Finding aid to the Lawrence and Houseworth photograph collection. PC RM Lawrence Houseworth

The collection was processed by Erin Hurley in 2018. Wendy Welker previously processed the stereographs in 2003-2004.
California Historical Society
December 2018.
678 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
reference@calhist.org
URL: http://californiahistoricalsociety.org/
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: California Historical Society
Title: Lawrence and Houseworth photograph collection
Creator: Lawrence & Houseworth
Creator: Weed, Charles Leander
Identifier/Call Number: PC RM Lawrence Houseworth
Physical Description: 0.5 box1 photo box, half of which is Lawrence and Houseworth and half of which is Houseworth and Co.
Date (inclusive): 1860-1870
Abstract: Lawrence and Houseworth were one of the main publishers of stereoviews on the West coast around the 1860s. They sold views primarily of California and Nevada, and the majority of their photographs are of nature scenes, and the wonders of California's redwoods, geysers, lakes and mountains. The collection contains commercial formats - stereographs and cartes de visites. They were taken by photographer Charles Leander Weed and published by Lawrence and Houseworth, who did a brisk business selling these formats, and were competitive with other merchants of stereoviews.
Language of Material: Collection materials are in English.

Biographical / Historical
Like many, Thomas Houseworth (1828-1915), a native New Yorker, travelled West with an interest in mining and arrived San Francisco in 1849. Houseworth met George S. Lawrence (dates unknown) while working a claim in Calaveras County, Calif. The two men were mining partners for the next two years, looking for gold in Trinity County, Calif. Lawrence settled in San Francisco, where he opened a jewelry shop and, later, in 1852, an optical shop - which he asserted was the first of its kind on the Pacific Coast. In 1855, Lawrence and Houseworth formally established a partnership, selling stereoscopic views and equipment. Intended as a form of armchair travel, stereographs made use of the principles of binocular vision ("the mental fusing of slightly dissimilar images seen separately by the viewer's two eyes into one image with three-dimensional characteristics"). As optometrists, Lawrence and Houseworth were uniquely well-positioned to bring this new technology to the masses.

The men got starting selling stereographs of exotic locales published by others (such as the London Stereoscopic Company), but, in 1863, began publishing their own views. The majority of the images that they published, including photographs of the 1862 Sacramento flood and of Yosemite, were taken by photographer Charles Leander Weed. He later became their in-house photographer, and Lawrence and Houseworth sponsored Weed's photographic expedition to Nevada and Yosemite. Weed later developed a rivalry with San Francisco's other main photographer of stereoviews, Carleton Watkins.

By 1864, Lawrence and Houseworth were publishing stereographs in earnest, and needed to expand their facilities to storefronts at 317 and 319 Montgomery Street in San Francisco. In 1867, Lawrence and Houseworth received a bronze medal for their views at the Paris International Exposition. In 1868, George S. Lawrence retired, leaving Thomas Houseworth to continue the business.


Conditions Governing Access
Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
Materials in this collection are in the public domain in the United States. Permission to publish or reproduce is not required.

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Collection is comprised of multiple donations from various donors. Please see collection files for more information.

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item, date]; Lawrence and Houseworth photograph collection, PC-RM-Lawrence-Houseworth; [box number, folder number]; California Historical Society.

Scope and Content
The collection consists of stereographs and cartes de visite published by opticians Lawrence and Houseworth of San Francisco between 1860 and 1870, with the bulk of images produced between 1863 and 1866. Most of the photographs were likely taken by Charles Leander Weed. The collection contains 49 stereographs and 38 cartes de visites, all albumen. The images primarily document California and Nevada, and include photographs of Sacramento, San Francisco, Santa Cruz and Yosemite. They include pictures of natural features such as Lake Tahoe, Donner Lake, the geysers of Sonoma county, and the Mammoth Sequoia trees in Calaveras county. There are images of hydraulic mining, major sea ports, and important buildings and intersections in San Francisco.

An additional photograph of Lawrence and Houseworth's optometry studio, located at 198 Clay Street, San Francisco, can be found in General Subjects -- Photographers -- (San Francisco -- J-L), PC-GS: Box 058.

**Arrangement**

The collection is organized by format into two series, and from there is organized geographically and chronologically. The geographic subseries and dates are taken from Peter Palmquist's book *Lawrence and Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth and Co.: A Unique View of the West 1860-1886* (National Stereoscopic Association, 1980). The dates are Palmquist's guesses at dates when the views were produced, as opposed to the dates printed on the cards themselves, which are likely copyright dates. Most images include an original title and number and, within each geographic subseries, items are arranged numerically.

