Peter Misch photograph collection, circa 1930s-1960

Overview of the Collection

Creator  Misch, Peter, 1909-1987
Title  Peter Misch photograph collection
Dates  circa 1930s-1960 (inclusive)
1930-1960
Quantity  Approximately 4198 black and white prints
Approximately 1828 negatives
Approximately 2330 slides (including 681 lantern slides)
Collection Number  PH2007-022
Summary  Photographs from professional life of University of Washington professor and geologist
Repository  University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.
Special Collections
University of Washington Libraries
Box 352900
Seattle, WA
98195-2900
Telephone: 206-543-1929
Fax: 206-543-1931
speccoll@uw.edu
Access Restrictions  Open to all users.
Languages  English, German

Biographical Note

Peter Hans Misch was a University of Washington geologist and professor whose research spanned three continents over 50 years. He is especially well known for his research and mapping of the North Cascade mountains of Washington state.

Peter Hans Misch was born in Berlin, Germany in 1909. His father Georg was professor of philosophy at Göttingen University, and his grandfather on his mother's side was the famous German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey. In 1932, at the age of 23, he earned his Ph.D. in Geology from Göttingen University with his investigation of the metamorphic petrology of the central Pyrenees mountains.

In 1934, Misch was asked by Willy Merkl to be the geologist for the German expedition to Nanga Parbat in the western Himalayas. Part of his research during the expedition concerned the petrology of the Himalayas. After his return to Germany, Nazi officials ordered that he surrender all of his research material to a scientist appointed by the government. Misch did not comply with the order, and instead began looking for a teaching position abroad. In 1935, he accepted the chair of structural geology at Sun Yat-Sen University in Canton, China, formerly held by Swiss geologist Arnold Heim.

Misch arrived in China in 1936, and began his studies of the Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces. By the end of 1938 Japanese advances into south eastern China forced the university to move to Kunming, in
Yunnan province. Misch and his students studied and mapped areas of Yunnan province until he left for the United States in 1946.

Misch was teaching at Stanford University when he met Professor Goodspeed of the University of Washington and discovered that they were both members of a minority of geologists who supported the theory of granitization. In 1947, Misch accepted an appointment as assistant professor at the University of Washington. While at the University of Washington, Misch became the leading authority on North Cascades geology. He wrote, published, and lectured on North Cascade geology, especially metamorphic petrology, for nearly 40 years. He created many geological maps of the North Cascades, and painted colorful and geologically detailed watercolor landscapes of many of the mountains that he studied. Misch spent nearly every summer in the mountains with his graduate students in support of their thesis research and general geological education. By the end of his time at the University of Washington, Misch had supervised the research of over 125 graduate students. He also engaged in committee work on behalf of the geology department, as well as various university clubs and associations.

Misch was also active outside of the university setting. During the 1950’s, he worked with John Hazzard as a research consultant for Union Oil of California. Misch and Hazzard studied and mapped areas in and around the Great Basin that included eastern Nevada, western Utah, and southern Idaho. Misch’s work with Union Oil also took him to Oklahoma where he studied and mapped the Potato Hills region of the Ouachita mountain range. Between 1974 and 1980 Misch was an advisor for the Bechtel Corporation in the proposed development of a nuclear power plant in the Skagit Valley of Washington state. Misch also served as Associate Editor for the American Association of Petroleum Geologists’ Bulletin.

Peter Misch retired from the University of Washington in 1981, but continued his geological research up to the very last months of his life. He died on the 23rd of July, 1987.

Content Description

The bulk of the photographs consist of aerial mapping photographs, photomicrographs of mineralogical specimens, and photographs of mountain ranges. The bulk of the photographs depict ranges in the Cascade Mountains, but the collection also includes images from Misch’s time in Asia, including images of Nanga Parbat in the Himalayas, and areas in Canton and the Yunnan province of China. Mapping photographs include images of mountain ranges in Oklahoma, Utah and Nevada made for Union Oil of California. Some of the photomicrographs were used to illustrate articles written by Misch.

Includes sets of slides Misch arranged into series, probably to accompany lectures or for classroom use, including an extensive, inventoried series of slides on the Washington Cascades.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Restrictions may exist on reproduction, quotation, or publication. Contact Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries for details.

Administrative Information

Peter Misch photograph collection, circa 1930s-1960
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv15097
Processing Note

Minimally processed

Photographs were relocated from the Peter Misch Papers, Accession No. 3370-009, in 2007.

Detailed Description of the Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aerial mapping photographs and photomicrographs; approximately 330 black and white prints and 8 color prints were arranged in folders by location. Aerial photographs are from the period when Misch was consulting for Union Oil of California. Contains aerial mapping photographs from mountain ranges in Oklahoma, Utah and Nevada. Also includes one folder of photomicrographs with inventory, 1949.</td>
<td>circa 1940s-1950s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aerial mapping photographs; approximately 500 black and white prints. Includes Okanogan, Grouse Creek and Goose Creek Mountains, Snake Range, Sacramento Pass area, and Shoshone (Nevada). Also includes a small number of photographs of minerological specimens.</td>
<td>circa 1940s-1950s</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Photomicrographs and photographs; approximately 580 black and white prints and 155 negatives. Photomicrographs used for Misch's papers &quot;Zoned Plagioclase in Metamorphic Rocks&quot; (November 1, 1954), and &quot;Metasomatic Granitization of Batholithic Dimensions,&quot; and photographs for Misch's Tillite paper; photomicrographs from Okanogan (1949), Nanga Parbat, and Yunnan; photographs of specimens from Nanga Parbat and of Misch's Nanga Parbat Expedition (1934); aerial photographs of Okanogan and photographs of the Cascades. Also includes a folder containing detailed inventories of Misch's &quot;WC&quot; (Washington Cascades) slide series (1954-1955).</td>
<td>1930s-1950s</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Cascade Range, Snake Range and China; Approximately 1570 black and white prints and 795 negatives. Largely consists of photographs of the Cascades (1952, 1954, 1955,1959-1960) and of China, including Canton (late 1930s) and West Yunnan (1939, 1940, 1945-1946). Also includes aerial photographs of Snake Range and Sacramento Pass area.</td>
<td>1930s-1960</td>
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<td>Container(s)</td>
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<td>used for Sacramento Pass map (1952) and a small number of photographs of Nevada (1956,1960).</td>
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</table>
| 5           | Cascade range  
Approximately 1160 black and white prints and 590 negatives | 1949, undated |
| 6           | Slides  
approximately 1700 35 mm color slides  
Slides include groups on the North Cascades, on East Central Nevada and Misch's "WC" (Washington Cascades) series slides. | 1940s-1960s |
| 7           | Aerial photos and lantern slides  
approximately 80 black and white prints and 3 negatives  
approximately 117 lantern slides  
Aerial photographs of Cascade areas (1947, undated); lantern slides of landscapes and geological formations. Most of the lantern slides are unmounted in original boxes, which are printed in German. Includes slides of the Himalaya Mountains. | 1930s-1940s, undated |
| 8-14        | Lantern slides  
514 lantern slides  
Includes slides of maps, diagrams and charts; images of Nanga Parbat, Yunnan province, the Cascades, and the Rockies. Some groupings of slides appear to have been used for classes or lectures. |       |
| 15          | Deteriorated negatives  
285 negatives  
Negatives removed from various boxes due to deterioration. |       |

Find Related Collections

Subject Terms:
Visual Materials Collections (University of Washington)

Form or Genre Terms:
Photographs