California Family Photograph Album Collection circa 1890-1955

Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History
San Jose State University

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Date Completed:
July 2010

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Descriptive Summary
Title: California Family Photograph Album Collection
Date (inclusive): circa 1890-1955
Collection Number: ECS01.08
Creator: Multiple families and individuals
Extent: 2 cubic feet
Repository: Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History, San Jose State University
San Jose, California 95192

Abstract: This collection of photograph albums provides pictorial documentation of the material culture and life events shared by several families living in Northern California during the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Recurring themes include images of residential life, gatherings of family and friends, travel to cities such as San Francisco, Monterey, Long Beach, and retreats to regions in the Sierra Nevada such as Yosemite, or coastal areas, such as Sea cliff Beach in Santa Cruz.

Language: English

Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], California Family Photograph Album Collection, ECS01.08, [Box number]: [Folder number], Edith C. Smith Photograph Collection, Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History, San Jose State University, San Jose, California

Acquisition Information
Albums in the California Family Photograph Album Collection were donated to the Sourisseau Academy by the Edith Corinne Smith Trust between 2003 and 2009.

Historical Note
The historical significance within these albums rest on the fact that prior to their creation, amateur photography was too expensive and technically advanced for most Americans. If a person could afford it, a local or itinerant photographer would...
be hired to create a photograph. Subjects who "sat" for a photography session typically wore their finest clothes and approached the occasion with a degree of formality and poise. For several decades, camera film often required several minutes to be correctly exposed to light, meaning subjects would need to hold the same position and facial expression for several minutes to create a sharp photograph. This often led to photographs that appeared contrived, cold, or impersonal. These limitations started to give way in 1880's with the development of amateur camera equipment, simpler film, and commercial film processing. By the year 1900, middle class families could easily purchase and operate a camera on their own, producing their own photographs. The time of photography for only special occasions had ended; with greater accessibility, homemade photograph albums like those found in this collection became possible. Photography had ascended to a common but culturally significant activity of visually recording life in both the public and private spheres. (1)

Evidence of the American revolution in automobile technology can also be found in this collection. Prior to the innovations of Henry Ford's Model T in 1908, automobiles were costly toys for the affluent, prone to mechanical problems, poorly standardized, and expensive to maintain (2). With increasing improvements in mass production, the cost of owning an automobile continued to decline. Middle class families could finally experience the freedom of owning an automobile. With a far wider range than a horse drawn carriage, families that had rarely traveled fifty miles beyond their home could now travel hundreds of miles further with relative ease. Numerous portraits with the family automobile and images chronicling travel in the automobile are early demonstrations of a revolution in technology, culture, and travel. It is here, in the early 20th century, that the automobile begins to be seen as not only an essential piece of technology, but a declaration of autonomy, freedom, and success. (3)


(3) Ibid.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms may be used to index this collection.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

California, Northern--History
Corbus Family
Cook, Judy Ann
Cook Family
Family life
Family vacations
Hammond, Berta L.
Lashell, Laura
Monterey (Calif.)
Photograph Albums--19th century
Photograph Albums--20th century
Salas Family
San Jose (Calif.)
Santa Cruz (Calif.)
Secrest, Edward
Travel--California
Turlock (Calif.)

**Scope and Content**

The bulk of this collection consists of photograph albums created by families native to California during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. This is one of several photograph album collections owned by the Sourisseau Academy that document this period in Californian history. Geographically, images within this collection are especially diverse. While a majority of the photographs were taken in California, portions were taken in South East Asia, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, and Nebraska. Within California, most images were created in Berkeley, Los Gatos, Monterey, San Francisco, San Jose, and Santa Cruz. Locales visited by the families include locations such as Sealiff Beach, Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo, Yosemite National Park; events included rodeos in Livermore, horse races at Bay meadows, and hunting trips near the Hamilton Mountain Range.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Album 1</th>
<th>Album 1, circa 1920's</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Salas family baby book with Bible verse placards. 1 Booklet. 1 certificate. 3 placards.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Album 2</th>
<th>Album 2, circa 1915-1926</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Salas Family Photograph Album. 58 Photographs. Images include trips to Alum Rock, San Francisco, Seabright beach, San Lorenzo River, a picnic on Monterey Road, a cottage in Carmel belonging to a Miss Collis [?], and a visit to Swanton Beach (now Natural Bridges beach)in Santa Cruz.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Album 3</th>
<th>Album 3, circa 1930's</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salas Family Photo Album. 29 photographs. Most images depict the Salas family children at their residence at South 9th Street in San Jose or playing at various beaches in Santa Cruz.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Album 4</th>
<th>Album 4, circa 1930-1955</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salas Family album, mostly candid portraits of the Salas children and social gatherings at the Salas residence. 131 photographs. Donated by Don Gagliardi.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Album 5</th>
<th>Album 5, circa 1915-1930</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Album given to Mary Corbus by Edward Secrest of Los Gatos. 385 photographs. Numerous photographs of orchards, houses, and people in Los Gatos, Pacific Grove, other Californian locations, the Pacific Fleet in Monterey Bay, 1919; military parades in Monterey. Copious notes and personal names are included.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Album 6</th>
<th>Album 6, circa 1915-1940</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unidentified Family Album from Turlock. 361 Photographs. Images include the Sunmaid Raisin Growers Factory, an unidentified mining facility near Turlock, the Livingston Department Store, and Yosemite National Park. Recurring portraits with the family automobile are present, as are scenes of vacations, wedding celebrations, and other social events.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Album 7</th>
<th>Album 7, circa 1890-1905</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<tr>
<td>Album belonging to Berta L. Hammond, from San Jose, California, 464 Minor Avenue. 48 photographs. Images include views of Lover's Point, Lobos point and unknown lighthouses, the Del Monte Hotel, Washington Hotel and Colton Hall in Monterey, and the first house built in Monterey. There are also views of the first theater built in California, the Methodist Episcopal Church in Pacific Grove, San Carlos Mission, San Jose High School, San Jose City Hall, and San Jose Normal School.</td>
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Container List

