Peter E. Palmquist Working Photograph Collection

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Humboldt State University Library
One Harpst Street
Arcata, California 95521-8299
707-826-3419
http://library.humboldt.edu/humco/
2018
Descriptive Summary

Title: Peter E. Palmquist Working Photograph Collection
Dates: 1860s-1970s
Collection Number: 2003.01
Creator/Collector: Peter Palmquist
Extent: Approximately 5,000 images
Online items available at http://library.humboldt.edu/humco/holdings/photoreults.php7S=%25ST=ALL+words&Submit=SEARCH&CS=2003.01&RS=ALL+Regions
Repository: Humboldt State University Library
Arcata, California 95521-8299
Abstract: The Peter E. Palmquist Working Photograph Collection contains approximately 5,000 images from Northwest California, especially Humboldt County. 3,700 of these images can be viewed in the Library's Humboldt Room and searched through the Humboldt Room Photograph Collections database. There is a close association between this collection and major portions of the Peter E. Palmquist Photograph Collection at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.
Language of Material: English
Access
The collection is open for research.
Publication Rights
Copyright was not transferred to the HSU Library.
Preferred Citation
Peter E. Palmquist Working Photograph Collection. Humboldt State University Library
Acquisition Information
In the mid 1990s the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University made arrangements to purchase Palmquist's vast collection. As planned, different segments of the collection were transferred from Palmquist's Arcata home to the Beinecke starting in 1999. After Peter's sudden death in January 2003, the schedule for transferring the remainder of the collection changed and all remaining materials were transferred in 2003. As this transfer process was ending the HSU archivist consulted with George Miles, Curator of the Beinecke's Western Americana Collection, about the negatives and study prints that Palmquist had intended to keep for his own use. Mr. Miles stated that they were not going to be included in what would be transferred to the Beinecke. Later in 2003, the Palmquist heirs and executors donated them to the HSU Library Special Collections.
Biography/Administrative History
Peter Palmquist spent his early years in Oakland, California, then moved to Humboldt County. The family lived outside Ferndale where Peter attended a one room elementary school. Starting at age 12 he taught himself photography. He graduated from Ferndale High School and then enlisted in the United State Army. While he was stationed in Paris with the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, he continued his study of photography and began his professional work as photographer. When he returned to Humboldt County, bringing his young family, he attended Humboldt State College and was employed as the official university photographer. He held that position long after his 1965 graduation, finally retiring in 1989. Throughout those years Peter also ran a commercial photography business. Starting in 1971, Palmquist became interested in historical images, an interest that led him in many directions. He died in 2003 immediately after being gravely injured by a hit and run driver. At first his interest in old photographs led to studying the history of his own profession and then the lives of past photographers, but it quickly incorporated an interest in the informational content revealed in a photograph. He started collecting images taken in northwestern California, but this soon broadened out to include other areas and led to a collection of images from all of western North America. Later his interest in women who worked in any aspect of photography led to extensive research in and collecting of photographs by women worldwide. Working with the Women in Photography International Peter developed and served as curator of the Women in Photography International Archive, which was housed at his home in Arcata. Throughout this time Peter generously shared the information he was discovering and collecting through numerous writings, exhibits, presentations, and workshops.
Scope and Content of Collection
The Peter E. Palmquist Working Photograph Collection contains approximately 5,000 images from Northwest California, especially Humboldt County. 3,700 of these images can be viewed in the Library's Humboldt Room and searched through.
the Humboldt Room Photograph Collections database. There is a close association between this collection and major portions of the Peter E. Palmquist Photograph Collection at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. From the early 1970s until the time of his death in 2003 Peter Palmquist made copies of photographs that came his way. The ways that this usually occurred were: a photograph Palmquist acquired, or borrowed, or viewed in a repository (and ordered a copy), or by providing reproduction services to authors needing photographs for a publication. The collection is strongest for 1860s to 1920s time period. Subject matter includes street and town scenes, the lumber industry, Native American life and ceremonies, ships and shipbuilding, schools, celebrations, landscapes, and portraits. Palmquist made study prints (4"x5") and negatives for most of the images from Northwest California, his home region.

**Indexing Terms**

Palmquist, Peter E.
Humboldt County (Calif.)--History--Pictorial works
Photographers--California--Humboldt County
Photography--California--Humboldt County--History

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