, dating from 1920 to 1975, with a gap for 1928-29. Although print sizes range from 2.75"x2.75" to 8"x10," the latter size is the most common format and images are predominantly black & white prints. This part of the collection documents events at the annual New Jersey Agricultural/Farmers Week celebrations, arranged by year. Most of the prints have notations or identifying captions on the back; files may also include press releases and articles from the Department's newsletter *The Farm Service News*. The subseries depicts activities including: exhibits of produce, livestock and farm equipment; demonstration gardens; contests and winners; newly elected farm association officials and commodity queens.

Oversized and Duplicate Prints – During the processing and scanning of the collection, oversized items and duplicate prints were set aside, and are boxed separately. Physical markers and database notations indicate when a print is stored with the oversized items. The duplicate prints, and any previously un-numbered negatives found filed with prints, are arranged by the image number assigned by the State Archives during database indexing and scanning.

Negatives – The negatives were identified in a single numerical sequence until about 1946, after which they were numbered within each year (e.g., those from 1947 being numbered "1-47" to "200-47", and so on). Negative numbers are generally identified on the reverse of the prints, along with captions.

Card-file Index – The card-file index is arranged alphabetically by subject heading or person's name. Each card provides a reference to one of the three subseries of prints discussed above. While the cards indexing images filed in Prints by Subject subseries have been superseded by the new online database, the card file is the only index available for images filed in the Individuals and Agricultural/Farmers Week prints subseries.

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If you have any questions about the information in this collection guide, please contact njarchives@sos.state.nj.us