

Irving Eisner World War II photograph album of India

Ms. Coll. 1157

Finding aid prepared by Clémence Scouten.

Last updated on February 02, 2018.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2015 December 3

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Eisner, Irving
Title	Irving Eisner World War II photograph album of India
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1157
Date [inclusive]	1942-1944
Extent	08 linear feet (1 volume)
Language	English
Abstract	This album, carefully created by Irving Eisner, chronicles his time as a corporal in the U.S. Army posted in India from 1942 to 1944. It mostly focuses on his friendships with other military personnel and his vacations while in India.

Cite as:

Irving Eisner World War II photograph album of India, 1942-1944, Ms. Coll. 1157, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Irving Eisner was a corporal in the United States Army in India during World War II. Although his scrapbook includes his name, no other personal information is included. It is probable, however, that Eisner was born on July 19, 1916 to David and Pauline Eisner and lived with his family in Bronx, New York. If this is the correct Eisner, he worked in New York as a radio repairman and enlisted on February 27, 1941 in New York City. Based upon the football program contained within his photograph album, Eisner served under Colonel Thomas H. Rees who was the commanding officer of Base Section 1 in the Services of Supply, China, Burma, and India (SOS USAF CBI) from May 1943 to January 1944. Base Section 1's headquarters were in Karachi (in today's Pakistan). It is probable that Eisner's work may have included the handling of supplies for China, India, and Burma and working with transportation, depots, ports of debarkation, hospitals, supply, and maintenance. There are several photographs of Eisner at the American Consul in Karachi, but it is, unfortunately, impossible to tell what his real work in the United States Army entailed. It is possible that he and his fellow soldiers were stationed at the Leslie Wilson Muslim Hostel in Karachi.

Scope and Contents

This album, carefully created by Irving Eisner, chronicles his time as a corporal in the U.S. Army posted in India from 1942 to 1944. It mostly focuses on his friendships with other military personnel and his vacations while in India. There are 330 photographs as well as a program for the "Thanksgiving Toilet Bowl Football Game" which lists all the enlisted men and officers under the command of Thomas H. Rees.

It is not clear from the photos where Irving Eisner was posted, but it seems likely that it was in Karachi (now Pakistan). There are many photographs documenting Karachi. The photos cover animals, native children, huts, a snake charmer, native women paving the street, beggars, street bazaars, street sweepers, acrobats, camel carts, and restaurants. His trips to Bombay, Calcutta and Darjeeling all capture this type of cultural observations in the form of street scenes and the local sites. Some of the specific sites photographed are: the Ghadi Gardens in Karachi, the Governor's palace, a Hindu temple, a Muslim gymkhana, the Victoria Museum, the Muslim Hotel, and Frere Hall. There are many photographs of the Temple for Birds. In Bombay, Eisner photographed the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Bombay post office, Breach Candy Baths, Fountain Square, Churchgate Depot, Hornby Road, and Marine Drive. Eisner took extensive photographs of his American Red Cross tour in Calcutta, capturing the Jain Temple, the Main Temple, Priest's Temple, Resident Temple, monkey gods, a monument of the builder of the temple, a burning ghat, and the Marble Palace, to name only a few.

At least half the photographs are devoted to his friends or fellow servicemen. Some of the identified people are Bunk Weaver (TX), Pete Kalas (NJ), Bill Morgan (GA), Dorothy Martin (KY), Max Levy (NY), Jim Vanderhoof (IL), Hosch (TX), Sgt Scully, Gordon Hoffman, Frank Robbins, Woody Flannery, Richard Miller, Quen Columbia, Clayton Carter, and Pat Therill. Several women also appear in the album, including Debbie Nagel, Arlene Martin, Daphne, and Clare DeSousa.

Both the football game program and two handouts from the American Red Cross with cultural and tourist information were laid into the volume and have been placed in a separate folder.

Administrative Information

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Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use. The front cover of the photograph album is detached and researchers are asked to use caution when handling the item.

Use Restrictions

Copyright restrictions may exist. For most library holdings, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania do not hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the requester to seek permission from the holder of the copyright to reproduce material from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Source of Acquisition

Sold by McBlain Books, 2003.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- United States. Army Service Forces.
- United States. Army. Services of Supply. Base Section No. 1.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Photograph albums
- Photographs

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- India--Photographs

SUBJECT(S)

- Voyages and travels
- World War, 1939-1945--India
- World War, 1939-1945--United States

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Photograph album, 1942-1944.	1	1
Red Cross tourism brochures and Thanksgiving football game program, 1943, undated.	1	2
