Carleton E. Watkins Mammoth Plate Photographs of California Missions photCL
Watkins 1-38

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The Huntington Library
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URL: http://www.huntington.org
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: The Huntington Library
Title: Carleton E. Watkins Mammoth Plate Photographs of California Missions
Creator: Watkins, Carleton E., 1829-1916
Identifier/Call Number: photCL Watkins 1-38
Physical Description: 8 Linear Feet (7 boxes)

Physical Description: 37 Photographic Prints: mammoth plate, albumen; size of prints varies, approximately 39 x 54 cm. (15 1/4 x 21 1/4 in.)
Date (inclusive): 1876-1884; 3 copies of daguerreotypes, 1850s

Abstract: A collection of 37 mammoth plate photographs of Spanish missions in California by American photographer Carleton E. Watkins (1829-1916). The photographs are among the earliest made of the former mission buildings and grounds, which are seen in various states of ruin, 1876-1884. Sixteen missions are represented, and three photographs are copies of daguerreotypes made in the 1850s.

Language of Material: Materials are in English.

Conditions Governing Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. Due to the fragility of the prints, access is granted only by permission of the Curator of Photography. For more information, contact Reader Services.

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Preferred Citation

Immediate Source of Acquisition
In library as of 1948.

Biographical / Historical
Carleton E. Watkins (1829-1916) was born in 1829 in Oneonta, New York. In 1851, he migrated to Sacramento, California in the company of businessman Collis P. Huntington and several other residents of Oneonta. He began his photographic career as an apprentice to established San Francisco Bay area studio photographers Robert H. Vance (1825–1876) and James May Ford (c. 1827–1877).

Watkins photographed Yosemite for the first time in 1861. His large-scale images inspired President Abraham Lincoln and the United States Congress to declare Yosemite the nation's first national preserve in 1864. By the end of the American Civil War, the photographer had become one of the medium's leading lights, winning prestigious commissions and international awards.

Over the course of his career, Watkins operated studios at various Montgomery Street addresses in San Francisco. Around 1869, he purchased Alfred A. Hart's stereographic negatives documenting the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. Watkins subsequently published Hart's negatives under the series title: "Watkins Central Pacific Railroad."

Watkins suffered severe financial reverses in 1875, losing his negative inventory to competitor Isaiah H. Taber. From that point onward, Watkins published negatives under the "New Series" heading.

In 1879, Watkins married Frances Henrietta Snead. The couple had two children, Julia (1881–1977) and Collis (1883–1965). By the early 1890s, declining health forced Watkins to curtail his activities. He took his last major commission in 1894, photographing the Phoebe Apperson Hearst residence, Hacienda del Pozo de Verona, in Pleasanton, California. The earthquake and fire of 1906 destroyed Watkins' San Francisco studio and its contents. Shortly thereafter, he entered the Napa State Asylum for the Insane in Napa, California, where he died in 1916.

Scope and Contents
This collection contains 37 mammoth plate, albumen photographs of Spanish missions in California by photographer Carleton E. Watkins. Most of the photographs were made approximately 1877, when Watkins undertook his first photography trip into Southern California on the newly-built railroad route from San Francisco. Traveling in a flat railcar with room for his photography wagon and equipment, Watkins then traversed extensively by horse and wagon from San Diego, systematically photographing most of the missions. One view was made later - Mission San Juan Bautista (item 23) - around
1884, as it shows a steeple that was added in restoration work completed that year. Three views in this set are mammoth-plate copies of original daguerreotypes made in the 1850s: Mission San Jose, Mission San Francisco de Asis, and Mission Santa Clara de Asis (items 31, 37, 38) are seen as they appeared in the 1850s.

Sixteen of the 21 California missions are represented in this collection. It is not known exactly why Watkins did not photograph all of the missions, though it is likely they were in such ruin there was little left to photograph. These photographs are among the earliest made of the missions, at a time when they were in various states of decay and abandonment, before preservation efforts began in the 1880s. The views include crumbling or discolored walls, various adobe structures, bell towers, cemeteries, fountains and other built details. The surrounding landscapes include footpaths, worn wagon roads, oak trees, palms, agricultural fields, and some houses. A bird's-eye-view of San Luis Obispo gives an overview of the town that developed near the former mission.

The prints are mounted on boards, accompanied by labels below the prints. Each label has a printed title, Watkins' negative number, "Watkins' New Series," and "26 New Montgomery Street, San Francisco."

