Guide to the California Stereograph Collection

Collection number: MSS-2010-09-18

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

SJState Library Special Collections & Archives
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library
San Jose State University
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0028
Phone: (408) 808-2062
Fax: (408) 808-2063
Email: special.collections@sjsu.edu
URL: http://library.sjsu.edu/sjsu-special-collections/sjsu-special-collections-and-archives

Processed by:
Lisa Zakharova
Date Completed:
2010
Encoded by:
Lisa Zakharova
Reviews by:
Danelle Moon

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Descriptive Summary
Title: California Stereograph Collection, 1906-1925
Dates: 1906-1925
Collection number: MSS-2010-09-18
Collector: Moreland Steven; Creators: Keystone Stereographic Company, Underwood and Underwood, The Union View Company, and others
Collection Size: 1 box, .3 linear feet
Repository: San Jose State University, Library.
San Jose, California 95192-0028
Abstract: The California Stereograph Collection consists of seventy-eight cards published by the Keystone View Company, Underwood & Underwood, the Union View Company, and other small publishing houses. Stereograph views were produced in the millions by photographers all over the world. Stereographs provided a very popular entertainment medium predating television and film. The collection represented here documents the natural landscape of California, San Francisco, and Yosemite. The images depicting San Francisco include the 1906 Earthquake, the Cliff House, and Ferry Building. Images of California include Catalina Island, Mount Shasta, various California Missions, including the Mission Santa Barbara, the Mission Hotel in Riverside, Mission Park San Diego, Stanford University, agricultural processing and packing, and other miscellaneous views of California. The views of Yosemite include some photographs taken by J.J. Reilly of Half Dome, Glacier Point, Bridal Veil, El Capitan, and Vernal Falls. The collection is arranged into one series: Series I. California Card Stereographs, 1906-1925.
Physical location: Vault 2, Range 1B
**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

**Access**

Collection is open for research.

**Publication Rights**

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**Preferred Citation**

The California Stereograph Collection, MSS-2010-09-18, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

**Processing Information**


**Stereograph History**

Stereographs became a very popular entertainment medium from the 1850s to the 1930s, though a few companies continued to produce stereographic images until the 1970s. Many different photographic processes were used to produce stereographs, including dauerreotypes, ambrotypes, wet plate glass positives, salt paper prints, albumen prints, and gelatin prints. Stereographs were formed of two images placed side by side and mounted on cardboard. They were commonly produced with cameras that had two lenses side by side. Stereographic cards were produced in the millions by photographers all over the world. Invented in England, the novelty and attraction of stereograph formats spread across Europe and the United States.

Stereograph cards were first made available commercially in 1854 by the London Stereoscopic Company. The card view is a double-image photograph mounted on cardboard. Noted photographers such as Edward Muybridge, B.W. Kilburn, and J.J. Reilly became well known for their stereographic work, though only a few of the images in this collection can be attributed to J.J. Reilly, who later became quite famous for his photography of Yosemite.

Stereographs provided a very popular entertainment medium predating television and film. Keystone and Underwood produced stereographic sets packaged in box sets with spines that resembled classic book bindings, accompanied by descriptive guide books written by recognized scholars, copyrighted maps depicting the exact location of the photograph, and the arrangement of sets by subject intended for primary and secondary school instruction. Stereographic views cover a diverse range of subjects and include topographic views, local history, events, industries and trade, urban and country life, portraits of famous people, and the production of box sets of World War I and World War II. The box sets ranged in size from 50 to 200 images per box, and were viewed through a stereoscope, which produced a unique three-dimensional (3-D) effect.

The collection represented here documents the natural landscape of California, San Francisco, and Yosemite. The images depicting San Francisco include the 1906 Earthquake, the Cliff House, and Ferry Building. Images of California include Catalina Island, Mount Shasta, various California Missions, including the Mission Santa Barbara, the Mission Hotel in Riverside, Mission Park San Diego, Stanford University, agricultural processing and packing, and other miscellaneous views of California. The views of Yosemite include some photographs taken by J.J. Reilly of Half Dome, Glacier Point, Bridal Veil, El Capitan, and Vernal Falls. This set contains some hand-colored photographs, but the collection is an artificial collection, where the collector purchased individual cards and organized them in similar subject categories defined by Keystone and Underwood. The cards are contained in an Underwood Company box.

**Scope and Content of Collection**

The California Card Stereograph Collection consists of seventy-eight cards published by the Keystone View Company, Underwood & Underwood, the Union View Company, and other small publishing houses. Stereograph views were produced in the millions by photographers all over the world. Invented in England, the novelty and attraction of stereograph formats spread across Europe and the United States. Stereograph cards were first made available commercially in 1854 by the London Stereoscopic Company. The card view is a double-image photograph mounted on cardboard. Noted photographers such Edward Muybridge, B.W. Kilburn, and J.J. Reilly became well known for their stereographic work, though only a few of the images in this collection can be attributed to J.J. Reilly, who later became quite famous for his photography of Yosemite. Stereographs provided a very popular entertainment medium predating television and film. The collection represented here documents the natural landscape of California, San Francisco, and Yosemite. The images depicting San Francisco include the 1906 Earthquake, the Cliff House, and Ferry Building. Images of California include Catalina Island, Mount Shasta, various California Missions, including the Mission Santa Barbara, the Mission Hotel in Riverside, Mission Park San Diego,
Guide to the California Stereograph Collection

Stanford University, agricultural processing and packing, and other miscellaneous views of California. The views of Yosemite include some photographs taken by J.J. Reilly of Half Dome, Glacier Point, Bridal Veil, El Capitan, and Vernal Falls. The collection is arranged into one series: Series I. California Card Stereographs, 1906-1925.

Arrangement
The collection is arranged into one series: Series I. California Stereocards, 1906-1925.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
- Keystone View Company
- Union View Company
- Underwood & Underwood
- Stereographs
- Education--Geography
- San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, Calif., 1906.
- History--California
- Natural Landmarks--History

Related Material
The Keystone View Company Stereocard Collection, MSS-2010-08-25

Bibliography
Series I

California Stereocards 1906-1925

Physical Description: 1 box

Scope and Content Note

The California Stereograph Collection consists of seventy-eight cards published by the Keystone View Company, Underwood & Underwood, the Union View Company, and other small publishing houses. Stereograph views were produced in the millions by photographers all over the world. Invented in England, the novelty and attraction of stereograph formats spread across Europe and the U.S. Card stereographs were first commercially produced in 1854 by the London Stereoscopic Company. The stereograph view is a double-image photograph mounted on cardboard. Noted photographers such Edward Muybridge, B.W. Kilburn, and J.J. Reilly became well known for their stereographic work, though only a few of the images in this collection can be attributed to J.J. Reilly, who later became quite famous for his photography of Yosemite.

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Stereographs span 80 years of early photographic practice and are an important source for students and scholars interested in researching the history of different photographic mediums, including glass transparencies, albumen prints, silver gelatin prints, and other mediums. From a historical perspective stereo views have tremendous research potential for those interested in understanding the perceptions of the photographers' and audiences' in capturing visual memories of the physical and contextual world from different eras.

The collection is arranged into one series: Series I. California Card Stereographs, 1906-1925.

Arrangement

This series is arranged by subject.