Guide to the Frontier Village Collection, 1961-1980

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CR-2009-02-09

California Room, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library

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Date Completed:
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Processed and encoded by:
Diana Kohnke

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Collection Summary
Title: Frontier Village Collection,
Date (inclusive): 1961-1980
Collection number: CR-2009-02-09
Creator: Frontier Village

Collection Size:
4 boxes
19 oversized box
3 map boxes
10.5 linear feet

Size of Unprocessed Materials:
3 boxes
2 oversized box
1 binder of slides
3.5 linear feet

Repository: San José Public Library, California Room
San José, CA 95112

Abstract: This collection is comprised of administrative records, employee manuals, photographs, clippings, various printed matter, plans and drawings, and scrapbooks of Frontier Village amusement park. Exactly when this collection was donated by Frontier Village is unknown. The collection has been with San José Public Library since the early 1990s and probably since the early 1980s.

Physical location:
For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library’s online catalog.

Languages:
Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Frontier Village Collection, California Room, San José Public Library

Acquisition Information
This collection was created by Frontier Village amusement park and was donated to San José Public Library sometime after its closure in the 1980s.

**Processing Information**

**Organizational History**
Frontier Village was a western-themed amusement park which opened on October 21, 1961 and closed on September 28, 1980. It was located on approximately 30 acres of what had previously been part of the Hayes' estate (an estate owned by a prominent political and newspaper publishing family in the Santa Clara Valley) on Monterey Highway in San José, California. It was started by Joseph Zukin Jr., a Palo Alto entrepreneur and small businessman, after he and his family visited Disneyland in 1959. Zukin was inspired by Disneyland's family-friendly atmosphere, its thematic divisions, and the fact that nothing like the park existed in northern California.

The look and design of Frontier Village is owed to Laurie (Laurence) Hollings, an experienced Hollywood set designer and amusement ride designer. Some of Hollings' previous work included nature habitats at the California Academy of Sciences, sets and designs for San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House, and several Western movies filmed at Columbia and Paramount Studios. As Hollings imagined it, the park would be a "sort of tongue-in-cheek approach to the Wild West." To this end, Frontier Village utilized stock characters to create the illusion of a wild western frontier town replete with a Deputy Marshal who was the "key character" and also the PR face of the park. The marshal's job was to entertain and tend to guests. Additionally, in the mock gun fights which were staged every hour on Frontier Village's Main Street, the marshal was "the hero" who saved the town from dangerous outlaws.

In terms of the layout, Frontier Village consisted of a central square with a railroad encircling the entire park over bridges and canyons, a village with shops, numerous rides and an outdoor stage for live performances. Among the attractions at the park was a small animal preserve, Rainbow Falls (a fishing pond where guests could catch and bring home trout to eat), an old school house, a stagecoach run, burro pack rides, an antique train, an archery range, a jail, a general store, a Hollywood-style stunt show, a shooting gallery, and western-themed rides like the Lost Dutchman Mine, the Flying Scooter, and the Apache Whirlwind.

In 1973, without the funds to expand, the park was sold to Rio Grande Industries. Rio Grande Industries planned to expand the park onto 60 more acres of the Hayes estate. However, these plans were disrupted when families in the area protested. "The legal hassles with the nearby homeowners, the skyrocketing San Jose land value, plus increasing competition from . . . Mariott's Great America in nearby Santa Clara, California" all contributed to Frontier Village's eventual closure. "The land that the park occupied was eventually made into a city park called Edenvale Garden Park, where some remains of Frontier Village still exist."

Former employees and fans of Frontier Village have created a website devoted to Frontier Village. In addition to this, beginning in 2001 annual picnics began to be held each summer at Edenvale Garden Park to commemorate Frontier Village.

**Bibliography and references cited**


**Scope and Content of Collection**
This collection consists of materials relating to the creation and operation of Frontier Village amusement park. The collection contains blueprints on the parks proposed expansion, drawings of some of its costumed characters, maps, employee guides, correspondence, news clippings, scrapbooks, photographs, and other printed matter. There is also a substantial amount of unprocessed materials which include video reels of commercials for Frontier Village, video tapes, 16mm film reels, audio reel to reel tapes, Frontier Village buttons, public relations' stock releases, fact sheets, magazine features, promotions, news releases, and a Dennis the Menace book in which Dennis the Menace takes a trip to Frontier Village. In addition to this, there are numerous photographs including 8 x 10's (along with their negatives) of Frontier Village gunfights, marshals, rides, and buildings; boxes of Frontier Village slides categorized by subjects such as printed matter, gunfighters, employees, Kitty Hawk, etc.; and negatives of various size.

