

Adam Clark Vroman (1856-1916) Collection, 1895-1912

P-001

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Adam Clark Vroman (1856-1916) Collection, 1895-1912

Dates: 1895-1912 (glass negatives)/ 1920s-1930s (film positives)

Collection Number: P-001

Creator/Collector: Vroman, Adam Clark (1856-1916)

Extent: 54.7 linear feet (Boxes: letter, 5x7, 19 ov)

Repository: Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Abstract: Adam Clark Vroman was an amateur photographer and bookstore owner. He made several expeditions to the Southwest from his home in Pasadena, California, to photograph the American Indians living in Arizona and New Mexico at the turn of the Twentieth Century. Included is a visual account of these expeditions which were led by the late Dr. Frederick Webb Hodge to the pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona. Over half of this collection deals with the ruins of ancient cliff dwellings and with the life, customs, and activities of the American Indians of the Southwest. Many are pictured in "Photographer of the Southwest" and "Dwellers at the Source." The rest of the collection is primarily concerned with Yosemite Valley, the California missions before restoration, Pasadena and surrounding areas. There are also negatives of a trip taken by Vroman to the Eastern United States. These images include Illinois, Pennsylvania, and the Library of Congress. Vroman photographed in Japan in 1909 and in Europe in 1912.

Language of Material: English

Access

Research is by appointment only.

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Preferred Citation

Adam Clark Vroman (1856-1916) Collection, 1895-1912. Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Acquisition Information

Purchased from the estate of A. C. Vroman by the Los Angeles County School District before 1920, for use in the Audio-Visual Division. The collection was later transferred to the Los Angeles County Museum.

Biography/Administrative History

Adam Clark Vroman (1856-1916), a native of LaSalle, Illinois, moved to Pasadena, California, in 1892. He was an amateur field photographer who worked primarily with glass plate photography and was the founder of Vroman's Bookstore located in Pasadena. His impressive body of photographic work from the late 1890s and early 1900s documents his multiple expeditions to the pueblos and mesas of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, several of these trips alongside Dr. Frederick Webb Hodge with the Bureau of American Ethnology. Vroman's close friendship with the natives, notably the Zuni, Hopi, and Navajo, allowed him to capture intimate images of their daily lives and customs as well as the lands that they inhabited. These photographs provide a stark contrast from common depictions of the time period that portrayed American Indian peoples as either exotic subjects or as savages. His work during this period also reflects his extreme fondness of the glowing, superior quality of light found in the Southwest region. During these expeditions he worked primarily with a 6 ½" x 8 ½" view camera as well as with 4"x5" and 5"x7" cameras. Between 1895 and 1905, Vroman documented the interiors and exteriors of the Spanish missions in California prior to the restoration of the buildings. He photographed areas in California such as Pasadena, Yosemite National Park, as well as the eastern region of the United States, including Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. Vroman was also an avid art collector with an interest in the crafts of Native Americans and treasures from Japan and the Far East. He spent the last years of his life traveling to the East Coast and Canada, as well as to Japan and to countries in Europe. He died in Altadena, California, in 1916 of intestinal cancer.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection is numbered and housed according to the original Vroman numbers. The finding aid is organized primarily by geographic region, with a small section organized by subject. Photographs taken by Vroman from 1895-1904 during his Southwest expeditions capture the daily lives and customs of American Indians living in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and areas of the Navajo Indian Reservation. These images include portraits of members of these communities as well as photographs of pueblos, mesas, cliff dwellings, the overall landscape of these regions, and photographs of stone carvings in Mexico. There are photographs taken by Vroman between 1895-1912 of many well-known sites in California such as Yosemite National Park, the Spanish missions, as well as buildings and scenes of nature in Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Diego, and other areas throughout the state.

Also included are photographs taken around the same time period during Vroman's trips to the east coast. These images depict quiet scenes of paper mills, bridges, and Civil War monuments in Pennsylvania, houses in Massachusetts and Illinois, portraits of family members, and visits to Washington, D.C. and Virginia where he photographed the Library of Congress, the Capitol Building, and Mount Vernon. Photographs of miscellaneous subjects such as Japanese art objects from Vroman's personal collection, chaparral, geological formations, buildings, and portraits are also a part of this collection.

Indexing Terms

Arizona.
Art objects, Japanese.
California.
Cliff dwellings--Arizona--1890-1930.
Colorado.
Hopi Indians.
Illinois.
Indian arts--United States.
Indians of North America.
Indians of North America--Antiquities.
Indians of North America--Dwellings.
Indians of North America--Portraits.
Indians of North America.
Landscapes--Southwestern States.
Massachusetts.
Mesas--Arizona
Mexico.
Missions --California.
Monuments--Washington (D.C.)
Navajo Indian Reservation
Navajo Indians.
Navajo textile fabrics.
New Mexico.
Pennsylvania.
Pueblos--Southwestern states--Pictorial works.
Spanish mission buildings--California.
Utah.
Virginia.
Vroman, A. C. (Adam Clark), 1856-1916
Washington (D.C.)
Yosemite National Park (Calif.)
Zuni Indians.

