



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
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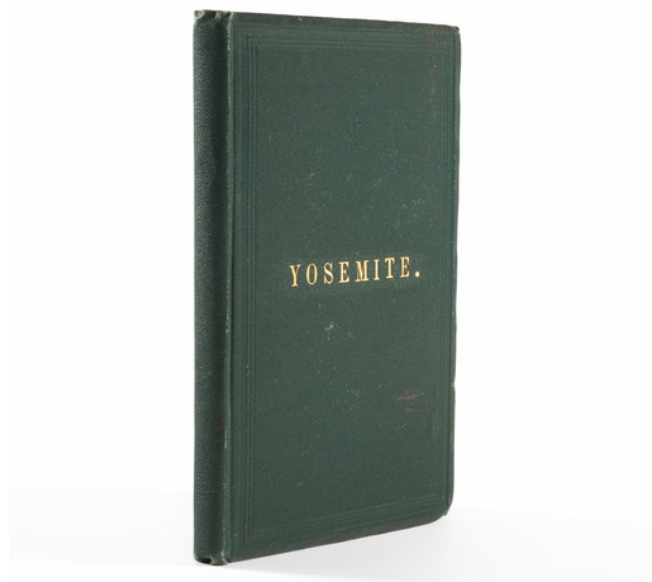
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**(First Yosemite Guidebook - Muybridge Photographs) Yosemite: Its Wonders and Its Beauties With Information Adapted to the Wants of Tourists About to Visit the Valley.**

**Stock#:** 95070  
**Map Maker:** Hittell & Muybridge  
**Date:** 1868  
**Place:** San Francisco  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** Fine  
**Size:** 4.75 x 7.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



**Description:**

***First Guidebook to Yosemite - "Exceedingly Rare"***

***With 20 Original Early Photographs by Eadweard Muybridge***

This extremely rare work is universally acclaimed by authorities as the first guide book to Yosemite, but it is much more than that, for it encapsulates in one place the original photographic record of the earliest major project of arguably the most renowned photographer of the American West. This book contains a highly prized suite of 20 original albumen photographs by the English-born photographer and pioneer of motion photography, Eadweard Muybridge. The small (2 1/2 x 3 1/4 inch) photographs, each neatly pasted on leaves bearing letterpress captions, are the result of Muybridge's earliest photographic project in the West - his 1867 expedition to the Yosemite Valley. Most of the photographs are signed "Helios" in the negative, which is a moniker Muybridge adopted for his artistic alter ego. According to Hood & Haas Muybridge made 72 photographs during this first expedition, which "are presently unknown, except as they are represented in twenty greatly reduced prints which illustrate John Hittell's book *Yosemite: its wonders and its beauties* (now an excessively rare book) or in an album of prints now in the Pitman collection, which provides us with only five more."



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*Muybridge made his first photographic expedition to the Yosemite Valley in the spring and summer of 1867. He was equipped with a stereoscopic camera and a small (5 1/2-by-8 1/2-inch) view camera. After photographing the Calaveras Big Tree Grove, he arrived at James Mason Hutchings's hotel in the valley before July 6. Muybridge conducted his photographic tour of Yosemite with scientific precision, taking great care to pick the best possible vantage point and the best time of day for each exposure. He averaged about six negatives a day. Starting at the base of the Mariposa Trail on the north side of the valley, he photographed his way from the Bridal Veil Meadow to El Capitan Meadow, Sentinel Meadow, and Stoneman Meadow. Two areas proved daunting because of their remoteness and rugged terrain: the Merced River Canyon and the Rim of the Valley between Panorama Cliff and Inspiration Point... In 1868, Muybridge's twenty Yosemite views, reduced to carte de visite size, appeared in John S. Hittell's book, Yosemite: Its Wonders and Its Beauties (San Francisco: H. H. Bancroft & Co., 1868) - Palmquist & Sandweiss.*

#### **California Pioneer**

Muybridge arrived in California in 1855 and by 1856 he was working as a bookseller in San Francisco under the name E. J. Muygridge (though his real name was Edward Muggeridge). Despite an extensive secondary literature on Muybridge, the beginnings of his photography career are shrouded in mystery, but seem to stem from an arduous return trip to England in 1860. The first leg of this trip involved a stagecoach accident in which Muybridge sustained major head trauma upon being ejected from an Butterfield Overland Mail Company stagecoach somewhere between Mountain Station in the Texas Lower Cross Timbers of Texas and Ft. Smith, Arkansas. The accident changed the man, and after receiving a cash settlement from the stage company, Muybridge made his way back to England (where he received expert medical attention) and Europe (where he is supposed to have mastered the techniques of large-format photography).

