

# Laura Wilson:

## An Inventory of Her Papers and Photographs in the Photography Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Wilson, Laura, 1939-
<b>Title:</b>	Laura Wilson Papers and Photographs
<b>Dates:</b>	1979-2004
<b>Extent:</b>	5 document boxes and 7 oversize boxes (12.2 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Laura Wilson Papers and Photographs document her work with photographer Richard Avedon from 1979 to 1984, and resultant exhibitions and publications from 1985 to 2003.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Photography Collection PH-02017
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Gift, 2004 (G12399)
<b>Processed by:</b>	Mary Alice Harper and Liz Murray, 2004
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Biographical Sketch

Photojournalist Laura Wilson was born in 1939 and raised in New England. She married author, editor, and entrepreneur Robert A. Wilson, with whom she has three sons, Andrew, Owen, and Luke.

Always interested in photography and photojournalism, Wilson photographed her sons throughout their childhoods, and pored over books by photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Jacques Henri Lartigue, and Eugene Smith. Her professional career began in 1978 when she met photographer Richard Avedon through her husband's involvement with the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. Wilson worked as an assistant to Avedon from 1979 to 1984 while he embarked on the project that culminated in his landmark exhibition *In the American West* at the Amon Carter Museum, and a book of the same title, in 1985. While in the field, Wilson documented their progress both on paper and film, and in 2003 she published a recollection of their experiences in *Avedon at Work: In the American West*.

Since her time with Avedon, Wilson has gained a reputation of her own working as a photojournalist. Her projects have taken her from photographing the life of a West Texas rancher, Watt Matthews, to capturing life in the Hutterite colonies of Montana over a fourteen-year period.

Wilson is the author of several books including *Watt Matthews of Lambshead* (1989), *Hutterites of Montana* (2000), and *Grit and Glory: Six-Man Football* (2003). Her work has been published in numerous magazines including *Aperture*, the *New York Times Magazine*, the *New Yorker*, the *Washington Post Magazine*, *Texas Monthly*, and the *Sunday Times* (London). She and her husband reside in Dallas, Texas.

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## Sources:

Dingus, Anne. "Her Three Sons." *Texas Monthly* 24, no. 5 (1996): 132-139.

Wilson, Laura.

- *Avedon at Work: In the American West*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.
- *Hutterites of Montana*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

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## Scope and Contents

The Laura Wilson Papers and Photographs document her work with photographer Richard Avedon from 1979 to 1984, and resultant exhibitions and publications from 1985 to 2003.

The collection is organized into two series: Series I. "In the American West: Photographs by Richard Avedon" Project, and Series II. *Avedon at Work: In the American West*.

The first series comprises materials relating to Avedon, his project, and the resulting exhibition and book. There are notes taken by Wilson while traveling with Avedon, project updates submitted to the Amon Carter Museum, subject release forms, and some correspondence. The bulk of the material is clippings on Avedon and *In the American West* from 1979 to 2001. Also included are a few layouts for the exhibition and book, an exhibition catalog, and a transcript of the *In the American West* seminar held at the Amon Carter Museum on September 14, 1985.

Series II. documents Wilson's own publication and includes several folders of research notes and twenty-four work prints. Of note are the production materials which consist of a project overview, several typescripts and dummies, and sixty-four black-and-white publication prints used to make the book. In addition there is a small amount of correspondence between Wilson and Avedon and Wilson and her publishers, two publicity posters, and information on another seminar at the Amon Carter Museum in 2003.

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## Separated Material

Audio-visual materials received with the collection (seven sound recordings and two videos, most of which are interviews with or about Avedon) have been transferred to appropriate collections in the Ransom Center. See the Audio-Visual Index at the end of this finding aid for additional information.

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## Index Terms

### Subjects

- Avedon, Richard.
- Documentary photography--West (U.S.).
- Portrait photography--West (U.S.)--Exhibitions.

