Guide to the Harry C. Peterson Papers, ca. 1880-1944

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Guide to the Harry C. Peterson Papers, ca. 1880-1944

Collection number: M0649

Department of Special Collections and University Archives
Stanford University Libraries
Stanford, California

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Peterson, Harry C. Papers,
Date (inclusive): ca. 1880-1944
Collection number: M0649
Creator: Peterson, Harry C.
Extent: 2 linear ft.
Repository: Stanford University. Libraries. Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives.
Abstract: The collection contains correspondence, notes, memorabilia, typescripts. Included is material pertaining to Stanford University and Sutters Fort.
Language: English.

Access Restrictions
None.
Publication Rights
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Acquisition Information
Purchased, 1993.
Preferred Citation

Biography
Harry Claude Peterson never met a historical fact or artifact that he didn't like. The inveterate historian spent his entire adult life in one position after another related to history, particularly California Gold Rush Days.
Harry was born in Algona, Iowa, in 1876, son of Julius E. Peterson, a Norwegian mechanician. Leland Stanford had learned of the elder Peterson in Europe and brought him to Stanford University to teach Machine Shop Practices. Young Harry was educated in public schools in Algona and Palo Alto, California. He was in the photographic business in Palo Alto for a time. He was married in 1902 and had one son, Austin Peterson.
Harry was named Director and Curator of the Stanford University Museum of Fine Arts (now the Cantor Center) in 1899, where he remained until 1918, adding collections to the Museum and writing historical papers. He also acquired his own collection of historical books and documents while serving as Curator. During his residence in Palo Alto, he served on the city counsel for eight years.

Harry's next endeavor was as head of Field Research for the California History Department of the California State Library. He remained in that position for three years, and then joined the Oakland Tribune as feature writer of California history for the paper, for another three years. In 1925, he was named Curator of Sutter’s Fort Museum in Sacramento, California, and became a charter member of the American Association of Museums.

Harry Peterson’s credits are many, from over three hundred published stories and speeches and countless photographs concerning California History, many for professional and trade publications and meetings. He was responsible for energizing the public to the historical value of Sutter’s Fort. He served on the Southern Pacific Railroad Company’s selection committee to identify historical sites along its lines. He also acted as historical consultant on several Hollywood films of the Gold Rush days, such as The Pony Express, The Big Trail, the Fighting Caravan, and Sutter’s Gold. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Sacramento Golden Empire Centennial in 1939. His energy, exemplified by his many activities, appeared to be unstoppable, but Harry Peterson died suddenly of a heart attack, in his office at Sutter’s Fort, in 1941. His series of articles on the Gold Rush for the Oakland Tribune were collected in book form, The 49er, published posthumously by the Doubleday Company in 1949.

**Collection Scope and Content Summary**

Correspondence, notes, memorabilia, typescripts. Included is material pertaining to Stanford University and Sutters Fort.

**Access Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog:

- Berner, Bertha
- Couper, William
- Covey, F.W.
- Davis, Horace
- Gross, H.H.
- Hewes, Anna Lathrop
- Holzman, R.O.
- Jordan, David Starr, 1851-1931.
- Nash, H.C.
- Schmid, Rupert
- Spencer, Francis
- Stanford, Jane Lathrop, 1828-1905.
- Wilbur, Ray Lyman, 1875-1949.
- Stanford University--History
- Sutters’ Fort

### Series 1. Peterson Family Material

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<th>Box 1, Folder 1</th>
<th><strong>Harry Claude Peterson biography and resumes n.d.</strong></th>
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<td>Physical Description: (4 sheets)</td>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<td>See also B 3 (OS), Fs 1, 4, and 5.</td>
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<th>Box 1, Folder 2</th>
<th><strong>Personal Correspondence1907-1937</strong></th>
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<td>Physical Description: (11 letters &amp; 4 postcards)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 3</th>
<th><strong>Correspondence to H. C. Peterson, from Arthur S. Dudley family1909-1937</strong></th>
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<td>Physical Description: (3 items)</td>
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Box 1, Folder 4  Stock certificate (gold mine), agreement to purchase (blank) 1933
Box 1, Folder 5  Commemorative silk ribbons 1889-1916
                        Physical Description: (14 items)
Box 1, Folder 6  Photo album, Austin Peterson n.d.
Box 1, Folder 7  Miscellany (Golden Gate Bridge ticket, H. C. Peterson business card, receipt 1932-1937
                        Physical Description: (3 items).

