Overview of the Collection

Title: A. A. Hart Stereographs of the Central Pacific Railroad

Dates (inclusive): approximately 1864-1869

Collection Number: photCL 184

Creator: Hart, Alfred A., 1816-1908

Extent: 372 photographs in 2 boxes : prints on card mounts ; mounts 9 x 18 cm (stereograph format) + 20 copy prints in 1 additional box

Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Photo Archives
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org

Abstract: This collection contains 372 stereographic photographs (including some variants and duplicates) by photographer A. A. Hart (1816-1908) that document the construction of the western half of first transcontinental railroad by the Central Pacific Railroad between 1864 and 1869. Hart served as the Central Pacific's first official photographer, and his images chronicle the advancement of the railroad over 742 miles from Newcastle, California, through the Sierra Nevada Mountains and into Nevada and Utah.

Language: English.

Note:
Finding aid last updated on September 19, 2014.

Access
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Preferred Citation
A. A. Hart Stereographs of the Central Pacific Railroad. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance
The collection was assembled from various sources. In 1966, the Library received approximately 238 images as a donation from Elizabeth T. and Charles Yale.


Fourteen stereographs were purchased from Mead Kibbey in 1995 (Nos. 127 and 131) and 1999 (Nos. 27, 41, 65, 82, 125, 131, 231, 239, 301, 302, 320, and 336), and one stereograph was received from Mead Kibbey as a gift in 2012 (No. 253).

Thirty-four stereographs were purchased by the Library Collectors' Council from Gene Quintana Fine Art in January 2013 (Nos. 17, 26, 40, 46, 95, 132, 140, 155a, 166, 200, 213, 219, 224, 230, 246, 261, 307, 309, 310, 311, 319, 324, 328, 335, 343, 344, 345, 346, 348, 349, 350, 352, 354, and 363).

Biographical Note on A. A. Hart
Photographer Alfred A. Hart (1816-1908) was born in Norwich, Connecticut, on March 28, 1816. In the late 1830s, he studied art in New York City, and later worked in Connecticut and along the East Coast as a portrait painter and panoramic artist. In 1857, Hart made an initial foray into photography in a partnership with daguerreotypist Henry H. Bartlett in Hartford, Connecticut. Hart and his family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, in the early 1860s, and by 1863, Hart had begun operating as a traveling photographer in various California mining towns.

In 1864, Hart first began photographing the construction of the western half of the transcontinental railroad, and, in January 1866, the directors of the Central Pacific Railroad (CPRR) purchased 32 stereoscopic negatives from Hart. Hart subsequently acted as the official photographer for the railroad making a number of trips to document its progress in California, Nevada, and Utah. During the late 1860s, he published stereographs of the construction with his Sacramento imprint. When Hart left the company in 1870, the only complete set of his 364 published images, belonging to the CPRR
itself, was dispersed. Sacramento photographer Frank Durgan and San Francisco photographer Carleton E. Watkins (who had replaced Hart as the official CPRR photographer in 1870) published Hart's images under their own imprints. In the 1870s, Hart returned to painting, working as an artist in both New York City and San Francisco. Hart died on March 5, 1908 in Alameda, California.

Historical Note on the Central Pacific Railroad

The Central Pacific Railroad Company (CPRR), led by president Leland Stanford and vice president Collis P. Huntington, was incorporated in Sacramento, California, on June 28, 1861. The Pacific Railroad Act, signed by President Abraham Lincoln on July 1, 1862, authorized the CPRR to build a railroad and telegraph line east from Sacramento and the Union Pacific Railroad Company to build west from Omaha, Nebraska. On January 8, 1863, the CPRR held the ceremonial groundbreaking in Sacramento, and the first track was laid in October 1863. Construction progressed eastward for the next six years, with track completed to Auburn, California, in May 1865; Cisco, California, in late 1866; and Reno, Nevada, in June 1868. On May 10, 1869, the eastern and western lines met at Promontory Summit, Utah, with the ceremonial final "golden spike" driven by Stanford.

Bibliography


Scope and Content

This collection contains 372 stereographic photographs (including some variants and duplicates) by photographer A. A. Hart that document the construction of the western half of first transcontinental railroad by the Central Pacific Railroad between 1864 and 1869. The collection includes all but seven of the original series, numbered from 1 to 364 by Hart (lacking 193, 323, 333, 358, 359, 362, and 364).

Hart served as the Central Pacific's first official photographer, and his images chronicle the advancement of the railroad over 742 miles from Newcastle, California (in 1864), through the Sierra Nevada Mountains into Nevada and on to Utah, where he captured the ceremonial meeting of the two railroads at Promontory Point on May 10, 1869. The majority of the photographs are views of mountains, lakes, rivers, and forested areas (some with stumps from clear-cutting in the foreground), often with railroad tracks running through the center of the images. In addition, there are also images of locomotives, Chinese and other workers, equipment, bridges, tunnels, frontier and mining towns, construction camps, as well as some images of Native Americans, including Paiute and Shoshone Indians.

