

## 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. In 1891, Ricalton retired as a teacher and spent the next 15 years as a full time photographer.

He travelled extensively 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 1909, it is claimed Ricalton 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. 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.

Adapted from: Wikipedia contributors, "James Ricalton," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=James\\_Ricalton&oldid=51401044](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=James_Ricalton&oldid=51401044) (accessed May 15, 2006).

### Scope & Content

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:

Ricalton, J. *James Ricalton's photographs of China during the Boxer Rebellion: his illustrated travelogue of 1900*. C. J. Lucas, ed. Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 1990 DS709 .R49 1990

----- *James Ricalton's photographic travelogue of imperial India*. C. J. Lucas, ed. Lewiston NY: Mellen Press, 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 21 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 21 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

#### **Lantern Slides**

3 of 21 Images of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

- slides are numbered 8-71 in sequential, but not numerical, order

4 of 21 Images of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

- numbered 75-155 in sequential, not numerical, order

- 5 of 21 Images of Ceylon and India
- including Indian famine of 1899
- 6 of 21 Organized “illustrated lantern slide programs”
- “India Old and New” (slides are numbered)
  - “Sermon one” (slides are numbered)
  - “Sermon 3” (slides are numbered)
  - Other slides of India—not numbered
- 7 of 21 Images of Ceylon and India
- including some that picture James Ricalton
- 8 of 21 Images of British East Africa
- Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, including several that picture James Ricalton
- 9 of 21 British East Africa, South Africa
- Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope, diamond mining, birds
- 10 of 21 South Africa; British East Africa
- Whaling, fishing, big game hunting, exotic flowers and plants
- 11 of 21 Images of Africa (including maps); images of Japan
- 12 of 21 Images of Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)
- 13 of 21 Images of China, Ceylon, the Holy Land
- Slides of a presentation entitled “Little Children”
  - China (including Boxer Rebellion)
  - Ceylon
  - Holy Land
- 14 of 21 Images of the Holy Land; Images of Iceland
- 15 of 21 Images of North Africa
- Algeria and Tunisia (Sahara Desert, Atlas Mountains)
  - Ruins of ancient Egypt
  - “Modern” Egypt (ca. 1900)
- 16 of 21 Images of Europe
- Italy (Roman and ancient Roman ruins)
  - England (London, Stonehenge)
  - France
  - WWI Battlefield photos (France)
  - Scandinavia
- 17 of 21 Paintings and sculpture
- Sculpture
  - Ruins of Greece and Rome
  - Parthenon
  - Roman ruins

18 of 21 Images of Russia

- Russia (Mostly St. Petersburg)
- Slides labeled “Russia as it is”
- Russian images—drawings
- Images of James Ricalton’s “dormo cart”

19 of 21 Images of Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, possible U.S. locations

- Brazil
- Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines
- Images depicting ships, boats, steamers
- Possible U.S. locations (most images are not described)

20 of 21 Miscellaneous images

- undetermined locations and subjects

21 of 21

- Lantern Slide projector owned and used by Ricalton in large wooden box

**Large-format Panels**

(stored in oversize area near folio materials and processing area):

- Portrait and biographical sketch (42” x 24”) on foam core used in *North Country Laurentians*--LD4817.S32 B85 2005
- Photograph of Ricalton’s Maplewood, New Jersey classroom (32” x 37”) on foam core
- Photograph of Ricalton’s home museum showing many artifacts (36” x 46”) on wooden frame
- Photo of Ricalton with artifacts in museum (24” x 24”) on wooden frame
- Reproduction of poster “Travels on Next to Nothing, starring James Ricalton” (23” x 18”)
- Presented by Maplewood Memorial Library (no year given)
- “James Ricalton’s travels at a glance” list and description of travels on wooden frame (23” x 35”)