



CHARLES M. CHARROPPIN PAPERS
1854-1913 [Bulk circa 1870s-1910s]

MIS.5.002

JESUIT ARCHIVES: CENTRAL UNITED STATES
4511 West Pine Boulevard, Saint Louis, Missouri, 63108
Telephone: 314.361.7765 Fax: 314.758.7182 Web: www.jesuitarchives.org

Collection Summary

Collection number: MIS.5.002

Repository Code: MoSIJA

Repository: Jesuit Archives: Central United States

Title: Charles M. Charroppin papers

Date [bulk]: circa 1870s-1910s

Date [inclusive]: 1854-1913

Extent: 4.5 linear feet (1 record carton, 1 OS box, 3 file drawers).

Creator: Charroppin, Charles M., 1840-1915.

Language of material: English, French, and Latin

Abstract: Charles M. Charroppin, S.J. (1840-1915) was a Jesuit priest, astronomer, and photographer who served in the Missouri Province and Belize Mission in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Charles M. Charroppin papers contain biographical material, correspondence, loose photographs, photograph albums, hand drawn artwork, and glass lantern slides.

Processing history: Processed by Midwest Jesuit Archives Associate Archivist, Nancy Mertz. Additional processing and description by Alexandra M. Bisio in 2016.

Conditions governing access: This collection is open for research. Access to the original glass lantern slides is limited to special appointments because the images are fragile.

Conditions governing reproduction and use: The archival records in the Jesuit Archives: Central United States are the property of the Northeast, Central and Southern, Chicago-Detroit, and Wisconsin Provinces of the Society of Jesus. Copies may not be duplicated or deposited elsewhere without the prior written consent of the archivist. Supplying a copy is not an authorization to publish or circulate. Written permission to publish any records in their entirety or a substantial portion thereof must be requested and approved prior to publication. The researcher has the sole legal responsibility for obtaining this written permission.

Preferred citation: [Identification of item], [Box number], [Folder number]. [Collection name], [Collection number]. Jesuit Archives: Central United States, St. Louis, Missouri. [Date accessed].

Additional finding aids: Indexes to photo albums, including some that have been unbound, are available upon request.

Biographical note

Father Charles M. Charroppin, S.J. was a Jesuit priest, astronomer, and photographer who served in the Missouri Province and Belize Mission in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Charles Marie Charroppin was born on the island of Guadeloupe in the Caribbean on August 15, 1840. The Charroppin family left Guadeloupe in 1848 and settled in St. Louis, Missouri. He entered the Jesuits in 1863 at the Saint Stanislaus Seminary in Florissant, Missouri. After finishing his studies at Florissant, Charroppin spent four years serving at a Jesuit boy's school in Cincinnati and St. Ignatius College, Chicago as prefect, director of the boy's sodality, and French language instructor. Finally, he completed two years of theology courses in Woodstock, Maryland, before returning to St. Louis. Following his ordination in 1877, he served as a professor of rhetoric, mathematics, chemistry, and astronomy at Saint Louis University.

In 1894, Father Charroppin was sent to Corozal, British Honduras, now Belize, where he spent four years as a missionary. After returning to the United States he spent the next twelve years lecturing on astronomical topics and his work in Central America. Having gained a reputation as a gifted scientist and photographer, Charroppin frequently corresponded with astronomers at Harvard University, the University of Chicago, the University of California, Berkeley, and the Vatican Observatory.

In 1912, Charroppin settled in St. Charles, Missouri, where he where he was named associate pastor at Saint Charles Borromeo church, and chaplain of the Sacred Heart convent. Father Charles M. Charroppin died on October 17, 1915.

Sources

Brown, Jo Ann. "A Renaissance Priest." In *St. Charles Borromeo: 200 years of Faith*, 118-119. St. Louis, MO: The Patrice Press, 1991

Merz, Nancy. "C.M.C: Astronomer, Photographer, Missionary, Character." *Jesuit Bulletin: The Missouri Province*, Fall 1987.

Scope and content note

The Charles M. Charroppin papers contain biographical material, correspondence, loose photographs, photograph albums, hand drawn artwork, and glass lantern slides. Biographical material and correspondence includes vital documents and personal effects, primarily membership cards to various organizations. Correspondence includes letters to and from Charroppin sent between 1889 and 1913. Correspondents include Father Provincial of the Missouri Province, family and friends, as well as astronomers in the United States and Europe.

Photographs, albums, and glass lantern slides include loose photographic prints, photo albums, art work, and glass lantern slides created by Charles Charroppin between 1850 and 1913. Photographs include portraits, posed tableaux, astronomical photographs, city scenes, and scenes from rural daily life. The albums include bound photograph albums that contain portraits, posed pictures from theatre performances, astronomical photographs, and city scenes of St. Louis. Four bound sketchbooks of hand drawings by Charroppin are also included in this subseries.