**Processing Information**

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**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Cartes de visite  
Stereographs  
Portrait photographs  
San Francisco (Calif.) -- Pictorial works  
Yosemite Valley (Calif.) -- Pictorial works  
Floods -- California -- Sacramento -- Pictorial works  
Streets -- California -- San Francisco -- Pictorial works  
Washo Indians -- Pictorial works  
Tahoe, Lake (Calif. and Nev.) -- Pictorial works  
Donner Lake (Calif.) -- Pictorial works  
Lumber trade -- California -- Pictorial works  
Mines and mineral resources -- California -- Pictorial works  
Hydraulic mining -- California -- Yuba River -- Pictorial works  
Optometry

### Stereographs

#### Sacramento Flood Series circa 1863-1864

**Scope and Content**

These are likely images taken by Charles Leander Weed of Sacramento, as a part of his "Views of Sacramento City during the great flood" series of 1862. They were published in 1862 by Weed's colleague, dagguereotypist Robert H. Vance, of San Francisco, and later republished by Lawrence and Houseworth around 1863-1864.

#### No. 23: Third Street, looking North near I Street, The Slough in the distance

Unnumbered: Men standing on wood in flooded area

General

Original stereocard is unnumbered. Title has been supplied by archivist.
Stereographs
San Francisco Series 1864

General
All stereocards are unnumbered and untitled. Title has been supplied by archivist based on information written on back of stereocard.

Unnumbered: Montgomery St., Sacramento to Clay
Unnumbered: Montgomery St., Pine to California
Unnumbered: California St., Montgomery to Kearny
Unnumbered: Montgomery St., California to Sacramento
Unnumbered: Montgomery St., California to Sacramento
Unnumbered: Montgomery St., Commercial to Clay St.

California and Nevada Views 1864-1865

No. 49: Healdsburg. "All aboard for the Geysers."
No. 50: Geysers. General View, Devils Canon.
No. 55: View in the Devil's Canon, Geysers.
No. 56: View in the Devil's Canon, Geysers.
No. 58: Devil's Canon. Venus' Bath, and Steam Escape Pipe.
No. 62: Scene on Pluton River, Geysers.
No. 149: Montgomery St. San Francisco, from Market St. Instantaneous.
No. 150: Montgomery Street, San Francisco - Instantaneous. From Eureka Theater.
No. 177: San Francisco - The deep cut on Broadway, Between Kearny and Montgomery St.
No. 181: Entrance to Cosmopolitan Hotel, San Francisco.
No. 312: Steamship Golden City.
No. 384: South Beach, from Steamboat Point, San Francisco.
No. 385: U.S. Marine Hospital and Goat Island, from Steamboat Point, San Francisco.
No. 525: San Francisco from corner California and Taylor Streets, looking South.
No. 604: Washoe Indians - The Chief's Family.
No. 651: Friday's Station, Valley of Lake Tahoe.
No. 653: The Lake House, Lake Tahoe. General view.
No. 658: Eagle Cañon, from Eckly's Island, Emerald Bay. Western shore of Lake Tahoe.
No. 660: Eagle Falls - upper fall, Emerald Bay. Western shore of Lake Tahoe.
No. 678: View from the top of Cave Rock - Eastern Shore of Lake Tahoe, looking South.
No. 690: Swift's Station, Carson and Lake Bigler Road - Eastern Summit of Sierra Nevada Mountains.
No. 703: Virginia City. General view from the East.
No. 707: Virginia City, from Cedar Hill.
No. 738: Quartz Mills at Gold Hill.
No. 796: Hydraulic Mining - Washing down the bank into the Sluice.
No. 836: The Summit House. Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road.
No. 849: Reflection - Donner Lake. View from Pollard's Hotel, Eastern Summit in the distance.
No. 875: The Sentinels ; Height 315 feet ; Mammoth Grove, Calaveras County
General
Spelling mistake in original title has been corrected by archivist.

No. 879: But-end of section of the Big Tree, showing the auger-holes made in felling.
No. 880: House over the Stump of the Original Big Tree, Calaveras county.
No. 900: The Pioneer's Cabin and Pluto's Chimney. Big Tree Grove, Calaveras county.
No. 901: Father of the Forest and James King of Wm., Mammoth Grove, Calaveras county.
No. 935: Beacon Bluff, 2,000 feet high, Silver Lake, Amador County.
Unnumbered: Hydraulic Mining - view from the bank of the Yuba River.

California and Nevada Series 1864-1866

No. 5: Scene at Redwood City, San Mateo Co.
No. 37: Porch of the Mission San Jose., Monterey Co.
No. 42: View of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County.