**Arrangement**
Scrapbooks, 1961-1980; Series III. Photo Albums, 1960s-1970s; and Series IV. Plans and Drawings, 1960s-1970s. Series I is arranged alphabetically by format and chronologically where possible. Series II is arranged sequentially by scrapbook number, alphabetically by format where possible, and chronologically where possible. Series III is contained in one flat box and Series IV is arranged in three map boxes. Series V is comprised of unprocessed materials and has not been arranged.

**Subjects**
Frontier Village (Amusement Park: San José, Calif.).
Amusement parks--California--San José
Frontier Village (San José, Calif.:Amusement park)--Employees.
Frontier Village (San José, Calif.:Amusement park)--Planning.
Amusement parks--Employees--Handbooks, manuals, etc.
Frontier Village (San José, Calif.: Amusement Park)--Valuation.

**Box/Folder 1/1-1/15**
Series I. General Administrative Files, 1961-1980

- Physical Description:
  - 15 folders

- Scope and Content Note
  - The contents in this series are arranged alphabetically. This series contains appraisal reports, reports on proposed expansion of Frontier Village, and various employee and merchandise guides.

- Box/Folder 1/1: Appraisal Report, 1966-1967
- Box/Folder 1/2: Costume Character Guides, 1960s
- Box/Folder 1/3: Employees Guide, 1960s
- Box/Folder 1/4: Employee Identification Card List, 1969-1980
- Box/Folder 1/5-1/7: Entertainment Guide 1960s
- Box/Folder 1/8: Expansion Documents, 1977-1978
- Box/Folder 1/9: Facts on Expansion, 1977
- Box/Folder 1/10: Facts on Expansion - Supplemental, December 27, 1977
- Box/Folder 1/11: Food Service’s Guide, 1960s
- Box/Folder 1/12: Groundkeeper Guide, 1960s
- Box/Folder 1/13: Merchandise Guide, 1960s
- Box/Folder 1/14: Picnic Employees Guide, 1960s
- Box/Folder 1/15: Ride Operator’s Guide, 1979

**Box/Folder 2/16-22/18**
Series II. Scrapbooks, 1961-1980

- Physical Description:
  - 50 folders 18 scrapbooks

- Scope and Content Note
  - This series consists of scrapbooks as well as the loose items pulled from them. The loose items were removed from the scrapbooks for preservation purposes. Each scrapbook has been assigned an identification number (Scrapbook 1 through Scrapbook 18) and each page within the scrapbooks has been numbered. Items pulled from the scrapbooks have been identified both in terms of the scrapbook they came from and the page number within the scrapbook from which they came. The contents in this series are arranged sequentially by scrapbook number and alphabetically by format. Whenever possible these items have also been arranged chronologically. There are two sub-series in order to accommodate the loose items pulled out of the scrapbooks: Sub-series 1: Loose Material from Scrapbooks, 1961-1980 and Sub-series 2: Consolidated Scrapbooks, 1961-1980.
Series II. Scrapbooks, 1961-1980
Sub-series 1. Loose Material From Scrapbooks, 1961-1980

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Box/Folder 2/16
2/16-2/65

Sub-series 1. Loose Material From Scrapbooks, 1961-1980

Physical Description:
50 folders

Scope and Content Note
This sub-series contains loose clippings, correspondence, and other printed matter related to Frontier Village. These items were pulled from the original scrapbooks as stated above and are arranged alphabetically by format and sequentially by scrapbook from which the item was removed.

