"There is not art photography, news, documentary, scientific... There is only good and bad photography and from all categories can come art—or not," said Berenice Abbott.

Abbott lived this belief, producing photography in a range of categories as her career evolved.



Evolution as a Photographer



Portrait of James Joyce, Paris, 1928. Courtesy Ron Kurtz.

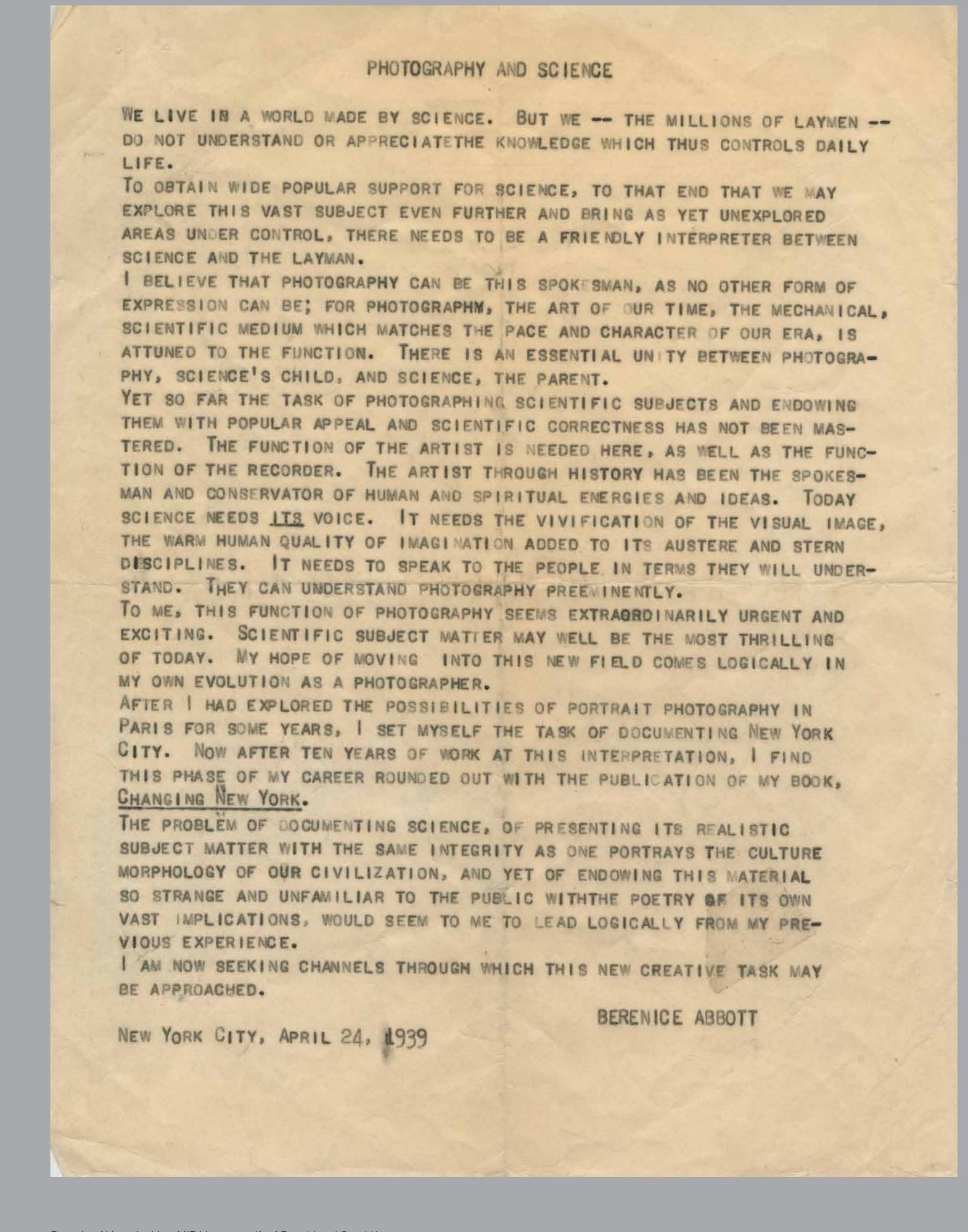
Berenice Abbott began her photographic career in Paris in the 1920s. First, she worked as a darkroom assistant to Man Ray; then she struck out on her own, achieving success as a portraitist.



Murray Hill Hotel: Spiral.

