
Guide to the Charles B. Polhemus Family Albums, 1886-1924

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Charles B. Polhemus Family Albums

Date (inclusive): 1886-1924

Collection Number: ECS01.03

Creator: Charles B. Polhemus Family

Extent: 2 boxes Selected online items available

Repository: Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History, San Jose State University,
San Jose, California

Abstract: Part of the Edith C. Smith Collection, these albums are a rare collection of photographs taken by members of this important California family of their various estates, family members and their activities, and early automobile excursions throughout Northern California.

Language: English

 <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/items/ark:/13030/kt909nf85q>

Access

Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Charles B. Polhemus Family Albums, [Box number]: [Folder number], Edith C. Smith Collection, Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History, San Jose State University, San Jose, California

Acquisition Information

The Charles B. Polhemus Family Albums were donated to the Sourisseau Academy by the Edith C. Smith Trust in 2008.

Biographical History

Charles B. Polhemus (1888-1969) was the son of George B. and Jennie (Jane Eliza Ryder) Polhemus, and grandson of Charles Bispham Polhemus.

Charles Bispham Polhemus (1818-1904) was born in New Jersey, but like many Americans, had a restless spirit. At the age of seventeen he ventured to South America, living variously in Valparaiso, Guayaquil, Lima, and Payta. After serving as the United States Consul to Payta for four years, Charles returned to America and settled in San Francisco in 1850. He married Matilda Murphy in 1852 and they had three children: Mary Josephine (d. 1935), George Bissel (1857-1914) and Stanhope Prevost, who died in infancy. When Charles divorced his wife in 1862, his niece Ellen V. Polhemus took over the management of his large household.

In the 1850s, Charles Polhemus acquired a substantial portion of the Las Pulgas Rancho, a vast tract of land that encompassed most of the peninsula. He subdivided the land and the large parcels he sold off to friends became the estates now known as Atherton, Millbrae and Menlo Park. The Polhemus estate, where the family lived in until 1862, eventually became the City of San Mateo. After working to bring the railroad to San Jose from San Francisco, Polhemus purchased Laurelwood Estate from Peter Donohue, a colleague in the railroad business, and moved south into Santa Clara County in the late 1860s. He also bought a large portion of the Stockton Rancho (Potrero de Santa Clara) from Commodore Stockton. By 1873 the family was occupying an estate known as Pendennis, one of several well-known prefabricated houses that were brought around Cape Horn in the 1850s by Commodore Stockton. A lack of sawmills in the West made imported prefabricated houses a viable option for those with the means to establish substantial residences. The family lived at Pendennis, located at the corner of Stockton Avenue and Polhemus Street, until it burned in 1914. A new house was erected on the property in 1916, and was eventually moved onto the grounds of Bellarmine College Preparatory School in 1946, where it still stands.

Charles Polhemus also owned a nine-hundred acre ranch in Coyote, which his son George Polhemus managed until the late 1890s when it was sold to the Spreckles family. George and his wife Jennie (Jane Eliza Ryder, married in 1887), daughter of local jeweler George R. Ryder, retained ninety acres in Coyote where they built a house and kept orchards. In 1906, George was the local Winton Automobile dealer, and became a founding member and the first president of the Santa Clara County Automobile Club.

George and Jennie's son Charles B. Polhemus, named for his grandfather, inherited the estate of Pendennis and constructed a new house on it in the 1950s after selling the Stockton Avenue property.

Charles Bispham Polhemus died in San Jose in 1904, followed shortly by his son George Polhemus in 1914. Jennie Polhemus died in 1938 at the age of seventy-four. George and Jennie's son Charles B. Polhemus died in 1969, and his wife Irene in 1990. The couple left no heirs. Mary Josephine Polhemus moved to Italy with her long-time companion Adeline Mills prior to World War I. She died there in 1935.

Indexing Terms

The following terms may be used to index this collection.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Automobile travel
Automobiles – Societies, etc.
Cerro Alegre Rancho (San Jose, Calif.)
Pendennis (San Jose, Calif.)
Polhemus, Charles B. (1888-1969)
Polhemus, George B. (1857-1914)
Polhemus, Jennie (Jane Eliza Ryder) (d. 1938)
San Jose (Calif.)
Santa Clara County (Calif.)
Santa Clara County Automobile Club

Scope and Content

The Charles B. Polhemus Family Albums collection consists of two photo albums and several pieces of correspondence. One photo album chronicles the 1908 outings of the newly-formed Santa Clara Automobile Club, which traveled throughout Santa Clara County and ventured south into Monterey and Carmel. The auto club organized tours and excursions throughout the county and ventured south to Monterey and Carmel. Scenic destinations for Polhemus family excursions as well as Auto Club tours included many points of local and regional interest such as the New Almaden Quicksilver Mines, the sumptuous Hotel Del Monte in Monterey, the famed Seventeen Mile Drive at Pebble Beach, Point Lobos and Gus Lion's ranch near San Martin. One especially exciting and historic trip took the Club over the mountains to Santa Cruz in 1908 to see President Roosevelt's Great White Fleet anchored off the coast in Monterey Bay.

