Descriptive Summary
Title: Ed Brady Aero Photographers, Inc. San Francisco Aerial Photograph Collection
Dates: 1954-1988
Collection Number: SFP 129
Creator/Collector:
Extent: 11 boxes of approximately 2,000 photographs and 4,000 negatives.
Repository: San Francisco Public Library. San Francisco History Center
San Francisco, California 94102
Abstract: The collection consists of approximately 2,000 black and white photographic prints and 4,000 negatives of aerial photography of San Francisco, California from the late 1950s to 1988 taken by Ed Brady and Jack Van Wart of Aero Photographers, Inc. (API). Includes both photographic prints and contact sheets as well as negatives. The aerial photography documents all areas of San Francisco including downtown, Civic Center, Nob Hill, and Treasure Island. Between the 1954 and 1988 Ed Brady and Jack Van Wart of API were hired by land developers, San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and other governmental agencies, engineering firms, the press, universities and others to photograph specific sites. Approximately half the images in the collection come from these assignments and the other half are what the two photographers chose to photograph as they were flying. Most of the images are taken at an oblique angle, giving the viewer a richer sense of the landscape. There are vertical aerial photographs as well and shot from a wide range of altitudes.
Language of Material: English
Access
The collection is currently unprocessed but available for research. Please contact the Photo Curator. The collection is available for use during Photo Desk hours.
Publication Rights
Copyright has been assigned to San Francisco Public Library. 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
Ed Brady Aero Photographers, Inc. San Francisco Aerial Photograph Collection. San Francisco Public Library. San Francisco History Center
Acquisition Information
In August 2006, the Marin History Museum acquired the Ed Brady/Aero Photography Collection from Grethe Brady. In August 2019 the Marin History Museum transferred the San Francisco photographs and negatives to the San Francisco Public Library. 2019-86.
Biography/Administrative History
Charles Edward “Ed” Brady was born on May 10, 1916 to Charles H. Brady and Elizabeth Baldwin in Fort Lupton, Colorado. During World War II, Brady became a pilot and flew out of Hamilton Airfield. He made Marin County his home after the war. In 1949, Brady bought a plane and began flying out of the San Rafael Airport in Santa Venetia. Partnering with Jack Van Wart they founded Aero Photographers, Inc. (API) in 1954. Neither man was a photographer, but Brady owned his own plane and recognized the need for aerial photography in the rapidly expanding San Francisco Bay Area and throughout California. Brady married Grethe L. Gustavsen on March 2, 1972. In addition to being a pilot and aerial photographer, Brady hosted a radio show “Brady Bandstand,” featuring the big band music of the 1920s and ’30s on KNBR. Ed Brady died on May 14, 1994 in Petaluma, California.
Scope and Content of Collection
The collection consists of approximately 2,000 black and white photographic prints and 4,000 negatives of aerial photography of San Francisco, California from the late 1950s to 1988 taken by Ed Brady and Jack Van Wart of Aero Photographers, Inc. (API). Includes both photographic prints and contact sheets as well as negatives. The aerial photography documents all areas of San Francisco including downtown, Civic Center, Nob Hill, and Treasure Island. Between the 1954 and 1988 Ed Brady and Jack Van Wart of API were hired by land developers, San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and other governmental agencies, engineering firms, the press, universities and others to photograph specific sites. Approximately half the images in the collection come from these assignments and the other half are what the two photographers chose to photograph as they were flying. Most of the images are taken at an oblique angle, giving the viewer a richer sense of the landscape. There are vertical aerial photographs as well and shot from a wide range...
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