The stereographs in the collection include a variety of imprints on the card versos. The stereographs primarily contain Hart's own Sacramento imprint with series titles including:
- *Scenes in the Sierra Nevada Mountains*
- *Scenes in the Valley of the Sacramento*
- *Scenes in the Washoe Range*
- *Scenes on the Humboldt River*
- *Scenes near Great Salt Lake*

Interspersed in the collection are stereographs published without credit to Hart by Frank Durgan and Carleton E. Watkins. Three cards contain the imprint "Sierra Nevada Mountains, Photographed and Published by Frank Durgan" (numbers 17, 26, and 40), and approximately forty crediting Watkins variously as "C.E. Watkins," "Watkins' Pacific Railroad," and "Watkins' New Series."

Item titles transcribed from stereographs.

Alternative Form of Materials Available

Visit the Huntington Digital Library: Photographs to view digitized items from this collection.

- Photograph Album of Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and Other City Views (photCL 135).

Arrangement

A. A. Hart Stereographs of the Central Pacific Railroad: Finding Aid
The collection is arranged numerically according to the numbers preceding the titles on the cards.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Subjects
Central Pacific Railroad Company -- Photographs.
Cutover lands -- California -- Photographs.
Indians of North America -- Photographs.
Lakes -- California -- Photographs.
Locomotives -- Photographs.
Mining camps -- California -- Photographs.
Mountains -- California -- Photographs.
Paiute Indians -- Photographs.
Railroad companies -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Railroad bridges -- California -- Photographs.
Railroad tracks -- California -- Photographs.
Railroad tracks -- Nevada -- Photographs.
Railroad tracks -- Utah -- Photographs.
Railroads -- United States -- History -- 19th century -- Photographs.
Shoshoni Indians -- Photographs.
Auburn (Calif.) -- Photographs.
California -- Photographs.
Cisco (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Colfax (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Donner Pass (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Dutch Flat (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Humboldt River (Nev.) -- Photographs.
Nevada -- Photographs.
Placer County (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Reno (Nev.) -- Photographs.
Sierra Nevada (Calif. and Nev.) -- Photographs.
Truckee River (Calif. and Nev.) -- Photographs.
Utah -- Photographs.
West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Yuba River (Calif.) -- Photographs.

Forms/Genres
Photographs.
Stereographs.

Additional Entries
Durgan, Frank, publisher.
Watkins, Carleton E., 1829-1916, publisher.
Central Pacific Railroad Company.

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A. A. Hart Stereographs of the Central Pacific Railroad: Finding Aid

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Box 1

photCL 184 (1)

1. Locomotive "Gov. Stanford."
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<td>Trestle near Station, at Auburn.</td>
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   Card labeled "Watkins' Pacific Railroad."

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56. Rounding Cape Horn. Road to Iowa Hill from the river in the distance.
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59. Hornet Hill Cut, West of Gold Run. 50 feet deep.
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62. Embankment below Dutch Flat, Placer County.
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   Card labeled "C.E. Watkins."

78. Green Bluffs. 1,500 feet above American River. 71 miles from Sac.
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85. Fort Point Cut. 70 feet deep. 600 feet long.
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   Card labeled "C.E. Watkins."

87. Horse Ravine. 77 miles from Sacramento.
88. Horse Ravine and Grizzly Hill Tunnel. 77 miles from Sacramento.
89. Grizzly Hill Tunnel from the North, 500 feet long.
   Card labeled "C.E. Watkins."

90. Bank and Cut at Sailor's Spur. 80 miles from Sacramento.
91. Owl Gap Cut. 900 feet long, 45 feet deep. 80 miles from Sacramento.
92. Heath's Ravine Bank. 80 feet high. 82 miles from Sacramento.
93. Black Butte and Crystal Lake, 90 miles from Sacramento.
   Card labeled "C.E. Watkins."
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110. Castle Peak from Lava Bluff. 10,000 feet above the sea. Western Summit.
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119. Laborers and Rocks, near opening of Summit Tunnel.
   Card labeled "C.E. Watkins."
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123. Lakeview Bluff, 350 feet high, from the Wagon Road.
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125. View of Donnar Lake [i.e. Donner Lake] from Summit — Lakeview Bluff on right.
126. Donner Lake and Eastern Summit, from top of Summit Tunnel, Western Summit.
128. Boating Party on Donner Lake, between Eastern and Western Summits.
129. Donner Lake, with Crested Peak and Mt. Lincoln in distance.
   Card labeled "C.E. Watkins."
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   Card labeled "C.E. Watkins."
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171. Miller’s Bluffs — Old Man Mountain in dist.
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173. Echo Point and Rattlesnake Mountains.
174. Railroad, below Cisco and Crystal Lake.
175. Foot of Black Butte, above Crystal Lake.
176. Black Butte, 91 miles from Sacramento.
177. Crystal Lake and Railroad, from Black Butte.
178. South Yuba Valley and Summit, from Black Butte.
179. Old Man Mountain, near Meadow Lake. Altitude 7,500.
180. Meadow Lake, 6,800 elevation. Knickerbocker Hill and Old Man Mountain.
181. North Fork of South Yuba, near Meadow Lake.
182. "Oneonta," at Cisco.
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184. Upper Cisco, Rattlesnake and Yuba Mountains.
185. Depots at Cisco, Altitude 5,900 feet.
186. South Yuba, below Cisco.
187. Summits of Sierras — 8,000 to 10,000 feet alt.
188. Castle Peak, a Western Summit, 10,000 feet altitude.
189. Summit of Castle Peak, 10,000 feet altitude.
190. Summit of Castle Peak, from the North-west.