Series 2. Material Relating to Stanford University and Stanford Museum

Box 1, Folder 8  "Founding of Stanford University (1891)" 1931
                        Physical Description: (1 pamphlet).
                        Scope and Content Note
                        See also B 3 (OS), Fs 1, 4, and 5.
Box 1, Folder 9  "Stanford University Opening Day Exercises" 1891
                        Physical Description: (1 pamphlet).
Box 1, Folder 10  Stanford Circulars 1 & 2 (with personal card of Mrs. Leland [Jane] Stanford). 1891
Box 1, Folder 11  Stanford University student testimonials, King-Richardson, Company 1899
                        Physical Description: (1 pamphlet).
Box 1, Folder 12  Stanford University Commencement 1901
                        Physical Description: (1 program).
Box 1, Folder 13  "Address to Stanford University Trustees," Jane L. Stanford 1899
                        Physical Description: (1 pamphlet).
Box 1, Folder 14  "Address to Stanford University Trustees," Jane L. Stanford 1903
                        Physical Description: (1 pamphlet). See also B 3, F 3.
Box 1, Folder 15  Letter to Jane L. Stanford, from F. W. Covey (Palo Alto Stock Farm), September 1, 1893
                        Physical Description: (2 sheets).
Box 1, Folder 16  Letter to Jane L. Stanford, from H. H. Gross, July 21, 1893
                        Physical Description: (2 sheets).
Box 1, Folder 17  Letters to Jane L. Stanford, from Francis Spencer (Stanford Trustee), C. F. Crocker, C. S. Lathrop, C. P. Huntington. August 17, 1890 and August 17, 1893
                        Physical Description: (2 letters).
Box 1, Folder 18  Letters to Jane L. Stanford, from Horace Davis (Stanford Trustee), July 13 and July 19, 1904
                        Physical Description: (2 letters).
Box 1, Folder 19  Letters to H. C. Nash (secretary to Leland W. Stanford), from R. O. Holzman, July 17, July 20, and August 5, 1893
                        Physical Description: (3 letters).
Box 1, Folder 20  Letter to H. C. Nash, from H. H. Gross, July 21, 1893
                        Physical Description: (1 sheet).
| Box 1, Folder 21 | **Letter to H. C. Nash, from Rupert Schmid, August 2, 1893**  
**Physical Description:** (1 sheet) |
| Box 1, Folder 22 | **In Memoriam: Leland Stanford, Jr., book with letter attached to Mrs. Jane L. Stanford, from William Couper. 1885** |
| Box 1, Folder 23 | **“Memorial Address: Leland Stanford,” U. S. Senate, Washington D. C., 1893**  
**Physical Description:** (1 pamphlet). |
| Box 1, Folder 24 | **“In Memoriam: Anna Lathrop Hewes,” August 2, 1892**  
**Physical Description:** (1 pamphlet). |
| Box 1, Folder 25 | **“Leland Stanford Junior Museum,” Stanford University Press, 1903**  
**Physical Description:** (1 pamphlet).  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Timothy Hopkins, Charles G. Lathrop, Anna Lathrop Hewes, David Starr Jordan, F. W. Covey, Palo Alto Stock Farm. |
| Box 1, Folder 26 | **Letter to H. C. Peterson, Curator, Leland Stanford, Jr. Museum, from Bertha Berner (Secretary to Jane L. Stanford), August 19, 1903**  
**Physical Description:** (1 sheet).  
**Scope and Content Note**  
See also B 3, F 1. |
| Box 1, Folder 27 | **Letters to H. C. Peterson, from Charles G. Lathrop, July 6, 1901, and Mrs. Charles G. Lathrop, December 28, 1903**  
**Physical Description:** (2 letters). |
| Box 1, Folder 28 | **Letter to H. C. Peterson, from David [Starr] Jordan, November 14, 1902**  
**Physical Description:** (1 letter)  
**Scope and Content Note**  
See also B 3, F 5. |
**Physical Description:** (1 sheet). |
| Box 1, Folder 30 | **Letter from H. C. Peterson to [Mr. Bube?], with invoice, October 14, 1907**  
**Physical Description:** (2 sheets) |
| Box 1, Folder 31 | **Additional Stanford Museum correspondence to H. C. Peterson 1901-1917**  
**Physical Description:** (8 letters, 1 postcard) |
| Box 1, Folder 32 | **Envelopes to H. C. Peterson 1910-1916**  
**Physical Description:** (5 envelopes) |
| Box 1, Folder 33 | **News clipping, “New Library at Stanford Has Browsing Room.” [July 26, 1919].**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Timothy Hopkins. |
| Box 1, Folder 34 | **Photo, note, and envelope re Herbert Hoover [1912]**  
**Physical Description:** (3 items). |
| Box 1, Folder 35 | **Letter to Stanford student’s parents, from Herbert Hoover, October 5, 1942**  
**Physical Description:** (1 letter) |
Box 1, Folder 36  "Palo Stock Farm Catalog," auction, November 26, 1897  
Physical Description: (1 pamphlet).  
Scope and Content Note  
See also B 1, F 15.

