Guide to Andrew P. Hill Photograph Collection 1983.11.11

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Content Description

The Andrew P. Hill Photograph Collection consists primarily of commissioned portraits that document Santa Clara College students, campus, and student organizations from 1886-1907. Other photographs include a color image of Hill's painting, "Santa Clara Mission in 1849," and an image of Hill and various conservationists at a redwood forest entitled, "Santa Clara Conservationists at the Base of The Santa Clara Tree," circa 1905.

The majority of the photographs in the collection are mounted on black paper and have been labeled with a number and/or a title written on the image itself. Some photographs that lack descriptive information on the front of the image include information on the verso, which indicates either the setting or the names of individuals depicted. Many of the group portraits featured in this collection depict student organizations that showcase academic departments (i.e. Second Book Keeping Class no. 15, Fourth English class no. 18, Contributors to Fourth Latin no. 49), performing/fine arts (College Band 1895 no.7, College Choir no.1), humanitarian groups (Promoters of the Sacred Heart no. 59, Senior Sodality Group), and extracurricular activities affiliated with Santa Clara College (Reading Room Association no. 44, Tennis Team no. 46). Other group portraits feature out-of-state students (Group of Oregonians, Group of Students 1890). The variety of student organizations and classes exemplifies the breadth of the curriculum offered at Santa Clara at the time.

Many of the images in this collection were shot outdoors in campus gardens and courtyards. The names of the subjects in several student group portraits are either labeled directly on the image itself or assigned a number (written on the image) with corresponding information available on the verso of the photograph. This collection also features images of Paul Galtes S.J., during his time as a pupil at Santa Clara College.

Biographical History

Andrew Putnam Hill was an ardent conservationist with an artist's propensity for recognizing and capturing beauty in both his paintings and photographic works. His collection provides a sampling of his commercial and artistic work from the late nineteenth century.

Andrew Putnam Hill was born on August 9, 1853 in Porter County, Indiana to Elijah Putnam Hill and Jane A. Rose. A few months prior to Andrew P. Hill's birth, his father, Elijah, left his pregnant wife while traveling via ox train to California. The journey was difficult and fraught with complications as a twenty-four hour altercation with Native Americans greatly compromised the travelers' physical well-being. Seven days after arriving in Amador City, California, a gold rush town forty miles southeast of Sacramento, Elijah Hill passed away due to the strain of this journey.

At fourteen years old, Andrew Hill and his uncle H. Warner Rose traveled to California via the Isthmus of Panama. At the age of fifteen, Andrew Hill enrolled in Santa Clara College where he entered the "preparation department" (the equivalent of high school) in 1868 and continued into the "second division." While at Santa Clara College, Andrew Hill experienced the earthquake of 1868, witnessing the destruction of the college chapel. Andrew Hill remained at Santa Clara College for only two years, never completing his studies.

In 1870, Andrew Hill traveled to San Luis Obispo, California to work on the ranch of his uncle, H. Warner Rose. While working on the ranch, Hill's interest in art was revitalized by a stint as a map maker. While studying cartography with engineers, Hill met Charles Reed, an engineer from the Fremont expedition of 1846. Reed, recognizing Hill's talent, encouraged him to refine his skills through artistic training. Thus, Hill left San Luis Obispo for San Francisco where he enrolled in the recently-founded California School of Design.

In 1878, after working in San Francisco and Oakland, Hill settled in San Jose where he taught art and ran a portrait studio. At this point in his career, Hill's talents were recognized by the public and he received various prestigious commissions,
some of which included life-size portraiture of Governor William Irwin and Senator Newton Booth. His large-scale painting, “The Murphy Party” (later destroyed in the 1906 earthquake) won a gold medal at the 1890 California State Fair for best landscape oil painting and was subsequently purchased by the California Pioneer’s Association of San Francisco.

In April of 1883, Andrew P. Hill married Florence Maria Watkins. Although Hill’s firstborn son died tragically within three days of birth, Hill and his wife raised two healthy sons, Andrew Putnam Jr., and Frank Ernest. In order to provide for his growing family, Hill shifted his artistic focus toward commercial photography, forming a partnership with Sidney J. Yard in 1892 called Hill and Yard—the photography studio from which many of the student portraits in the Andrew P. Hill Photograph Collection were produced.