191. Summit Valley, from Emigrant Mountain, looking west.
192. Anderson’s Valley and Devil’s Peak, from Emigrant Mountain, Western Summit.
193. Lakes in Anderson Valley, from Lava Bluff.
194. American Peak, in Spring, View near the Pass, Western Summit.
195. Shaft House over Summit Tunnel, American Peak in distance.
196. Summit Tunnel, before completion. Width, 12 feet; height [sic], 18 feet.
197. East Portal of Summit Tunnel, Western Summit. Length 1,660 feet.
198. East Portal of Summit Tunnel, and Wagon Road from Tunnel No. 7.
199. Bluff and Snow Bank in Donner Pass, Western Summit. Altitude 1,092 feet.

200. Melting of a Snow Bank, Scene on the Summits in August.
201. East Portals of Tunnels No. 6 and 7, from Tunnel No. 8.
202. Donner Lake, Tunnels Nos. 7 and 8, from Summit Tunnel, Eastern Summit in distance.
203. Heading of east portal Tunnel No. 8.
204. Railroad on Pollard’s Hill, 1,100 feet above Donner Lake.
205. Coldstream Valley, from Tunnel No. 13.
206. Coldstream, Eastern Slope of Western Summit.

207. Coldstream Valley, Western Summits of Sierras.

208. View from Crested Peak — 8,500 feet altitude. Donner Lake and Railroad Line.

209. Loaded Teams, from Cisco.
210. West Portal Tunnel No. 1, Grizzly Hill.
211. North Fork of Yuba River, between Cisco and Meadow Lake.
212. Snow Covering, below Cisco.

Card labeled "Watkins' Pacific Railroad."
214. Emigrant Gap Ridge. 84 miles. Old Man Mountain, Red Mountain [i.e. Red Mountain], Castle Peak, in distance.


216. View at Shady Run. 73 miles from Sacramento.

217. All aboard for Virginia City, and the Overland Mail.

Sign for "Wells, Fargo & Co's. Express" on building in background.

218. Tunnel No. 3, above Cisco.

219. View above Cisco, looking toward the Summit.

220. Scene on the Truckee River, near Donner Lake.

221. Truckee river below Truckee Station, looking west toward Donner Lake.

222. Truckee River, below Truckee Station, looking toward Eastern Summit.

223. Truckee River, approaching the Eastern Summit.

224. First Crossing of the Truckee river, 133 miles from Sacramento.

225. View at Shady Run. 73 miles from Sacramento.

226. Bridge over First Crossing Truckee River. 204 feet long.

227. Profile Rock, near the First Crossing of the Truckee River.


229. American River Bridge. Railroad around Cape Horn, 1,400 feet above.

230. View on the American River, below Cape Horn.

231. Bloomer Cut near Auburn, 800 feet long and 63 feet high.

Card labeled "Watkins' Pacific Railroad."

232. Capital Granite Quarry at Rocklin. 22 miles from Sacramento.

233. Cutting Granite at Rocklin. 22 miles from Sacramento.

Caption reads "213. Railroad wharves at Sacramento."

[234.] Railroad Wharves at Sacramento.


With the locomotive "A.A. Sargent" in foreground.

Caption incorrectly numbered as 215.

236. Cathedral Rocks, Truckee River.

237. Crested Peak, from Grant's Butte.

238. Cloud View, Donner Lake.

[239. Snow Plow at Cisco.]

[239. Winter View at Cisco.]

240. Engine House and Train. Rocklin, 22 miles from Sacramento.


243. Clipper Gap, 43 miles from Sacramento.

244. Cut near New England Mills. 49 miles from Sacramento.

245. Railroad around Cape Horn, from the Canyon.

246. Constructing Snow Cover. Scene near the Summit.

247. Frame of Snow Covering. 90 miles from Sacramento.

248. Lower Cascade, near Long Side Track.

248. Lower Cascade, near Long Side Track.

249. Lower Cascade Bridge. Above Cisco.

250. Upper Cascade. 98 miles from Sacramento.

251. Upper Cascade Bridge. Above Cisco.

251. Upper Cascade Bridge. Above Cisco.

252. Snow Gallery around Crested Peak. Timbers 12x14 in. 20 in. apart.

253. Crested Peak, from Railroad. Roof of Snow Gallery.

Man standing on roof of the snowshed is identified as Arthur Brown, Superintendent of bridges and trestles for the Central Pacific Railroad.
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   Duplicate image of 288 with incorrect caption that reads "290. Truckee Meadows, from Camp 37. 162 miles from Sacramento."
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Reference copy prints

Scope and Content Note

This box contains approximately 20 8 x 10 in. copy prints of various stereographs made by the Huntington Library.