

Yale University Library
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Guide to the David Grant Noble Photographs and Papers

WA MSS S-4504



by Janet Lopes and Michael Rush

March 2022

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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-4504

CREATOR: Noble, David Grant

TITLE: David Grant Noble photographs and papers

DATES: circa 1940s-2017

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 59.58 linear feet (66 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English (Latin script)

SUMMARY: The David Grant Noble photographs and papers document Noble's work as a photographer and writer. Photographs consist of black and white prints, color prints, platinum prints, contact sheets, proofs, negatives, slides, transparencies, and related papers. Subjects include landscapes of the American Southwest, Vietnam, New York City, Taos Pueblo, cars, portraits, China, the Yucatán, Ecuador, and others. Papers consist of lectures, publications, professional correspondence, unpublished writings, journals, and publicity and reviews.

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To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from David Grant Noble on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana, 2021, and gift of David Grant Noble, 2021.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Access

Box 59 (computer media): Restricted fragile. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 60 (microcassette): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Conditions Governing Use

The David Grant Noble Photographs and Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

David Grant Noble Photographs and Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Related Materials

[David Grant Noble, Photographs of Southwestern Cultural Landscapes](#) (WA Photos Folio 142), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[David Grant Noble, Photographs of Mohawk steelworkers, New York City](#) (WA Photos 318), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[David Grant Noble, Photographs of Ojibwa wild rice harvests](#) (WA Photos 380), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[David Grant Noble, Photographs of Ojibwa cemeteries and Ojibwa families](#) (WA Photos 401), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[David Grant Noble, Portfolio of photographs of American Indians](#) (1988 Folio 79), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

David Grant Noble

David Grant Noble (born 1939) is an American photographer and writer whose focus is the history and archaeology of the American Southwest.

Scope and Contents

The David Grant Noble photographs and papers document Noble's work as a photographer and writer. Photographs consist of black and white prints, color prints, platinum prints, contact sheets, proofs, negatives, slides, transparencies, and related papers. Subjects include landscapes of the American Southwest, Vietnam, New York City, Taos Pueblo, cars, portraits, China, the Yucatán, Ecuador, and others. Papers consist of lectures, publications, professional correspondence, unpublished writings, journals, and publicity and reviews.

Arrangement

Organized into two series: I. Photographs, circa 1940s-2017. II. Papers, 1950-2017.

Collection Contents

Series I: Photographs, circa 1940s - 2017

53.0 linear feet (50 boxes)

The photographs series consists of black and white prints, color prints, platinum prints, contact sheets, proofs, negatives, slides, transparencies, and related papers documenting David Grant Noble's work as a photographer. Subjects include landscapes of the American Southwest, Vietnam, New York City, Taos Pueblo, cars, portraits, China, the Yucatán, Ecuador, and others.

Organized into four sub-series: Southwest landscapes, 1977-2013; Photographic projects, circa 1940s-2013; Non-black and white photography, 1970-2017, undated; and Book projects, undated.

	Southwest landscapes <i>21.33 linear feet (19 boxes)</i>	1977-2013
	Southwest landscapes consist of predominantly black and white prints documenting Southwest ruins and rock art, "Great Gallery" in Blair Canyon, Chaco Canyon, Pueblo Grande, and other southwest landscapes. Also includes some color proofs, negatives, contact sheets, and project documentation.	
	Organized into the following projects or groups: Southwest ruins and rock art; "Great Gallery" in Barrier Canyon; Chelsea project; Chaco Canyon; Southwest landscapes; and Pueblo Grande project.	
	Southwest ruins and rock art Includes 14 x 17" and 16 x 20" mounted, overmounted, and matted prints. Organized into two subseries: 14 x 17" matted prints and 16 x 20" matted prints.	1977-2004
	14 x 17" matted prints Arranged in print number order.	
b. 1 (Oversize)	1. Four generations of an Apache family, Kinishba, Arizona	1982
b. 1 (Oversize)	152. Casa Rinconada, Chaco Canyon	1982
b. 1 (Oversize)	153. Hovenweep, Utah	undated
b. 1 (Oversize)	154. Petroglyph, Three Rivers, New Mexico	1980
b. 1 (Oversize)	155. Petroglyphs, Galister Basin	undated
b. 1 (Oversize)	156. White House, Canyon de Chelly	undated
b. 1 (Oversize)	158. Keet Seel, Arizona	undated
b. 2 (Oversize)	172.	undated
b. 2 (Oversize)	219. Holly ruins, Hovenweep, Colorado	undated
b. 2 (Oversize)	220. White House, Canyon de Chelly	1978
b. 2 (Oversize)	221. Frijoles Canyon, New Mexico	1980
b. 2 (Oversize)	222. Chettro Kettle, Chaco Canyon	undated

