

Guide to California State Parks Photographic Archives



Pioneer Grove and highway at Humboldt Redwoods State Park in 1936.
Catalog Number 090-11037.

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Introduction

The first archivist assigned to the Photographic Archives, Brenda Applegate, created the *Guide to California State Parks' Photographic Archives* (the "Guide") in 1995. The *Guide* was originally designed to be a general information resource on the core collection. It consisted of a series of lists. In 1998 the second archivist, Victoria Yturralde, conducted a more in-depth inventory and review of the various photographic materials stored at the Photographic Archives, updating and adding additional lists to the 1998 *Guide* revision. This version of the *Guide* documented materials left out of the original 1996 *Guide*. It also featured a series of indexes organized by Park Name, Subject, Plants, Animals, Song Slides, and Aerial Photography. The 1998 *Guide* also included a brief history of California State Parks' Photographic Archives, the scope and content of the collection, instructions on using the *Guide*, and a section on copyright and reproduction.

The 2004 edition of the *Guide* featured a different stylistic look while preserving the basic index format utilized in the 1998 edition. Retaining the organization of materials by Park Name, Subject, Plants, Animals, Song Slides, and Aerial Photography, it also included edited and updated versions of the history, scope and content, instructions, and copyright sections from the 1998 *Guide*. The 2004 *Guide* had been converted to a database format to assist in updating information in subsequent revisions. The database format did not provide enough flexibility in reporting data; for this reason, we reconverted the *Guide* to a more flexible and intuitive format.

The 2007 edition of the *Guide* blended the best elements of the 1998 and 2004 editions. We updated our Park Index to reflect the State Park System as of 2006. Park units that changed their names or became subunits of other parks reflect this in a more easily recognizable manner and directed the reader to either the new identity or to a new park unit type. Some categories showed "To Be Cataloged" as a placeholder for park unit image collections that were still waiting to be formally inventoried and catalogued.

The 2014 edition to the *Guide to the California State Parks Photographic Archives* includes further refinements and additions, specifically detailing the organization of two special collections currently pending cataloging into our image database: the James Woodward Aerial Slide Collection, and the John H. Plimpton Research Records. Additionally, we updated the Park Index to reflect the addition of "born digital" images to our collection, overall date ranges for the specific park unit collections, and additional organizational information.

Finally, I would like to offer special thanks to Corinne Nelson and Lane Massey. This new edition would not be possible without their input, database review, hard work, and dedication. We hope you enjoy the 2014 *Guide*.

Wil Jorae
Museum Curator II

History of the Photographic Archives

The materials that would form the core of the Photographic Archives collections originated when the earliest advocates of a state park system wanted to acquire and preserve lands reflecting the incredible beauty and diversity of our state. Documenting this diversity through photographs served to illustrate their cause and enlist public and legislative support. Many of the earliest photographs in the Photographic Archives depict huge virgin redwood stands, pristine lakes and rivers, and historically significant structures. Later photographs detail the growing and developing park system: access roads, sewer lines, campgrounds, fire pits, and ranger housing. Photographers employed by the federally funded Work Projects Administration in the 1930s took many of the photographs in this group, which highlight the contributions of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Images from this era document public and legislative acceptance of the idea of land preservation for recreational use.

The State of California's continued commitment to acquisition of park land necessitated workforce growth for planning and stewardship. The collection contains the photographic work of many important archeologists, historians, naturalists, supervisors, and directors. Of particular note are the contributions of Fred Meyer, Fritz Riddell, Norm Wilson, John Michael, Elmer Aldrich, Bud Heacox, Leonard Penhale, and Leo Crawford. Innumerable others helped provide a visual history of California State Parks. In general, these early photographs served a specific purpose—to document the state of the new acquisitions. Later photographs document erosion, floods, fires, and other natural disasters. The collection contains a unique photographic record of the Department's developing environmental focus and planning priorities as depicted in the construction and restoration work undertaken by park employees and volunteers.

California State Parks acquired its first official photographer in the 1960s. Gene Russell focused on copying historical photograph collections held at local parks, documenting new park acquisitions, and working on exhibit and audiovisual projects. As park holdings continued to grow, so did the photographic records that would become the basis for the Photographic Archives. Collection control became more centralized, numbering systems were developed, and selected images were mounted into photograph albums. Park employees in the field sent their film to the Photo Files Unit in downtown Sacramento to be developed. The Department borrowed and copied photographs relating to the history of particular areas. In 1976 the Photo Files Unit moved to a new location in West Sacramento, along with the exhibit shop and related offices, to serve as a point of access to the valuable visual information resource for both public and private users.

The Office of Interpretive Services (OIS), formed in 1980, united the various interpretive functions performed on a statewide level. OIS absorbed the Photo Files Unit, which became the Audio-Visual Section (later named the Interpretive Programs Section). Until 1991, OIS served to create meaningful interpretive exhibits and programs for park visitors, and to publicize California's natural and cultural resources to the public. OIS staff often drew upon the photographic resources held in the developing Photographic Archives. With the Department's reorganization in 1991, the majority of these interpretive efforts

returned to being a local or district responsibility, but the photographs acquired, created, and used in interpretive efforts remained a statewide responsibility with the Photographic Archives. Fundamentally, the Photographic Archives holdings reflect the spirit and the efforts of an organization devoted not only to maintaining and preserving California's abundant resources, but also to interpreting them for the greater understanding of the public as well.

