

Rebecca Lepkoff (1916-2014)
Vermont Hippies Photographs, ca. 1970
FB-108

Introduction

This collection of approximately 38 photographs by Rebecca Lepkoff forms her series entitled “Hippies” taken during the 1970s in Jamaica, Vermont. The collection was given to the Vermont Historical Society by Rebecca Lepkoff in 2012. Three additional photographs were donated by family friend Laura Preston in 2023. The collection is housed in two flat archival boxes FB-108.1 and FB-108.2.

Biographical Note

Rebecca Lepkoff was born in a tenement on Hester Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, New York City, to Jewish-Russian immigrants in 1916. She studied as a dancer with the Humphrey Weidman School of Modern Dance and purchased her first camera in 1938. She studied under the tutelage of Sid Grossman, who founded the Photo League, a groundbreaking group of photographers, during the 1940’s.

The Photo League was an egalitarian and idealistic group of photographers who used their medium to illustrate the current human conditions in New York City as an avenue for social change. Lepkoff developed her love of photography by documenting the social and urban neighborhoods of the Lower East Side of Manhattan, especially as it evolved as a community. In 1951 the Photo League was disbanded under Sen. Joseph McCarthy for encouraging “communist” ideals.

In 1950 Lepkoff documented the community of Pike Falls near Jamaica, Vermont. The community was headed by Scott Nearing and Helen Knothe and encouraged cooperative farming and community living under a “back to the land” movement. Lepkoff continued to summer in Vermont and these photographs of “Hippies” were taken in Pike Falls in the 1970s. In 2010 these photographs were showcased at the “Vermont Hippies” exhibition at the Vermont Center for Photography in Brattleboro, Vermont.

At the time that this collection was processed in 2012, Lepkoff was living in Washington Heights, New York, and continued to photograph every day. Her work is currently sponsored by Howard Greenberg Gallery and is included in the collections of the National Gallery in Canada, the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C. and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York City. She was honored with works exhibited during a retrospective entitled “The Radical Camera: New York’s Photo League (1936-1951).” A book of her works, *Life on the Lower East Side: Photographs by Rebecca Lepkoff, 1937-1950*, was published by the Princeton Architectural Press in 2006.

Rebecca Lepkoff died in Townshend, Vermont, in August 2014. She was 98 years old.

Scope and Content Note

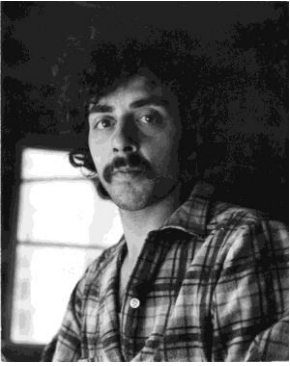
This collection contains 38 gelatin silver prints by Rebecca Lepkoff taken during the 1970s in the Pike Falls area of Jamaica, Vermont. Photographs include 18 portraits, 4 farm scenes, 5 nudes, 6 in a series focusing on a woman named “Wendy,” and 5 of an outdoor children’s concert. Three additional photographs taken by Lepkoff of her son, Daniel, and local family friends were added to the collection in 2023. The subjects of individual images, when identified, are listed in the inventory below.

Related Collections





A book of Lepkoff’s earlier Pikes Falls photographs, *Almost Utopia: Residents and Radicals of Pikes Falls, Vermont 1950* is in the VHS library collection (974.31 J221a)





Inventory





These photos were identified by the donor. Unidentified subjects and scenes were given general descriptions by VHS volunteers.





Photograph Number	Theme	Subject	Print Size w x h (inches)
FB-108.1:01	Portraiture 	Man; flannel shirt with mustache, framed by window	7 x 9 Mounted, flush
FB-108.1:02	Portraiture	Woman (?); freckles, curly hair holding paper bag	7.5 x 9 Mounted, flush











FB-108.1:03	Portraiture 	Woman; in sweater holding kitten amid ferns	7.5 x 9 Mounted, flush
FB-108.1:04	Portraiture 	Woman (Gusta Ronson); dark hair, white shirt in field squatting, picking beets	9 x 7.5 Mounted, flush
FB-108.1:05	Portraiture 	Woman leaning on man with beard; garden behind	7.5 x 9.5 Mounted, signed.
FB-108.1:06	Portraiture 	"Steve and his Goats"	7.5 x 8.5 Mounted, signed.





FB-108.1:07	Portraiture 	Woman with pail and goat, dog, 2 nd woman on far left, field background	10.5 x 13 Mounted flush
FB-108.1:08	Portraiture 	Man; in flannel shirt and vest, log held on right shoulder	7.5 x 9 Mounted
FB-108.1:09	Portraiture 	“Adrienne Maeve”	7.5 x 9 Mounted, signed.
FB-108.1:10	Portraiture 	“Steve and His Goats”	10 x 12 Mounted, signed.