Southwest landscapes > Southwest ruins and rock art > 14 x 17" matted prints (continued)

b. 2 (Oversize)	256.	undated
b. 2 (Oversize)	257.	undated
b. 2 (Oversize)	258. Eroded cliffs	undated
b. 2 (Oversize)	259. Aspens	undated
16 x 20" matted prints Arranged in print number order.		
b. 3 (Oversize)	95.	undated
b. 3 (Oversize)	97. La Cienega III	1990
b. 3 (Oversize)	102. Comanche Gap III	1992
b. 3 (Oversize)	108. Pueblo Bonito IX	2004
b. 3 (Oversize)	111. Casamero	2004
b. 3 (Oversize)	114. Round House in Grand Gulch	1987
b. 3 (Oversize)	151. Anasazi woman, Mancos Canyon	1992
b. 3 (Oversize)	157. Quarai, New Mexico	1980
b. 4 (Oversize)	159. Pueblo Bonito, Chaco Canyon	1982
b. 4 (Oversize)	160. Keet Seel, Arizona	1977
b. 4 (Oversize)	161. Chichen Itza I	1985
b. 4 (Oversize)	162. Frijoles Canyon cave dwellings	1980
b. 4 (Oversize)	163.	undated
b. 4 (Oversize)	164. Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles de Porciumcala de los Pecos	1990
b. 4 (Oversize)	165. Hovenweep, Utah	1983
b. 4 (Oversize)	166. White House II	1994
b. 5 (Oversize)	167. Sleeping Ute Mountain from Hovenweep	1992
b. 5 (Oversize)	168.	undated
b. 5 (Oversize)	169. Chaco Canyon from Hungo Pari	circa 1984
b. 5 (Oversize)	170. Tseping ruins	1992
b. 5 (Oversize)	171.	undated
b. 5 (Oversize)	173. Petroglyphs (flute players), Chaco Canyon	1984
b. 5 (Oversize)	174. Barrier Canyon, Utah III	1983
b. 6 (Oversize)	175. Glyphs with grasses, San Cristobal, New Mexico, no. 1	1998

Southwest landscapes > Southwest ruins and rock art > 16 x 20" matted prints (continued)

b. 6 (Oversize)	176.	undated
b. 6 (Oversize)	177. Barrier Canyon IV	1983
b. 6 (Oversize)	178. Galisteo Basin VII	1988
b. 6 (Oversize)	179.	undated
b. 6 (Oversize)	180. Barrier Canyon I, Utah	1993
b. 6 (Oversize)	225. Cookes Peak, New Mexico	1987
b. 7 (Oversize)	232.	undated
b. 7 (Oversize)	233.	undated
b. 7 (Oversize)	235.	undated
b. 7 (Oversize)	238.	undated
b. 8 (Oversize)	240. La Cieneguilla I	1989
b. 8 (Oversize)	251. Gravestone, Quemado, New Mexico	1982
b. 8 (Oversize)	252. San Antonio, New Mexico, I	1990
b. 8 (Oversize)	253. Near Springerville, Arizona	1990
b. 8 (Oversize)	254. Pie Town, New Mexico	1982
b. 8 (Oversize)	260. Pie Town, New Mexico	undated
b. 8 (Oversize)	261. Navajo road, San Juan Basin, New Mexico	1984
b. 8 (Oversize)	262. Betatakin Canyon, Arizona	
b. 8 (Oversize)	263. Mesa Verde in winter	1985
b. 9 (Oversize)	264.	undated
b. 9 (Oversize)	265. Tumacacori Camposanto	1984
b. 9 (Oversize)	266. Galisteo Basin V	1988
b. 9 (Oversize)	267. Dancing couples, Salt River Valley	undated
b. 9 (Oversize)	268.	undated
b. 9 (Oversize)	269. Petroglyph, Galisteo, NM, Comanche Gap I	1983
b. 9 (Oversize)	270. Comanche Gap V	1987
b. 9 (Oversize)	271. Hohokam Series, no. 1	1992
	"Great Gallery" in Barrier Canyon	1982 October
b. 10	Color proofs and negatives	1982 October