The Photographic Archives became part of the Interpretation Section in 1991, providing a secure, controlled environment for many of the Department's photographic images. When the Interpretation Section transitioned to the Interpretation and Education Division, the Photographic Archives became one of its initial Sections. The Photographic Archives continued to evolve, leaving the chemical darkroom model behind in 2006 to embrace the new digital darkroom model. Consisting of prints, negatives, glass plates, lantern slides, color slides, "born digital" images, and supplementary research files, the Photographic Archives continues to grow and assist staff in planning restorations, creating interpretive programs, and documenting concessions and visitor activities. In addition, the Photographic Archives serves as a valuable information resource for students, scholars, authors, and more. The Photographic Archives continues to expand its contemporary holdings through the original digital photographic work of Department photographers. The Photographic Archives also adds to its historical holdings by accepting and housing images previously held in park units and by individuals.



Self-portrait of Gene Russell, the first professional photographer employed by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

© 1978, California State Parks.

Scope and Content

The Photographic Archives is home to over 400,000 images depicting the natural and cultural resources of California State Parks. Holdings consist of about 200,000 prints and negatives in black and white and color, approximately 35,000 color slides in 35mm format, approximately 200,000 images awaiting processing, and a small number of lantern slides and glass plate negatives. Physical photographic materials in the collection range between 1900 to the present, with the majority taken between 1950 and 1985. In addition, there is a large collection of copy photography reflecting works created as early as 1839. The bulk of the 35mm slide format materials have a date range between 1970 and 2001. Department photographers now capture images using various digital cameras, with over 16,000 “born digital” images added since 2006.

The traditional photographic materials depict a wide range of subjects. These subjects include the movement of populations into California, from the early days of the gold rush to West Coast immigration. The collections document the growth and development of the State Park System, beginning with the acquisition of Big Basin Redwoods State Park in 1902. Photographs reveal the construction of access roads, campgrounds, restrooms, sewers, and visitor centers, often using the Civilian Conservation Corps and inmate workers. The unique natural resources of areas are also recorded, including lakes, mountains, flora, and fauna, as well as cultural resources, including buildings, artifacts, landscapes, and restoration and preservation efforts. Also depicted in the collection are natural disasters, such as fires and floods, oil spills and erosion. The Photographic Archives also contains images spanning nearly a century that depict people fishing, swimming, eating, talking, hiking, biking, and relaxing in California’s wonderful state parks.

Among the photographic materials in the collection, several groups of materials stand out. The Hearst School of Mines Collection consists of approximately 6,000 glass lantern slides, copied and mounted into photo albums. Once used as teaching aides for the mining school at the University of California, Berkeley, these images document the equipment and processes used for mining gold and other minerals. Another major collection consists of prints made from lantern slides of Angel Island in the early 1900s, which record the variety of cultural groups arriving at the immigration and quarantine station. The stories captured in the Angel Island glass lantern slides continue to engage and inspire researchers, teachers, authors, and documentary filmmakers. The Andrew P. Hill collection of glass plate negatives show the incredible beauty and majesty of the redwoods that inspired the start of the movement that created California State Parks.

While the slide collection contains representative images of nearly all parks, some units are more comprehensively depicted than others. Angel Island State Park, La Purísima Mission State Historic Park, Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, and Monterey State Historic Park have over 300 slides each, while some parks have only a few slides. The slide collection has a number of images showing park personnel and park interpretive activities, such as environmental living programs and Junior Rangers. One significant collection of slides is composed of aerial photographs taken by Jim Woodward, park

planner and archeologist, and the late Jim Tryner, Chief of the Resource Protection Division. The slides were created to assist park personnel in planning land acquisitions, designing projects, evaluating resources, and training Department staff. The aerial photography collection consists of about 6,000 slides spanning a time period of 1970 to 1995, and represent many of the 278 park units that make up the State Parks System.

From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, interpretive staff worked on a variety of park-specific projects, and compiled the graphic elements of their research into binders, now held at the Photographic Archives. These binders, consisting of both original photography and photographs gathered from other institutions, form a valuable reference tool. For example, images of early adobe tile and brick construction were gathered by Mary Helmich and Richard Clark, State Park Interpreters, in preparation for the restoration of La Casa de Estudillo at Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. Of particular note in the reference collection is a 20-volume set of binders relating to the gold rush, including mining processes, milling and refining technology, and life in the gold fields. The reference binders contain materials gathered solely for reference purposes as well as representative materials from the Photographic Archives collections.

Format determines the housing of materials in the Photographic Archives. Many of the earliest photographs were dry mounted into photo albums and usually have brief inscriptions and a basic numbering system. The Photographic Archives stores its unbound prints in archival folders and boxes; the unbound prints contain both unique and duplicate images. There are separate storage locations for the slides, negatives, and photographic prints. The catalog records contain transcriptions of all the information accompanying negatives, prints, and slides for the purpose of retention and accessibility.

