
Sam Behrendt Collection, ca.1870-1920

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Sam Behrendt Collection, ca.1870-1920

Dates: 1870-1920

Collection Number: P-010

Creator/Collector: Behrendt, SamPierce, C. C. (Charles C.), 1861-1946 Maude, Frederic HamerPutnam and ValentineGreene, Al

Extent: 7 linear feet (Boxes: letter, 1 ov; ov folders in mc-14)

Online items available  <http://collections.nhm.org/seaver-center/>

Repository: Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
Los Angeles, California 90007-4057

Abstract: Photographs. Sam Behrendt was a Los Angeles collector of historical materials including photographs. Many of these photos were made by Charles C. Pierce. Subjects include Los Angeles and Southern California communities, San Francisco and Northern California, and some subject files. ca. 1870-1920, undated; bulk 1870s-1890s.

Language of Material: English

Access

Research is by appointment only

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Preferred Citation

Sam Behrendt Collection, ca.1870-1920. Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Biography/Administrative History

Sam Behrendt (1879 or 1880 -1940) was born in San Francisco or Los Angeles, California. His father was a German-born Los Angeles pioneer of 1852, Caspare Behrendt. He lived in Los Angeles, was married to Sadie Mosbacher Behrendt, and had a son, George. After several years working as a collector for the Pacific Light and Power Corporation, he embarked on a career in the insurance industry. He made a name for himself as a successful insurance salesman in Los Angeles in the teens and twenties. As early as 1909, he operated the Behrendt-Levy Company, which underwrote about 75% of the movie industry's insurance. Behrendt was interested in collecting images that represented a wide range of subjects that depicted life and activities of the late 19th and early 20th century.

Scope and Content of Collection

Photographs. The collection consists of about 1500 prints, some ephemera, and a few negatives pertaining to early California, Los Angeles and San Francisco, and the surrounding communities. Geographic titles assigned to the collection include Los Angeles, cities and towns within Los Angeles County, San Diego County, and San Francisco and its environs. The subjects of the images cover a wide range and include people, transportation, railroads, beaches, city life, schools, religious and commercial buildings, hotels, streets, retail businesses, prominent businessmen, attorneys, politicians, entertainers, workers, adults, and children. Many of these photos were made by Charles C. Pierce. A significant amount of individual and some group portraits are part of the collection. Subjects include Behrendt's acquaintances or friends, notable persons in California history, and others. There are over 100 images of the devastation and destruction caused by the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Images include ruined buildings, people left without homes (refugees), and the fires that overtook the city shortly after the quake. There are also images that show the city in the late 1800s, prior to the destruction. Several images of government and business buildings, such as city halls and banks, in both San Francisco and Los Angeles figure prominently in the collection. The prints of Los Angeles include parks, plazas, recreational places, parades, and glimpses of the motion picture industry. The collection also includes various missions throughout California. Photographs of city life are significantly represented. Many of these include transportation of the time, whether horse-drawn carriages or wagons, streetcars such as cable cars and trolleys, early automobiles, and airplanes. Portraits and portrait photography of both identified and unidentified persons are represented. The majority of the photographs are prints, but there are also some cabinet cards and cartes de visite included. The images cover the period circa 1870-1920. Many photographs are undated. Related collections: Behrendt Manuscript Collection, GC-1325; C. C. Pierce Collection, ca. late 19th-early 20th century, P-077; Frederic Hamer Maude (1858-1959) Collection, ca.1890-1920, P-002.2; Putnam-Valentine Collection, ca.1880s-1930, P-002.1; Putnam-Valentine Original Print Collection, ca. 1900-1910, P-121; Al Greene (1906-1980) Photographic Print Collection, P-002.3

Indexing Terms

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