Southwest landscapes > "Great Gallery" in Barrier Canyon (continued)

b. 11	11x14" prints 8 Folders Includes 65 loose prints.	undated
b. 12	Chelsea project 4 Folders Includes 42 8x10" loose prints.	undated
b. 13	Chaco Canyon 6 Folders Includes 76 finished prints and proofs of Chaco Canyon ruins and rock art. The proofs were considered for publication in books.	undated
b. 14	Southwest landscapes 3 Folders Includes 29 11x14" and smaller prints.	undated
	Pueblo Grande project Includes silver photographs, proofs, and negatives for the Phoenix Arts Commission.	1990-1992
b. 15	11x14" prints and project documents 9 Folders Includes 63 11x14" prints, documents and letters relating to the project, Phoenix Arts Commission paperworks, and contracts.	1990-1992
b. 16	Contact sheets, proofs 7 Folders Includes 68 sheets.	1990-1992
b. 17	5X7" proofs and test prints 9 Folders Includes 139 black and white images.	1991, undated
b. 18	8x10" proofs and test prints 6 Folders Includes 67 black and white images.	1991, undated
b. 19	Negatives Includes 69 rolls of film, 6x7cm and 35mm.	1991-1992
	Photographic projects 28.75 linear feet (27 boxes) Photographic projects include prints, albums, negatives, and contact sheets documenting David Grant Noble's photography, ranging from childhood photographs to projects in Vietnam, New York City, indigenous communities outside the American Southwest, Taos Pueblo, China, the Yucatán, and Ecuador. Also includes portraits, figure studies, cars, and various other subjects. Arranged in rough chronological order.	circa 1940s-2013

Photographic projects (continued)

b. 20	<p>Early photographic prints, albums, and negatives <i>4 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes photographs taken with a Brownie camera when Noble was between 8 and 11 years old. Subjects include animals in the National Zoo in Washington, D. C., Camp Dudley, Le Rosey School in Switzerland, and the high school football team that his father coached.</p>	1940s-1950s
b. 21	<p>Early photographic prints, albums, and negatives <i>2 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes photograph albums of Noble's European trip to England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, and France.</p>	1940s-1950s
b. 21	<p>Vietnam <i>3 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes 46 black and white prints, mostly on 8x10 paper.</p>	circa 1960-1965
b. 22	<p>New York City <i>6 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes 58 black and white prints, mostly on 8x10 paper. Subjects include people living on the streets, building fronts, abstract patterns, and Central Park. According to Noble in his own description, "I made most of these pictures when I was first discovering photography as an art form. I had a strong interest, initially, in patterns especially on building. Also of street people."</p>	circa 1965-1969
b. 22	<p>Indigenous communities of northern states <i>4 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes 34 photographs, mostly 8x10 work prints, never exhibited.</p>	1970-1971
b. 23	<p>Indigenous communities of northern states <i>2 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes 14 11x14 prints. These are mostly work prints, never exhibited.</p>	1970-1971
b. 23	<p>Iroquois lacrosse <i>3 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes 14 prints of various sizes and seven 35mm film strips and proofs.</p>	1971
b. 24	<p>Deer Dance at Ohkay Owingeh <i>4 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes 60 5x7, 8x10, and larger prints, plus four contact sheets. According to Noble, in describing the photographs, "The name of the elderly Hunt Chief, who is shown in some of these pictures, can be found in Elsie Clews Parson's 'Pueblo Indian Religion' (1939). He was the hunt priest in the '30s and continuing into the 70s. Alfonso Ortiz told me that when he died, a great wealth of traditional knowledge went with him."</p>	1973
b. 25	<p>Taos Pueblo Includes 3 11x14 and 3 8x10 prints.</p>	1970s
b. 25	<p>Cars Includes 14 prints of derelict cars in the desert and jungle.</p>	undated

Photographic projects (continued)

b. 25	Group portraits <i>2 Folders</i> Includes 17 8x10 prints. Series of portraits of Noble, his wife, and various friends when Noble moved to Santa Fe. Some photographs are related to building Noble's adobe house with the help of friends and nephews.	1970s
b. 26 (Oversize)	Portraits <i>8 Folders</i> Includes 36 portraits of various sizes, loose and matted. Includes portraits of musicians, Arroyo Hondo sweat-lodge bathers, and an Apache family.	circa 1970s
b. 27	Figure studies <i>10 Folders</i> Includes 9 matted, 18 loose prints, and 1 contact sheet of nude female models.	circa 1970s
b. 28 (Oversize)- 29 (Oversize)	China, 11x14 prints, matted <i>19 Folders</i> Includes 18 11x14" prints in 16x20" mats, and one 16x20 unmatted print of courtyard.	1982
b. 30	China, 11x14 prints <i>2 Folders</i> Includes 20 11x14" prints, including proofs of which final prints were not made.	1982
b. 31-32	China, 8x10 prints, matted <i>25 Folders</i>	1982
b. 33	China, 8x10 prints <i>10 Folders</i> Includes 94 8x10 loose prints.	1982
b. 34	China, 5x7 proofs <i>3 Folders</i> Includes 53 5x7" loose proofs.	1982
b. 35	Yucatán <i>4 Folders</i>	1985
b. 36	Great Spruce Head Island <i>2 Folders</i> Includes 11 8x10" photographs and 6 contact sheets. Noble notes he and Ruth, his wife, spent several days as guests of Stephen and Marcie Porter. Ruth worked for their son, Eliot, preparing photographs for portfolios. Noble went to China with another of Porter's sons in 1982.	1991
b. 37	Death Valley <i>3 Folders</i> Includes 10 11x14" prints and 12 test prints, some with notations.	circa 1990s
b. 38	Ecuador <i>7 Folders</i> Includes 10 8x10 prints, 32 4x6" color prints, 26 5x7" black and white prints, contact sheets, and negatives.	2013

