The Taber Photographic Album of Principal Business Houses, Residences and Persons

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Descriptive Summary

Title: The Taber Photographic Album of Principal Business Houses, Residences and Persons

Dates: 1880

Collection Number: SFP 28

Creator/Collector: Taber, I. W. (Isaiah West), 1830-1912.

Extent: 1 photograph album (104 photographic prints: albumen); album 20 x 29 cm, prints 20 x 25 cm

Repository: San Francisco Public Library. San Francisco History Center
San Francisco, California 94102

Abstract: This leather bound volume of 104 albumen prints by Isaiah Taber document the Gilded Age of San Francisco. The photographs are mounted on pages of advertisements for San Francisco businesses. Most of the photographs depict the exterior of the business building (including a view of Taber's studio).

Language of Material: English

Access

The collection is available for use during San Francisco History Center's Photo Desk hours.

Publication Rights

All requests for permission to publish from photograph collections 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

The Taber Photographic Album of Principal Business Houses, Residences and Persons. San Francisco Public Library. San Francisco History Center

Acquisition Information

Gift.

Biography/Administrative History

Isaiah West Taber was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts August 17, 1830. Taber came to California in 1850, where he spent four years working first as a miner, then a farmer. Taber returned to New Bedford in 1854 where he studied dentistry and began a dental practice. An interest in amateur photography eventually became his life-work. He settled in Syracuse, New York, where he opened his first studio. In 1864 he returned to California at the inducement of the photographers Bradley and Rulofson, whom he worked for until 1871. Taber established the "Taber Gallery" at No. 12 Montgomery Street in 1871. His highly successful business was well-known for portraiture and a vast stock of California and Western views. Due to his success and stature in California, Taber was awarded the photographic concession of the Midwinter Fair of 1893-94 in San Francisco. Taber's career ended in 1906 when his entire collection of glass plates, view negatives and portraits on glass were destroyed in the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire. He died February 22, 1912.

Scope and Content of Collection

This leather bound volume of 104 albumen prints by Isaiah Taber document the Gilded Age of San Francisco. The photographs are mounted on pages of advertisements for San Francisco businesses. Most of the photographs depict the exterior of the business building (including a view of Taber's studio). Buildings of note include Palace Hotel, California Sugar Refinery, Union Iron Works, Grand Hotel Block, Alta California, Mrs. W. P. Rutherford and Company, San Francisco Bulletin, Levi Strauss and Company, Gladding, McBean and Company. There are also twelve portraits: Taber, General U. S. Grant, President R. B. Hayes, General W. T. Sherman, R. W. Thompson, A. D. Sharon, George H. Smith, Governor George Perkins, D. W. Hitchcock, W. A. Strong, US Senator A. A. Sargent, and Emellie Melville. On cover of album is "presented to S. S. Colma" and inside interior of cover is stamped "Property of Roger D. Lapham."

Indexing Terms

San Francisco (Calif.) -- Commerce -- Pictorial works.
San Francisco (Calif.) -- Buildings, structures, etc. -- Pictorial works.
Buildings -- California -- San Francisco -- pictorial works
Photograph albums.
Photographic prints.
Albumen prints.
Advertisements.