A second photo album chronicles the excursions of the Polhemus family throughout San Jose and Santa Cruz, including Congress Springs.



The correspondence in this collection primarily relates to a trip Charles B. Polhemus took to Italy in 1924.

Series I. **Photographs 1886-1908**














Box 1, Album 1

Polhemus Family Photograph Album, 1886

Box 1, Album 2	Santa Clara County Automobile Club Photograph Album, 1908
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1839 George B., Jennie and Charles B. Polhemus  ark:/13030/kt209nf1w1
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1840 Polhemus' Winton Six-Teen-Six on the road with passengers  ark:/13030/kt587038qd
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1841 Outside Osen and Hunter Auto Co. on North First St.  ark:/13030/kt6f59s22n
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1842 George B. Polhemus' Winton  ark:/13030/kt509nf462
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1843 Almaden, on the first run of the Santa Clara Automobile Club  ark:/13030/c8h993s7
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1844 The Lake at New Almaden  ark:/13030/c87w69td
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1845 The Lake at New Almaden, near Casa Grande  ark:/13030/c80c4tcp
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1846 Lunch in the Garden  ark:/13030/c8qv3k35
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1847 Scenes Around the Lake  ark:/13030/c8qf0s36
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1848 Scenes around the lake  ark:/13030/c86w98p1
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1849 Scenes around the lake  ark:/13030/c8zc81f8
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1850 Scenes around the lake  ark:/13030/c8pv6j07
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1851 Scenes around the lake  ark:/13030/c8ff3qzd
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1852 Scenes around the lake  ark:/13030/c85x27hr
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1853 Lunch  ark:/13030/c8xd1080
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1854 Superintendent's House  ark:/13030/c8nz867g
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1855 Chinese Pagoda  ark:/13030/c8df6pt1
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1856 Two parked autos at New Almaden  ark:/13030/c84x56cc
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1857 Resting on the road home  ark:/13030/c8wh2nk0
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1858 Resting on the road home  ark:/13030/c8n01553
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1859 Lunch under the palms  ark:/13030/c8cf9nq3
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1860 Arriving at Derby Home, Almaden  ark:/13030/c83x858f
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1861 Lunch on the grounds of Casa Grande at New Almaden  ark:/13030/c8vh5mfm
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1862 Road trip stop  ark:/13030/c8m0441q
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1863 On the road in San Felipe  ark:/13030/c8bq2mk8
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1864 On the road in San Felipe  ark:/13030/c8319tqd
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1865 Winty, Dot and Ted on the porch at Pendennis, the Polhemus family estate  ark:/13030/c8th8k97
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1866 Winty, Dot and Ted  ark:/13030/c8k072vq
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1867 Winty, the Polhemus family dog  ark:/13030/c89g5kdf
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1868 Pendennis, the Polhemus family estate  ark:/13030/c8222sdg
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1869 Stopping in Belmont  ark:/13030/c8si1j6v
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1870 Through La Honda  ark:/13030/c8j101r3
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1871 Lunch on the Coast Range  ark:/13030/c88k77pc
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1872 Road to Mount Hamilton  ark:/13030/c8125r83
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1873 Approaching Stone Bridge  ark:/13030/c8ri4h2g
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1874 Lunch at Smith's Creek  ark:/13030/c8h130mq
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1875 Bend in the Road  ark:/13030/c87m06jj
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1876 Viewing the Valley at Grand View Ranch  ark:/13030/c8028q4g
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1877 Ready for Home  ark:/13030/c8qj7fw7
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1878 The Palisades  ark:/13030/c8g44nw8
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1879 Approaching Long Bridge, San Benito River  ark:/13030/c86m35fm
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1880 Spreading gravel  ark:/13030/c8z31x7x
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1881 Spreading gravel  ark:/13030/c8pk0dsv
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1882 Road Work Completed on Monterey Road on Coyote Hill  ark:/13030/c8f47mrw
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1883 Road Work completed  ark:/13030/c85m6497
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1884 Road work completed  ark:/13030/c8x34w23
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1885 Scenes between Salinas and Monterey  ark:/13030/c8np231r
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1886 Scenes between Salinas and Monterey  ark:/13030/c8d50kkm
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1887 Wreck of the St. Paul  ark:/13030/c84m934d
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1888 On the road  ark:/13030/c8w66icq
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1889 Views at the Casino Santa Cruz  ark:/13030/c8mp51xd

- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1890 **Views at the casino Santa Cruz**  <ark:/13030/c8c53jgp>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1891 **Views of the Casino Santa Cruz, Balboa at sea**  <ark:/13030/c83n2211>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1892 **Views at the casino Santa Cruz**  <ark:/13030/c8v69h6n>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1893 **Views at the Casino Santa Cruz**  <ark:/13030/c8kp80s1>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1894 **Scenes between Salinas and Monterey**  <ark:/13030/c8b56hb9>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1895 **Teams Hauling Gravel for repair work on the road at Coyote**  <ark:/13030/c82r3q84>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1896 **Lion Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c8t72q2t>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1897 **Incident on the Road**  <ark:/13030/c8jq0zmc>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1898 **Auto Picnic at Lion Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c8959q5g>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1899 **Auto Picnic at Lion Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c81r6p56>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1900 **Auto Picnic at Lion Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c8s75dzg>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1901 **Auto Picnic at Lion Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c8hq3xhf>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1902 **Auto Picnic at Lion Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c88914qg>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1903 **Hotel Del Monte Run**  <ark:/13030/c80r9n1t>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1904 **Hotel Del Monte Run, the Bardin House in Salinas**  <ark:/13030/c8r78ct3>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1905 **Hotel Del Monte Run**  <ark:/13030/c8qq6wc2>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1906 **Hotel Del Monte Run, Watsonville**  <ark:/13030/c879439k>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1907 **Hotel Del Monte Run**  <ark:/13030/c8zs2v3k>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1908 **Hotel Del Monte Run**  <ark:/13030/c8q81bnt>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1909 **Hotel Del Monte Run**  <ark:/13030/c8ft8jn0>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1910 **Del Monte Hotel Run**  <ark:/13030/c869726n>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1911 **Wharf at Del Monte Baths**  <ark:/13030/c8xs5t0n>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1912 **Del Monte Hotel Run, crossing a bridge**  <ark:/13030/c8p849hf>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1913 **Del Monte Hotel Run**  <ark:/13030/c8dv1hh5>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1914 **Del Monte Hotel Run**  <ark:/13030/c85b012t>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1915 **Del Monte Hotel Run**  <ark:/13030/c8ws8rvv>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1916 **Hotel Del Monte Run**  <ark:/13030/c8nc5zs0>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1917 **Hotel Del Monte Run**  <ark:/13030/c8cv4qbb>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1918 **Through Crittenden Pass**  <ark:/13030/c84b2zw6>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1919 **Through Crittenden Pass**  <ark:/13030/c8vt1qq1>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1920 **On an estate**  <ark:/13030/c8mc8xnm>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1921 **Car Wreck at the Del Monte Race Course, Roy Rehm killed**  <ark:/13030/c8bv7f7d>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1922 **Santa Cruz beach and pier**  <ark:/13030/c8736ph0>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1923 **Sea Beach Hotel, Santa Cruz**  <ark:/13030/c8zp44qq>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1924 **Monterey drive**  <ark:/13030/c8q52n8z>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1925 **17-Mile Drive**  <ark:/13030/c89w0d3k>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1926 **Polhemus family members viewing fruit drying at Coyote Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c8639ncm>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1927 **Drying trays and agricultural laborers at Coyote Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c8sx6bvk>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1928 **Polhemus family memebtrs having lunch under a vine-covered arbor**  <ark:/13030/c8jid4vdv>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1929 **Agricultural laborers working at drying fruit at Coyote Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c88w3bxb>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1930 **Balboa in the Bay**  <ark:/13030/c85719n3>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1931 **Casino**  <ark:/13030/c8wq02fq>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1932 **Beach at Santa Cruz**  <ark:/13030/c8n58k06>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1933 **Capitola Hotel**  <ark:/13030/c8cn72j4>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1934 **Apricot tree, laden with fruit, likely at Coyote Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c84748hg>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1935 **Broken fruit tree, likely at Coyote Ranch orchard**  <ark:/13030/c8vq3193>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1936 **Apricots on a tree at Coyote Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c8m61hvv>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1937 **Polhemus family toddlers in an orchard**  <ark:/13030/c8br8qs7>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1938 **Polhemus family toddlers in an orchard**  <ark:/13030/c83777bw>
- Box 1, Album 2 ecs1939 **Fruit drying field at Coyote Ranch**  <ark:/13030/c8tq6048>