Box/Folder 2/17
Scrapbook 1-Clippings, 1961
Scrapbook 1-Correspondence, 1961-1962

Box/Folder 2/18
Scrapbook 1-Printed Matter, 1960s

Box/Folder 2/19
Scrapbook 2-Correspondence, 1963

Box/Folder 2/20
Scrapbook 2-Printed Matter, 1962-1964

Box/Folder 2/21
Scrapbook 3-Printed Matter, 1963-1964

Box/Folder 2/22
Scrapbook 4-Correspondence, 1973-1976

Box/Folder 2/23
Scrapbook 4-Printed Matter, 1974

Box/Folder 2/24
Scrapbook 7-Printed Matter, 1965-1967

Box/Folder 3/26
2/24-2/25

Box/Folder 2/26
Scrapbook 7-Printed Matter, 1965-1967

Box/Folder 2/27
Scrapbook 8-Printed Matter, 1970s

Box/Folder 2/28
Scrapbook 11-Clippings, 1963-1964

Box/Folder 2/29
Scrapbook 11-Correspondence, 1963-1965

Box/Folder 2/30
3/29-3/30

Box/Folder 3/29
Scrapbook 11-Correspondence 1 of 2, 1963

Box/Folder 3/30
Scrapbook 11-Correspondence 2 of 2, 1963-1965

Box/Folder 3/31
Scrapbook 11-Printed Matter, 1962-1964

Box/Folder 3/32
Scrapbook 12-Correspondence, 1965

Box/Folder 3/33
Scrapbook 12-Correspondence, 1965

Box/Folder 3/34
Scrapbook 12-Printed Matter, 1964-1965

Box/Folder 3/35
Scrapbook 13-Correspondence, 1966

Box/Folder 3/36
Scrapbook 13-Printed Matter, 1966

Box/Folder 3/37
Scrapbook 14-Clippings, 1967, 1969

Box/Folder 3/38
Scrapbook 15-Correspondence, 1969-1973

Box/Folder 3/39
3/39-3/40

Box/Folder 3/39
Scrapbook 15-Correspondence 1 of 2, 1969-1973

Box/Folder 3/40
Scrapbook 15-Correspondence 2 of 2, 1971-1972

Box/Folder 3/41

Box/Folder 3/42
Scrapbook 15-Correspondence, 1973

Box/Folder 3/43
Scrapbook 16-Correspondence, 1973-1974

Box/Folder 3/44
Scrapbook 16-Printed Matter, 1973

Box/Folder 4/45
Scrapbook 17-Correspondence, 1975-1976

Box/Folder 4/46
Scrapbook 17-Printed Matter, 1975

Box/Folder 4/47
4/47-4/64

Box/Folder 4/47
Scrapbook 18-Correspondence, 1979-1980

Box/Folder 4/48
Scrapbook 18-Clippings, 1 of 18, February 1979, May 1979

Box/Folder 4/49
Scrapbook 18-Clippings 2 of 18, May 1979-July 1979

Box/Folder 4/50
Scrapbook 18-Clippings 3 of 18, June 1979

Box/Folder 4/51
Scrapbook 18-Clippings 4 of 18, July 1979

Box/Folder 4/52
Scrapbook 18-Clippings 5 of 18, July 1979-August 1979

Box/Folder 4/53
Scrapbook 18-Clippings 6 of 18, August 1979-September 1979

Box/Folder 4/54
Scrapbook 18-Clippings 7 of 18, September 1979-October 1979

Box/Folder 4/54
Scrapbook 18-Clippings 8 of 18, October 1979

Box/Folder 4/55
Scrapbook 18-Clippings 9 to 18, November 1979
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<th>Box/Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/56</td>
<td>Scrapbook 18-Clippings 10 of 18, November 1979-December 1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/57</td>
<td>Scrapbook 18-Clippings 11 of 18, August 1979-May 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/58</td>
<td>Scrapbook 18-Clippings 12 of 18, November 1979-February 1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/59</td>
<td>Scrapbook 18-Clippings 13 of 18, February 1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/60</td>
<td>Scrapbook 18-Clippings 14 of 18, March 1980-April 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/61</td>
<td>Scrapbook 18-Clippings 15 of 18, April 1980-May 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/62</td>
<td>Scrapbook 18-Clippings 16 of 18, May 1980-June 1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/63</td>
<td>Scrapbook 18-Clippings 17 of 18, June 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Scrapbook 18-Clippings 18 of 18, May 1980-June 1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/65</td>
<td>Printed Matter, 1979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sub-series 2. Consolidated Scrapbooks, 1961-1980**

**Physical Description:**
18 boxes

**Scope and Content Note**
This sub-series consists of scrapbooks which contain assorted news clippings, correspondence, and printed matter relating to Frontier Village. They are arranged sequentially by scrapbook number.

