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Collection number: BANC PIC 2004.158

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Henri Lenoir pictorial collection

Date (inclusive): circa 1930-circa 1990
Date (bulk): circa 1970-circa 1985
Collection Number: BANC PIC 2004.158
Collector: Lenoir, Henri

Extent: 18 boxes, 10 albums, 7 oversize folders (circa 2350 photographic prints, circa 400 drawings, circa 1230 negatives, circa 650 slides, circa 70 prints, circa 1700 postcards, 1 painting) and 4 negatives : 61 x 92 cm or smaller.

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Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English

Access Information

COLLECTION STORED, IN PART, OFF-SITE: Advance notice required for use.
NEGATIVES RESTRICTED. Use of negatives only by permission of the appropriate curator. Inquiries regarding these materials should be directed, in writing, to the Head of Public Services, The Bancroft Library.
NITRATE NEGATIVES CLOSED TO RESEARCH DUE TO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESTRICTIONS.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Henri Lenoir pictorial collection, BANC PIC 2004.158, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Related Material
Henri Lenoir papers (BANC MSS 92/842 c)

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog
Banducci, Enrico--Pictorial works.
Dunham, Ward--Pictorial works.
Gomez, Isadore--Pictorial works.
Koci, Frank--Pictorial works.
Lenoir, Henri, 1904-1994--Archives
Lenoir, Henri, 1904-1994--Henri Lenoir papers
Lenoir, Henri, 1904-1994--Homes and haunts--Pictorial works.
McClintock, Bonnie--Pictorial works.
Wiman, Vern
Wiman, Vern--Pictorial works.
12 Adler Place (San Francisco, Calif.)--Pictorial works.
Black Cat Café (San Francisco, Calif.)--Pictorial works.
Iron Pot (San Francisco, Calif.)--Pictorial works.
Vesuvio Café (San Francisco, Calif.)--Pictorial works.
Art dealers--California--San Francisco--Photographs.
Artists--California--San Francisco--Photographs.
Authors, American--California--San Francisco--20th century--Photographs.
Bars (Drinking establishments)--California--San Francisco--Photographs.
Nightlife--California--San Francisco--Photographs.
Restaurants--California--San Francisco--Photographs.
Restaurateurs--California--San Francisco--Photographs.
North Beach (San Francisco, Calif.)--Pictorial works.
North Beach (San Francisco, Calif.)--Social life and customs--Pictorial works.
San Francisco (Calif.)--Social life and customs--Pictorial works.
Drawings.
Nudes.
Photograph albums.
Postcards.
Posters.
Slides, color.
Gift ; of Bonnie McClintock ; 2004.
Additions: Gift ; of Bonnie McClintock ; 2012.

**Processing/Project Information**

Series descriptions include names of people, places and events which were transcribed from manuscript annotations on the backs of photographs or on accompanying envelopes, lists, etc. While many of these names could be verified for accuracy and spelling, several lesser-known names have been transcribed as found, whether or not the annotations were accurate.

**Biography/Organization History**

Henri Lenoir was born Silvio Velleman on March 17, 1904 in Zuoz, Switzerland. His father was Antone Vellman, a headmaster at a boys' boarding school and his mother, Ethel Ireland, was a homemaker. Silvio was sent to a boarding school in England at an early age, and upon his parents' divorce, took his mother's maiden name. In 1920, he was enrolled at King William's College on the Isle of Man, and was soon expelled. He then enrolled at the Ecole Nationale d'Horticulture et de Viticulture in Geneva, but left in 1921. Lenoir held a number of jobs over the next several years, including as a drummer in a dance band in the Chateaux d'Oex, a tour guide in Italy, a claims adjuster in Paris and a ballroom dancer in Nice. He arrived in New York in the company of an American woman on July 5, 1929, and lived there for just over a year before departing for Hollywood in 1930. Broke and threatened with deportation for an expired work visa, he changed his name to Henri Lenoir and left for San Francisco. Despite having no formal secondary art education, Lenoir had an eye for talented artists, and after holding another series of jobs throughout the 1930s, he began hanging art work at the Iron Pot in
1941. He gained a reputation for boosting clientele through the promotion and showing of art, and in 1949, Lenoir bought the Vesuvio Café. It quickly became a center of bohemian activity, and was famously a beatnik landmark. Lenoir owned and operated Vesuvio for nearly two decades until he sold it in 1968 amidst rising rent prices and a general decline of artistic activity in the area. Lenoir continued to promote art throughout the rest of his life and was known to friends and tourists alike as the "King of Bohemia." He died on March 30, 1994.

