A.C. Vroman Photograph Collection: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Suzanne Oatey.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Photo Archives
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
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URL: http://www.huntington.org
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Overview of the Collection

Title: A.C. Vroman Photograph Collection

Dates (inclusive): approximately 1892-1909

Collection Number: photCL 86


Extent: 169 photographs: 131 prints and 38 glass negatives in 5 boxes

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Abstract: Photographs made by Adam Clark Vroman, ca. 1892-1909, spanning various subjects, primarily his bookstore in Pasadena, California, and scenes from his travels to Pueblo villages of the Southwest. Other topics include scenery, towns and buildings on the West and East coasts, and photographs of people and architecture in Japan. Of particular significance is Vroman's handwritten journal of a trip to see the Snake Dance at Walpi, Arizona, in 1895, written sequentially on the back of 19 mounted photographs.

Language: English.

Note: Finding aid last updated on March 5, 2020.

Access

Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

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Preferred Citation

A.C. Vroman Photograph Collection. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

This is an artificial collection of undetermined provenance. The photographs most likely came from various sources, and were received prior to 1975. The 19 photographs inscribed with Vroman's journal of his trip to Walpi are mentioned in a 1975 article by former curator Gary Kurutz ("Pictorial Resources: The Henry E. Huntington Library's California and American West Collections," California Historical Quarterly, Summer 1975).


Technical Details

The prints in this collection vary in size, mount, and types of paper. A few are platinum prints, and some others are on paper that appears to have been part of an album. Some prints are printed two to a page, possibly for an album. Most of the prints have ink captions in Vroman's hand, often noting the negative number.

The glass negatives vary in size: 5 x 7 inches, 6 ½ x 8 ½ inches, and 8 x 10 inches.

Biographical Note

Adam Clark Vroman was born in La Salle, Illinois, on April 15, 1856, to parents of Dutch ancestry. In 1893, after several years working on the railroads, he moved to Pasadena, California, where he hoped the climate might help his wife, Esther Griest, who had tuberculosis. Her health did not improve and she died in September 1894.

At the end of 1894, Vroman opened a bookstore in Pasadena with stationer J.S. Glasscock at 60 East Colorado Street. The shop also sold cameras and photo supplies, a reflection of Vroman's budding interest in the art and practice of photography. In 1895, he acquired a 6 ½ x 8 ½ inch glass plate camera and made his first trip to the Indian pueblos. He made eight more trips to Arizona and New Mexico between 1897 and 1904. Three of these Southwest trips were Smithsonian-led expeditions that Vroman was invited to join based on his skills as a photographer. He accompanied anthropologist Frederick Webb Hodge's expeditions in 1897 and 1899, and the Museum-Gates expedition in 1901.
Vroman's photographs appeared in *Land of Sunshine* (a journal edited by Charles F. Lummis), ethnological reports, tourist brochures and other publications. It does not appear he sold his photographs in his store; he primarily photographed for himself, his friends, and for ethnological and historical documentation.

He never returned to the Southwest after 1904, and his last travels were to the East Coast, Canada, Europe, and Asia. Vroman's bookstore flourished (he had bought out his partner in 1901), and he continued showing his Indian photographs and lecturing in his remaining years. Vroman died of cancer in 1916.

**Scope and Content**

Photographs made by Adam Clark Vroman, ca. 1892-1909, spanning various subjects, primarily his bookstore in Pasadena, California, and scenes from his travels. The California images include scenery and travelers in the San Gabriel Mountains, Mount Wilson, Mount Lowe and the Alpine Tavern, and travelers having a picnic; details of missions; historic adobes of Monterey; Rancho Guajome Adobe in San Diego County; Yosemite and one view of Indians living in Yosemite Valley. Locations depicted in other parts of the United States are: Manitou, Colorado; Oregon, Illinois; Niagara Falls; Grant's Tomb; a bird's-eye-view of Santa Fe, New Mexico; and other miscellaneous views.

Vroman travelled to Japan in 1903 and 1909, and eight prints in the collection show Japanese men and women in traditional dress, as well as details of architecture. They are printed two on a page, side-by-side, and were possibly made for an album (89-92).

Vroman appears in a few photographs, including: a portrait; seated poses in his Arts and Crafts style bookstore and residence; and some group camp scenes. There are several portraits of Pueblo Indian men, some identified in Vroman's captions, as well as scenes of Hopi Indians performing the Snake Dance at Walpi, Arizona. Vroman wrote a personal journal of his trip to Arizona in 1895 on the backs of 19 mounted photographs made during the trip (Series II, items 102-120). Vroman's traveling companions were Horatio N. Rust, Mrs. Thaddeus (Leontine) Lowe, and Charles J. Crandall, who are shown, along with Vroman, at pueblos, and traveling with supplies and wagons. There are also views of the Grand Canyon and the Petrified Forest.

Item titles are supplied by the cataloger.

