



Guide to the R. B. Holmes Photograph Collection, 1910-1926 and undated

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

askRL@duke.edu

URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

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Summary

Collection Title:

R. B. Holmes photographs, 1910-1926 and undated

Source:

Archive of Documentary Arts (Duke University)

Creator:

Holmes, Randolph Bezzant, 1888-1973

Abstract:

The images in the collection were taken by British photographer R. B. (Randolph Bezzant) Holmes and possibly others from his studio who traveled with him. Holmes was the owner of the R. B. Holmes & Co. photography studio in Peshawar, Pakistan. Of the 208 prints in the collection, one hundred two are loose, 11.5 x 9.5" black-and-white photographic prints of Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan. The remaining 106 prints are mounted in three commercial albums whose subjects range widely, from Afghan War-period images of the Khyber Pass, Landi Khana, Ali Musjid, and the Kabul River; to pastoral scenes around Nowshera, street scenes in Peshawar city, and panoramic views of the Peshawar Valley, to views from India, including the Jhelum and Liddar valleys, Srinagar, lower Himalas, Harabal waterfall, Shalimar, and the Taj Mahal in Agra, to images of Waziristan and the Khyber railway. The sizes of the mounted prints range from 8.25"x5.75" to 11.25"x9", along with some panoramic prints. Acquired as part of the Archive of Documentary Arts.

Extent:

7.6 Linear Feet (208 items)

Language:

English

Collection ID:

RL.00565

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1cg9x>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], R. B. Holmes photographs, 1910-1926 and undated, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

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Background

Scope and Content

Of the 208 prints in the collection, one hundred two are loose, 11.5 x 9.5" black-and-white photographic prints of Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan. The majority of these detailed images were taken during the end of the Anglo-Afghan war in 1919 and depict large British military camps and vast landscapes, sometimes with camel caravans or military convoys. Some scenes show the remains of villages, military features such as towers, and religious structures. There are portraits of individuals, including camel drivers, a sniper, a female spinner, a young woman dressed in traditional wear, and various groups. The landscape views include the Khyber Pass, Tanai Gorge, Kabul River, Khargali Ridge, Dal Lake, Nanga Parbat, and the Sikkim Himalaya. Military camp views, many in panoramic scale with fine detail, include Landi Khana, Dakka Plain, and Landi Kotal.

The remaining 106 prints are mounted in three commercial albums whose subjects range widely, from Afghan War-period images of the Khyber Pass, Landi Khana, Ali Musjid, and the Kabul River; to pastoral scenes around Nowshera, street scenes in Peshawar city, and panoramic views of the Peshawar Valley, to views from India, including the Jhelum and Liddar valleys, Srinagar, lower Himals, Harabal waterfall, Shalimar, and the Taj Mahal in Agra, to images of Waziristan and the Khyber railway. The sizes of the mounted prints range from 8.25"x5.75" to 11.25"x9", along with some panoramic prints. There are 12 gelatin silver prints. The images of Waziristan (Box 6) are out of copyright. There are also several photographs from the Diwan and Mela Ram studios in the Waziristan images. Acquired as part of the Archive of Documentary Arts.

Biographical/Historical

Randolph Bezzant Holmes was born in 1888. He was a commercial photographer who took over the business established by his father, William D. Homes, around 1899 in Peshawar, Pakistan. Holmes was an official photographer of the Afghan Wars on the North West Frontier in Afghanistan. He also spent time in Kashmir and in other Asian locales. Later in life he also painted watercolor landscapes from the same areas. In 1929 he published a memoir of his time in Afghanistan, *Story of the North West Frontier Province, Peshawar*, containing gelatin print plates of his landscapes. Holmes died in 1973.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

Except for the Waziristan photograph album (Box 6), which is out of copyright, the copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Acquisition Information

The R. B. Holmes Afghan War Photographs were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a purchase from 2009-2011, 2014, and 2016.

Processing Information

Processed by Paula Jeannet, December 2009

Encoded by Paula Jeannet, December 2009

Updated for additions by Alice Poffinberger, December 2010 and October 2011

Updated for addition by Alice Poffinberger, September 2014

Updated for additions by Alice Poffinberger, January 2017

Accessions 2009-0117, 2010-0181, 2010-0194, 2011-0121, 2011-0122, 2011-0212, 2014-0131. 2016-0052, 2016-0250 and 2016-0286 are described in this finding aid.

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Related Materials

Related Material

R. B. Holmes Collection (papers and photographs) Macmillan Brown Library,
University of Canterbury, New Zealand

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Names and Subjects

- Afghan Wars
- Afghan Wars -- Pictorial works
- Afghanistan -- Pictorial works
- Afghanistan -- Social conditions -- 20th century
- India -- Pictorial works
- India -- Social conditions -- 20th century
- Pakistan -- Pictorial works
- Pakistan -- Social conditions -- 20th century
- Photograph albums
- Black-and-white photographs
- Platinum prints
- Gelatin silver prints
- Waziristan (Pakistan) -- Pictorial works
- Great Britain. Army -- History -- 20th century
- Archive of Documentary Arts (Duke University)
- Holmes, Randolph Bezant, 1888-1973
- R. B. Holmes & Co. (Peshawar)

Collection Inventory

Photographic Prints, 1910-1926 and undated

Jamrud Fort and entrance to the Khyber Pass.

Box 1 > Print 1

Physical Description: 2 copies

Scope and Contents

One copy housed with Print 9

Entering the Khyber Pass. Camel Convoy. Box 1 > Print 2

Ali Musjid Camp. Box 1 > Print 3

Ali Musjid Camp. Box 5 > Print 3 > Page 2

Physical Description: 2 copies

Scope and Contents

One copy housed with Print 35

Exit of the Khyber into the Peshawar Plains. Box 1 > Print 4

Looking North through the Gorge at Ali Musjid. Box 1 > Print 5

Physical Description: 2 copies

Scope and Contents

One copy housed with Print 15

Looking North through the Gorge at Ali Musjid. Box 5 > Print 5 > Page 1

Looking South through the Gorge at Ali Musjid. Box 1 > Print 6

Camp at Landi Kotal (left half of panorama). Box 1 > Print 7

Camp at Landi Kotal (right half of panorama). Box 1 > Print 7a

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Scope and Contents

Housed with Print 32

On the road to Landi Khana looking towards K bargali ridge. Box 1 > Print 11

Scope and Contents

Caption on photograph reads "The Tangi Gorge."

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Physical Description: 2 copies

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Scope and Contents

Hand tinted

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Scope and Contents

Hand tinted

By Tannin River and Mountain heights in mist.

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Hand tinted

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Hand tinted

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Processing Information:

Album numbering supplied by library staff.

"General List of Photographic Studies and views, from the Studio of R. B. Holmes, & Co., Photographers, 155, The Mall, Peshawar"	Box 6
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Physical Description: photocopy

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