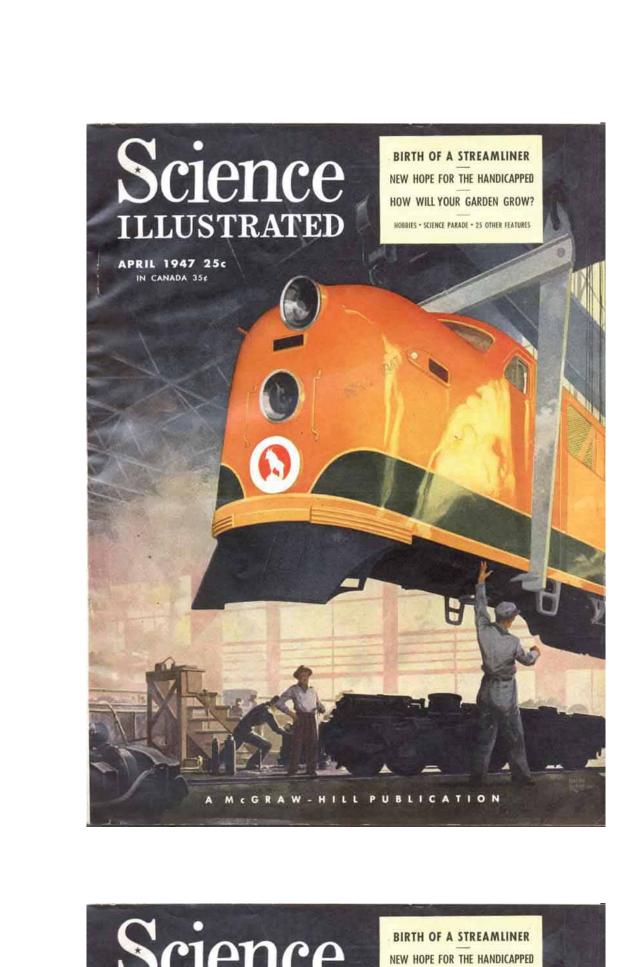
Berenice Abbott Collection, MIT Museum, gift of Ronald and Carol Kurtz.

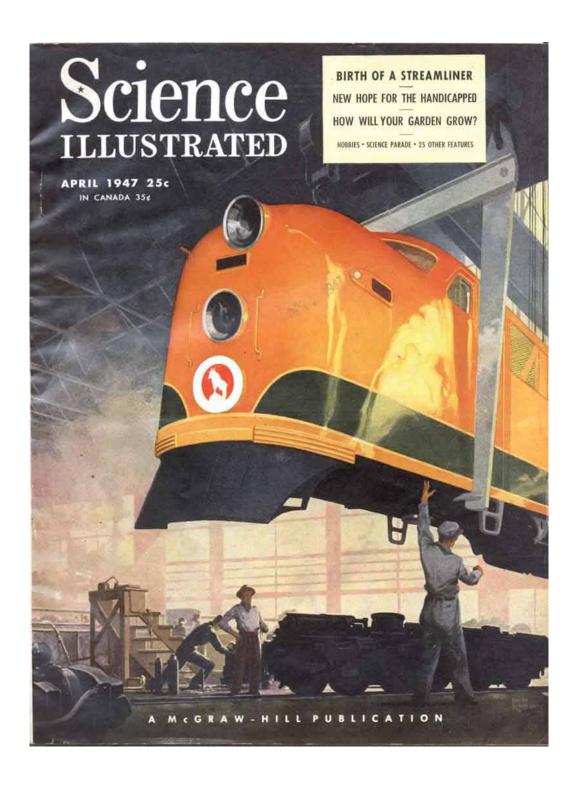
From 1935 to 1939, support from the New Deal Federal Art Project enabled Abbott to carry out "Changing New York," a photographic and research project that included thousands of images.



Berenice Abbott Archive, MIT Museum, gift of Ronald and Carol Kurtz.

In 1939, Abbott wrote this manifesto, proposing a new role for herself, and for photography, as an "interpreter between science and the layman.'