Box 1, Folder 37  Photographs of early Stanford University [1900]  
Physical Description: (16 B/W photos and colored postcards).

Box 1, Folder 38  Souvenir ticket to Stanford house, Michigan Bluff, Placer County, California, June 2, 1928  
Physical Description: (1 item.)  
Scope and Content Note  
See also B 4, F 1.

Box 1, Folder 39  "Scientific Physiognomist." Fragment, signed by Mary Olmstead Stanton . n.d.  
Physical Description: (1 sheet).

Box 1, Folder 40  Blank invoices, Vina Distillery 1890?  
Physical Description: (10 items)

Series 3. Material Relating to Fort Sutter and the Discovery of Gold

Box 2, Folder 1  Photographs of Sutter's Fort (n.d.) and H. C. Peterson, Curator (1932).  
Physical Description: (4 items)

Box 2, Folder 2  " Sutter's Fort Historical Museum," pamphlet[1944?]  
Physical Description: (48 pages).

Box 2, Folder 3  "The Discovery of Gold in California," pamphlet1919  
Physical Description: (4 pages).

Box 2, Folder 4  Letters by P. B. Beakart, stating that first gold found in 1848 was not nugget-sized 1921, 1931  
Physical Description: (2 letters)

Box 2, Folder 5  "California Pioneers," speech, John C. Chambers, February 22, 1918  
Physical Description: (9 pages).

Box 2, Folder 6  "Sutter's Fort Historical Museum," typescript, by H. C. Peterson 1925  
Physical Description: (5 sheets).

Box 2, Folder 7  "Hock Farm," partial typescript, by H. C. Peterson n.d.  
Physical Description: (3 sheets).

Box 2, Folder 8  "It Never Occurred To Me," typescript, by H.C. Peterson n.d.  
Physical Description: (2 sheets).

Box 2, Folder 9  Sutter's Fort Museum Collection, partial typescript, [by H. C. Peterson?] n.d.  
Physical Description: (2 sheets).