Photographic projects (continued)

b. 39-41, 42 (Oversize)-43 (Oversize)	Various <i>57 Folders</i> Includes 126 matted and loose prints of various subjects including beach scenes, street portraits, and landscapes from places like New Mexico, Utah, Montana, Hawaii, New York, and Mexico.	1955-2008, undated
b. 44-46	Various <i>27 Folders</i> Includes a total of 46 matted and loose prints of various subjects including Western landforms, landscapes from New Mexico, Maine, and Hawaii, beaches, cityscapes, and street portraits. Some prints were exhibited in the 1998 Witkin Gallery show. According to Noble's notes, most are from the period of time he was changing size and format and printing on Kodak Ektalure G paper, a warm-tone emulsion with a fine-grained texture.	circa 1998, undated
	Non-black and white photography <i>2.08 linear feet (2 boxes)</i> The non-black and white photography series consists of platinum work prints, notes, manuals and color prints, transparencies, and slides.	1970-2017, undated
	Platinum work <i>1.67 linear feet (1 box)</i>	undated
b. 47	11x14" prints <i>4 Folders</i> Includes work prints, notes, and manuals.	undated
	Color work <i>0.42 linear feet (1 box)</i>	1970-2007
b. 48	Photographs, slides, transparencies, and negatives <i>10 Folders</i> Includes color photographic prints, 6x7 mm transparencies, and slides. Transparencies include ruins and images relating to magazine and book illustrations and covers. Slides are of Mohawk steelworkers in New York City. There is also documentation of building a straw bale house for a Navajo woman near Gallup.	1970-2007, undated
	Book projects <i>0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)</i> The Book projects subseries consists of black and white prints used in two books: <i>Ancient Ruins of the Southwest: An Archaeological Guide</i> and <i>Pueblos, Villages, Forts, and Trails: A Guide to New Mexico's Past</i> .	undated
b. 49	<i>Ancient Ruins of the Southwest: An Archaeological Guide</i> , photographic prints <i>12 Folders</i> Includes 110 5x7" and 8x10" black and white prints used for the first three editions of the guide.	undated
b. 50	<i>Pueblos, Villages, Forts, and Trails: A Guide to New Mexico's Past</i> , photographic prints <i>8 Folders</i> Includes 82 5x7" and 8x10" black and white prints.	undated

Series II: Papers, 1950–2017*6.58 linear feet (16 boxes)*

Papers consist of lectures, publications, professional correspondence, unpublished writings, journals, and publicity and reviews documenting the work of David Grant Noble.

Box 59 (computer media): Restricted fragile. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 60 (microcassette): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Organized into three sub-series: Writings, 1950-2017; Journals, 1965-2013; and Publicity and reviews, 1971-2010.

