



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(California and Mexico) [Album of 68 original photographs (including 42 panoramic views): a train wreck in California; San Francisco earthquake damage; Torreón; Aguascalientes; Mexico City and more]

Stock#: 98220
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1906 circa
Place: California; Torreón;
Aguascalientes; Mexico City
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 15 x 11.25 inches
Price: \$ 3,400.00



Description:

Panoramic Photographs of Mexico and the Western United States Circa 1906

A wonderful vernacular photo album with 68 images of Mexico and the Western United States, including 42 terrific and sharp panoramic photos, all of which document a railroad excursion into Mexico via the western United States by a large party of prosperous middle-aged men and women. The travel documented herein began in Northern California, likely traversed Nevada, Utah, Colorado. At some point the group made their way to the Mexican border, through the northern border state of Coahuila, with stops in Torreón, Aguascalientes, and finally Mexico City.

Torreón would be an important site during the Mexican Revolution only a few years later. Pancho Villa took the town and several battles were fought nearby, notably at San Pedro de las Colonias. At the time of the present images the Revolution had yet to begin, and the local people appear at peace.

The album opens with images from California, including a couple of views depicting damage to buildings caused by the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Other photographs show the aftermath of a train wreck in an unnamed high desert locale, with well-dressed men and women observing as a crane in the process of cleaning up the debris. The views of California and western United States include:

- 8 panoramas taken from a train car showing western landscapes, including desert vegetation and others with snow-capped mountains and pine forests.
- Snapshot of two uniformed African American train porters at an unidentified stop along the route.
- 2 panoramic views of Avalon Bay, Catalina Island.



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- Panorama of showing a pair of stately homes in Southern California, possibly in Pasadena, Los Angeles or Redlands.
- Panorama of an ostrich farm in Southern California.
- 3 panoramas of palm trees, homes and orchards in Southern California.
- 4 panoramas of train wreck in California or elsewhere in the west. One train car at the wreck site is identified as rolling stock from the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio Railroad (G.H. & S.A.).

Early Amateur Panoramic Photography in Mexico

The panoramic photographs of Mexico are fantastically detailed and include first rate compositions of such subjects as horse-drawn trolley cars, Mexican architecture (in the arid north as well as in central Mexico, including Mexico City), and numerous street scenes. The traveling party reached central Mexico, including stops in Aguascalientes and Mexico City, via the Central Mexicano Railroad.

In Torreón the unnamed photographer made a panorama of the unusual German-styled fortress home built there by American engineer Frederico Wulff. Wulff began constructing his eclectic "German castle with neoclassical elements" next to the railroad tracks in Torreon in 1902. The house, which was built on a hill overlooking his office building, was completed in 1905, and comprised 15 rooms and a basement, oak floors, Italian tiles, and was one of the first houses in the city with in-door plumbing.

The Mexican views are:

- Panoramic group portrait of the excursionists standing in a Mexican town (church dome in the background).
- 9 panoramas of arid northern Mexican towns and views, likely Torreón and other places in Coahuila.
- 2 panoramas possibly in Aguascalientes
- 3 panoramas of Xochimilco river boats, south of Mexico City.
- Panoramic view of typical Mexican adobe houses.
- Panoramic view of Chapultepec castle in Mexico City.
- Over a dozen excellent snapshots of people and street views in Mexico City and Aguascalientes.

In sum a collection of spirited amateur railroad travel photographs of pre-Revolutionary Mexico and the American West. The panoramic photographs are particularly sharp and nicely composed. The other snapshots evoke the playful qualities of the boyhood images made by noted French photographer Jacques Henri Lartigue.



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Detailed Condition:

Oblong quarto. Contemporary leather-grained black cloth photo album. 68 original photograph prints (42 are panoramic photos, measuring approximately 3 1/2 x 12 inches) on rectos and versos of gray album leaves. The remaining photographs measure 3 1/4 x 5 1/2 inches or 3 1/2 inches square. First album leaf detached. Binding tight and nice. Internally very clean, with all of the photographs in excellent condition. Album as approximately 30 blank album leaves, which are clean and perfect, i.e. there is no indication that any photos have been removed from the album.