

From: Mark Duncan

Comment:

I have written a book on the 140-year old history of the railroad on the San Francisco Peninsula. Photographs are an invaluable means of documenting and describing the railroad. Pictures are often not identified as to who and when they were taken. But when viewed by a wide audience, someone is often able to provide insight that provides added meaning and value to the photograph.

Even when a photograph has been identified, it is a daunting task to attempt to contact that person, since they typically have moved or may have died. There are frequently multiple people with a given name, and it is extremely difficult to locate many of them. Most railroad pictures are taken by amateurs, typically as a hobby.

Frequently, the person with a picture is not the person who originally took the picture, collections having been inherited, given, or purchased. Photographs may be found in family collections, in historical community associations, libraries --- but are not generally available and circulated.

There are tens of thousands of railroad books that contain photographs. It is a daunting task to determine if a given photograph has ever been used in another publication, when the photograph lacks any proper identification.