Guide to the French Motor Expedition to China, Tibet, Mongolia, and the Gobi Desert Regions Photograph Album

Processed by Edward C. Fields
Department of Special Collections
Davidson Library
University of California, Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106
Phone: (805) 893-3062
Fax: (805) 893-5749
Email: special@library.ucsb.edu
URL: http://www.library.ucsb.edu/speccoll/speccoll.html
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French Motor Expedition to China, Tibet, Mongolia, and the Gobi Desert Regions Photograph Album, ca. 1914-1916

Collection number: Bernath Mss 81

Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara

Contact Information:
Department of Special Collections
Davidson Library
University of California, Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106
Phone: (805) 893-3062
Fax: (805) 893-5749
Email: special@library.ucsb.edu
URL: http://www.library.ucsb.edu/speccoll/specoll.html

Processed by:
Edward C. Fields
Date Completed:
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Encoded by:
David C. Gartrell

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Descriptive Summary
Title: French Motor Expedition to China, Tibet, Mongolia, and the Gobi Desert Regions Photograph Album
Dates: ca. 1914-1916
Collection number: Bernath Mss 81
Extent: .3 linear feet (1 oversize box)
Repository: University of California, Santa Barbara. Library. Dept. of Special Collections
Santa Barbara, California 93106-9010
Abstract: The album, containing 282 uncaptioned black and white photographs ca. 1914-1916, is a record of a journey undertaken by a French expedition via automobile through China, Tibet, and Mongolia.
Physical location: Del Sur Oversize.
Language: English.

Access Restrictions
None.

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Acquisition Information

Scope and Content of Collection
A cloth-covered, oblong album containing 282 b/w photographs [n.d. ca 1914-6, uncaptioned]. The album is a record of a journey undertaken by a French expedition via automobile through China, Tibet, and Mongolia. Photographs appear to be in sequential order of the journey from its beginning in Peking (Beijing) to various destinations in Tibet, Mongolia, and the Gobi desert areas. The first large photo shows a compound flying the French flag. In others, the various members of the expedition pose with a number of Chinese, along with their early Model T Ford touring cars loaded with expedition supplies. The photos record various sights, people and unusual things that the members of the expedition saw including: Tibetan Lamas, camel caravans, entertainers on tall stilts, dusty towns, including one fort-like compound flying the French flag. The expedition progress to the Great Wall, with photographs of Mongolian yurts, a team of Mongolian ponies extracting one of the cars which was apparently stuck in the soft sand, visits among the Mongols showing people in traditional costume. The next series of photos shows the arrival at a desert oasis and an elaborate walled compound. Also featured are views of desolate and isolated towns, photo-portraits of Mongolian horsemen, lots of scenery and panoramic views, the cars being ferried across a river, Buddhist lamaseries, poses with Lamas, holy temples, walled cities, Buddhist priests, and areas of snowy terrain. There are also photos of Mongolian families in elaborate costume before their yurts. Finally there is a series of photos showing the expedition's arrival at the "Pioneer Inn" in an undisclosed location. Other photos include Mongol archers, "Devil Dancers," religious ceremonies and gigantic painted thankas displayed in a grand festival. Also, great mounds of yak skins for sale, camel caravans, musicians and men praying, a large drum cart, lion dances, photos a Lama with family members, large Buddhist altars, and tents.

There is no container list for this collection.

Other sources of information

Chavannes, Edouard, Mission Archéologique dans la Chine Septentrionale
Easton, Robert Olney, China Caravans: An American Adventurer in Old China
Hardin, Sven, Across the Gobo Desert
Hedin, Sven, Central Asia and Tibet
Hopkirk, Peter, Foreign Devils on the Silk Road
Hopkirk, Peter, Trespassers on the Roof of the World
Lattimore, Owen, Mongol Journeys
Pelliot, Paul, Mission Paul Pelliot Documents Archéologiques

The above titles may be found via searching Pegasus, the UCSB Libraries' online catalog.

The following websites contain information and additional images relating to early twentieth century expeditions in China.

The Musée Guimet
http://www.museeguimet.fr/gb/pages/page_id18180_u1l2.htm
Sinologie Française
http://www.umass.edu/wsp/french/front/sinologie.html
The J. Paul Getty Museum (Mogao conservation project)
http://www.getty.edu/

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
China -- Pictorial works.
Tibet (China) -- Pictorial works.
Mongolia -- Pictorial works.