Box 2, Folder 10  "Benicia," typescript, H. C. Peterson, September 12, 1927  
Physical Description: (8 sheets).
| Box 2, Folder 11 | "Marysville," partial typescript, by H.C. Peterson, September 14, 1935  
Physical Description: (4 sheets). |
| Box 2, Folder 12 | Minutes, California State Historical Association, Sutter’s Fort, H. C. Peterson, Acting Secretary, November 26, 1934  
Physical Description: (3 sheets) |
| Box 2, Folder 13 | Lists of Fort Sutter display labels n.d.  
Physical Description: (5 sheets). |
| Box 2, Folder 14 | Sutter’s Fort Museum correspondence, to H. C. Peterson, 1920-1929  
Physical Description: (11 letters, 2 postcards) |
| Box 2, Folder 15 | Sutter’s Fort Museum correspondence, to H. C. Peterson, 1930-1940  
Physical Description: (16 letters, 4 postcards) |
| Box 2, Folder 16 | Correspondence to/from B. F. Hall and H. C. Peterson 1930-1937  
Physical Description: (3 letters and 1 postcard) |
| Box 2, Folder 17 | Correspondence from H.C. Peterson 1927-1936  
Physical Description: (4 letters). |
| Box 2, Folder 18 | Letter from Karen Kearns (Huntington Library) to Gerald Lucero regarding authenticity of attached letter, purportedly written by John A. Sutter, May 17, 1988  
Physical Description: (2 sheets).  
Scope and Content Note  
See also B 3, F 9. |
| Box 2, Folder 19 | Photograph, John A. Sutter, n.d. |
| Box 2, Folder 20 | Copy of will, Anna Sutter, dated 1881 1926  
Physical Description: (4 sheets). |
| Box 2, Folder 21 | Invitation to H. C. Peterson to visit branches of the Sutter Family, from M. Van Volbeck, January 18, 1928. |
| Box 2, Folder 22 | Letters from Paulita de Sutter to H.C. Peterson, 1938  
Physical Description: (4 letters). |
| Box 2, Folder 23 | Photographs, John Bidwell n.d.  
Physical Description: (3 photos) |
| Box 2, Folder 24 | Letter to John Bidwell, from Mrs. T. Lynch Mineral Point, November 13, 1851  
Physical Description: (1 letter). |
| Box 2, Folder 25 | Letter to H.C. Peterson, from Charles E. Bancroft, regarding Bidwell’s Bar, March 19, 1925,  
Physical Description: (1 sheet) |
| Box 2, Folder 26 | Letters from Charles H. Davis regarding disposition of effects, May 1, 1928  
Physical Description: (2 letters). |
| Box 2, Folder 27 | Letters from/to A. William Lund and H. C. Peterson, May 19 and 26, 1928  
Physical Description: (2 letters). |
| Box 2, Folder 28 | Letter to H. C. Peterson from E. Brown regarding C. H. Davis, July 9, 1928  
Physical Description: (1 letter) |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 2, Folder 29| Letter to H. C. Peterson from Capt. W.R. Scott regarding C. H. Davis, July 18, 1928  
Physical Description: (1 sheet). |
| Box 2, Folder 30| Typescript and handwritten draft regarding C. H. Davis n.d.  
Physical Description: (2 sheets).  
Scope and Content Note  
See also Box 3, F 10. |
| Box 2, Folder 31| Correspondence between H. C. Peterson and the Progressive Magazine, January 27 to February 14, 1928  
Physical Description: (7 letters). |
| Box 2, Folder 32| The Progressive Magazine facsimile and book advertisement. n.d.  
Physical Description: (2 items). |
| Box 2, Folder 33| Correspondence between Julius Loeb and H. C. Peterson regarding the Pony Express, August 4 and 25, 1927, and February 20, 1928  
Physical Description: (4 letters). |
| Box 2, Folder 34| List of Candidates [for California Historical Society ?]. prepared by H. C. Peterson. n.d. |
| Box 2, Folder 35| Program, Garden Fete, for delegates to Pan American Reciprocal Trade Conference, August 28, 1930. Replica: California Republic flag,  
Physical Description: (2 items). |
| Box 2, Folder 36| Illustrated card and poem, from E. A. Burbank (8x10 inches) to H. C. Peterson (and envelope) August 23, 1938. |
| Box 2, Folder 37| Photographs commemorating "Days of the 49ers" [1939]  
Physical Description: (8 photographs).  
Scope and Content Note  
See also B 3, F2. |
| Box 2, Folder 38| Photograph (8x10 inches), Morgan Wallace as General John Fremont in film Sutter's Gold. n.d. |
| Box 2, Folder 39| Luggage tag, H. C. Peterson, Sutter's Hotel, San Francisco, California. n.d. |
| Box 2, Folder 40| Correspondence to H. C. Peterson regarding Whiskerinos Club, 1920s  
Physical Description: (2 letters, 3 postcards) |
| Box 2, Folder 41| Miscellaneous envelopes 1928-1937 |
| Box 2, Folder 42| Correspondence to H. C. Peterson regarding early California history 1928, 1938  
Physical Description: (5 letters) |
| Box 2, Folder 43| "Romance of California," [text by H. C. Peterson ?], Sacramento Chamber of Commerce (pamphlet, [1927]  
Physical Description: 22 pages). |
| Box 2, Folder 44| "Romance of California," text by H. C. Peterson, Sacramento Chamber of Commerce (pamphlet,  
Physical Description: 1938  
Scope and Content Note  
47 pages, with map). |
| Box 2, Folder 45 | Crofutt's New Overland Tourist, and Pacific Coast Guide (partial copy). [1880] |
| Box 2, Folder 46 | Historical notes on crossing the plains by H. C. Peterson n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (8 notes). |