**Box 5**
Scrapbook 1, 1960-1962

**Box 6**
Scrapbook 2, 1962-1964

**Box 7**
Scrapbook 3, 1963-1965

**Box 8**
Scrapbook 4 (Frontier Wonderland Club), 1973-1977

**Box 9**
Scrapbook 5, 1977-1978

**Box 10**
Scrapbook 6, 1978

**Box 11**
Scrapbook 7 (Frontier Wonderland Club), 1963-1968

**Box 12**
Scrapbook 8 (Frontier Wonderland Club), 1962-1972

**Box 13**
Scrapbook 9, 1976

**Box 14**
Scrapbook 10, 1978

**Box 15**
Scrapbook 11, 1963-1965

**Box 16**
Scrapbook 12, 1965-1966

**Box 17**
Scrapbook 13, 1966-1967

**Box 18**
Scrapbook 14, 1967-1968

**Box 19**
Scrapbook 15, 1969-1972

**Box 20**
Scrapbook 16, 1973-1975

**Box 21**
Scrapbook 17, 1973-1975

**Box 22**
Scrapbook 18, 1979-1980

**Series III: Photo Albums, 1960s-1970s**

**Physical Description:**
1 oversized box

**Scope and Content Note**
This series contains two albums of photographs relating to Frontier Village.

**Box 23**
Frontier Village Photograph Albums, 1960s-1970s
Series IV: Plans and Drawings, 1960s-1970s

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Box/Item 24/1-26/8

Series IV: Plans and Drawings, 1960s-1970s

Physical Description:
3 map boxes

Scope and Content Note
This series contains plans and drawings relating to the rides, costumed characters, attractions, layout and landscape of Frontier Village.

Separated Materials Note
These materials are located in oversized map boxes which are located in the California Room's general collection at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. The map box numbers identify the arrangement within the California Room's other map boxes. These numbers are distinct from the box numbers which designate the boxes in the overall arrangement of the Frontier Village Collection.

Box/Drawing 24/1-24/13

California Room Map Box 9 1960s-1970s

Mailbox, 1960s-1970s
Wanted Posters (three posters rolled together), 1960s-1970s
Cactus Kong, 1960s-1970s
Paul Blackweel Drawing, 1960s-1970s
Coke Wagon (two drawings rolled together), 1960s-1970s
Vending Cart, 1960s-1970s
Restrooms (two drawings rolled together), 1960s-1970s
Entrance Sign (two drawings rolled together), 1960s-1970s
Indian Island, 1960s-1970s
Arrow Flyer Track Layout, 1960s-1970s

Box/Plan 26/1-26/8

Park Layout, 1960s-1970s

California Room Map Box 10 1960s-1970s

Dark Ride, 1960s-1970s
Kitty Hawk Ride, 1960s-1970s
Roundup Ride, 1960s-1970s
Ride Layout, 1960s-1970s
Theater, 1960s-1970s
School House, 1960s-1970s
Stampede Ride, 1960s-1970s
Petting Zoo (two drawings rolled together), 1960s-1970s
Stagecoach and Stagecoach Depot, 1960s-1970s
Antique Auto Sheds, 1960s-1970s

California Room Map Box 11 1960s-1970s

Camera and Art Shop, 1960s-1970s
Grading Plan, 1960s-1970s
General Plan 1960s-1970s
Master Plan, 1960s-1970s
Fish Pond, 1960s-1970s
Landscape Plan, 1960s-1970s
Ice Cream Gazebo, 1960s-1970s
Series V: Unprocessed Materials 1960s-1970s

**Physical Description:**
2 boxes, 2 oversized boxes, 1 binder of slides

**Scope and Content Note**
This material has not been processed or indexed. It contains various public relations documents, video tapes, audio tapes, photographs, negatives, slides, and ephemera relating to Frontier Village. This material is located in the California Room's Vault 2 at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.