FB-108.1:11	Portraiture 	Man; dark hair, goatee hands resting on knees with cabbage in right hand	10.5 x 12 Mounted, signed.
FB-108.1:12	Portraiture 	Woman; long hair, flannel shirt, dogs and rough hewn fence behind	10.5 x 12.5 Mounted, signed.
FB-108.1:13	Portraiture 	Man; beard, flannel shirt with rough hewn fence behind and cloudy sky	11 x 10.5 Mounted, signed.
FB-108.1:14	Portraiture 	Woman in overalls in front of house; curly hair, freckles and evergreen tree to her right	10 x 12 Mounted, signed.





FB-108.1:15	Portraiture 	Man in field playing a flute	10.5 x 13 Mounted, signed.
FB-108.1:16	Portraiture 	“Richy at Pike Falls, Jamaica, VT 1970’s”	10.5 x 12 Mounted, signed.
FB-108.1:17	Portraiture 	Woman and man; man, shirtless, hand on side of house; woman slightly forward; jeans, dark t-shirt	7.5 x 9 Mounted
FB-108.1:18	Portraiture 	“Danny+Jesse”	13 x 11 In large matt




FB-108.1:19	<p>Nudes</p> 	<p>Nude woman bathing in river near waterfall; 2nd woman behind first on rock ledge near 2nd waterfall</p>	7.5 x 9.5
FB-108.1:20	<p>Nudes</p> 	<p>“The Falls, Vermont”</p>	8.5 x 8 Mounted, signed.
FB-108.1:21	<p>Nudes</p> 	<p>Two women standing in pool; waterfall in center of viewer’s foreground</p>	8 x 9
FB-108.1:22	<p>Nudes</p> 	<p>Man, with beard, standing nude, under tree near river</p>	10 x 12 Mounted

FB-108.1:23	<p>Nudes</p> 	<p>Three nude figures running through a field</p>	<p>11 x 13 In large matt Mounted</p>
FB-108.2:01	<p>“Wendy”</p> 	<p>Wendy and Her goats</p>	<p>9 x 7.5 Flush mounted</p>
FB-108.2:02	<p>“Wendy”</p> 	<p>Wendy outside house on bench with book</p>	<p>7.5 x 8</p>
FB-108.2:03	<p>“Wendy”</p> 	<p>Wendy with eggs in hand</p>	<p>7.5 x 8.5 Mounted, signed</p>

FB-108.2:04	<p>“Wendy”</p> 	Wendy at Home	7.5 x 8 Mounted, signed
FB-108.2:05	<p>“Wendy”</p> 	“Wendy Vermont 1977”	7.5 x 9 Mounted, signed
FB-108.2:06	<p>“Wendy”</p> 	Wendy on stump with eggs at open door of the henhouse	7.5 x 8 In large matt
FB-108.2:07	<p>Outside Concert</p> 	<p>“Jamaica, VT 1970’s Pike Falls Rd.”</p> <p>Trio of musicians recorder, violin, and cello playing with fourth boy standing behind</p>	9 x 7.5 Mounted, signed

FB-108.2:08	<p>Outside Concert</p> 	Outdoor concert	9.5 x 7.5 Mounted, signed
FB-108.2:09	<p>Outside Concert</p> 	Trio of musicians; a recorder, violin, and cello playing	8 x 7.5
FB-108.2:10	<p>Outside Concert</p> 	Trio of musicians; women behind	8 x 7.5
FB-108.2:11	<p>Outside Concert</p> 	“Daniel Lepkoff and Micha Loe...” (illegible)	7.5 x 8.5 Mounted, signed

FB-108.2:12	<p>Farm Scenes</p> 	Motorcycle and cow	7.5 x 8 Mounted, signed
FB-108.2:13	<p>Farm Scenes</p> 	Two women picking beans	8.5 x 7.5
FB-108.2:14	<p>Farm Scenes</p> 	Group in garden harvesting	9 x 7.5 In large matt Mounted
FB-108.2:15	<p>Farm Scenes</p> 	Laundry on line with woman with pails near truck in background	7.5 x 9 In large matt

FB-108.2:16	 <p>Portraiture</p>	Daniel Lepkoff and family friend Laura Preston sitting on hood of car	8x10
FB-108.2:17	 <p>Portraiture</p>	Daniel Lepkoff playing guitar for Laura Preston and Michael, Eva, Andrew, and Daniel Loewy	10.5x13.5
FB-108.2:18	 <p>Scenery</p>	Mountain stream	7.5x9.5

Jessie Lynne Dall
 October 2012; revised January 2021
 Revised December 2023
 LepkoffRebecca.doc