
Taking the Wider View: Panoramic Photography in the American Southwest

Rick Hendricks and Charles B. Stanford

Panoramic photography is almost as old as photography itself. Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre invented the first practical photographic process in 1839 called the daguerreotype, which captured an image on a copper plate coated with a light-sensitive layer of silver iodide and bromide. In addition to his scientific work, Daguerre was also a panorama painter, and his work in that medium influenced the development of the daguerreotype.

The earliest panoramas were made by placing a series of daguerreotype plates side-by-side. A later development involved exposing a series of wet-plate negatives. After each exposure, the camera was repositioned for the next view of the panorama. Prints from the negative were mounted in the form of a composite panoramic photograph.

The most popular panoramic camera, the Cirkut, was manufactured by Eastman Kodak Co., beginning in 1907. This device was a rotating panoramic camera and operated in such a way that gears were wound to advance the roll of film and move the camera in synch. Rather than a snapshot, the rotating panoramic camera took a timed exposure. If the subject moved during the timed exposure, the result was a blur. This type of camera was capable of producing a 360-degree photograph.

Another popular type of panoramic camera was the swing lens camera. This device was different from the Cirkut-type camera in that the lens pivoted around the axis of rotation but the camera and film remained stationary. This type of camera was capable of producing a 150-degree photograph.

Almeron Newman, Panoramic Photographer

Almeron Newman was born on 20 June 1875 in Portland, Michigan, to Frederick and Emma Newman. Newman moved to the small town of Deming, New Mexico, in 1899 and worked as a photographer. In 1900, Newman was living in a boarding house in Tucson City,

Arizona Territory and still working as a photographer. By 1909 he had settled in Trinidad, Colorado, where he continued his photographic career. Examples of his work in Colorado from this year are in the Library of Congress collection of panoramic photographs.

Newman was again living in Deming, New Mexico, in September 1918 when he registered for the draft for World War I. At the time he was described as being of medium height and medium build with blue eyes and brown hair. His closest relative was his wife, Ida May. *The Deming Headlight* reported on 20 December 1918 that Newman, who was described as a military photographer, had bought out his business partner, L. S. Patterson. The newspaper noted that the partners had sold more than a thousand copies of a picture of the Thirty-Fourth Infantry Division. The photo was taken on 18 August 1918 at Camp Cody near Deming (the location of one of our display images). In the photograph, 16,000 formed themselves into the division's insignia, which features a bull's skull.

Such living insignia portraits, along with panoramic group portraits such as seen here, were quite popular in the early 20th century. They also presented ways for photographers to make good money, since the photographer could charge higher fees for larger groups and sell multiple copies of the same image.

Rick Hendricks works at NMSU Library Archives and Special Collections Department and teaches Latin American history.

Charles B. Stanford joined the NMSU Library Archives and Special Collections Department in January 2007 after working as a project archivist in Pittsburgh, where he received his M.L.I.S. in August 2006.

**The Astronomical League 15th Annual Convention,
Detroit, Michigan, 1-3 July 1961**
From the Walter H. Haas papers Ms 0399

Walter Haas is an astronomer who lives in Las Cruces. He worked with Clyde Tombaugh and taught mathematics here and at UNM. He is also the founder of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers, which has held joint conferences with the Astronomical League.



*How many people in the picture are wearing glasses?
How many people are carrying cameras?
How many are carrying pens in their shirt pockets?*

Elephant Butte Construction Camp, c. 1914

From the Herbert W. Yeo papers Ms 0094

Herbert Yeo served as state engineer from 1927-1931. From 1908 to 1917 he worked on the Rio Grande project, a work of the Bureau of Reclamation which included the construction of Elephant Butte Dam.



Note the changes in light and shadow on the clouds. Also see how the river seems to curve away from the viewpoint at the sides. This is a distortion caused by the movement of the camera. How wide an angle do you think these images are?

Burro Avenue, Cloudcroft, New Mexico, c. 1910
James A. Alexander, Photographer, El Paso Texas
From the Ron Collins photographs Ms 0366



Can you detect anything unusual or odd about this image? If so, what explanations can you think of for it?

Organ Mountains, 1923

Almeron Newman, Photographer, Silver City, New Mexico

From the Orren Beaty papers, RG2002-85



Organ Mountains, 1923
Almeron Newman, Photographer, Silver City, New Mexico
From the Orren Beaty papers, RG2002-85



Which landscape features can you match between these two views?

Seventh Annual Cowboys' Reunion, Las Vegas, New Mexico, 4-6 July 1921
Jordan Malaney, Photographer, Las Vegas, New Mexico



The Las Vegas Cowboys' Reunions were popular events that drew famous celebrity entertainers. The Las Vegas Museum is currently hosting an exhibit on the reunions: <http://lasvegasmuseum.org/>. Their exhibit, "Git Fer Vegas, Cowboy", will be in place until the end of 2010.

Magdalena, New Mexico, c. 1902
From the Carl T. Redemann collection RG2004-012



55

Do you see any unexpected creatures in this picture?

**Hot Springs, New Mexico from Bluffs on East Side of Rim, Opposite Ice Plant,
August 1938**

Almeron Newman, Photographer, Silver City, New Mexico

From the Caroline McGregor donation RG80-078



Hot Springs is now called Truth or Consequences.

**Fifth and Sixth Nebraska Infantry, Camp "Cody," Deming, New Mexico,
September 1917**

J. U. Medley and I. Shulman, Photographers, El Paso, Texas

From the Lee Myers papers RG82-37



57

How many blurred figures can you spot? Can you find the blurred horse? The blurred car? The cook?

White Sands National Monument , New Mexico, 29 April 1934
Almeron Newman, Photographer, Silver City, New Mexico
From the Barbara Jean Branum photographs RG2005-139



58

Can you read the advertisement on the car in the center?

**Eight Cavalry, Ft. Bliss, Texas, 9 October 1919
“That Man Hill,” Photographer, Ft. Bliss, Texas**



59

Do you think this is a full 360 degree image?

Civilian Conservation Corps Company 813-F-25-N, Glenwood, New Mexico,
11 March 1934
Almeron Newman, Photographer, Silver City, New Mexico



What do you think everybody is looking at?
Can you find the cat?

GEOLOGICAL MAP
of the
Route explored by Lient. A.W. WHIPPLE, Corps of Top. Eng.
near the Parallel of 35° North Latitude
From the MISSISSIPPI RIVER TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN
Courtesy NMSU Archives and Special Collections Department

