Elon and Blanche Willcox Collection

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2019
Elon and Blanche Willcox Collection

YCN: 2044 (2138)

Descriptive Summary

Title: Elon and Blanche Willcox Collection
Dates: 1899
Collection Number: YCN: 2044 (2138)
Creator/Collector: Elon and Blanche Willcox
Extent: One box of twenty items [nineteen photos one object].
Repository: Yosemite National Park Archives
El Portal, California 95318

Abstract: The Elon and Blanche Willcox Collection consists of 19 photographic prints dating from when Captain Willcox was stationed in Yosemite National Park in 1899 as well as a nativemade necklace. The photographs show various activities at the cavalry encampment at Camp A. E. Wood as well as visits to Glacier Point and Yosemite Valley.

Language of Material: English

Access
Public domain - no restrictions

Preferred Citation
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Acquisition Information
About 1934, Mrs. Blanche C. Willcox loaned a collection of negatives to the Yosemite Museum. “Print one,” someone has written on the outside of the envelope, “and if not good do not print the others.” One of the photographs in the collection (YOSE 7371) is an inexpensive contact print, the edges of the film negative clearly visible, while the remainder are higher quality photographic prints, suggesting that these instructions were followed. Captions are handwritten in pencil on the reverse of most of the images. As several different individuals are specifically identified in the photographs, the captions are presumed to have been provided by Mrs. Willcox and the original negatives were probably returned to her. The necklace was presumably also donated at this same time.

Biography/Administrative History
Born in Detroit, Elon Farnsworth Willcox was the son of General Orlando B. Willcox, a career army officer who later received the Medal of Honor for his gallantry at the Battle of Bull Run during the Civil War. Following in his father’s footsteps, Elon Willcox graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1878 and was initially assigned to his father’s regiment, the 12th Infantry, then stationed in Arizona. He transferred to the 6th Cavalry in 1882 and was promoted to first lieutenant in 1886, serving four years as the regimental adjutant. Following the death of his first wife, Willcox married Blanche C. Erdt in 1895. He was promoted to captain in 1897 and appointed as the military advisor to the governor of Colorado to assist with the organization of the Colorado Volunteers for the Spanish American War. In June 1899, Captain Willcox and his Troop F were transferred from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to the Presidio of San Francisco, California, from where they were ordered to Yosemite National Park for three months. He and his troop returned to Yosemite the following summer to continue patrolling the park. Between 1901 to 1906, he and Troop F served overseas in the Philippines, China, and Japan. Elon Willcox retired in 1907 as a major in the 4th Cavalry, settling with his wife in Los Angeles. After her husband’s death, Blanche Willcox remained in their home in Los Angeles. Sources: Letter, Blanche V. Willcox to Don Hubbard, April 27, 1959, in Accession File 2138. Robert Garth Scott (ed.), The Memoirs, Journals, and Civil War Letters of Orlando B. Willcox (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1999). Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1038. George W. Cullum, Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy, 3:306-307, 4:304, 5:281-282, 6:260. Los Angeles Herald, July 13, 1910 and Los Angeles Times, July 13, 1910.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Elon and Blanche Willcox Collection consists of 19 photographic prints as well as a necklace, made by an unidentified Southern Sierra Miwok. The photographs, taken by Elton and Blanche Willcox with their private camera, show various locations in Yosemite National Park in 1899.

Inventory