James Ricalton Lantern Slide Collection
Mss. Coll. 146

Biographical
James Ricalton (born about 1844, in Waddington, NY, died in Waddington October 28, 1929) was a school teacher, traveler, inventor, and photographer.

After briefly attending St. Lawrence University (class of 1871) Ricalton left before taking a degree and moved to Maplewood, New Jersey in 1871 for a 12-week, $200 contract as a school teacher. Contrary to practice at the time, his contract was renewed repeatedly until he became the district's first permanent school teacher and eventually principal. By all accounts, he was an extraordinary teacher, and his legacy is celebrated in the South Orange-Maplewood School District. He was locally famous for his habit of conducting classes outdoors in good weather and for his gentle manner. Among other things, a central square in Maplewood village is named after him, and there is a large mural of his outdoor classes in Maplewood municipal hall.

Always referred to as Professor Ricalton, he travelled extensively during his summer vacations and circumnavigated the world seven times. He was a prolific photographer, leaving over 100,000 images, among them a large collection of stereoscopic images. His journeys included Iceland, Russia, the Middle East, and much of Europe. Thomas Edison sent him on a mission to find the right bamboo filament for a light bulb. The filament he found was used by Edison for nine months until tungsten was discovered. He also acted as a war photographer during the Boxer Rebellion in China, the Russo-Japanese War, and the installation of Edward VII as Emperor of India in 1901. The Underwood company used his photographers to illustrate geography books.

In 1891, Ricalton retired as a war photographer, but he continued with his travels. In 1909, he walked from Cape Town to Cairo. He was sent on another assignment by Edison to test a motion picture camera in Africa, filming among other things a whaling expedition off Cape Town. His son Lomond accompanied him on this trip but died from typhoid fever there, and this was Ricalton's last trip.

He expanded his house on Valley Street in Maplewood to house his enormous collection. When the township of Maplewood declined to accept his collection as a gift, he moved it all in two and a half train cars to his birth town of Waddington, where he spent his last five years.


Scope & Contents
This collection consists primarily of glass plate slides taken by Ricalton during his travels around the world from 1891-1915. His journeys included Iceland, Russia, the Middle East, and much of Europe. Also included are 22 typescripts to accompany the slides as well as photographic prints in narrow dimensions. Also included is a slide projector.

Provenance
Gift to St. Lawrence University Libraries

Additional Sources:
Books:
DS709 .R49 1990

DS413 .R43 1990
Websites:
“Ricalton.org” is a site developed by James Ricalton's great-grandson, James [Jim] Ricalton Wilson (see http://www.jamesrwilson.com). Jim is a software architect by trade who spends occasional hobby hours as a family archivist. Though many Ricalton artifacts are spread through museums and other collections, Jim possesses a few Ricalton documents, speeches, photographs and antiques. This site is intended to serve as a repository to convey information about and taken from these artifacts, provide first-person histories, and other information of interest.”-- http://www.ricalton.org/

Box Listing:

1 of 14  Scripts that Accompany Slides
  The Holy Land (Palestine)- 2 copies
  The Land of Sacred Story- A Trip Through Palestine Part 2
  A Month In The City of the Great King (Israel)
  The Christian Conquest of India
  The Old and New In India
  China-The Dragon Empire
  The Uplift of China
  China Thro’ The Dragon Empire at the time of the Boxer Uprising
  Chinese Life and Customs
  Japan In Beauty and Desolation
  Sleeping on the Great Pyramid
  A World Survey of Missionary Needs
  Ripon Falls, Uganda, Africa
  Through Darkest Africa- 4 copies
  In the Streets of Cairo-2 copies
  By Palm and Pyramid Part 1
  A Beacon of Light in West Central Africa

  Tonjac, Inc. (3 lists of photographers of stereographs and lantern slides.)

2 of 14  Ricalton Photographs
  Forty One 8x10:
    Athens and Olympia
    China
    Egypt
    Petrograd and Moscow
    Unknown Locations
  One Hundred and Nineteen 5x7 and 4.5x6.5:
    Unknown Locations Continued

3 of 14  Brown wooden box with handle- contains a projector
  24 in. long x 19.5 in. wide

4 of 14  Brown wooden box- contains slides of Ceylon, Kandy (Sri Lanka), India
  12.5 in. long x 4 in. wide

5 of 14  Brown wooden box- contains slides of Ceylon, India
  9.75 in. long x 5 in. wide

6 of 14  Brown wooden box- contains slides of Ceylon and Kandy (Sri Lanka)
  9.75 in. long x 5 in. wide
7 of 14  Brown wooden box - contains slides of exotic plants, trees, vegetation; South Africa, Kenya
          21.5 in. long x 5.5 in. wide

8 of 14  Brown wooden box - contains slides of Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt; Brazil
          21.5 in. long x 5 in. wide

9 of 14  Brown wooden box - contains slides from Japan
          12.5 in. long x 4 in. wide

10 of 14 Black wooden box with handle and purple cloth inside - contains slides from B. E. Africa, Australia, Japan, and Philippines
          10.25 in. long x 8 in. wide

11 of 14 Black wooden box with handle and white cloth inside - contains slides from Ceylon, India, Calentta, Singalila, Delhi, Palestine, Japan, and Jerusalem
          13.5 in. long x 8.25 in. wide

12 of 14 Black wooden box - contains slides from Russia, Sweden, and Norway
          12.75 in. long x 4 in. wide

13 of 14 Brown wooden box with handle - contains slides from Germany, Belgian, and China
          12.75 in. long x 4.5 in. wide

14 of 14 Brown wooden box - contains slides from France, Italy, England, and Greece
          9.75 in. long x 5 in. wide