#### **"Helios"**

Muybridge's use of the name Helios, Greek for the sun, was possibly adopted based on his 1862 brush with photography at the Paris gallery, Maison Hélios. Rebecca Solnit reads even more into the name: "Helios... is not a modest appellation... Early on photography had been called 'the pencil of nature' and 'sun drawings,' with the implication that nature itself was the artist; with his new name Muybridge was laying claim to being that nature, that sun..."

A typographically dense full-page ad in the back of the present book highlights Muybridge's photographic offerings at this early date. These include *Scenery of the Yosemite Valley*, "the most comprehensive and beautiful series of Photographic Views... ever executed," comprising 260 views. The ad states that the



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views "are by HELIOS," which suggests a separation of the artist from the businessman offering the photographs for sale: Edward J. Muybridge. The photographer also announced, "in preparation," a complete series of San Francisco Views, and a series of Mining Scenes. Interestingly, Muybridge offered his services for a range of photographic work:

*HELIOS is prepared to accept commissions to photograph Private Residences, Ranches, Mills, Views, Animals, Ships, etc., anywhere in the city, or any portion of the Pacific Coast.*

#### **Eadweard Muybridge**

Eadweard Muybridge is considered a pioneer in photography for his work in capturing and analyzing movement through sequences of photographs. His earliest photographic project however, took place in the Yosemite Valley in 1867. Muybridge's photographs of Yosemite were some of the first to showcase the natural beauty of the area and helped to establish Yosemite as a popular tourist destination.

A multi-faceted artist, Muybridge's most significant contribution to the field of photography was his later work on animal locomotion, yet even that later work had its seed in 1870s California: Muybridge was commissioned by Leland Stanford, the Governor of California and a racehorse owner, to settle a bet about whether a horse's hooves left the ground while running. Muybridge used multiple cameras and tripwires to capture sequential photographs of a horse in motion, which showed that a horse's hooves do leave the ground during a gallop. This groundbreaking work paved the way for the development of motion picture technology and was a major step forward in the scientific study of animal movement.

Overall, Muybridge's work in Yosemite and his later studies of animal locomotion helped to establish him as a pioneering figure in the history of photography and laid the foundations for many of the techniques and technologies used in the field today.

#### **Hittell's Yosemite Book and Muybridge's Photographs**

The text of the Hittell's book collects material from many well-known authorities on Yosemite, drawing on Thomas Hutchings, and including quotations from Josiah Whitney, Thomas Starr King, Horace Greeley, and other prominent figures. Also a practical guidebook, the work includes an extensive table of distances helpful to any visitor to the area. The text of the 1864 Act granting the Yosemite Valley to the state of California is included, as is an account of the early commissioners charged with preserving the place.

According to Gary Kurutz:



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*One of the most delightful pieces of early Californiana is John S. Hittell's Yosemite: It's Wonders and Its Beauties, published by H. H. Bancroft and Company in 1868. This exceedingly rare volume, recognized as the first guidebook to Yosemite, is an important document in the history of California photography. Eadweard Muybridge, using the fanciful pseudonym of "Helios," took the twenty wet-plate photographs that illustrate the guide book. Actually, the illustrations are greatly reduced prints of the original 6 x 8 inch views Muybridge obtained on an expedition to the valley in 1867. The English photographer modestly promoted these views of Yosemite "...as the most exquisite photographic views ever produced on this coast, and are marvelous examples of the perfection to which photography can attain in the delineation of sublime and beautiful scenery..."*

Kurutz goes on to highlight the importance of these intriguing early Muybridge photographs, as an important record of the photographer's earliest work in California, not otherwise obtainable, in original contemporary prints, in a single place:

*Since so few of the original 6 x 8 views have been found, the diminutive copies pasted in the Hittell book represent the most complete record of the famous photographer's early work.*