Charroppin's collection of glass lantern slides contains black and white images created between 1870 and 1915. Images in this subseries include astronomical work, photographs of daily life, self-portraits, as well as portraits Jesuits and students.

Arrangement note

The Charles M. Charroppin papers are arranged in two series:

Series 1. Biographical material and correspondence, 1854-1913

Series 2. Photographs, albums, and glass lantern slides, circa 1850s-1913

Series 2. Photographs, albums, and glass lantern slides is arranged in three subseries:

Subseries 2.1. Photographs, 1850s-1913

Subseries 2.2. Albums, circa 1870s-1910s

Subseries 2.3. Glass lantern slides, circa 1870s-1910s

Collection Contents

[Series 1. Biographical material and correspondence, 1854-1913](#)

Scope and content note:

Biographical material and correspondence includes vital documents such as Charroppin's birth certificates, as well as certificates of baptism and citizenship. This series also contains a few personal effects, primarily membership cards to various organizations, including the Astronomical Society of the Pacific and the Saint Louis Camera club. Correspondence includes letters to and from Charroppin sent between 1889 and 1913. Charroppin's correspondents include Father Provincial of the Missouri Province, family and friends, as well as astronomers at the Yerkes Observatory of the University of Chicago, the Lick Observatory of the University of California, and the Vatican Observatory. Charroppin's correspondence with the Missouri Provincial primarily concerns his work as a missionary in Corozal, British Honduras, now Belize.

Arrangement note:

This series is arranged chronologically.

Biographical material, 1854-1897

Folder 28: Drawer 5.0015

Correspondence, 1889-1913

Folders 29-31: Drawer 5.0015

Series 2. Photographs, albums, and glass lantern slides, circa 1850s-1913

Scope and content:

This series contains photographs, photo albums, art work, and glass lantern slides created by Charles Charroppin. The photographs subseries contains loose photographic prints created by Charles M. Charroppin between 1860 and 1913. Images include portraits, posed tableaux, astronomical photographs, city scenes, and rural daily life photographs. Many of these loose prints are duplicate images of photographs arranged in albums, or were also developed as glass lantern slides.

The albums subseries contains photograph albums and bound sketchbooks created by Charles M. Charroppin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Images in the photograph albums include portraits, posed pictures from theatre performances, astronomical photographs, and city scenes of St. Louis. Four bound sketchbooks of hand drawings by Charroppin, entitled “Myiographs and Anthrenographs,” are also included in this subseries. Charroppin’s collection of glass lantern slides contains black and white images created between 1870 and 1915. Images in this subseries include astronomical work, photographs of daily life, self-portraits, as well as portraits Jesuits and students.

Arrangement:

This series is arranged in three subseries: 2.1. photographs, 2.2. albums, and 2.3. glass lantern slides. Photographs are arranged in the order imposed by the original processing archivist, while glass lantern slides and albums are arranged alphabetically and by date respectively.

Series 2.1. Photographs, circa 1850s-1913

Scope and content:

This subseries contains loose photographic prints created by Charles M. Charroppin between 1860 and 1913. The subjects of these images include Charroppin’s family, self-portraits, portraits of Jesuits and Charroppin’s academic colleagues, posed pictures from theatre performances, scriptural still-lives, astronomical photographs, city scenes of St. Louis, and daily life at Saint Stanislaus Seminary in Florissant, Missouri. Many of these loose prints are duplicate images of photographs arranged in albums by Charroppin, or were also developed as glass lantern slides for public viewing.

Arrangement:

This series is in the order devised by the original processing archivist.