Series 1 Arizona

Scope and Content:

The series comprises primarily of portraits and landscape photography taken in Apache County, Coconino County, Navajo County, and other areas in Arizona.

Subseries 1 Apache County

Scope and Content:

The subseries consist of photographs of mummy caves and other ruins at Canyon de Chelly and ranches located at the Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site in Ganado. Indians, local people, members of Vroman's party, as well as Vroman himself are featured in these images.

Subseries 2 Coconino County

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain photographs of landscapes and cliff dwellings at Canyon Diablo, Grand Canyon, and Walnut Canyon.

Subseries 3 Navajo County

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain portraits of Indians and building interiors in Bidahochi. Also featured are photographs taken of Indians in the Hano, Sichomovi, and Walpi villages on the First Mesa of the Hopi Indian Reservation, Sipaulovi and Mishongnovi villages on the Second Mesa, Oraibi of the Third Mesa, and portraits and landscapes of Keams Canyon, Jeddito Spring, Sikyátki Ruins, Petrified Forest National Park, and Twin Buttes.

Subseries 4 Miscellaneous Arizona

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain photographs taken in unspecified geographical locations within Arizona. Featured are portraits of Indians, members of Vroman's party, photographs of Indian pottery, as well as landscapes.

Series 2 California

Scope and Content:

The series comprises photographs of the historic Spanish missions throughout California as well as photographs of ranches, forests, mountains, and other buildings and landscapes.

Subseries 1 California missions

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain photographs of California's Spanish missions prior to their restoration. These images capture details of both the interiors and exteriors of the church buildings as well as the surrounding landscapes. The following missions and *asistencias* (sub-missions) are included:

Mission La Purisima Concepcion
Mission San Antonia de Padua
Mission San Buenaventura
Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo
Mission San Diego de Alcala
Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana
Mission San Francisco Solano
Mission San Francisco de Asis
Mission San Jose
Mission San Juan Bautista
Mission San Juan Capistrano
Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa
Mission San Luis Rey de Francia
Mission San Miguel Arcangel
Mission Santa Barbara
Mission Santa Clara de Asis
Mission Santa Cruz
Mission Santa Ynez
Mission Soledad

Mission San Antonio de Pala Asistencia
Santa Margarita de Cortona

Subseries 2 Yosemite National Park

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain views of well-known Yosemite sights:

Bachelor and Three Graces
Bridalveil Fall
California (Tree)
El Capitan
Fallen Monarch (Tree)
General Grant (Tree)
Glacier Point
Glacier Point Trail
Grizzly Giant (Tree)
Half-Dome
Happy Isles
Inspiration Point
Left Sentinel (Tree)
Merced River
Mirror Lake
Mirror Lake
Nevada Fall
North Dome
Pasadena (Tree)
Pennsylvania (Tree)
Sentinel Hotel
Sentinel Rock
Silver Strand Falls
Three Brothers
Vernal Falls
Wawona (Tree)
Wawona Hotel
Yosemite Falls
Yosemite Point

Subseries 3 Los Angeles County

Scope and Content:

The series contains photographs of Charles F. Lummis, historian, activist for Indian rights and friend of Vroman's, at Lummis' home in Highland Park, as well as estates, ranches, mills, hotels, forests, mountains, and canyons in the following areas:

Catalina Island
Pasadena
Long Beach
San Gabriel Valley
Santa Monica Canyon
Topanga Canyon

Series 3 San Diego County

Scope and Content:

The series contains photographs of Rancho Guajome, Indian tule houses in San Luis Rey, Friar Gaspara's home in Old Town San Diego, which may have been a source for Helen Hunt Jackson's novel, *Ramona*, and school children in Old Town.

Subseries 1 Other Southern California counties

Scope and Content:

The series contains photographs taken in the counties of Monterey, Riverside, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, and Ventura.

Monterey County:

Old Customs House
Colton Hall

Riverside County:

Mount Rubidoux

San Luis Obispo:

Old Paso Robles Ranch House

Santa Barbara:

San Marcos Pass

Santa Clara County:

Old cemetery in San Jose

Ventura:

Camulos Ranch

Also features photographs of unspecified old adobe and ranch houses as well as photographs of Henry Sandham's paintings, mostly depicting characters from Helen Hunt Jackson's novel, *Ramona*.