Scope and Content Note
Includes snapshot photographs of Henri Lenoir, his friends, associates and customers, many taken in the restaurants, bars and other establishments owned and/or frequented by Lenoir in San Francisco’s North Beach district. Among the individuals depicted are Vern Wiman, Frank Koci, Luke Gibney, Enrico Banducci, Isadore Gomez (aka Izzy Gomez), Ward Dunham and Bonnie McClintock. Among the locations depicted are Vesuvio Café, the Iron Pot, 12 Adler Place, Enrico's, Enrico's Sidewalk Café, the Black Cat Café, Isadore Gomez’ Café, as well as Lenoir’s North Beach residences and offices. North Beach street scenes and other San Francisco views are also present. Also includes original drawings and other artwork collected by Lenoir; photographs of artwork and artists promoted by Lenoir; and a portion of Lenoir’s famous postcard collection. Original drawings by caricaturist Vern Wiman are well-represented. For a more complete list of persons, places and subjects depicted, consult series descriptions.

While there are a few photographs depicting Lenoir prior to his arrival in San Francisco in the 1930s, and very limited documentation of the beat generation and bohemian milieu associated with Lenoir’s heyday as the owner of Vesuvio Café in the 1950s and 1960s, the bulk of the collection documents Lenoir’s later social life of the 1970s and 1980s.
Series 1. Vesuvio Cafe, The Iron Pot and other North Beach establishments.

Physical Description: circa 970 photographic prints, circa 200 negatives, 4 slides, 2 drawings.

Shelving locations: PIC boxes 1-2, AX box 1, B box 1, C box 1, D folder 1, fALB vols. 1-3 and 5-6, NEG box 1, NEG(strip) box 1, NEG(8x10) misc. box 1

Scope and Content Note
Chiefly snapshots depicting interior and exterior scenes of establishments owned and/or frequented by Lenoir, as well as other locations in North Beach and beyond, including Lenoir’s residences and office. Locations depicted include Vesuvio Café (255 Columbus Avenue), The Iron Pot (539 Montgomery Street), 12 Adler Place (later renamed 12 William Saroyan Place), Enrico’s (504 Broadway Street), Black Cat Café (710 Montgomery Street), Isadore Gomez’ Café (848 Pacific Ave.), TransAmerica Pyramid (600 Montgomery Street), Powell’s Bar (Powell and Union Streets), India House (350 Jackson Street), Little City Litho (650 Vallejo Street), Maritime Museum (900 Beach Street), Cable Car Clothiers (110 Sutter Street), Potrero Hill, Chucker (San Mateo), The Old Grotto Restaurant (545 Washington Street), Ristorante Castellucci (561 Columbus Avenue), Cannon Press (1261 Folsom Street), 526 Connecticut Street, City Lights Books (261 Columbus Ave.), Lenoir’s office at 271 Columbus Avenue, and his residences at 247 Columbus Avenue and 355 Columbus Avenue.


Additional Note
Early photographs of Vesuvio Café (1950s-1960s), as well as photographs of the Iron Pot (1940s), 12 Adler Place (1947-1948), the Black Cat Café (1930s-1940s) and Isadore Gomez’ Café (1940s) are concentrated in PIC box 1, AX box 1 and fALB volumes 1-3.

Physical Description: circa 530 photographic prints, circa 25 negatives, 2 slides.
Shelving locations: PIC boxes 2-3, AX box 1, B box 1, C box 1, D folder 2, FALB vols. 4, 7 and 9, NEG box 1, NEG(8x10) misc. box 1, NEG(strip) box 1

Scope and Content Note

Series 3. Events.

Physical Description: circa 140 photographic prints, circa 15 negatives.
Shelving locations: PIC box 3, AX box 1, B box 1, D folder 3, NEG box 1, NEG(strip) box 1

Scope and Content Note
Chiefly snapshots of benefits, celebrations, parties and exhibits. Events include Civic Center Art Show, Annual Grant Avenue Street Fair, Columbus Day Parade, Koci Art Exhibit (at 63 Bluxome Street), bicycle race for North Beach saloons (at Golden Gate Park), Bob Kaufmann Funeral Parade (at Washington Square), Henri Lenoir Memorial (at Washington Square Bar and Grill, 1707 Powell Street), The Saloonkeeper’s Halloween Party (at the Old Spaghetti Factory, 478 Green Street), An Evening of Auditory Assault (poetry reading at The Catalyst), A Warehouse Party for Charles Dawkins (at 200 Greenwich Street at Sansome Street), Blabbermouth Nite #6 (at The Place), U.S.-China People’s Friendship Week (Kabuki Theater and San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts), 1980 Mark Twain Behrens Exhibit (at his studio, 113 Steuart Street), and 1982 Mark Twain Behrens Exhibit (at Limn Gallery, 457 Pacific Avenue). Also includes a few broadsides and posters.

Scenes depict various individuals including Henri Lenoir, Herb Caen, Bonnie McClintock, Bruce Weiss, Pete Maccharini, Sam Provezano, Quentin L. Kopp, Ward Dunham, Van Hoyt, Thomas Albright, Roger Boas, Scott Beach, Susan Tibbon, Johnny Cooper, Judy Smith, Jack Ertola, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Burt Bales, George Gonzalez, Louise Renne, Audrey E. Gabrielson, Joan Hinchman and Francis J. Rigney.

