Inventory of the Boyle Photograph Collection

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Collection number: 1999.03

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Arcata, California 95521

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Date Completed:
2009

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Boyle Photograph Collection

Dates: 1900s-1990s

Bulk Dates: 1910s-1970s

Collection number: 1999.03

Creator: Boyle, Katie

Creator: Boyle, William

Collection Size: Approximately 3000 photographic negatives1795 online images

Repository: Humboldt State University Library.

Abstract: The Boyle Photograph Collection consists of photographic negatives taken by Katie and William Boyle of the Trinidad, Moonstone, Crannell and Westhaven areas of Humboldt County, California from 1966 through the early 1990s. As a school teacher in Trinidad, Katie photographed local historical photo collections covering the area's history, including local Indians, whaling, lighthouse keepers, schools, lumbering and transportation. In addition, she photographed contemporary local events such as the Trinidad bicentennial celebration and the Clam Beach Run. Her husband Bill worked for Hammond Lumber Company in Crannell, later Georgia Pacific, and took many photos documenting logging operations and practices as they existed in the 1960s and 1970s. A unique feature of the collection is the multiple re-photographing of views previously recorded by other photographers since Katie was particularly interested in documenting landscape change over time. More information about this collection, including the full finding aid, can be found at http://library.humboldt.edu/humco/holdings/boyle.htm

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

1,795 of the photographic negatives have been scanned and are available online. Copy prints of a majority of the collection are available at the Trinidad Museum Society.

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Preferred Citation

Boyle Photograph Collection, 1999.03. Humboldt State University Library, Arcata, Calif.

Acquisition Information

The collection was gifted to the HSU Library by Katie Boyle, just prior to her death in 1999, as she had long planned.

Biographical Information

Katie Boyle taught school in the lumber company town of Crannell the last year the school was open, 1948-49, and from then until her retirement in 1983 in Trinidad. One of her objectives as a teacher was to bring history alive for her students and instill in them an awareness of the local history of the Trinidad area. During the 1960s she and her husband Bill, who...
Katie M. Williams was born on February 8, 1921 in Goliad, Texas. She attended Southwest Texas State College and George Pepperdine College before joining the war effort at Mare Island Navy Yard where she met and married William Boyle. They moved to Crannell where Bill worked for Hammond Lumber Company and Katie continued her education at Humboldt State, obtaining her BA in 1959 and her elementary education lifetime credential, a special education credential and a reading certificate -- and continued taking classes into the 1980s. In 1999 Katie was one of four teachers honored by the Humboldt State University's Alumni Association at their annual Who's Who Awards. She died on December 18, 1999, preceded in death by her husband in 1994.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Boyle Photograph Collection consists of photographic negatives taken by Katie and William Boyle of the Trinidad, Moonstone, Crannell and Westhaven areas of Humboldt County, California from 1966 through the early 1990s. During the 1960s she, a school teacher in Trinidad and her husband Bill, who worked for Hammond Lumber Company and its successors in Crannell, took classes in photography and became accomplished amateur photographers. Their interests led them to document both the contemporary history of the area for over 20 years as well as to copy historical photograph collections belonging to many Trinidad area residents. Thus the collection consists of two distinct groups of images: historical photographs copied from local, private collections with the understanding that they would be made available to the community, especially schools, for educational purposes, and original work by both Bill and Katie Boyle. The original work includes documenting contemporary events and practices and purposefully documenting sites/views in older photos to show "then and now."

Katie created many historical displays using these photographs for every imaginable event in the Trinidad area from the late 1960s through the 1980s. She also worked very closely with the Trinidad Museum Society (TMS) where many of her photographs were developed into Museum exhibits. In 1989 TMS obtained a grant from the Humboldt Area Foundation for this purpose and Patti Spears prepared a major exhibit, working from prints developed by Bill. Katie also encouraged TMS volunteers, Ned Simmons and Elmer ("Lindy") Linberg, beginning in 1992, to make copy prints for TMS of most of the negatives before the negatives were gifted to HSU.

Katie's interest in local history went beyond the photographs themselves. She recorded detailed descriptive information about both the collectors of the photographs as well as the subject matter of the photographs. She was also concerned about identifying specific photographers. Her numbering system provides significant information: the name of the collection and the date she (and/or Bill) took the photograph. Original photographs by Bill and Katie are designated as "BYB" and "BYK". Although a new HSU specific numbering system was imposed on the collection during processing (collection number is 1999.03), Katie's numbering system has been maintained and is reflected in the names of the sub series.

Early on Katie determined that their growing collection of photograph negatives should ultimately be deposited at the Humboldt State University Library's Humboldt Room; this was accomplished in her last days in Fall 1999. Katie spent time organizing the collection over a long period of time, interrupted by events and illnesses, with a renewed push on it when she learned she was terminally ill. It seems that she devoted her last energies to ensuring that this part of her life's work was set right and sent on to a permanent home.

Arrangement

The Boyle Collection (approximately 3,300 negatives) is in three parts, reflecting the chronological arrangement as well as the level of descriptive information which Katie completed and compiled into handwritten notebooks, with the accompanying negatives. Within each part the images are grouped into sub series by the source, or the collector, of the photographs and a description of the collector or collection. The first part (951 negatives), covering work done from 1966-1969, includes a subject index in addition to lengthy descriptions of the source or collector. The second part (539 negatives), covering 1970-1972, does not include the subject index although the subject headings have been assigned as part of the descriptive notes. The third part (1807 negatives), covering 1973-1995, is the least well documented. It includes only Katie's "scribble": no subject headings had been assigned and the information about the collector was in many cases minimal or non-existent. The sub series (or collection) descriptions written by Katie are included verbatim; notes made during collection processing are in brackets: [/RK].

Since the person processing the collection, Rebekka Knierim, was quite familiar with the images in the Boyle Collection from her work first as an HSU student intern and then as a volunteer with the TMS, she was uniquely qualified to transfer Katie's notebooks into the HSU Humboldt Room Photograph Collection database. During this time, she was also able to

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work very closely with TMS historian extraordinaire, Ned Simmons. She maintained a detailed processing log to document questions encountered and decisions made during the database entry, metadata enhancement and digitization selection phase of the project.

Digitization. Digitization was provided by Northern Micrographics to the specifications of the California Local History Digital Resources Project (LHDRP), a multi-year program supported by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. Leveraging the infrastructure of the California Digital Library (CDL) in partnership with Califa and Infopeople, the LHDRP explores a model to aggregate, preserve, and provide permanent public access to local history materials maintained by California cultural heritage institutions via a single statewide online access point. For more information, see the LHDRP website. After the digitizing was completed, Rebekka Knierim correlated the images to the database, yielding 1,795 online images.

**Subject Headings**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.
Trinidad (Calif.)
Crannell (Calif.)
Hammond Lumber Company
Lighthouses
Lumbering
Forests and forestry
Whaling
Yurok Indians

**Related Collections**
Warren Photograph Collection