A recent book by Sarah Gordon, which focuses on Muybridge's famous motion studies of nudes, contextualizes the photographs in Hittell's Yosemite book, suggesting that they are a tangible link between Muybridge and a larger circle of Western American landscape artists of the day, including Albert Bierstadt:

*Muybridge's work can also be considered in relation to American landscape painting of the era. Artists such as Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt shaped early photography and the American West, and the influence was mutual. Moran, landscape painter, and William Henry Jackson, photographer, worked together on the 1871 Yellowstone survey and studied each other's work. Bierstadt and Muybridge, after meeting at a San Francisco Art Association reception in January 1872, traveled together later that year in Yosemite, where Muybridge photographed Bierstadt as he sketched the Mariposa Indians... [Bierstadt] probably knew Muybridge's Western views by 1868, as they were published in John Hittell's Yosemite, Its Wonders and Its Beauties (1868)... Bierstadt later subscribed to Muybridge's Yosemite pictures and praised the photographer's artistic skill and choice of perspective - Gordon, Indecent Exposures: Eadweard Muybridge's Animal Locomotion Nudes, page 17.*

#### **The photographs:**

I. General View of the Yosemite Valley looking East from Komah, (Moon Rock) on the Mariposa Trail,



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1,500 feet above the valley. The prominent objects are El Capitan, the Half Dome, Cathedral Rockes, and Bridal Veil Fall.

II. Pohono, (Spirit of the Evil Wind) Bridal Veil Fall, from the Northwest, a mile off; 940 feet high.

III. Tutucanula, (Great Chief the Valley of (El Capitan, from the South-east, a mile off, 3,300 feet above the Valley.

IV. Pompompasus, (Mountains playing Leap Frog) Three Brothers, 4,000 feet above the Valley.

V. Poosenachucka, (Large Acorn Cache) Cathedral Rocks and Spires, from the North-east, a mile distant, about 3,000 feet above the Valley.

VI. Yosemite Falls. Upper Fall, 1,500 feet; Cascades and Rapids, 650 feet; Lower Fall, 400 feet; total, 2,550 feet.

VII. Lower Yosemite Fall, from Cascade Avenue; Fall 400 feet high.

VIII. Base of Lower Yosemite Fall, at low water.

IX. Base of Upper Yosemite Fall, from the Yosemite Cave.

X. View on the Merced River, looking up the Valley from the base of the Three Brothers.

XI. Loya Sentinel Rock, from a point a mile and a half distant, 3,270 feet above the Valley.

XII. Tocoya, (Shade to Indian Baby Basket) North Dome, 3,568 feet above the Valley. Washington Column, 2,400 feet high.

XIII. Kekootoyem, (Water Asleep) Mirror Lake, from the western bank.

XIV. Tissayac, (Goddess of the Valley) Half Dome, from the West, three miles off, 4,737 feet above the Valley.

XV. Piwyac, (Cataract of Diamonds) Vernal Fall, 475 feet high.

XVI. Kahchoomah, Wild Cat Fall, 30 feet high, on the main fork of the Merced.



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XVII. Yowiye, Nevada Fall, 639 feet high.

XVIII. Mahta, (Cap of Liberty) Mount Broderick, 4,600 feet above the Valley. Yowiye, Nevada Fall, at the right.

XIX. Toloolweack Fall, in the South Canon of the Merced, 300 feet high.

XX. Scene from Toloolweack Canon, or South branch of the Merced. The Half Dome, Wild Cat, Mount Broderick, and Vernal Fall.

As an important and rare 19th-century California photographically-illustrated book Hittell's book has only a handful of peers, but as an encapsulation of Eadweard Muybridge's first Yosemite expedition, one would have to assemble a collection of the original larger format prints, to surpass this book as a record of Muybridge's earliest Californian project.

**Rarity**

We note only two copies in RBH in the last 25 years (only one of which had the map, which is often lacking).

**Detailed Condition:**

12mo. Original green cloth, gilt title on front cover. 59 pages plus [3] pages of advertisements. 20 original albumen photograph prints pasted on leaves with letterpress captions. Eighteen of the photographs are signed in the lower corner of the negative: "Helios." The double-page map is supplied in expert facsimile. The photographs are all in a beautiful state of preservation, and very fine. Except for the map, a fine copy overall.