**Related Materials in the Huntington Library**

- Carleton E. Watkins Mammoth Plate Photograph Albums: Photographic Views of Kern County, California (137500); The Central Pacific Railroad and Views Adjacent (137501); Summits of the Sierra (137502); and Arizona and Views Adjacent to the Southern Pacific Railroad (137503).
- Carleton E. Watkins Mammoth Plate Photographs of Yosemite, New Almaden Mine and the Mendocino Coast, California: [379010]
- Carleton E. Watkins Photograph Collection (photCL 74)
- Carleton E. Watkins Stereograph Collection (photST Watkins)
- Watkins, Carleton E. Scenes in Yosemite photograph album (photCL 409)
- Watkins, Carleton E. Sunny Slope. San Gabriel, Cal. photograph album (photCL 522)
- Watkins, Carleton E. Album of the Yo-semite Valley, California (New York: D. Appleton, 1866) [406039]

**Arrangement**

Huntington Library staff assigned numbers to the photographs at an unknown time, mid-20th century, and the photographs are arranged in this sequence, (1-38). Note that the number 32 was inadvertently skipped, and the numbering sequence goes from 1-31, then 33-38.

**Related collections at other institutions**

This is one of three known complete sets of Watkins' mammoth plate photographs of the California missions. Another set is held by UCLA Special Collections, and the Hispanic Society of America, New York, holds a bound volume of all 37 photographs titled "Franciscan Missions of California." The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley holds an album of 35 cut-down mission views.

**Bibliography**


**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Missions -- California -- Photographs
- Spanish mission buildings -- California -- Photographs
- Building, Adobe -- Photographs
- Agriculture -- California -- Photographs
- San Luis Obispo (Calif.) -- History
- Mission San Gabriel Arcangel (San Gabriel, Calif.) -- Photographs
- Santa Inés Mission (Solvang, Calif.) -- Photographs
- San Luis Rey Mission (Calif.) -- Photographs
- San Antonio de Pádua (Mission) -- Photographs
- Mission San Carlos Borromeo (Carmel, Calif.) -- Photographs
- Santa Barbara Mission -- Photographs
- San Buenaventura Mission -- Photographs
- Mission San Juan Capistrano -- Photographs
San Fernando, Rey de España (Mission : San Fernando, Calif.) -- Photographs
San Juan Bautista (Mission : San Juan Bautista, Calif.) -- Photographs
Mission San Miguel Arcangel (San Miguel, Calif.) -- Photographs
Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa (San Luis Obispo, Calif.) -- Photographs
Mission San Jose (Alameda County, Calif.) -- Photographs
San Diego Mission -- Photographs
San Francisco de Asís Mission (San Francisco, Calif.) -- Photographs
Santa Clara Mission -- Photographs
Photographs
Albumen prints
Mammoth plate

Note
All titles and Watkins' numbers are transcribed from the items. The dates in brackets are from the catalog raisonné by Weston Naef and Christine Hult-Lewis, *Carleton Watkins: The Complete Mammoth Photographs* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum), 2011. (Cited below as Naef.)

Box 1
Mission, Santa Ynez. / Santa Barbara County, California, Established September 17th, 1804 (photCL Watkins 1) [approximately 1877]
Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1225. Middle distance view toward church and adobe structure. Man and a woman standing at door.
Note
Naef no. 763

Box 1
Mission, Santa Ynez. / Santa Barbara County, California, Established September 17th, 1804 (photCL Watkins 2) [approximately 1877]
Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image)
Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1224. View from street. A man and a woman are posed facing each other in the portal.
Note
Naef no. 764

Box 1
Mission, San Luis Rey de Francia. / San Diego County, California, Established June 13th, 1798 (photCL Watkins 3) [approximately 1877]
Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image)
Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1206. Three people standing in middle distance.
Note
Naef no. 784
Collection Contents

Box 1  Mission, San Louis Rey de Francia. / San Diego County, California, Established June 13th, 1798 (photCL Watkins 4) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Watkins no. 1205. Two men and two boys in middle distance.
   Note
   Naef no. 785

Box 1  Mission, San Louis Rey de Francia. / San Diego County, California, Established June 13th, 1798. From the North (photCL Watkins 5) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Watkins no. 1207. Distant view from rear.
   Note
   Naef no. 783

Box 1  Mission, San Louis Rey de Francia. / San Diego County, California, Established June 13th, 1798. From the West (photCL Watkins 6) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Note
   Naef no. 782

