Finding aid for the Collection of Bohemian Grove Photographs 1890-1950 SFP 104

Finding aid written by Christina Moretta and Leta Ward.
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library
2016
100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
sfhistory@sfpl.org
URL: http://www.sfpl.org/sfhistory
Title: Collection of Bohemian Grove Photographs
Date (inclusive): 1890-1950
Identifier/Call Number: SFP 104
Creator: Bohemian Club (San Francisco, Calif.)
Creator: Moulin, Gabriel
Creator: Waters, Raper James,
Physical Description: 3 manuscript box; 397 albumen and gelatin silver photographic prints
Contributing Institution: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library
100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 557-4567
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Abstract: This artificial collection consists of 397 photographic prints of Bohemian Grove (Sonoma County, Calif.) activities from 1890 to 1950. The Bohemian Grove is a secret society annual gathering place in the redwoods in Northern California for members of the Bohemian Club in San Francisco. The collection of photographs was assembled by the San Francisco Public Library over the years from donations. Some photographs were in the library’s Reference Department before 1965. Photographs in the collection include many group portraits of gatherings at Stow Circle, in the Bohemian Grove as well as campfire views at night, banquet tables in concentric circles, play productions, and Russian River activities.
Physical Location: The collection is stored onsite.
Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English.
Conditions Governing Access
The collection is available for use during Photo Desk hours.
Publication Rights
All requests for permission to publish from photographs must be submitted in writing to the Photo Curator. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the San Francisco Public Library as the owner of the physical items.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Collection of Bohemian Grove Photographs (SFP 104), San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.
Provenance
Gifts from unknown sources.
Administrative History
The Bohemian Club of San Francisco was founded in 1872 as an all-male, private club. Originally its membership was artists, musicians, and writers and it grew to include elite businessmen and prominent politicians. Each summer a two-week gathering in the Bohemian Grove still takes place where the “Cremation of Care” ceremony initiates the activities. Dramatic play performances, outdoor dinners, orchestral performances, and other activities and rituals are part of the happenings in the 2,700 acre campground in Sonoma County. Only active members of the Club and their guests may visit the Grove. Guests may be invited to the Grove for either the “Spring Jinks” in June or the main July encampment.
Raper J. Waters was a native Californian and began his career as a photographer in Nevada in the 1880s. R. J. Waters opened a commercial photography studio in San Francisco in 1892 at 110 Sutter Street. Gabriel Moulin joined R. J. Waters and the business name changed to R. J. Waters and Company until 1909.
Gabriel Moulin [Charles Peter Gabriel Moulin] (1872-1945) was a leading California photographer whose subjects included Bohemian Grove plays, Golden Gate International Exposition and the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge. In 1884 he began assisting Isaiah West Taber with Taber’s commercial photography. After working for photographer Max Karras he was soon employed by R. J. Waters, who had a large photography studio in San Francisco. Under Waters, Moulin worked as a photographer for the 1894 California Midwinter International Exposition in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. He later became the official photographer for the Bohemian Club.
Scope and Content
This artificial collection consists of 397 albumen and gelatin silver photographic prints of Bohemian Grove (Sonoma County, Calif.) activities from 1890 to 1950. The Bohemian Grove is a secret society annual gathering place in the redwoods in Northern California for members of the Bohemian Club in San Francisco. The collection of photographs was assembled by the San Francisco Public Library over the years from donations. Some photographs were in the library’s Reference Department before 1965.
Department before 1965. Photographs in the collection include many group portraits of gatherings at Stow Circle, in the Bohemian Grove as well as campfire views at night, banquet tables in concentric circles, play productions, Russian River activities. Some photographs have hand-written captions noting the club members and some other photographs have typed labels noting the plays. The 1890s photographs are by Raper J. Waters. Most of the 20th century prints are identified as Gabriel Moulin photographs.

**Arrangement**

Photographs are arranged chronologically.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Bohemian Club (San Francisco, Calif.)
Bohemian Grove (Calif.) -- Pictorial works
Bohemian Club (San Francisco, Calif.) -- Pictorial works
Theater, Open-air -- California -- Bohemian Grove -- Photographs
Theatrical productions -- California -- Bohemian Grove
651 Bohemian Grove (Sonoma County, Calif.)
Photographic prints -- 1890-1900.
Photographic prints -- 1900-1910.
Photographic prints -- 1910-1920.
Photographic prints -- 1920-1930.
Bohemian Club (San Francisco, Calif.)
Moulin, Gabriel
Waters, Raper James,

**Physical Description**

1 manuscript box; 76 albumen photographic prints

**Scope and Contents**


Locations include a shooting range, Russian River, dining area, indoor lodge, outdoor bar, encampment, and redwood grove. Activities and events show leisure time, plays, outdoor dining, piano playing, a painting demonstration, and the construction of the Daibutsu Buddha statue.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Waters, Raper James,
Bohemian Grove 1908-1918

Physical Description: 1 manuscript box; 193 gelatin silver photographic prints

Scope and Contents

Bohemian Club members identified include: Bresera, Semare, Stillman-Kelly, Godowsky, Sabin, Farwell, Schneider, McCoy, Redding, Chadwick, Burgdorff, Shield, Cadenasso, Fonda, Cahill, Peters, Dickman, Lyon, Simmons, Ian Sweeney, Waldrop, Martinez, W.T. Barton, Finnell, Harrison Fisher, E. Hamilton, Haig Patigian, and Frank L. Unger.


Subjects and Indexing Terms

Moulin, Gabriel

Bohemian Grove 1919-1950

Physical Description: 1 manuscript box; 128 gelatin silver photographic prints

Scope and Contents


Events and activities include the “Cremation of Care” ceremony (1921), a nighttime bonfire gathering, outdoor dinner, a band concert, stage plays, band camp, and portraiture.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Moulin, Gabriel