### Document Types

- Gelatin silver prints.
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**Series I. "In the American West: Photographs by Richard Avedon" Project**

Amon Carter/Avedon Project, updates submitted by Wilson, 1979-1984	<b>Container</b> 1.1
Notes taken by Wilson during project	<b>Container</b> 1.2
Release forms for subjects, with two Polaroid photographs of five subjects	<b>Container</b> 1.3
Photocollage layout in four panels [for exhibition publicity?], inscribed and signed by Avedon "Laura Xmas 82"	<b>Container</b> 1.4
Exhibition catalog, 1985, with press release; layout of prints for <i>In the American West, 1979-1984</i> (Abrams edition, 1985), with photocopies of selected images [*oversize removed to Box 11]	<b>Container</b> 1.5*
Articles on "In the American West" [*oversize removed to Box 11]	<b>Container</b>
1979	<b>Container</b> 1.6
1980-1984	<b>Container</b> 1.7
1985	<b>Container</b>
June-August	<b>Container</b> 1.8
September	<b>Container</b> 1.9-11
September cont'd.	<b>Container</b> 2.1-2
October	<b>Container</b> 2.3-4
November	<b>Container</b> 2.5
December	<b>Container</b> 2.6
1986	<b>Container</b> 2.7
1987	<b>Container</b> 2.8
1989	<b>Container</b> 3.1
Correspondence (Avedon, Wilson, and the Amon Carter Museum), 1979-2003	<b>Container</b> 3.2
Transcript and reviews of "In the American West" seminar, Amon Carter Museum, 14 September 1985	<b>Container</b> 3.3

Articles on Avedon	Container
1978-1979	Container 3.4
1986-1989	Container 3.5
1991-1993	Container 3.6
1994	Container 3.7
1995	Container 3.8
2001-2002	Container 3.9
Interviews with Avedon, for the <i>Boston Globe Magazine</i> , April 5, 1987; corrected typescripts for <i>Egoist</i> , September 1984, and Italian <i>Vogue</i> [], 1993	Container 3.10

**Series II. Avedon at Work: In the American West (2003)**

Research material, notes	<b>Container 4.1-5</b>
Production material	<b>Container</b>
Overview of project, with sample chapter	<b>Container 4.6</b>
Prefatory material and foreword, typescript draft	<b>Container 4.7</b>
Text, typescript drafts	<b>Container 4.8-9</b>
Corrected pages, typescript draft	<b>Container 4.10</b>
Notes on text and layout	<b>Container 4.11</b>
Book dummies [*oversize sample pages, layouts, and dust jackets, removed to Box 11; poster-size reproduction of photograph of Wilson and Avedon removed to Box 12]	<b>Container 5.1-3*</b>
Publication photographs, black-and-white prints	<b>Container</b>
pp. cover-37 (2004:0030:0001-0016), 16 items [lack prints for the cover, pp. 2-3, and pp. 36-37]	<b>Container 6</b>
pp. 38-73 (2004:0030:0017-0032), 16 items	<b>Container 7</b>
pp. 74-101 top (2004:0030:0033-0048), 16 items	<b>Container 8</b>
pp. 101 bottom-back cover (2004:0030:0049-0064), 16 items [*print for pp. 102-103 (2004:0030:0050) removed to 6G:LP: W Box, Large; lack prints for pp. 112-113, 114-115, 116 and 129]	<b>Container 9*</b>
Rejected photographs (2004:0030:0065-0088), 24 black-and-white prints [*2004:0030:0088 removed to 6G:LP: W Box, Large]	<b>Container 10</b>
Photocopy of published book	<b>Container 5.4</b>
Correspondence	<b>Container</b>
General, 1979-1986	<b>Container 5.5</b>
With Avedon, 1979-2003	<b>Container 5.6</b>
With publishers, 1986-2002	<b>Container 5.7</b>
From subjects to Avedon and Wilson, mostly photocopies, 1979-2004	<b>Container 5.8</b>

Publicity [*oversize poster for Wilson and Avedon appearance at the Ransom Center, November 21, 2003, removed to Box 11]	<b>Container</b> 5.9*
Correspondence and guidelines in re Wilson lecture at Amon Carter Museum, 2003	<b>Container</b> 5.10
Oversize materials	<b>Container</b> 11-12