Box 1  Mission, San Antonio de Padua. / Monterey County, California, Established July 14th, 1771 (photCL Watkins 7) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 1/4 /4 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Watkins no. 1230. Rear view from middle distance. Includes adobe structure.
   Note
   Naef no. 756

Box 1  Mission, San Carlos del Carmelo. / Monterey County, California, Established June 3d, 1770 (photCL Watkins 8) [1876-1878]
   Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Note
   Naef no. 755

Box 1  Mission, San Carlos del Carmelo. / Monterey County, California, Established June 3d, 1770. View looking West, with glimpse of Carmel Bay (photCL Watkins 9) [1876-1878]
   Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 3/8 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Note
   Naef no. 754
Box 1-1  Mission, San Juan Capistrano. / Los Angeles County, California, Established Nov. 1st, 1776. View from the West (photCL Watkins 10) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: 14 5/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Watkins no. 1211.
   Note
   Naef no. 778

Box 2  Mission, Santa Barbara. / Santa Barbara County, California, Established December 4, 1786 (photCL Watkins 11) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Watkins no. 1221. Fountain prominent in foreground.
   Note
   Naef no. 768

Box 2  Mission, Santa Barbara. / Santa Barbara County, California, Established December 4, 1786. View from Olive Orchard, looking North (photCL Watkins 12) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Watkins no. 1222. Distant view across plowed field.
   Note
   Naef no. 765

Box 2  Mission. Santa Barbara. / Santa Barbara County, California, Established December 4, 1786. View looking West (photCL Watkins 13) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 3/8 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Watkins no. 1223.
   Note
   Naef no. 766

Box 2-1  Mission, Santa Barbara. / Santa Barbara County, California, Established December 4, 1786 (photCL Watkins 14) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Watkins no. 1220. Close view of front facade, with four women in doorway.
   Note
   Naef no. 767

Box 2  Mission, San Buenaventura. / Ventura County, California, Established March 31st, 1782. View from the West (photCL Watkins 15) [approximately 1877]
   Physical Description: Print has been inked to cover graffiti and/or posters on wall.
   Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
   Scope and Contents
   Watkins no. 1218.
   Note
   Naef no. 771
Box 2  Mission, San Buenaventura. / Ventura County, California, Established March 31st, 1782. General View from the Rear (photCL Watkins 16) [approximately 1877]

Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 1/4 inches (image)

Scope and Contents

Note
Naef no. 769

Box 2  Mission, San Buenaventura. / Ventura County, California, Established March 31st, 1782 (photCL Watkins 17) [approximately 1877]

Physical Description: Print has been inked to cover graffiti and/or posters on wall and fence.

Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image)

Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1217. Includes cemetery.

Note
Naef no. 770

Box 2  Mission, San Juan Capistrano. / Los Angeles County, California, Established Nov. 1st, 1776 (photCL Watkins 18) [approximately 1877]

Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image)

Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1209. Two women and a girl standing at center of picture.

Note
Naef no. 777

Box 2  Mission, San Juan Capistrano. / Los Angeles County, California, Established Nov. 1st, 1776 (photCL Watkins 19) [approximately 1877]

Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)

Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1210. Close view of ruins of former sanctuary.

Note
Naef no. 779

Box 2-2  Mission, San Fernando Rey. / Los Angeles County, California, Established Sept. 8th, 1797 (photCL Watkins 20) [approximately 1877]

Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 3/8 inches (image)

Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1215.

Note
Naef no. 774

Box 3  Mission, San Fernando Rey. / Los Angeles County, California, Established Sept. 8th, 1797 (photCL Watkins 21) [approximately 1877]

Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image)

Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1214.

Note
Naef no. 773
Mission, San Fernando Rey. / Los Angeles County, California, Established Sept. 8th, 1797. General View from the East (photCL Watkins 22) [approximately 1877]
Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
Scope and Contents
Note
Naef no. 772

Mission, San Juan Bautista. / San Benito County, California, Established June 24th, 1797 (photCL Watkins 23) [approximately 1884]
Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1234. Includes steeple added in restoration work completed around 1884.
Note
Naef no. 753

Mission, San Miguel. / San Luis Obispo County, California, Established July 25th, 1797. General View, looking North (photCL Watkins 24) [approximately 1877]
Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1228. View of valley from the north end of the mission property.
Note
Naef no. 758