Physical Description: circa 380 drawings, circa 100 negatives, circa 60 photographic prints, circa 40 prints, 15 slides, 1 engraving plate.

Shelving locations: PIC box 3, AX boxes 2-4, B box 1, C box 1, D folders 4-6, F folder 1, fALB v.10, NEG(strip) box 1, NEG(8x10)

Scope and Content Note

Original artwork, as well as photographs and other reproductions of artwork, primarily by artists represented, exhibited and/or collected by Lenoir. Includes original drawings and prints by Vern Wiman, Mel Fowler, Byron McClintock, Justin Murray, Charles Surendorf, George Pennewell, P.R. Morgan, Sharon Craney, Charles Stark and Sam Provezano. Also includes photographs, posters and other reproductions of works by Luke Gibney, Karl Baumann, Bill Beuche, Frank Koci, Fred Wickham, Byron Randall, Justin Murray, Crazy Joe Beckman (?), Joe Zygaj, Alex Anderson, Judy Smith, John Sacks, Geroge Pennewell, Bill Bates, Charles M. Ware, Victor Duena and Synergisms. Also includes a few psychedelic posters by W. Sätt and Wes Wilson.

Volume 10 exclusively contains reproductions of Vern Wiman carticatures, as well as clippings and photographs pertaining to the artist.

Series 5. Postcards and slides.

Physical Description: circa 1750 postcards, circa 640 slides, 3 negatives.

Shelving locations: PIC boxes 4, 6-8, B box 1, NEG box 1, LAN boxes 1-2, NEG(5x7) misc. box 1, NEG(strip) box 1

Scope and Content Note

Includes that portion of Lenoir’s renowned postcard collection which does not contain correspondence. Subject matter includes female nudes, romantic couples, and burlesque humor. Postcards are chiefly from the turn of the 20th century, many of them produced in France.

Also includes numerous 35mm glass slide reproductions of Lenoir’s postcards. The slides were numbered, indexed and projected in late-night slide shows at Vesuvio Café.

Additional Note

Other postcards with correspondence to or from Lenoir are included in the Henri Lenoir papers (BANC MSS 92/842).

Physical Description: circa 830 negatives, circa 500 photographic prints.
Shelving locations: NEG box 1, PIC box 5

Scope and Content Note
Small-format instamatic negative discs organized and described by Henri Lenoir, with accompanying prints. Subjects include friends, associates, local haunts and other subjects. Names listed on accompanying envelopes include Henri Lenoir, Jane Fletcher, Christine Klampe, Sarah Kliban, Bonnie McClintock, Jean McClintock, Patricia Stutsman, Florence Allen, Enrico Banducci, Byron Randall, Bob Lanci, Marie Carzol, Joe Gigliotto, Ward Dunham, Janet McGregor, Drew Sparks, Terry St. John, Valerie Steel, Thomasina DeMaio, Fred Wickham, Mary Duchow, Frank Koci, Claire Walsh, Suzanne Larsen, Melvin M. Belli, Curt Gentry, Frank Peacock, Donna Seid, Ed Taylor, Byron McClintock, Wing Kwong Tsefb, Audrey E. Gabrielson, Joyce Resendez (Joyce Rezendes?), Sheila Grant, Lorna Larsen, Chuck Wilmarth, Bernard Zackheim, Dorothy Tegnazian, Claire Cummings, Mark Behrens, Diane Roxas, Christopher Cevalley, Dwain Cox, Dianne Fechheimer, Dante Benedetti, Wolo (Baron Wolff Erhardt Anton Georg Trutzschler von Falkenstein), Mary Ming, Elizabeth Rush, Hassel Smith, David Vegmola, David Drees, Donna Elway, Audrey Katz Darby, Nicole Bach, Betty Samuelson, Jesse Hamlin, Joe Zygaj, Joe Finocchio, Craig Jones, Judy Smith, Allegra Banducci, Alan Cumings, Nancy J. Peters, Faith Kark, Hube Cube, Roger Boas, David Wood, Louis Bassi Siegriest, Nancy Boas, Maya Dhillon, Nathan Oliveira, Stepehn Canright, Tito and Posey Tibbon.

Additional Note
Negative discs and accompanying prints are arranged numerically, as assigned by Lenoir. Prints (PIC box 5) include Lenoir’s annotated envelopes, usually listing the names of those depicted. Not all negatives have matching prints. No attempt has been made to verify if descriptive annotations match actual contents.

Series 7. Miscellaneous.

Physical Description: circa 120 photographic prints, circa 40 negatives.
Shelving locations: PIC box 4, AX box 4, B box 1, NEG(strip) box 1

Scope and Content Note
Photographs of miscellaneous and unidentified subject matter, including female nudes, Mack Sennett Bathing Beauty celebrities and San Francisco trolley cars. Also includes 3 small snapshot photographs of the 1906 earthquake and fire, assorted greeting cards and business cards, and a photograph of Liberation Day in Paris, 1945.