Warren Photograph Collection

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Humboldt State University Library
One Harpst Street
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2018
Descriptive Summary

Title: Warren Photograph Collection

Dates: 1890s-1950s

Collection Number: 1999.06


Extent: 3 cubic feet; approximately 500 items

Repository: Humboldt State University Library
Arcata, California 95521-8299

Abstract: The Warren Photograph Collection provides a visual history of the lumber company town of Crannell (known as Bulwinkle prior to 1922) and the Little River Redwood Company (LRRC). LRRC purchased the Vance Redwood Mill in 1900 and merged with Hammond Lumber Company in 1931; these companies are also represented in this collection.

Language of Material: English

Access
The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
Warren Photograph Collection. Humboldt State University Library

Acquisition Information
Walter Warren donated the collection to Humboldt State University Library in 1994.

Biography/Administrative History
Walter J. Warren was born in Eureka in 1912, one of three sons of parents who emigrated from Croatia. He lived with his family in Bulwinkle/Crannell from 1914 until 1926 when the family moved to Arcata and Walter started high school. A one year business course at Humboldt State started him on his career in insurance and accounting. He retired from Warren, Starkey and Gray Insurance Agency in 1980 as a long time civic and business leader in Humboldt County. Some of his activities included board membership of Humboldt Federal Savings & Loan Association, Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District, Arcata Rotary Club and Arcata Chamber of Commerce; he was also secretary of Reclamation District No. 768 for many years. Warren’s major hobby was collecting and restoring old logging steam locomotives. His photograph collection reflects that early experience and continuing life interest until his death in 1996. Two of the Warren family homes are now part of the Humboldt State University campus.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Warren Photograph Collection provides a visual history of the lumber company town of Crannell (known as Bulwinkle prior to 1922) and the Little River Redwood Company (LRRC). LRRC purchased the Vance Redwood Mill in 1900 and merged with Hammond Lumber Company in 1931; these companies are also represented in this collection that was gifted to the HSU Library in 1994 by Walter J. Warren. Crannell flourished during the 1920s. Two major fires, in 1908 and 1945, frame the beginning and the decline of this company town. The 1908 fire at Luffenholtz followed logging by Hammond Lumber Company and devastated the area from Little River to Trinidad, although it spared the newly built LRRC mill at Bulwinkle. The fire in 1945 destroyed the system of railroad trestles and marked the transition to hauling logs by truck. In 1947 Hammond shifted its focus of activity from Crannell to Big Lagoon. The last vestiges of Crannell were obliterated in 1969 by Georgia Pacific who acquired Hammond in 1956. The collection consists of approximately 500 photographs, samples of promotional materials produced by and/or used by LRRC in the 1920s, three presentation albums, and four rolled panoramas. Photohistorian Peter Palmquist’s review of the collection in December 1993 for the donor includes this description: “The photographs date between c.1910 and c.1940. While most of the prints lack a photographer’s stamp, there are representative numbers by S.U. Bunnell, A.W. Ericson, Freeman Art Company, Jesse Meiser, Seely Brothers and Dold & Dold. Most of the photographs are of a standard commercial quality. The physical condition of the photographs average very good. Subject content centers on the Little River Redwood Company and the adjacent town of Crannell (a company town). There are views of townsites, company housing, mill overviews, logging sites, dry kilns, saw shop, logging trains, caterpillar tractors at work, ship and harbor views, employee groups, loggers and lumbermen at work and play, etc.” Seventy five of the photographs in this collection were selected to be digitized as part of a grant project through the California State Library (2005-06).

Indexing Terms
Humboldt County
Crannell
Little River Redwood Company
Company towns
Lumbering
Forests and forestry

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