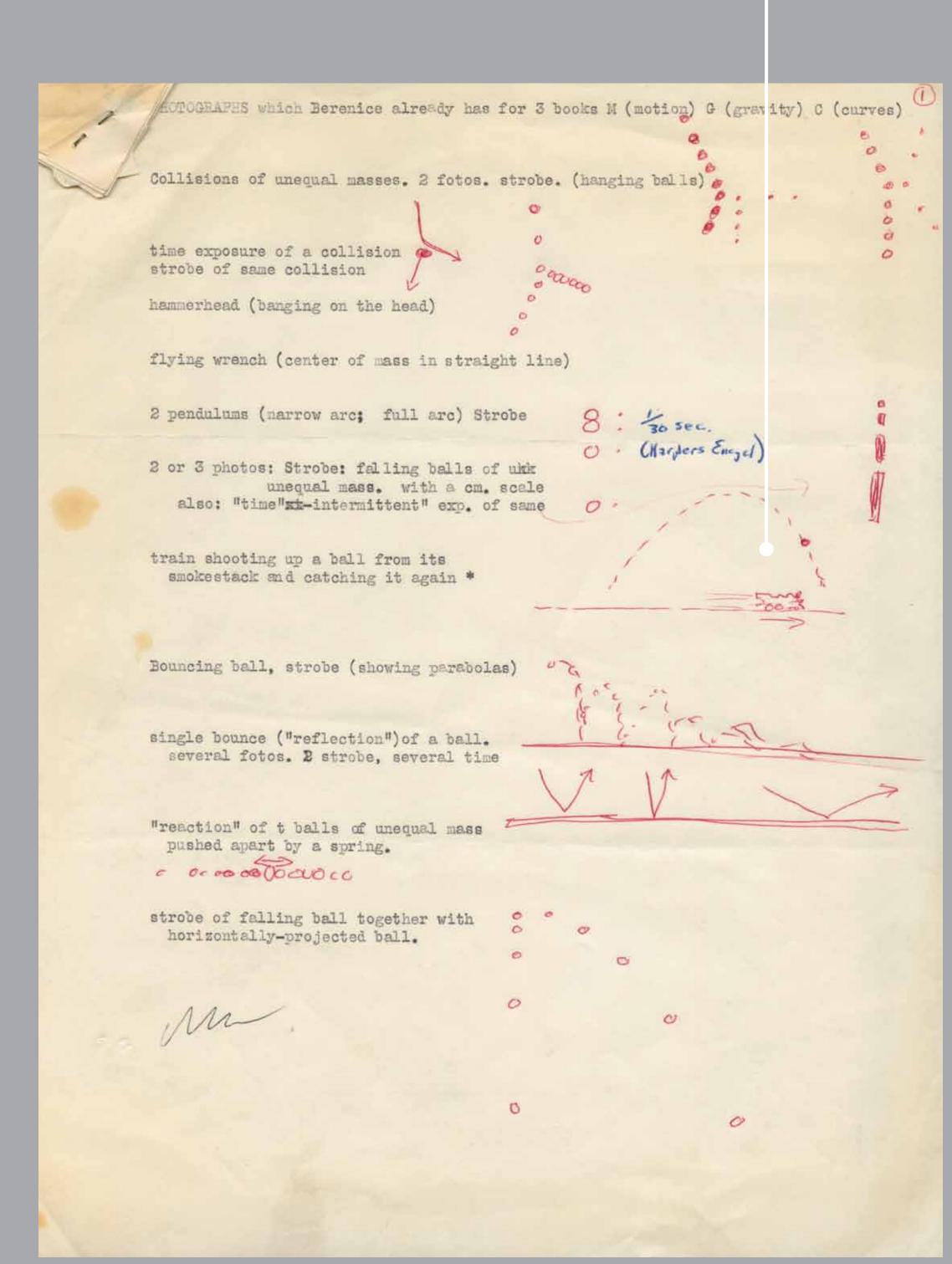
Berenice Abbott Archive, MIT Museum, gift of Ronald and Carol Kurtz.

In the 1940s, Abbott served as photography editor for Science Illustrated. She took photographs for the textbook American High School Biology (1948).

From 1958 to 1960, Abbott worked as the staff photographer for the Physical Science Study Committee (PSSC), a high school curriculum reform project based at MIT. The PSSC wrote a textbook, *Physics*, and developed films and hands-on laboratory manuals. The PSSC approach revolutionized the teaching of physics, presenting physics as a way of investigating the world rather than a collection of facts to memorize.



Berenice Abbott Collection, MIT Museum, gift of Ronald and Carol Kurtz.