Series 4 Colorado and Utah

Scope and Content:

The series comprises photographs taken in Colorado of landscapes, rivers, and rock formations in Manitou Springs (El Paso County) and the suspension bridge and canyon located at the Royal Gorge (Fremont County), known as the Grand Canyon of the Arkansas. Also featured are photographs of Salt Lake City, Utah, including images of the Mormon Tabernacle, the Mormon Temple, the residence of Brigham Young, and the Brigham Young Theater.

Series 5 Navajo Indian Reservation

Scope and Content:

The series comprises portraits of the daily lives of Navajo men, women, and children, as well as photographs of craftspeople such as silversmiths and blanket weavers. Also included are photographs of Navajo cave dwellings, baskets, blankets, and pottery. Portrait subjects include Hostine Martine, Hostine Neg (or Nez), Ah-del-Stohne, Black Sheep, and father of Black Sheep.

Series 6 Mexico and New Mexico

Scope and Content:

The series comprises portraits of men, women, and children of the pueblos of New Mexico, as well as landscapes, rock formations, and stone carvings in New Mexico and Mexico.

Subseries 1 Bernalillo County and Cibola County

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain photographs documenting the daily lives of the people of the Isleta Pueblo (Bernalillo County) as well as the people and landscapes of the Acoma Pueblo and the Laguna Pueblo (Cibola County). Also includes photographs of Mesa Encantada and El Morro (Cibola County).

Subseries 2 McKinley County

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain portraits of the people of the Zuni Pueblo, their dwellings, and surrounding landscape. Portrait subjects include Elekellejene and Garnet. Featured are images of Dowa Yalanne, a mesa which was inhabited by the Zuni.

Subseries 3 Mora County, Rio Arriba County, and Rio Grande

Scope and Content:

The subseries contains images of cabins and nature in Piedroso Canon (Mora County), church interiors and portraits of the people of the San Juan Pueblo and Santa Clara Pueblo (Rio Arriba County), as well as photographs of the Rio Grande.

Subseries 4 Sandoval County, Santa Fe County, and Taos County

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain portraits and landscape views of Sandoval County pueblos including the Jemez Pueblo, the Sandia Pueblo, the Santa Ana Pueblo, the Santo Domingo Pueblo, and the Zia Pueblo. Also included are landscape images of the San Felipe Mesa, photographs of churches and buildings in Santa Fe County (Santa Fe, Pojoaque Pueblo Grant, San Ildefonso Pueblo), and the people and landscapes of the Taos Pueblo (Taos County).

Subseries 5 Miscellaneous New Mexico and Mexico

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain photographs of stone carvings in Mexico as well as portraits, buildings, and ruins of unspecified pueblo communities in the New Mexico area.

Series 7 East Coast

Scope and Content:

The series comprises photographs taken by Vroman of monuments and landscapes during trips to the Eastern United States.

Subseries 1 Illinois

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain photographs of the landscape of the Rock River and Pine Creek areas located in Ogle County. Also featured are images of houses and landscapes in Rockford, Illinois, in Winnebago County.

Subseries 2 Massachusetts and Rhode Island

Scope and Content:

The subseries contains photographs taken in the Cambridge and Boston areas, including images of the Longfellow House, Christ Church (the oldest church in Cambridge), the Washington Elm, country scenes, and the U.S.S. Constitution. Also included is an image of an old stone mill in Newport, Rhode Island.

Subseries 3 Pennsylvania

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain photographs of the Adams County area, featuring images of monuments in Gettysburg as well as scenes of nature and houses in Floradale.

Adams County

Coquillon

High Water Mark tablet

Mead's Headquarters

Memorial of Longstreet's repulse

Minnesota Monument

Monument of Tammany Regiment, NY

Monument to Second Regiment, Maryland

National Soldier Monument
New York State Monument
Residence of J.W. Pickett
State military encampment
Statue of Winfield Scott
Valley of Death

Philadelphia County

Pennsylvania Railroad Bridge
Paper Mill Creek
Washington Monument
Wissahickon Drive

Also featured are portraits of millers and photographs of creeks, mills, and bridges in Media, Delaware County.

Subseries 4 Washington, D.C., Virginia, and West Virginia

Scope and Content:

The subseries contain photographs of landmark structures in Washington, D.C., including interior and exterior views of the Thomas Jefferson Building at the Library of Congress, the Capitol Building, and the Washington Monument. There are also photographs of Mount Vernon, George Washington's tomb (Fairfax County, Virginia), the Appleford Hotel (Rockbridge County, Virginia), and the Grand Central Hotel (Greenbrier County, West Virginia).

Series 8 Miscellaneous Subjects

Scope and Content:

The series comprises photographs taken by Vroman on a variety of subjects. The majority of the images have not been identified geographically. Topics include scenes of nature and animals, buildings, Japanese netsuke (miniature sculptures), Indian baskets, portraits of Indians, portraits of Vroman and his photographic party and family members, and windmills.