Yosemite Views 1866

No. 1114: The North Dome, 3,725 feet high, Royal Arch, And Washington Tower, Yo-Semite, Mariposa County.
General
Box contains two copies of this stereocard.

No. 1118: Mirror Lake and Reflections, Yo-Semite Valley, Mariposa County.
General
Box contains two copies of this stereocard.

No. 1119: The Vernal Fall, 350 feet high, Yo-Semite Valley, Mariposa County.
Cartes de visite

San Francisco and Eureka, Calif. 1860-1870

General
These images do not have the same stamps on the back as the photographs in the "California and Nevada Views" series, and also lack printed titles and numbers. The numbers, titles, and dates were taken from information written on the back of the cards.

No. 45216: Eureka Ware House.
No. 52706: Fremont St. near Market, San Francisco.

California and Nevada Views 1865

General
All of the photographs in this subseries are stamped on the back, either with "Album and Stereoscopic Views of California Scenery Photographed and Published by Lawrence and Houseworth, Opticians, 317 and 319 Montgomery st., San Francisco." or "Album Views of Nevada Photographed and Published by Lawrence and Houseworth, Opticians, 317 and 319 Montgomery st., San Francisco."

No. 149: Montgomery St. San Francisco, from Market St. Instantaneous.
No. 150: Montgomery Street from Eureka Theatre; San Francisco; Instantaneous.
No. 191: The Old Mansion House and Mission Dolores; San Francisco.
No. 232: Jewish Synagogue, Sutter Street, from Union Square; San Francisco.
No. 375: San Francisco - View from 2nd St., Rincon Hill.
No. 383: St. Mary's Hospital, South Beach, San Francisco.
No. 469: Catholic Cemetery, Lone Mountain.
No. 552: Second Street, from Market, San Francisco.
No. 572: Suisun Bay, from U.S. Armory Grounds, Benicia, Solano County.
No. 573: Mount Diablo, from Benicia, Solano County.
No. 622: General view of Strawberry Valley.
No. 630: Teaming up the Grade at Slippery Ford.
No. 637: View on the Summit of the Sierra Nevada, Leading down into Lake Valley.
No. 681: View from Sierra Rocks - Eastern shore of Lake Tahoe, looking South, towards Cave Rock.
No. 690: Swift’s Station, Carson and Lake Bigler Road - Eastern Summit of Sierra Nevada Mountains.
No. 794: Hydraulic Mining - The Palm Claim, Timbuctoo, Yuba County.
No. 798: Hydraulic Mining, Timbuctoo Diggings, Yuba County.
No. 838: Method of Traveling on Show-Shoes.
No. 844: Donner Lake and Eastern Summit, From the Road on the Western Summit.

General
Original card is torn in half and mended with tape. Please handle with care.

No. 846: Pollard’s Station, Donner Lake, Nevada County.
No. 847: View on Donner Lake, Nevada County.
No. 879: But-end of section of the Big Tree, showing the auger-holes made in felling.
No. 881: The Sentinels, and House over the Big Tree Stump, from the Mammoth Grove Hotel.
No. 885: Big Tree - Wm. Cullen Bryant; near view. Calaveras Group.
No. 886: Pioneer’s Cabin; near view; diameter 32 feet. Mammoth Grove Calaveras County.
No. 890: Father of the Forest, and James King of Wm. Mammoth Grove, Calaveras County.
No. 893: Big Tree - George Washington; 284 feet high, 52 feet circumference.
No. 900: The Pioneer’s Cabin and Pluto’s Chimney. Big Tree Grove, Calaveras County.
No. 901: Father of the Forest and James King of Wm., Mammoth Grove, Calaveras County.
No. 903: Father of the Forest - Entrance to the Horseback ride, Mammoth Grove, Calaveras county.

General
Box contains two copies of No. 903 - one printed vertically and one printed horizontally.

No. 910: Section of the Original Big Tree, near view, Mammoth Grove, Calaveras County.
No. 1110: The Sentinel Rock, 3,270 feet high, Yo-Semite Valley, Mariposa County.
Unnumbered: Portrait of seated unidentified man.

General
Title supplied by archivist.

Unnumbered: Hydraulic Mining - The Sluice Blocks.
Unnumbered: Couple seated in front of big tree.

General
Title supplied by archivist. Tree appears to be "The Big Tree," Mammoth Grove, Calaveras County. Card is in fragile condition and should be handled with care.

Unnumbered: California rocks, river, and mountains.

General
Title supplied by archivist.