**Sources Consulted**


**Related Materials**

Related materials in the Huntington Library:

- Horatio N. Rust Photograph Collection: Trip to Arizona, 1895 (photCL 8)

**Arrangement**

The collection is organized in 3 series:

- Series I. Original and copy prints
- Series II. Photo-journal of trip to Arizona
- Series III. Glass plate negatives

Items are arranged numerically according to numbers previously assigned by Huntington Library catalogers.

**Indexing Terms**

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

**Subjects**

Rust, Horatio N. (Horatio Nelson), 1828-1906 -- Photographs.
A.C. Vroman, Inc. -- Photographs.
Acoma Indians-- Photographs.
Adobe houses—California-- Photographs.
California Missions-- Photographs.
Cameras--1890-1910 -- Photographs.

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Camping--1900-1910-- Photographs.
Hotels--California--1880-1910-- Photographs.
Hopi Indians-- Photographs.
Indians of North America—Southwest, New-- Photographs.
Isleta Indians-- Photographs.
Japan--Buildings, structures, etc.--Photographs.
Mount Lowe Railway-- Photographs.
Photographers--1890-1930-- Photographs.
Pueblo Indians-- Photographs.
Rickshaws--Japan--1900-1910 -- Photographs.
Snake dance -- Arizona -- 1890-1900-- Photographs.
Stores & shops -- California -- Pasadena -- Photographs.
Travel -- 1880-1900 -- Photographs.
Travelers -- West (U.S.) -- 19th century -- Photographs.
Vroman's Bookstore-- Photographs.
Women travelers -- United States -- History -- 19th century -- Photographs.
Zuni Indians-- Photographs.

Places
Arizona-- Photographs.
California-- Photographs.
Chelly, Canyon de (Ariz.) -- Photographs.
Echo Mountain Observatory (Los Angeles County, Calif.) -- Photographs. (local term)
General Grant National Memorial (New York, N.Y.) -- Photographs.
Grand Canyon (Ariz.) -- Photographs.
Japan -- Photographs.
Lowe, Mount (Los Angeles County, Calif.) -- Photographs.
Manitou Springs (Colo.) -- Photographs.
Monterey (Calif.)--Buildings, structures, etc. -- Photographs.
New Mexico-- Photographs.
Niagara Falls (N.Y. and Ont.) -- Photographs.
Oraibi (Ariz.). -- Photographs.
Oregon (Ill.) -- Photographs.
Pasadena (Calif.)--Buildings, structures, etc. -- Photographs.
Pueblo of Cochiti, New Mexico-- Photographs.
Rancho Guajome (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Rubio Canyon (San Gabriel Mountains, Calif.) -- Photographs. (local term)
San Felipe Pueblo (N.M.) -- Photographs.
San Gabriel Mountains (Calif.) -- Photographs.
Sandia Pueblo (N.M.) -- Photographs.
Santa Fe (N.M.) -- Photographs.
Walpi (Ariz.) -- Photographs.
Wilson, Mount (Calif. : Mountain) -- Photographs.
Zia Pueblo (N.M.) -- Photographs.

Form/Genres
Glass negatives.
Journals -- Accounts -- Arizona -- 19th century.
Negatives.
Photographs.
Platinum prints.
Portraits.

**Original and copy prints**

**Physical Description:** The original prints in this collection vary in size, mount, and types of paper. A few are platinum prints, and some others are on paper that appears to have been part of an album. Some prints are printed two to a page, possibly for an album. Most of the prints have ink captions in Vroman's hand, often noting the negative number.

**Box 1**

Prints (1-92)

**Portrait of A.C. Vroman.**

**Scenes from trips to New Mexico (San Felipe and Zia pueblos) and vicinity, 1897-1901.**

**Adobe buildings in Monterey, California; canyon view of Santa Margarita Pass.**

**Scenes in the San Gabriel Mountains: Echo Mountain; Mt. Lowe Railway and Alpine Tavern; Rubio Canyon.**

**Manitou, Colorado and environs.**

**Town of Oregon, Illinois and environs.**

**Niagara Falls.**

**Arizona: Grand Canyon; Canyon de Chelly; cliff dwellings.**

**Vroman and others in camp scenes with Navajo (?) Indians, ca. 1904.**

**Pottery maker at Acoma, 1904.**

See similar photograph of this same woman in [Frederick Monsen Collection, photCL 312 (299)].

**Peter Goddard Gates, Walter Hough and Navajo workmen.**

Museum-Gates Expedition of 1901, which included Vroman as photographer.

**Camp scene with several men (Dr. Elliot Coues at center), Embruda, New Mexico.**

Most likely the Bureau of Ethnology expedition of 1899.

**Birds-eye-view of Santa Fe, New Mexico, ca. 1901.**

The two images form a panorama view.