Andrew P. Hill was remarkably dedicated to environmental causes in California. Influenced by the leadership and philosophies of conservationists John Muir and Gifford Pinchot, Hill became a leading figure in the movement for the conservation of the redwood forests. He was a founding member of the Sempervirens Club of California, an organization formed to save old growth redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Hill’s photographs of the redwood forests articulated his fascination with the grandeur and historicity of the Sempervirens trees. The publication of his photos in The San Francisco Chronicle and The San Jose Mercury News furthered public interest in their conservation. Utilizing the power of photography as an impetus for social change, Hill’s leadership and passion was instrumental to the formation of Big Basin Redwood State Park in March 1901. Andrew P. Hill continued to photograph and guard the redwood forests long after the formation of Big Basin, ardently confronting any persons or groups found destroying the living beauty of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Andrew Putnam Hill passed away on September 3, 1922. Nearly a century later, his humanitarian efforts and artistic pursuits have been immortalized in various centers throughout the Bay Area including California Redwood Park, Big Basin State Park, and Santa Clara County. In addition, the Andrew P. Hill High School, located in Southeast San Jose, bears his name.

The biographical information provided here is an edited version of the Biographical History section of a legacy finding aid at our institution.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Mia Hope and Daniela Baez in 2018. Finding aid written and EAD encoded by Andrea Hoff in 2018.

Organizational History
Santa Clara University was founded in 1851 by the Society of Jesus as Santa Clara College and is California’s oldest operating institution of higher learning. It was established on the grounds of Mission Santa Clara de Asís, the eighth of the original 21 California missions. The college originally operated as a preparatory school and did not offer courses of collegiate rank until 1853. The institution became known as the University of Santa Clara in 1912, when the schools of engineering and law were added. For 110 years, Santa Clara University was an all-male school. In 1961, women were accepted as undergraduates and Santa Clara University became the first coeducational Catholic university in California. The number of students and faculty tripled over the next decade and the university began the largest building program in school history with eight residence halls, a student union, and an athletic stadium. In the early 1970s, the Board of Trustees voted to limit the size of the undergraduate population, an action that was intended to preserve the character and ensure the quality of the university for generations to come. In 1985, the university adopted Santa Clara University as its official name.

Bibliography:

Arrangement
This collection is arranged into one series: Series I: Photographs.

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This collection is open for research.

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From College to University - SCU's first 150 years Digital Collection
Silicon Valley History Online Digital Collection

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Santa Clara University -- History
Students -- Societies
Santa Clara College (Calif.)
Santa Clara University (Calif.)
Student activities

Box 1: Commercial Department, Performing Arts, & Student Portraits, 1888-1898, & undated
   Folder 1: Student Portraits, Groups, 1894, & undated
   Folder 2: Student Portraits, Groups, 1888-1898, & undated
   Folder 3: Commercial Department, 1890-1893, & undated
   Folder 4: Student Societies, Spanish Society, 1892, & undated
   Folder 5: Student Societies, Sodality, 1894
   Folder 6: Student Societies, House of Philhistorians, 1894
Box 2: Student Portraits Framed in Leather, 1888-1899, & undated
   Folder 1: Student Portraits, Groups, 1893-1895, & undated
   Folder 2: Student Portraits, Groups, c. 1888-1899
   Folder 3: Student Portraits, Groups, c. 1892-1898, & undated
Box 3: Student Portraits & Student Societies, 1886-1897, & undated
   Folder 1: Student Portraits, Groups, c. 1892-1895, & undated
   Folder 2: Student Portraits, Groups, c. 1892-1897, & undated
   Folder 3: Performing Arts, Choir, 1886-1890
   Folder 4: Groups, c. 1890-1894, & undated
Box 4: Portraits A-Z, c. 1889-1907, & undated
   Folder 1: Portraits, B-G, 1889-1907, & undated
   Folder 2: Student Portraits, Individuals, undated
   Folder 3: Portraits, H-M, c. 1890-1899, & undated
   Folder 4: Portraits, N-Z, c. 1890-1899, & undated
Box 5: Photo Album, SCU Campus, c. 1890-1899
Box 6: Photo Album, Reference Prints, undated