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| “Self-portrait with mortar and pestle & Scales,” 1875 | Folder 1: Box 762 |
| “Phenomena, astronomical, clouds, diagram of telescope,” 1900 | Folder 2: Box 762 |
| “Portraits and Self-portraits (various),” circa 1870-1913 | Folders 3-4: Box 762 |
| “Youth,” circa 1850, 1865 | Folder 5: Box 762 |
| Cross of St. Louis, 1897 | Folder 7: Box 762 |
| “Self-Portraits in Prayer,” circa 1910s | Folder 8: Box 762 |
| “Relatives,” circa 1870s-1910s | Folder 9: Box 762 |
| “Photos with birds, animals, etc. standing on rocky ledge,” circa 1880s-1890s | Folder 10: Box 762 |
| “Eclipse party,” 1889 January 1 | Folder 11: Box 762 |
| “Charroppin with telescopes,” circa 1880s | Folder 12: Box 762 |
| “Observatories, including Yerkes,” circa 1880s-1890s | Folder 13: Box 762 |
| “Spread Eagle,” steamboat, negative, circa 1870s-1910s | Folder 14: Box 762 |
| “Camera club,” circa 1880s-1890s | Folder 15: Box 762 |
| “Self-portraits with camera,” circa 1880s-1990s | Folder 16: Box 762 |
| “Early St. Louis,” circa 1870s-1890s | Folder 17: Box 762 |
| “Theatre groups,” circa 1870s-1890s | Folder 18: Box 762 |
| “Eclipse and moon photos,” circa 1870s-1910s | Folder 19: Box 762 |
| Cyanotypes, circa 1870s-1890s | Folder 20: Box 762 |
| “St. Stanislaus Seminary,” 1874-1886 | Folder 21: Box 762 |
| “Total eclipse party” 1900 May 28 | Folder 22: Box 762 |
| “Various,” circa 1880s-1890s | Folder 23: Box 762 |

Series 2.2. Albums, circa 1870s-1910s

Scope and content note:

This series contains photograph albums and bound sketchbooks created by Charles M. Charroppin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Photograph albums include images of

Charroppin's family, self-portraits, portraits of Jesuits and Charroppin's academic colleagues, posed pictures from theatre performances, astronomical photographs, and city scenes of St. Louis.

Of particular interest are early photographs of Saint Louis University at its original location on Washington Avenue, and the demolition of the original Saint Francis Xavier College Church. In his later years, Charroppin traveled to the West Coast of the United States, primarily Flagstaff, Arizona, where he photographed members of the Hopi tribe and their traditional dwellings, and Santa Barbara, California. Loose copies photographs arranged in these albums can be found in the photographs series.

Also included in this series are four bound sketchbooks of hand drawings by Charroppin. Entitled "Myiographs and Anthrenographs," these sketchbooks contain miniature drawings of mythological and fantastical creatures of Charroppin's own imagining. No explanation or description of these drawings by Charroppin is available.

Arrangement:

This series has been intellectually arranged in chronological order.

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| "Myiographs and Anthrenographs," circa 1870s-1910s | Vol. 1-4: Drawer 5.0017 |
| "Album D," 1889-1909 | Vol. 1: Box 833 |
| "Album B," circa 1906 | Vol. 2: Box 833 |
| "Album of his photographs," circa 1910s | Folder 6: Box 762 |

[Subseries 2.3. Glass lantern slides, circa 1870s-1910s](#)

Scope and content:

This series contains black and white glass lantern slides created by Charles M. Charroppin between 1870 and his death in 1915. Images include examples of Charroppin's astronomical work, photographs of daily life at Saint Stanislaus Seminary and Saint Mary's College, Kansas, and city scenes of St. Louis and St. Charles, Missouri. Charroppin took many self-portraits, as well as portraits of his fellow Jesuits and students. Posed tableaus depicting scripture scenes and photographs of theatre performances are also included. Many of the glass lantern slides have been individually inscribed by Charroppin with humorous descriptions of the subjects. The slides in this collection are in various states of decay, though most are still intact. Some images were also developed as prints, and can be found in the photographs series.

Arrangement:

This subseries has been intellectually arranged in alphabetical order.

Access:

Access to the original glass lantern slides is limited to special appointments because the images are fragile.

| | |
|--|---|
| “Astronomy by Charroppin,” circa 1870s-1910s | Folder 7: Drawer 868 |
| “Astronomy (purchased),” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 2: Drawer 868 |
| “Florissant,” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 1: Drawer 868 |
| “Mary, Jesus,” circa 1870s-1910s | Folder 7: Drawer 868 |
| “Monstrances,” circa 1870s-1910s | Folder 6: Drawer 868 |
| “Scripture scenes,” circa 1870s-1910s | Folder 6: Drawer 868 |
| “St. Louis,” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 1: Drawer 868 |
| “Self-portraits,” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 1: Drawer 868 Folder 7: Drawer 868 |
| “St. Charles,” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 1: Drawer 868 |
| “St. Mary’s, Kansas,” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 1: Drawer 868 |
| Tabernacle door – Paraguay,” circa 1870s-1910s | Folder 6: Drawer 868 |
| “Teams,” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 2: Drawer 868 |
| “Theater,” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 2: Drawer 868 |
| “Varia,” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 1-2: Drawer 868 |
| “Various,” circa 1870s-1910s | Folder 6: Drawer 868 |
| “Various Jesuits,” circa 1870s-1910s | Box 1: Drawer 868 |