Box 1, Album 8  
**Album 8, circa 1906-1930**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Unidentified family album. 277 photographs. Primarily images of hunting trips in Sonoma County, near Geyserville; and in the Mount Hamilton Range near Lick Observatory and Smith Creek Hotel.

Box 1, Album 9  
**Album 9, circa 1910-1929**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Unidentified family album. 187 photographs. Views of Seacliff beach, Santa Cruz Board Walk, and coastal railroad trestle construction, Spanish missions, the California State Capitol Building under renovation or construction, possible images of Sacramento, portraits of woman with San Diego banner, and sailors aboard the ship West Caruth.

Box 2, Album 10  
**Album 10, 1891-1892; 1912-1914**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Photo Album of Mrs. George M. [Laura] Lashell. 110 photographs. Recording her travels through Eustice, Nebraska; Denver, Colorado; and Long Beach, California. View of the George M. Lashell business in Long Beach.

Box 2, Album 11  
**Album 11, circa 1920-1935**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Unidentified family photo album. 132 photographs. Comprised of images displaying social gatherings, theatrics, horseback riding, swimming, women dressed as nurses, large buildings possibly serving as a training hospital, possibly San Jose State College, and the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, which includes a view of its indoor saltwater pool, “The Plunge.”

Box 2, Album 12  
**Album 12, circa 1905-1911**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Unidentified family album. 62 photographs. Unidentified houses said to belong to a “Stella.” The grave of Mr. Serler in Hollister and numerous views of the family in their home and garden are included.

Box 2, Album 13  
**Album 13, circa 1940’s**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Created by Mr. and Mrs. J.T. Cook. 243 photographs. This album depicts their daughter Judy-Ann. Locations include San Jose and Monterey. Predominantly, baby photographs.

Box 2, Album 14  
**Album 14, circa 1941**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Album of Lois (Lyman) and Carl Minarick. 184 photographs. Views of social gatherings, home life, automobile trips. Images of San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley. Wedding and greeting cards, newspaper clippings relating to WWII.

Box 2, Album 15  
**Album 15, circa 1928-1936**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Unidentified family album. 283 photographs. Views of the ocean going vessels Silver spruce, the Santa Clara, and the Santa Rita. Images of South East Asian countries, exotic animals in transit on a ship. Views of a hydroelectric power plant owned by the Southern California Edison Company. Images of home life and social gatherings in several Californian regions which include the Sierra Nevada.
Box 2, Album 16  
**Album 16, circa 1920-1946**

*Scope and Content Note*

Unidentified family. 283 photographs. Recurring portraits with the family automobile. Numerous travels to locations such as Pinnacle Peak, Lake LaCount, Paso Robles, Santa Ysabel, Pismo Beach, Echo Lake (near Lake Tahoe).

Box 2, Album 17  
**Album 17, circa 1900-1920**

*Scope and Content Note*

Unidentified family album. 136 photographs. Images of Santa Margarita, residences in San Jose, portraits of women atop the Santa Clara County courthouse, the State Normal School and Lake Tahoe.

Box 2, Album 18  
**Album 18, 1936-1939**

*Scope and Content Note*

Unidentified Family photographs of the American Southwest, especially the Grand Canyon. 502 photographs. Other locations include images of San Francisco, Oakland Airport, the San Diego Zoo, the Russian River, the Livermore Rodeo, San Mateo, and Bay Meadows.

Box 2, Album 19  
**Album 19, circa 1906**

*Scope and Content Note*

Unidentified family. 125 photographs. Views of San Francisco, Cliff House, San Jose, and Stanford University following the 1906 earthquake.

Box 2, Album 120  
**Album 20, 1906; 1930-1931**

*Scope and Content Note*

Unidentified family. 33 photographs. Many images display an unidentified San Jose farm family. Images of San Jose, cigar shops, the Santa Clara County courthouse, burial sites, and possibly St. James Park.