

## **Big Basin Park Photograph Album**

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History San Jose Research Library

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**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Big Basin Park Photograph Album

**Dates:** 1890-1920

**Collection Number:** 1997-208

**Creator/Collector:** Hill, Andrew Putnam

**Extent:** .5 linear feet

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**Repository:** History San Jose Research Library

San Jose, California 95110

**Abstract:** Album of photographs taken by Andrew Putnam Hill between 1890 and 1920. The majority of photographs feature Big Basin Redwoods State Park, with a small number of the Putnam family and Sempervirens Club. The album is labeled "Mrs. Hill Sr. Big Basin."

**Language of Material:** English

**Access**

The photographs are available to researchers by appointment with the Curator of Library and Archives.

**Preferred Citation**

Big Basin Park Photograph Album. History San Jose Research Library

**Acquisition Information**

Part of the History San Jose Photographic Collection.

**Biography/Administrative History**

Andrew Putnam Hill was a San Jose artist and photographer who is credited with saving the old growth redwoods of Big Basin, located in the Santa Cruz Mountains of the California central coast area. Hill first saw the big trees of the redwood forest in 1899 when he was hired to photograph them for a magazine story. When he learned that they were to be logged he was inspired to work to prevent their destruction. From then on, much of his life was devoted to the cause of preserving the redwoods and to the creation of a public park at Big Basin. In 1900 Hill gathered together a group of influential persons from San Francisco, San Jose, and Santa Cruz for a camping trip in Big Basin and it was then that the Sempervirens Club was founded. The Sempervirens were to become pioneers in the conservation movement. The club motto was "Save the Redwoods." The first officers were Charles W. Reed, president; Carrie Stevens Walter, secretary; J. Q. Packard, treasurer; W. W. Richards, sporting secretary; and Andrew P. Hill, official artist. Their first order of business was the passage of state legislation that would provide for the purchase of Big Basin for a state park. They were able to enlist the support of many prominent people in politics, journalism, and education. Local papers, such as the Santa Cruz Sentinel, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the San Jose Mercury Herald, supplied favorable publicity for their cause. In 1901 California governor Henry T. Gage signed the appropriations bill providing for the purchase of 2,500 acres at the price of \$250,000. In 1904 the California Redwood Park was officially opened to campers, becoming the first state park in California. The name was later changed to Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

**Scope and Content of Collection**

The album contains 96 black and white, sepia, and hand-colored photographs taken by Andrew Putnam Hill in the Big Basin Park area of the Santa Cruz Mountains, featuring redwoods, mountains, wildlife, and group portraits of the Sempervirens Club activities. Photographs have been removed from the album.

**Indexing Terms**

Redwoods

Forest conservation

Sempervirens Club of California

Big Basin Redwoods State Park (Calif.)

Santa Cruz Mountains (Calif.)

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