Box 1, Album 2	ecs1940 Polhemus family members visiting fruit drying facility at Coyote Ranch ark:/13030/c8k64gp4
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1941 Fruit drying in a field at Coyote Ranch ark:/13030/c8610xzf
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1942 Polhemus family members viewing fruit drying at Coyote Ranch ark:/13030/c828067h
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1943 Trays of fruit set out in the sun to dry at Coyote Ranch ark:/13030/c8sq8z0h
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1944 Members of the auto club gathered in front of the Warm Springs Hotel ark:/13030/c8j9650x
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1945 Members of the auto club parked in front of the Warm Springs Hotel ark:/13030/c88s4njg
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1946 Automobiles on the road outside the town of Warm Springs ark:/13030/c8183534
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1947 Unidentified orchard home ark:/13030/c8rr1wwq
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1948 Three automobiles paused on the road for a group photo ark:/13030/c8h993tp
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1949 Flat tire stop ark:/13030/c87s7mcn
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1950 Road trip stop, unknown village ark:/13030/c80863xw
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1951 Lunch at San Leandro ark:/13030/c8qv3k4m
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1952 Lunch in San Leandro garden ark:/13030/c8qb22pv
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1953 Picnic among the rocks ark:/13030/c86t0k7t
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1954 Picnic among the rocks ark:/13030/c8zc81gg
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1955 A pause on the road ark:/13030/c8pv6j1p
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1956 Great White Fleet at anchor in Monterey Bay ark:/13030/c8fb51kx
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1957 Hotel Del Monte Grounds ark:/13030/c85t3j4w
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1958 Carmel Hill ark:/13030/c8xd109f
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1959 Nearing Watsonville on the road from Monterey to Santa Cruz ark:/13030/c8nv9gww
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1960 In the pines on 17-Mile Drive ark:/13030/c8db80fi
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1961 Santa Cruz with the Great White Fleet anchored off shore ark:/13030/c84x56dt
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1962 Santa Cruz with the Great White Fleet anchored off shore ark:/13030/c8wd3z64
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1963 Viewing the Great White Fleet anchored off Santa Cruz ark:/13030/c8mw2fr2
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1964 Great White Fleet anchored off Santa Cruz ark:/13030/c8cc0z9b
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1965 Members of the auto club in Santa Cruz ark:/13030/c83x859w
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1966 Members of the auto club in Santa Cruz ark:/13030/c8vd6x36
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1967 Picnic area in the park at Pebble Beach ark:/13030/c8kw5dn4
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1968 Great White Fleet in Monterey Bay, under steam ark:/13030/c8bg2mml
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1969 Cars parked during a race, possibly part of the Stanford racing team ark:/13030/c82z1452
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1970 Single roadster at a bend in the road ark:/13030/c8td9vzd
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1971 Single touring car in front of house ark:/13030/c8jw8chr
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1972 Great White Fleet at night, anchored off San Francisco ark:/13030/c89g5kfw
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1973 Pendennis, the Polhemus family estate ark:/13030/c81z431p
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1974 Polhemus family in the Winton on a road trip, possibly 17-Mile Drive ark:/13030/c8np2326
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1975 George B. and Jenny Polhemus ark:/13030/c8d7992p
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1976 Auto touring through a forest, possibly on 17-Mile Drive ark:/13030/c84q7sm7
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1977 Trio of touring cars pausing on the road in front of houses ark:/13030/c80z71ww
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1978 Poor forest road ark:/13030/c8ms3rc6
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1979 Cars pulled up in front of a hotel ark:/13030/c8c827xf
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1980 Auto parked at the curb ark:/13030/c83r0rqd
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1981 Road construction with teams of horses ark:/13030/c8v69h73

Box 1, Album 2	ecs1982 Stopping near a park  ark:/13030/c8qj7fxp
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1983 Auto rollover on forest road  ark:/13030/c8q15zgz
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1984 Two cars parked in front of a house  ark:/13030/c86h4g19
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1985 Road construction with teams of horses  ark:/13030/c8z31x8c
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1986 Crossing a temporary bridge on a dry bed  ark:/13030/c8pk0dt9
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1987 Climbing turn  ark:/13030/c8f18xc1
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1988 Road Construction  ark:/13030/c85h7dxz
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1989 Dirt road tow  ark:/13030/c8x34w3j
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1990 Automobile paused on the road  ark:/13030/c8nk3cpv
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1991 Montgomery Glider aircraft frame  ark:/13030/c8d21w76
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1992 Pond Road  ark:/13030/c84m935v
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1993 Montgomery Glider aircraft frame  ark:/13030/c8w37tzt
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1994 Members of the Santa Clara County Automobile Club  ark:/13030/c8mk6bh3
Box 1, Album 2	ecs1995 Members of the Santa Clara County Automobile Club  ark:/13030/c8c24v2c
Box 2, Folder 1	Loose photographs, circa 1900

Series II. **Correspondence 1924**

Box 2, Folder 2

Correspondence

Box 2, Folder 3

Travel documents