Harrison Gray Otis Album of California Scenes, circa 1890-1910

Collection number: BANC PIC 1978.029--ALB

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Collection Summary
Collection Title: Harrison Gray Otis Album of California Scenes
Date (inclusive): circa 1890-1910
Collection Number: BANC PIC 1978.029--ALB
Photographer: "Rafert"
Extent: 23 photographic prints, 20 x 24 cm., mounted and bound in album, 24 x 32 cm.23 digital objects
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Abstract: The Harrison Gray Otis Album of California Scenes contains 23 photographic prints taken circa 1890-1910 by the photographer "Rafert."
Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English
Access
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Preferred Citation
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Digital Representations Available
Digital representations of selected original pictorial materials are available in the list of materials below. Digital image files were prepared from selected Library originals by the Library Photographic Service. Library originals were copied onto 35mm color transparency film; the film was scanned and transferred to Kodak Photo CD (by Custom Process); and the Photo CD files were color-corrected and saved in JFIF (JPEG) format for use as viewing files.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog
Otis, Harrison Gray, 1837-1917. Associated name
California Heritage Project. CU-BANC
Online Archive of California.
California -- Pictorial works.
Cliff House (San Francisco, Calif.) -- Pictorial works.
Dwellings -- California -- Photographs.
Otis Art Institute -- Pictorial works.
Otis, Harrison Gray, 1837-1917 -- Homes and haunts -- Pictorial works.
Outdoor recreation -- California -- Photographs.
Spanish mission buildings -- California -- Photographs.

Acquisition Information
The Harrison Gray Otis Album of California Scenes was purchased in 1978.

Biography
Harrison Gray Otis was born in 1837, near Marietta, Ohio, into a family characterized by their ardent loyalty to patriotic causes. Otis' grandfather served in the Revolutionary War, and his father was an ardent abolitionist who housed runaway slaves for the underground railroad. At the age of 14, Otis became an apprentice printer, and thereafter pursued a career in publishing. After moving to Kentucky, Otis was elected as a delegate to the state's 1860 Republican convention to nominate Abraham Lincoln. The following year, after the outbreak of the Civil War, Otis enlisted in the Union Army's Twelfth Ohio Voluntary Infantry, for which he would heroically fight until the end of the war, becoming a highly lauded officer. In 1867, Otis became a compositor for the Government Printing Office in Washington, D.C., where he would join the International Typographers' Union. With the bold venturesomeness that often characterized his actions, Otis resigned from the G.P.O. in 1876 and moved to California, which he had visited two years earlier and which impressed him as a region of great financial opportunity. Immediately upon his arrival in Santa Barbara, he took over the Santa Barbara Daily Press of rancher William W. Hollister, whom he had befriended on his previous trip. In 1882 --after experiencing controversial political and business misfortunes in Santa Barbara, and after two brief spans as U.S. Treasury agent of the Seal Islands in the Bering Sea where he supervised the government and the local sealskin monopoly --Otis was hired as editor of the newly founded Los Angeles Times. He eventually became sole owner of the paper and president of the Times-Mirror Company. Using the influence of both his narrowly partisan conservative newspaper and his ties with business and government, Otis became one of the most important developers of the Los Angeles area. He promoted both urban and agricultural growth, was instrumental in the development of Los Angeles Harbor at San Pedro into a major seaport, and helped to establish an adequate water supply system for the city. (Concurrent with Otis' leadership of the Times, Los Angeles grew from a small frontier town of 12,000 inhabitants to a sprawling urban area with a population of over a half-million.) A vehement
opponent of the closed shop, the one-time union member Otis was also a major force in the suppression of Los Angeles' burgeoning labor movement. In 1910, in retaliation for Otis' published attacks on organized labor, the brothers James and John McNamara bombed the Los Angeles Times Building, killing 20 persons and injuring 17 others -- an event which Otis exploited to further his anti-union crusade. Always eager to selflessly commit himself to efforts he felt were for the greater good of the nation, the multi-millionaire Otis -- at the age of 62 -- requested and was appointed to the post of Brigadier General of the volunteer regiments fighting in the Spanish-American War in the Philippines. As following the Civil War, Otis resigned with an exemplary record. Otis would remain owner of the Times until his death, always working closely with his son-in-law Harry Chandler, who as Otis' successor, would continue Otis' policies and would play an equally instrumental role in the development of Los Angeles. Otis' residence, "The Bivouac," located at what was formerly Wilshire Place and Park View Avenue, was a virtual museum of war relics, and reflected his appreciation of the fine graphic arts and photography. Shortly before his death, Otis donated the house to the County of Los Angeles to serve as an art gallery. It has since become the esteemed Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design. Harrison Gray Otis died in 1917.