**Indians haying at Sandia, New Mexico.**

**Plaza and estufa at Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico, 1899.**

**View of Thunder Mountain from Zuni, ca. 1901.**

**Enchanted Mesa, Arizona, 1897.**

**Portraits of Pueblo Indians identified as Hopi, Isleta, Acoma, Zuni.**

Includes portrait of Isleta man “Lucero.” 1902.

**Views of Walpi, Oraibi and other pueblo villages; Snake Dance at Walpi, 1897.**

**Yosemite; Indians of Yosemite in front of wooden house. [Miwok/Paiute/Mono(?)]**

**Rancho Guajome Adobe (San Diego County, California).**

**A.C. Vroman and other photographers in his “Club of Four,” seen with their cameras in the Arroyo Seco, Pasadena, ca. 1900.**

Box 1, (80-84) Interior views of A.C. Vroman's bookstore and residence, Pasadena.

Vroman is posed seated in some views.

- (80, 81, 82b, 83) Original print from glass negative in collection. 82b is a variant of 82.
- (80a, 81a, 82) Copy print, only, from glass negative in collection.
- (84) Original print; no corresponding glass negative in collection.


Physical Description: Cabinet card with two prints mounted on either side. "A.C. Vroman" stamped on card mount.

Box 1, (88.1) Japan views.

Includes men with rickshaws carrying unidentified white men; statues; architecture; a woman with children. Note: Vroman toured Japan in 1903 and 1909 (Webb, p. 4).

Box 2 Prints (93-151)

Box 2, (93-99) Trip to Mount Wilson, ca. 1895.

Includes Vroman in a group picnic scene.

Box 2, (100-101) Rancho Guajome Adobe (San Diego County, California). Display of cameras inside Vroman's bookstore.

Interior view of Vroman's bookstore, 60 E. Colorado St., Pasadena. Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (121) Exterior of Vroman's storefront and display windows.

Exterior view of Vroman's bookstore, 60 E. Colorado St., Pasadena. Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (122) Mission San Buenaventura.

Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (123) Mission Santa Ynez [Santa Inés Mission].

Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (125) Four Mexican men at Mission San Fernando.

Copy print from glass negative in collection; accompanied by the original negative envelope with handwritten label by Vroman.

Box 2, (126) Interior, unidentified church.

Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (127) Mission Santa Barbara.

Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (128) Unidentified town.

Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (129) Group portrait of women and girls, unidentified location.

Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (130-131) Two unidentified white women in a portrait and on horseback at Walpi, Arizona.

Copy print from glass negative in collection.
Box 2, (132) "Doctor at Indian Pueblo" written on mount in Vroman’s hand. Portrait of unidentified white man. Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (133) Pueblo Indians performing ceremony. Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (134) (No print) Partial view of an Indian man in regalia. Glass negative in collection (part broken off and missing).

Box 2, (135-139) Portraits of Pueblo Indians. Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (140) Unidentified pueblo. Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (141) View of Indian curios belonging to Thomas Keam, Keams Canyon, Arizona, 1900. Copy print from glass negative in collection.

Box 2, (142) Second Congregational Church, Rockford, Illinois, August 1892. Copy print from glass negative in collection; accompanied by the original negative envelope with handwritten label by Vroman.

Box 2, (143-149) Views of a stream and houses along a river, possibly in New York. Copy prints from glass negatives in collection.

Box 2, (150-151) Grant’s Tomb, New York. Copy prints from glass negatives in collection.

Photo-journal of trip to Arizona

Box 2, (102-120) Trip to Hopi pueblo of Walpi, Arizona, and the Petrified Forest, 1895, with journal on backs of photographs. A set of 19 mounted photographs of Vroman’s trip to Arizona in 1895, on which he wrote, on the verso, a personal journal of this trip. Vroman’s traveling companions were Horatio N. Rust, Mrs. Thaddeus (Leontine) Lowe, and Charles J. Crandall, who are shown, along with Vroman, at pueblos, and traveling with supplies and wagons. There are several portraits of Native Americans, some identified in Vroman’s captions, as well as scenes of Hopi Indians performing the Snake Dance at Walpi, Arizona, and also views of the Petrified Forest.

Link to transcription: A. C. Vroman's Account of Trip to Walpi and Petrified Forest, Arizona, 1895.

Glass negatives

Physical Description: The glass negatives vary in size: 5 x 7 inches, 6 ½ x 8 ½ inches, and 8 x 10 inches.

Box 3 Glass negatives (80-80a; 81-81a; 82-82a; 83; 121; 123-134) Access Information Advance arrangements for viewing the glass negatives must be made with the Curator of Photographs.
Glass negatives

Box 4  
**Glass negatives (135-151)**

**Access Information**

Advance arrangements for viewing the glass negatives must be made with the Curator of Photographs.

Box 5  
**Glass negative (122)**

**Access Information**

Advance arrangements for viewing the glass negatives must be made with the Curator of Photographs.

**Scope and Content Note**

Glass negative is broken and secured in mat.