| Box 2, Folder 47 | "Captain Jean J Voiget," typescripts, [by H. C. Peterson?] n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (two copies, 8 pages). |

| Box 2, Folder 48 | Notebook, compiled by H. C. Peterson, relating to J.J. Voiget's first survey of Yerba Buena (San Francisco) in 1839-40. 1904 |
| Scope and Content Note | (Notes from several historical sources, photos of dispositions of early settlers, maps, news clippings). |

| Box 2, Folder 49 | Photograph of painting of Yerba Buena, [by John J. Voiget]. n.d. |
| Box 2, Folder 50 | Land grant testimony of John J. Voiget and Wm. I. Richardson, schedule of testimony, plot plan, San Francisco, 1848. 1848, 1854 |
| Box 2, Folder 51 | Letter to H. C. Peterson from Alice Jeanette Voiget n.d. |
| Box 2, Folder 52 | Letter to Raphael Weill, from H. C. Peterson regarding Yerba Buena Cove, March 31, 1920 |
| Physical Description: | (1 letter). |

| Box 2, Folder 53 | Photograph, U.S. Mint [San Francisco?]. 1904 |
| Box 2, Folder 54 | "The Highway of Romance" (Mother Lode State Highway), n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (pamphlet, 8 pages). |

| Box 2, Folder 55 | Program, Dedication of Fremont Tablet, Buttes, California, April 15, 1923. |
| Box 2, Folder 56 | News clipping on John C. Fremont, New York Tribune, June 20, 1856. |
| Box 2, Folder 57 | Chinese Camp (California), typescript by H. C. Peterson n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (11 pages). |

| Box 2, Folder 58 | Chinese Camp (California), handwritten notes [by H.C. Peterson?] n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (4 sheets). |

| Box 2, Folder 59 | Coloma (California), handwritten notes [by H. C. Peterson?] n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (4 sheets). |

| Box 2, Folder 60 | Coyote Diggins (California), handwritten notes, [by H. C. Peterson], n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (3 notes, 1 envelope). |

| Box 2, Folder 61 | Volcano (California), handwritten notes, [by H. C. Peterson?] n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (1 sheet). |

| Box 2, Folder 62 | Announcement, State Mining Celebration, Mariposa, California, June 20-21, 1931 |
| Physical Description: | (1 sheet). |

| Box 2, Folder 63 | California history, handwritten notes, [H. C. Peterson?] n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (2 sheets). |

| Box 2, Folder 64 | California pioneer tombstones (8 photographs). n.d. |
| Box 2, Folder 65 | Gold mining towns n.d. |
| Physical Description: | (8 photographs, and 1 chit from gold mining company). |