	<p>Writings <i>5.25 linear feet (12 boxes)</i></p> <p>Box 59 (computer media): Restricted fragile. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.</p> <p>Box 60 (microcassette): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.</p> <p>Organized into three subseries: Lectures, 1988-2016; Publications, 1950-2017; and Unpublished short stories, 1959-1967.</p>	1950–2017
	<p>Lectures <i>1.33 linear feet (4 boxes)</i></p> <p>Lectures document Noble's work speaking, teaching, and guiding tours related to the history of the American Southwest.</p>	1988–2016
b. 51	<p>Elderhostel <i>10 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes papers relating to Noble's teaching of courses in New Mexico. Courses include photography and subjects relating to the Southwest, New Mexico, and Santa Fe history. Listed courses include: "Traders, Travelers, and Tourists: How the Outside World Changed New Mexico," "The Spanish-Colonial Frontier," "Historical Santa Fe," "Trails to Santa Fe," "Double Vision," "New Mexico Territorial History," and "The Camino Real."</p>	circa 1995-2002
b. 52–53	<p>Books, photography, archaeology, and history lectures and articles <i>16 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes topics as Fort Union, Santa Fe Trail, Chimney Rock National Monument, Impact of the Santa Fe Trail, Zebulon Montgomery Pike Expedition, Ute origins and history, Mohawk Steelworkers, Goodnight-Loving Trail, popular writing for "Writing Anthropology," "Living the Ancient Southwest," The Repatriation of Adolph F. Bandelier, "Ancient Ruins and Rock Art of the Southwest," "Ancient Colorado: An Archaeological Perspective," and Spanish-Colonial Santa Fe.</p>	1988–2016
b. 54	<p>Martin Randall tour, "Canyons & Cliff Dwellings" <i>5 Folders</i></p> <p>Noble was a tour guide and lecturer on a 12-day bus tour from Salt Lake City to Phoenix. Tour members were British, Irish, and Australian.</p>	2015 October

Writings (continued)

	<p>Publications <i>3.67 linear feet (7 boxes)</i></p> <p>Publications consist of magazines and other publications containing work by David Grant Noble, sales and gift records, correspondence, contracts, and otehrs papers related to Noble's books, and other professional correspondence.</p> <p>Box 59 (computer media): Restricted fragile. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.</p> <p>Box 60 (microcassette): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	1950-2017
b. 55-56	<p>Magazine articles and other publications <i>13 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes about 32 magazines and publications containing photographs and articles by Noble. Includes issues of <i>Discovery</i>, an athropological journal of which Noble was editor.</p>	1972-2012
b. 57	Sales and gift records	1950s-2010s
b. 61	<p>Professional correspondence <i>13 Folders</i></p> <p>Relating to various book and photography projects and photo galleries.</p>	1972-2013
b. 62	<p>Unpublished short stories <i>0.25 linear feet 8 Folders (1 box)</i></p> <p>Includes "Moments Together," "Pigeons," "Meguro," "The Secret Places of the Forest," "Miguel," "The Squat Thrust," "Didi," "Mike's Diner," "Badger," "The Thief," "An Afternoon Walk," untitled, "The Magic Key," "The Llama's Tale," "The Giraffe Hunter," "The Wedding," "The Return," "Three Tales," and a play.</p> <p>Also includes two papers written by Noble as an undergraduate at Yale.</p>	1959-1967
	<p>Journals <i>0.67 linear feet (2 boxes)</i></p> <p>Journals document Noble's travels in China, across the United States and Canada, Vietnam, and Ecuador.</p> <p>Arranged in chronological order.</p>	1965-2013
b. 63	<p>Travel journals <i>7 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes journals from China, Native American tribal lands, and Noble's bicycle trip in Canada's maritime provinces.</p>	1965-1982
b. 63	<p>Great Spruce Head Island</p> <p>Includes journal of Noble's time in Maine with Eliot Porter.</p>	1991 July-August
b. 64	<p>Vietnam memoir <i>2 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes an original and later version of a memoir written for family and friends. It became a memoir component of "Saigon to Pleiku: A Counterintelligence Agent in Vietnam's Central Highlands, 1962-1963".</p>	1995

Journals (continued)

b. 64	Ecuador According to Noble's notes, he was invited by Nik Millhouse, thr proprietor, to be guest artist at Hacienda Cusin in Ecuador for two weeks.	2013
	Publicity and reviews <i>0.67 linear feet (2 boxes)</i> Publicity and renews consist of materials related to books and photography shows. According to Noble, he "stopped collecting this kind of material in the late 1990s, probably because I ceased having relationships with galleries and having exhibits. But there have been subsequent book reviews." Arranged in roughly chronological order.	1971-2010
b. 65	1971-1980	1971-1980
b. 65	1981-1989 <i>7 Folders</i>	1981-1989
b. 65-66	1990-1999 <i>7 Folders</i>	1990-1999
b. 66	2000s	2000s
b. 66	China shows	1984
b. 66	"In Search of Chaco"	2006

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Photographers -- United States -- Archives

Geographic Names

China -- Pictorial works

Ecuador -- Pictorial works

New York (N.Y.) -- Pictorial works

Southwestern States -- Pictorial works

Taos Pueblo (N.M.) -- Pictorial works

Vietnam -- Pictorial works

Yucatán (Mexico : State) -- Pictorial works

Genres / Formats

Audiovisual materials

Born digital

Photographic prints

Photographs

Platinum prints

Occupations

Photographers -- United States -- 20th Century

Names

Noble, David Grant