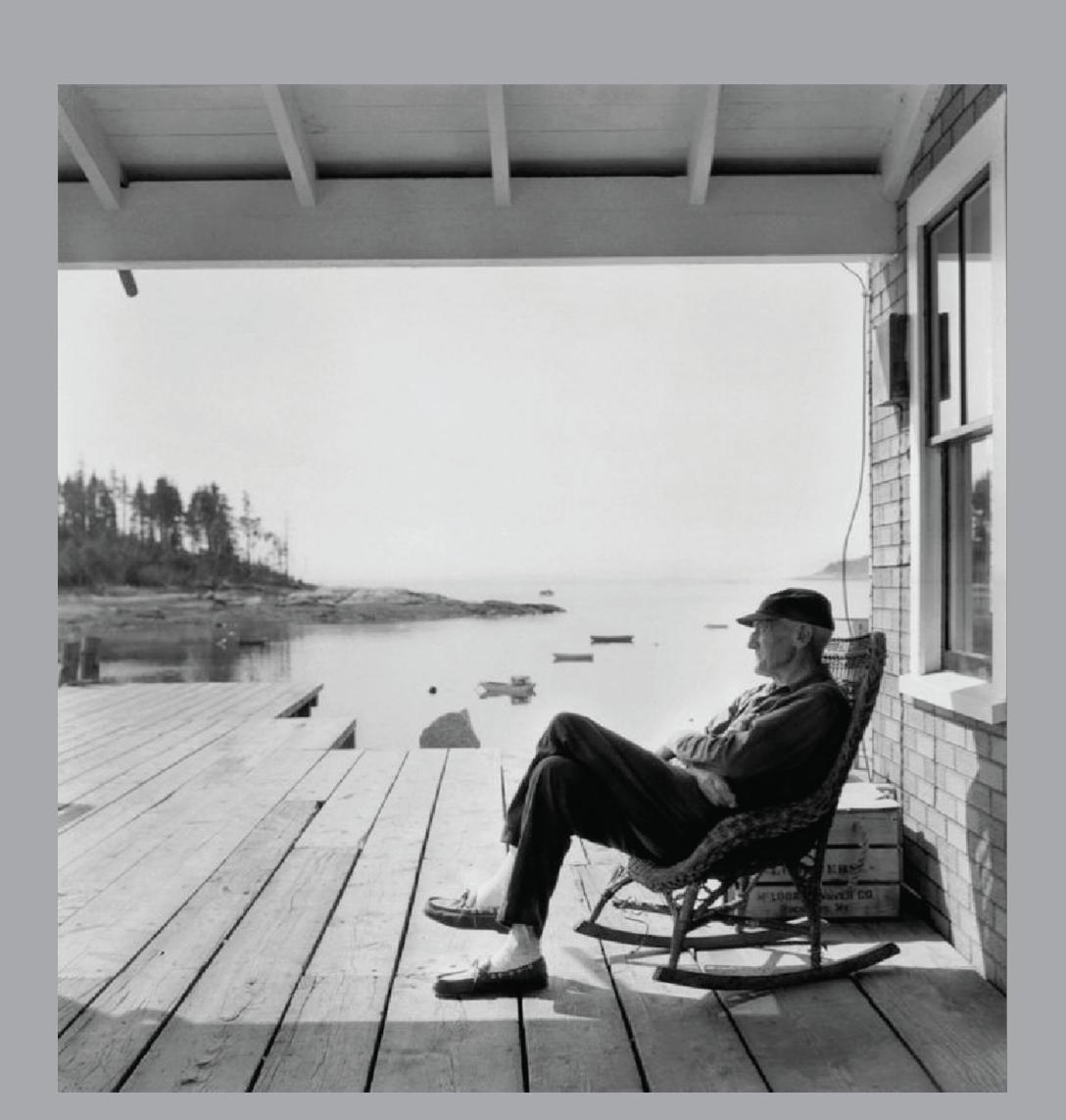


Abbott's notes, which include her hand-drawn sketches, show plans for adapting PSSC work for use in books for young readers. Berenice Abbott Archive, MIT Museum, gift of Ronald and Carol Kurtz.



Melbourne Hotel, Florida, a photograph in Abbott's Route 1 series. Berenice Abbott Collection, MIT Museum, gift of Ronald and Carol Kurtz.

After leaving MIT, Abbott spent six years taking photographs along Route 1, from Florida to Maine.



Old Man in Rocker, Maine, 1967, a photograph from Abbott's A Portrait of Maine. Berenice Abbott Collection, MIT Museum gift of Ronald and Carol Kurtz.

Abbott published her last book of photography, A Portrait of Maine, in 1968. She never returned to scientific subject matter. She photographed Maine for the rest of her life, dying in 1991.

In the 1960s, Abbott collaborated with E. G. Valens on three science books for young readers:

- Motion
- Magnets • The Attractive Universe