

Archives & Manuscript Collections  
National Sporting Library  
Middleburg, VA

**Leonard S. Sutcliffe**  
**Photograph Albums**  
**1925-1934**

Name: **Sutcliffe, Leonard Stansfield (1880-1937)** MC 0003

Materials: Photograph albums

Dates: 1923-1934

Volume: 1 cubic foot (Document boxes 1-3)

Donation: Unknown donation, 1985

Usage: Unless otherwise stated by NSL staff, these records are open for research without restrictions.

**Biographical Note**

Leonard Stansfield Sutcliffe was a successful horse photographer based out of Lexington, Kentucky in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in Birkenhead, England on April 15, 1880, and was educated in Yorkshire. Sutcliffe came to North America in 1907, serving as a lieutenant in the Governor General's Footguards of Canada. Driven south by the Canadian climate, he settled first in the Carolinas, but then relocated to Lexington, Kentucky. Beginning only as an amateur photographer, Sutcliffe quickly demonstrated a natural skill at capturing the most flattering images of horses; by the early 1920s he was recognized as one of the most talented turf photographers of his day. The noted English racing photographer F. H. Rouch visited Lexington in 1922 and remarked that his presence there to photograph famous horses was unnecessary, as Sutcliffe was already there.

During his career Sutcliffe created several landmark works which still stand today as milestones in the horse photography world. Around 1929 he produced a series of five albums chronicling American thoroughbred sires and mares, still considered to be masterpieces. His photographs were used in several publications like studbooks and *The Thoroughbred Record*. Sutcliffe's most famous contributions to the field were his celebrated photographs of Man o'War, thought by many to be the best pictures ever taken of the famed winner. Sutcliffe also built a reputation for being an expert in not only still life photography, but also in the preservation and repair of photographs. At the time of his death, he was working on a compilation of

photographs of all the winners of the Kentucky Derby beginning with Aristides, the winner of the first Derby in 1875.

Sutcliffe had never married, and his only family remained in England. Leonard Stansfield Sutcliffe died on June 30, 1937 after a brief illness. He was buried in Lexington, his home for twenty years.

### Collection Description

The Leonard S. Sutcliffe Photograph Albums consist of three photograph albums, two pieces of correspondence, and four loose photographs, which date from 1923 to 1934. The collection has been divided into three series: Correspondence, Photographs, and Photograph Albums. The two letters in the first series, Correspondence, were written by Sutcliffe to Neil "Roamer" Newman, contributor to *The Thoroughbred Record* and later the creator of the three-volume series *Famous Horses of the American Turf* (in which he used photographs by Sutcliffe). The Photographs series contains four loose photographs of horses taken by Sutcliffe after the compilation of the albums; these photographs were enclosed with the later letter to Newman. The albums, comprising the third series, are divided into two subject areas: thoroughbred sires and thoroughbred mares. Each album consists of two horses to a page, with pedigree information handwritten in white by Sutcliffe. The albums have been arranged chronologically according to the dates of the photographs contained within. An alphabetical index of horses depicted in the albums has been appended to this finding aid. Many of the photographs were obviously intended for use elsewhere, as the reins and hands of the trainers were removed from the photograph during development.

Judging from the correspondence, Sutcliffe seems to have sent the albums to Newman as a fellow connoisseur of horse photography, and possibly also to help raise a demand for the printing of the books.

### Series and Subseries

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <b>I. Correspondence</b>   | <b>1 folder</b> |
| Two letters from Sutcliffe to Newman, n.d., 1934 (misdated as 1928, but sent 1934) |                 |
| <b>II. Photographs</b>   | <b>1 folder</b> |
| Four loose photographs of thoroughbreds (included with letter dated 1934), 1934    |                 |
| <b>III. Photograph albums</b>  | <b>3 boxes</b>  |
| A. "Photographs of Thoroughbred Mares," 1923-1928                                  |                 |
| B. "Photographs of Thoroughbred Mares, Vol. II," 1925-1929                         |                 |
| C. "Photographs of Thoroughbred Sires," 1926-1931                                  |                 |

**Container List**  
**MC 0003**

**I. Correspondence**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Letter from Sutcliffe to Newman	n.d.
1	1	Letter from Sutcliffe to Newman	1934

**II. Photographs**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	2	Four photographs of thoroughbreds	1934

**III. Photograph albums**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	--	"Photographs of Thoroughbred Mares"	1923-1928
2	--	"Photographs of Thoroughbred Mares, Vol. II"	1925-1929
3	--	"Photographs of Thoroughbred Sires"	1926-1931

This collection was processed by Michele M. Tourney, Jan. 2004.