**Index of Audio-Visual Materials**

- Amon Carter (VHS)
- Amon Carter Seminar, 14 Sept. 1985 (with subtitles, credits, etc.) (VHS)
- Avedon, Richard. Interview by Laura Wilson. 5-6 Oct. 2001. (2 audio cassettes)
- Avedon, Richard, Laura Wilson and Ruediy Hofmann. Avedon "In the American West," Herbst Theatre, San Francisco, 13 Mar. 1986 (2 audio cassettes)
- "Beatrice Wood." *I'm Too Busy to Talk Now*. NPR, undated (audio cassette)
- *The Glenn Mitchell Show*, Photography of American West, 26 Nov. 2003, KERA 90.1FM, North Texas Public Broadcasting, L. Wilson on *Avedon at Work* book (audio cassette)
- Learning from Performers, 2 tapes, 20 Feb. 1987, Modern Language Center, Harvard University (audio cassette)
- "Richard Avedon: A Sound Portrait," 1985, Connie Goldman Productions, Inc. (audio cassette)
- Starr, Kevin. Lecture on Richard Avedon and *In the American West*. Phoenix Museum, 1 Oct. 1986 (audio cassette)



**Index of Correspondence**

- Anderson, Stephen N.--5.8
- Avedon, Richard--3.2, 5.5-6, 5.8
- Baker, Hamp--5.5
- Bencich, Mike--5.8
- Bennett, Sandra--5.8
- Bowen, J. David (Joshua David), 1930- --5.5
- Brody, Jacqueline, 1932- --5.5
- Brown family--5.8
- Cabrera, Asunción--5.9
- Cannon, Hal, 1948- --5.8
- Christenson, A. John--5.8
- Covey, Sandra L. --5.5
- Cox, Norman R., Jr.--5.8
- Dowell, Shelley--1.3, 3.2, 5.5, 5.8
- Durando, Antonio R.--5.8
- Duty, Michael--3.2
- Fikes, Lee--3.2
- Fischer, Ronald F.--5.8
- Fisher, David--5.8
- Flukinger, Roy, 1947- --5.8
- Forten, Boyd--5.8
- Fox, Randall D.--5.5
- Garber, Dorothy E.--5.8
- Gary, N. E. (Norman E.)--5.5
- Garza, Rudolph C.--5.8
- Geddes, Kathy--5.8
- Grench, Charles--5.7
- Gutierrez, Jose Angel--5.5, 5.8
- Hamrick, David S.--5.9
- Harrison family--5.8
- Helmerich, W. H. (Walter H.), III--5.8
- James, Paula--5.8
- Janklow, Morton Lloyd--1.2
- Knoll, John F.--5.8
- Lampe, Mary M.--3.2
- Losee, R. E. (Ronald E.)--5.5, 5.8
- Marston, Betsy--1.2
- Matzer, Laura--5.10
- McKay, Stephanie J.--5.5
- McKnight, Sara--1.2
- McMurtry, Larry--5.8
- Miller, Arthur, of Reserve Oil and Minerals Corp.--5.5
- Morton, Robert Alan, 1934- --5.5
- Price, Betty--5.8
- Ranck, Lydia H.--5.8
- Roca, C., Fr.--5.5
- Rohrbach, John--5.10
- Sandweiss, Martha A.--3.2
- Stewart, A. D.--5.8

- Stovall, James E.--5.8
- Taylor, John A., of Oklahoma City, Okla.--5.8
- Tyler, Ronnie C., 1941- --3.2
- Varnedoe, Sam--5.8
- Wakabayashi, Gregory--5.7
- Wakabayashi, Hiro Clark, 1961- --5.7
- Westheimer, Ellen W.--5.8
- Whelchel, Harriet--5.5
- Wilson, Laura, 1939- --1.1, 3.2, 5.5-8
- Wilson, Owen, 1968- --5.8
- Wilson, Robert A.--5.6
- Young, Juanita--5.5