Mission, San Miguel. / San Luis Obispo County, California, Established July 25th, 1797 (photCL Watkins 25) [approximately 1877]
Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)
Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1229. Roof tiles stacked in foreground.
Note
Naef no. 759

Mission, San Luis Obispo. / San Luis Obispo County, California, Established Sept. 1st, 1772 (photCL Watkins 26) [approximately 1877]
Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image)
Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1226.
Note
Naef no. 762

Mission, San Luis Obispo. / San Luis Obispo County, California, Established Sept. 1st, 1772 (photCL Watkins 27) [approximately 1877]
Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1 4 inches (image)
Scope and Contents
Watkins no. 1227. Includes bird's-eye-view of town and farms of San Luis Obispo.
Note
Naef no. 761
Box 3  

Mission, San Antonio de Padua. / Monterey County, California, Established July 14th, 1771 (photCL Watkins 28)  
[approximately 1877]  
Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 1/4 inches (image)  
Scope and Contents  
Watkins no. 1231.  
Note  
Naef no. 757

Box 3-1  

Mission, San Gabriel. / Los Angeles County, California, Established September 8th, 1771 (photCL Watkins 29)  
[approximately 1877]  
Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 1/2 inches (image)  
Scope and Contents  
Watkins no. 1213.  
Note  
Naef no. 775

Box 3  

Mission, San Gabriel. / Los Angeles County, California, Established September 8th, 1771 (photCL Watkins 30)  
[approximately 1877]  
Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 1/2 inches (image)  
Scope and Contents  
Watkins no. 1212. Horse and people standing in front of mission.  
Note  
Naef no. 776

Box 4  

Mission, San Jose. / Alameda County, California, Established June 11th, 1797 (photCL Watkins 31)  
[approximately 1877, from daguerreotype approximately 1852]  
Physical Description: A mammoth-plate copy of an original daguerreotype. Print is dark and softly focused. Label has a typo: "Established."  
Physical Description: 15 1/4 x 21 1/2 inches (image)  
Scope and Contents  
Watkins no. 1237.  
Note  
Naef no. 752

Box 4  

Olive and Palm Orchard. / San Diego Mission (photCL Watkins 33)  
[approximately 1877]  
Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)  
Scope and Contents  
Watkins no. 1204.  
Note  
Naef no. 787

Box 4  

Mission, San Diego. / San Diego County, California, Established July 16th, 1769. From the Rear, Looking Down the Valley (photCL Watkins 34)  
[approximately 1877]  
Physical Description: 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)  
Scope and Contents  
Watkins no. 1202.  
Note  
Naef no. 786
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<th>Box 4</th>
<th><strong>Mission, San Diego. / San Diego County, California, Established July 16th, 1769. From the East Side</strong> (photCL Watkins 35) [approximately 1877]</th>
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|      | **Physical Description:** 15 3/8 x 21 1/4 inches (image)  
|      | **Scope and Contents**  
|      | Watkins no. 1203. Includes cemetery.  
|      | **Note**  
|      | Naef no. 788 |

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<th>Box 4</th>
<th><strong>Mission, San Diego. / San Diego County, California, Established July 16th, 1769</strong> (photCL Watkins 36) [approximately 1877]</th>
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|      | **Physical Description:** 15 1/8 x 21 3/8 inches (image)  
|      | **Scope and Contents**  
|      | **Note**  
|      | Naef no. 789 |

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<tr>
<th>Box 4</th>
<th><strong>Mission, San Francisco de Asis. / San Francisco County, California, Established Oct. 4th, 1776</strong> (photCL Watkins 37) [approximately 1878-1883, from daguerreotype approximately 1850-1851]</th>
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|      | **Physical Description:** A mammoth-plate copy of an original daguerreotype. Print is slightly grainy.  
|      | **Physical Description:** 12 x 20 inches (image)  
|      | **Scope and Contents**  
|      | Watkins no. 1236. Also known as Mission Dolores.  
|      | **Note**  
|      | Naef no. 749 |

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<th>Box 4</th>
<th><strong>Mission, Santa Clara. / Santa Clara County, California, Established Jan. 18th, 1777</strong> (photCL Watkins 38) [approximately 1878-1883, from daguerreotype approximately 1855-1858]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|      | **Physical Description:** A mammoth-plate copy of an original daguerreotype.  
|      | **Physical Description:** 11 x 17 inches (image)  
|      | **Scope and Contents**  
|      | Watkins no. 1235.  
|      | **Note**  
|      | Naef no. 750 |