<p>| Box 2, Folder 66 | Letter from John B. Montgomery to E. L. Norton, from Boston August 7, 1862, |
| Physical Description: | (1 sheet). |
| Box 2, Folder 67 | Monterey-Carmel (California), n.d. | Physical Description: (8 photographs). |
| Box 2, Folder 68 | Letter to H. C. Peterson about San Mateo California from C. P Cooley, Palo Alto, California, January 1, 1928 | Physical Description: (1 letter). |
| Box 2, Folder 70 | &quot;Central Pacific Railroad,&quot; pamphlet 1913 | Physical Description: (2 copies). |
| Box 2, Folder 71 | Sun Valley, Idaho, typescript [by H. C. Peterson?].1938 | |
| Oversize 3, Folder 1 | News clipping, &quot;Mrs. Stanford Dies in Sudden Agony at a Honolulu Hotel, Declaring,'I am poisoned!'&quot; San Francisco Chronicle, March 2, 1905. | |
| Oversize 3, Folder 3 | Policy statement to Jane L. Stanford from Stanford University Trustees, June 5, 1903. | Physical Description: See also B 1 F 14. |
| Oversize 3, Folder 4 | Stanford University map n.d. | |
| Oversize 3, Folder 5 | Partial letter [to Jane L. Stanford?] from Jesse Knight Jordan n.d. | Physical Description: (3 pages). |
| Oversize 3, Folder 6 | The Resources of California, [about Stanford University], September 1886. | |
| Oversize 3, Folder 8 | &quot;Life at Sutter's Fort,&quot; play script, with accompanying letter by Irene Clark to H. C. Peterson March 2, 1936 | Physical Description: (script 21 pages, letter 2 pages). |
| Oversize 3, Folder 9 | Letter by John A. Sutter [purported] to Ernesto Hopkins n.d. | Physical Description: (1 letter). Scope and Content Note See also B 1 F 18 |
| Oversize 3, Folder 10 | Letter, partial, [by H.C. Peterson] regarding Captain C. H. Davis n.d. | Physical Description: (11 sheet). Scope and Content Note See also B 2, F 31 |
| Oversize 3, Folder 11 | Chattel mortgage agreement: Ralph Joines to Harry C. Peterson, regarding tools, Sutter's Fort. 1939 | |
| Oversize 3, Folder 12 | Boyd and Barber in San Francisco in mid-1800s, typescript n.d. | Physical Description: (4 sheets). |
| Oversize 3, Folder 13 | California Indians, partial typescript n.d. | |
| Oversize 3, Folder 14 | News clippings. Marysville Advertiser, 1854 and 1857 | Physical Description: (13 clippings). |</p>
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<th>Oversize 3, Folder 15</th>
<th>Handwritten copy of Sonoma (California) County law, 1857</th>
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<td>Oversize 3, Folder 16</td>
<td>Statement of charges incurred by patients of St. Luke's Hospital, San Francisco, September 1 to September 30, 1876.</td>
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<td>Oversize 3, Folder 17</td>
<td>Accounts record [in Spanish]. 1851</td>
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<td>Physical Description: (14 pages)</td>
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<td>Oversize 3, Folder 18</td>
<td>Proclamation [in Portugese], signed by Joaquin O. Alvarez and Jose de O Barbazo, April 26, 1826.</td>
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<td>Physical Description: (2 sheets).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oversize 3, Folder 19</td>
<td>Statement from Mutuo Soccorso della Compagna Carabiniere Swizzeri [in Italian], San Francisco, December 1, 1888.</td>
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Series 5. Photoprints

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<th>Box 4, Folder 1</th>
<th>Photoprints of Leland Stanford house at Michigan Bluff, California n.d.</th>
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<td>Physical Description: (8 glass negatives).</td>
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<td>Box 4, Folder 2</td>
<td>Photoprint of Peter Slater's Saloon, Fort Sutter, (H.C. Peterson behind bar), n.d.</td>
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<td>Physical Description: (1 glass negative, cracked)</td>
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