Until 2006, the Photographic Archives maintained an active black and white photography laboratory. Now, our photographers utilize modern digital image capture techniques to continually add images to the collection. The staff photographers periodically travel to park units to bolster the holdings of the Photographic Archives, primarily through original photography. In addition, the curator is available to evaluate the conservation needs of photographic materials held in field units and to appraise materials for potential addition to the collection.

Using the Indexes

Two primary concerns directed the development of the *Guide to California State Parks' Photographic Archives*—first, to harness internal control over an active and changing collection; and second, to assist users of the Photographic Archives in identifying potentially relevant materials for possible review. The primary access to images in the collection is by park unit. This index lists parks alphabetically, and includes both “classified” and “unclassified” units. The *Guide* also includes internal units within the State Park System, underwater areas, unnamed and unclassified, trail and non-trail properties not intended for classification, units and properties whose identities have changed, and units/properties formerly owned by the Department.

The Park Index lists the current official form of the park name. This index lists former, variant, and proper names alphabetically, and refers the user to the proper name of the park. The alphabetical listing also includes internal classified units within parks, as well as unclassified significant structures and areas; these refer the user to the larger unit. For example, the entry for the Tijuana Estuary Natural Preserve refers the user to Border Field State Park, and the entry for Cascade Ranch refers the user to Año Nuevo State Park. The Park Index list includes a number of former park properties transferred outside the California State Park system, some of which are now under local or federal control.

The Subject Index integrates the most commonly requested materials under subject headings originally created by Department staff back in the days of the Photo Files Unit. Subject terms such as “Environmental Concerns” and “Missions” will lead the user to images regardless of which specific unit they exist in. The Plant Index is arranged “dictionary” style, integrating Latin and common names originally prepared for the 1996 *Guide*. The Animal Index reflects the taxonomy and includes common names. The Song Index listing, arranged alphabetically by song title, can assist users in finding common campfire songs for interpretive programs. The number next to each song title indicates the quantity of slides required per song.

The Special Collections Index covers two major collections that are currently pending cataloging into the database. The James Woodward Aerial Slide Collection consists of a large collection of aerial slides by park unit, primarily shot by Jim Woodward. The dates when the images were captured for the respective park units are also indicated. Aerial photographs are, in some cases, additionally located in the slide collection and the print collection under the name of the individual park unit. The John H. Plimpton Research Records consist of a series of volumes, hand typed by John H. Plimpton, which focus on the natural and cultural history surrounding the American River. These volumes consist of Plimpton’s research results, copies of letters, photographs, property documents, and other pertinent materials.

Park units represented in the Department's image database appear with an asterisk next to their name. As of 2014, our portion of the statewide museum database system contains over 109,000 searchable catalog records. The catalog records represent physical images scanned and cataloged as part of the Department’s ongoing preservation efforts as

well as the contemporary born digital images. The statewide museum database serves as a tool to speed up the search process and also reduce the physical handling of collection materials. Catalog records for the physical collections include a low-resolution, full frame scan of the image. These scans have received no cosmetic alterations apart from minor contrast and brightness modifications.

Copyright and Reproduction

Copyright is a form of legal protection provided by Title 17, U.S. Code, to the creators of original works, including photographs. Copyright dates from the moment a work is created in tangible format, and includes the rights of reproduction, adaptation, distribution, performance, and exhibit. Fair use privileges afforded to libraries and archives allows for reference use and reproduction of most of the copyrighted materials held at the Photographic Archives.

Park employees took many of the images held in the Photographic Archives in the course of their work for the Department. The Department holds the copyright to these images and reproduces them for reference or scholarly use for a minimal charge. Commercial use of these images typically involves both reproduction and licensing fees.

A portion of the collection consists of copies of historic photographs held at individual park units or district offices. Many of these images are now in the public domain. Cost recovery fees for reproduction and/or use are assessed, and there must be a completed Department usage contract on file prior to providing copies of the public domain images held at the Photographic Archives.

Over the course of many years, the Photographic Archives gathered reference copies of images held by a variety of individuals and agencies. While the Photographic Archives will provide a reference copy of these photographs to individuals, those wishing to obtain copies for commercial use are referred to the source agency for permission.

Due to staffing reductions and our relocation to a new, secured building, visits to the Photographic Archives are by appointment only. We can provide copies of the materials in our collections in both digital and archival inkjet print format. Four weeks processing time is requested once the researcher has made and provided their final selection of images for the finished deliverables, depending on the size of the request. The Photographic Archives does not loan or rent photographic materials.

For further information, please contact Wil Jorae (Museum Curator II) at (916) 263-0997 or Brian Baer (Senior Photographer) at (916) 263-1001. To use the California Relay Service with TTY, call (888) 877-5378 or without TTY, call (888) 877-5379. Please call (916) 263-0997 to obtain this publication in alternate formats. Direct any correspondence to:

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