**Scope and Content**

The Harrison Gray Otis Album of California Scenes contains 23 photographic prints taken circa 1890-1910 by the photographer "Rafert." The album primarily features photographs of southern California locations, many of which are historically associated with Otis' involvement in the development of the Los Angeles region or with his private interests. The album includes views of San Pedro Harbor and Point Fermin, Santa Monica Beach, the Santa Barbara and San Gabriel Missions, the old plaza and mission church of the Los Angeles Pueblo, Elias Jackson "Lucky" Baldwin's Santa Anita Rancho, Echo Park, Figueroa Street, Mt. Lowe, Millard Canyon, and a Verdugo residence. Also pictured is the "The Outpost," the Cahuenga Pass locale which was the site of Pico's 1847 surrender to Fremont. The album also includes several prints of Otis' Wilshire Place residence "The Bivouac," in which he displayed sizeable collections of both war paraphernalia and fine art, and on whose site is presently located the Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design. Unidentified ranch scenes and a view of San Francisco's Cliff House and Seal Rocks are also included.

The album's leather cover is embossed, "Pictures by Rafert." Another embossing, "Gen. H.G. Otis," has been partially rubbed out. The spine is embossed, "Pictures." One mount has been detached from the binding and is thus lacking.

A man who may be Harrison Gray Otis is pictured in some of the prints.

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**Corridor, Santa Barbara Mission.** BANC PIC 1978.029:02--ALB

**Patio, Verdugo Home. [Los Angeles County.]** BANC PIC 1978.029:03--ALB

**Cacti, San Gabriel Mission.** BANC PIC 1978.029:04--ALB

**A drink by the wayside. [Unidentified location.]** BANC PIC 1978.029:05--ALB

**Under the oaks.** BANC PIC 1978.029:06--ALB

**A tropical scene, Baldwin's Ranch. [San Gabriel Valley.]** BANC PIC 1978.029:07--ALB

**Millard's Canon [i.e. Millard Canyon]. [Los Angeles County.]** BANC PIC 1978.029:08--ALB

**Figueroa St. [Los Angeles.]** BANC PIC 1978.029:09--ALB

**"The Outpost." View of the rustic bridge.** BANC PIC 1978.029:10--ALB

**"The Peppers." Figueroa St. [Los Angeles.]** BANC PIC 1978.029:11--ALB

**On the beach at Santa Monica.** BANC PIC 1978.029:12--ALB

**Arch Rock, Santa Monica.** BANC PIC 1978.029:13--ALB

**San Pedro Harbor.** BANC PIC 1978.029:14--ALB

**Point Fermin [i.e. Fermin]. [Palos Verdes Peninsula, Los Angeles.]** BANC PIC 1978.029:15--ALB

**Beach near Santa Monica.** BANC PIC 1978.029:16--ALB

**Mt. Lowe.** BANC PIC 1978.029:17--ALB

**The Cliff House and Seal Rocks, S.F. [San Francisco].** BANC PIC 1978.029:18--ALB
"The Outpost" -- View of the old adobe and ancient sycamore. (In this house according to local history, the treaty between Capt. Fremont and Don Adreas Pico was signed.)
BANC PIC 1978.029:19--ALB ark:/13030/tf067nb2pd

"The Bivouac." View of the upper central hall. [Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles.]
BANC PIC 1978.029:20--ALB ark:/13030/tf0w1006rn

"The Bivouac." View looking through the porte cochere. [Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles.] BANC PIC 1978.029:21--ALB ark:/13030/tf7779p3n7

"The Bivouac" -- Glimpse of the peristyle and a bit of the grounds. [Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles.] BANC PIC 1978.029:22--ALB ark:/13030/tf7m3nb6sp

"The Bivouac" -- Southern exposure. [Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles.]
BANC PIC 1978.029:23--ALB ark:/13030/tf929012f2