Finding Aid for the Don Jose de la Guerra Portrait Album C012169

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Finding Aid for the Don Jose de la Guerra Portrait Album C012169

**Title:** de la Guerra, Don Jose, Portrait Album

**Identifier/Call Number:** C012169

**Contributing Institution:** Society of California Pioneers

**Language of Material:** English

**Physical Description:** 1.0 volume 1 album (95 photos)

**Date (inclusive):** circa 1860-1870

**Abstract:** The album contains photographs of (presumably) the family and descendants of Don Jose de la Guerra.

**Language of Materials note:** English and Spanish

**Location note:** P-4G: B001467 (C012169) Society of California Pioneers. San Francisco, California.

**creator:** de la Guerra, Don Jose, 1860-1870

**Biographical/Historical note**

Don Jose de la Guerra was born in Spain in 1779. At the age of 13, he immigrated to Mexico City to live with his uncle Pedro Gonzales de Noriega. He went to work for Lt. Col. manuel Carcaba, the first paymaster general of the presidial troops of the Californias in 1793. Within five years he was made a cadet at the Presidio of San Diego, marking the beginning of his illustrious military career in California. Between 1800 and 1807, he served the city of Monterey as ensign of the presidial company, lieutenant, habilitado, administrator of mail, and acting comandante. He married Antonia Carrillo (daughter of Raimundo Carrillo) in 1804. In 1806, he was given the position of presidio comandante in Santa Barbara. He then served in San Diego as lieutenant, habilitado, and acting comandante between the years of 1807 and 1815. De la Guerra served in Santa Barbara as lieutenant and captain between 1815 and 1827, while maintaining his position as presidio comandante in that city until 1842 when he retired from military service. Over the years, de la Guerra both purchased and was granted over 500 thousand acres of California land, including the land stretching from the southern border of San Louis Obispo to the southern border of the County of Ventura. Other grants included land in Marin and Sacramento. Among his ranchos were Simi, Las Posas, El Conejo, San Julian, and Los Alamos. “El Capitan,” as he is widely known in California, passed away in 1858. (Information gathered from California State Military Museum: http://www.militarymuseum.org/delaguerra2.html)

Christina and Millie McCoy (also spelled McKoy), conjoined twins featured in the album, were born of slaves on Alexander McCoy's plantation in Columbus Coutny, North Carolina in 1851. At ten months old, the girls were sold by McCoy to an agent who eventually sold them to showman Joseph Pearson Smith. Smith educated and trained the girls as performers. The twins, called "The Two-headed Nightingale," grew famous not only as a sideshow novelty (featured for a while in P.T. Barnum's show), but as talented singers and musicians. The twins died in 1912, after millie caught Tuberculosis. (Information gathered from American National Biography Online: http://www.anb.org/articles/20/20-01879.html)

**Preferred Citation note**

Don Jose de la Guerra Portrait Album. Society of California Pioneers.

**Existence and Location of Originals note**

Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA 94107.

**Conditions Governing Use**

There are no restrictions on access.

**Conditions Governing Access**

Collection open for research.

**Scope and Contents note**

The album contains CDV portraits, both single and group. Each page holds two CDV photos, and written in the upper corners are the numbers 1-100, correponding to the photo slots. The album contains a photo index at the beginning, and written within it are the names: Don Jose de la Guerra, Dr. Platon Vallejo (missing), Mrs. Platon Vallejo (missing), Mrs. Ann Rogers Childe  "nee Cooper, nee Larkin," Sampson Tams, Mrs. Sampson Tams (Carolina Larkin), Philip A. Roach, Jacob B. Leese, Daniel P. Taylor, Dr. Alex Taylor, group including J.J. Vallejo and Captain Salvador Vallejo, E.J. Martin, possibly Sofia Larkin, Mrs. Josephine Fitch, Manuel Walter, Zobeide Leete, Mat Queen, and J. Pico. Not listed in the index, yet noteworthy is a portrait of Millie and Christine McCoy, labeled at the bottom of the photo as "2 Headed Girl, Millie Chrissie." This album is bound in leather and fastened with two intricate brass clasps. It remains in good condition, with some wearing on the spine. "Photogrpahs" is stamped in gilt on the spine.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Actors--Portraits
Photograph albums