

---

## Inventory of the Ernest and Esther Born Collection, 1924-1985

### Collection number: 2001-16

Environmental Design Archives  
University of California, Berkeley  
Berkeley, California

Processed by:

Lorna Kirwan

Date Completed:

2005

Encoded by:

Devan McGirr

© 2009 The Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved.

---

### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Ernest and Esther Born collection

**Dates:** 1924-1985

**Collection number:** 2001-16

**Creator:** Born, Ernest, 1898-1992

**Creator:** Born, Esther, 1902-1987

**Collector:** Environmental Design Archives

**Extent:** 10 manuscript boxes, 5 flat boxes, 2 flat file drawers.

**Repository:** Environmental Design Archives. College of Environmental Design.

University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, California

**Abstract:** The Ernest and Esther Born Collection spans the years 1924-1985 and contains six series: Personal Papers, Professional papers, Project Records, BART, Golden Gate International Exposition, and the UC Greek theatre Reconstruction. The collection is comprised of two primary parts: Ernest Born's personal and professional papers and the records of his practice including design, exhibit, and building projects; and the architectural photographs of Esther Born.

**Physical location:** For current information of the location of these materials, please consult the library's online catalog.

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### Access

Collection open for research.

### Publication Rights

All requests for permission to publish, reproduce, or quote from materials in the collection should be discussed with the Curator.

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of Item], Ernest and Esther Born Collection, 2001-16, Environmental Design Archives. College of Environmental Design. University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, California.

### Acquisition Information

The Environmental Design Archives acquired this collection in 2001.

### Biographical Note

#### Ernest Born (1898-1992)

Ernest Born was born in San Francisco in 1898. Educated in San Francisco and Oakland schools, he graduated from UC Berkeley's School of Architecture in 1922. Following graduation he traveled to Europe on a Fellowship returning to receive his master's degree in Architecture from the University of California in 1923. From 1927 to 1928 he studied decorative painting and fresco in Europe and in 1936 he traveled to Mexico to study modern architecture. Early in his career, Born worked with John Galen Howard, John Reid Jr., and George Kelham. He received his license to practice architecture in New York in 1931, and in California in 1937. In 1926 he married UCB Architecture School graduate Esther Baum ('26) with whom he traveled and shared an architectural practice (1945-1973). Esther B. Born was a widely regarded architectural photographer. (See Biographical Note below.)

---

---

An accomplished artist as well as architect, Born's designs included exhibits, murals, and building design for the 1939-40 Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco, low rent housing for the San Francisco Housing Authority, residences, warehouses, offices, plant designs, and showrooms. He performed site and master planning for the University of California and consulted on product and book design projects. Later in his career, Born participated in the design of the Glen Park BART station and drafted the signs for 33 BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) stations. Born also did editorial and design work for the *Architectural Record* and *Architectural Forum* magazines, as well as rendering designs for other firms, designing furniture, painting in oils and watercolor, and creating illustrations and art prints.

Born was a member of the faculty at the UC Berkeley School of Architecture from 1951 to 1958, and from 1962 to 1974. A member of the A.I.A., he was director of the San Francisco Art Association from 1947 to 1950, serving as its president in 1951. He was also a member of the Art Commission of the City and County of San Francisco from 1947 to 1950. His works were published in various professional architectural magazines from 1929 onward. Born created the illustrations and co-authored both of *The Plan of St. Gall* and *The Barns of the Abbey of Beaulieu* (UC Press) with Walter Horn. He died in 1992 in San Diego.

#### **Esther Born (1902-1987)**

Esther Baum, was a graduate of the UCB Architecture School (1926) where she studied under John Galen Howard. She married Ernest Born in the same year she graduated. During the Great Depression she studied photography, which she practiced successfully throughout her life. She became interested in the architecture of Mexico and drove south to experience the architecture for herself. She returned 10 months later with photographs, drawings, and plans of the country's architecture and design. The compilation of this work was first published in an issue of *Architectural Record* in April 1937. The article was expanded into a book, *The New Architecture in Mexico* published by Wm. Morrow & Co. (New York, 1937). This monograph has been credited with directing the attention of the world to the rise of modern architecture in Mexico.

From 1938 through 1940, she photographed the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in San Francisco. Her subjects included the many different aspects of the Exposition: buildings, construction, fresco painting, opening events, exhibit halls, exhibits, and the general environment.

Her photographs were published in several architectural journals throughout her career, and of note are her architectural photographs highlighted in an article featuring Frank Lloyd Wright's "Honeycomb House" (*Architectural Record*, July 1938).

From 1945 through 1973 she shared an architecture practice with Ernest Born. She continued to take many outstanding photographs of architecture designed by him and others.

#### **Scope and Content of Collection**

The Ernest and Esther Born Collection contains six series: Personal Papers, Professional papers, Project Records, BART, Golden Gate International Exposition, and the UC Greek theatre Reconstruction. The collection is comprised of two primary parts: Ernest Born's personal and professional papers and the records of his practice including design, exhibit, and building projects; and the architectural photographs of Esther Born.

The Personal Papers are comprised of personal drawings of mosque details and designs from Tunisia (1924) and travel slides (1965-1971) from Europe.

The Professional Papers include negatives of Anderson Ranch, a project designed by a fellow architect, Carl F. Gromme. In addition, this series includes a negative of a 1938 San Francisco residence designed by John Eken Dinwiddie.

The Project Records are mostly comprised of drawings and photographs, but also contain project specifications, proposals, and correspondence. They include large-scale presentation renderings for developments on San Francisco's Alcatraz Island, Fisherman's Wharf, and the Embarcadero Crescent, as well as drawings and photographs for other city improvements, including San Francisco's United Nations Plaza Fountain. Born's commission to design numerous private residences and a public housing facility, the North Beach Place Housing Project (1942-ca. 2002) are also a part of the Project Records, as are a number of his design projects for plaques, exhibits, and publications.

The BART series consists of research for signage, files, construction photographs, and drawings for the Balboa, Glen Park, and Lake Merritt stations. Researchers interested in subway and airport transportation and transport signage of all types might find this series of interest.

The Golden Gate International Exposition was held on Treasure Island, San Francisco in 1939 and 1940. Ernest Born was the collaborating architect and designer on many of the buildings and exhibits. The Golden Gate International Exposition series contains many photographs by Esther Born of the design, construction, and opening events of the Exposition.

The UC Greek theatre Reconstruction files are quite extensive and include historical material about the theater and its performances; correspondence with the Hearst Corporation and building contractors; and many photographs and drawings.

For interested researchers, there are separate item-level inventories made by the daughter of Ernest and Ester Born for certain projects including Alcatraz Island, Davis Residence, Fisherman's Wharf, Golden Gate International Exposition, UC Greek theatre, North Beach Place Housing Project, Pacific School of Religion, and the Quillen Residence. The inventories do not necessarily represent the current arrangement.

#### **Arrangement**

The collection is organized into six series: Personal Papers, Professional papers, Project Records, BART, Golden Gate International Exposition, and the UC Greek theatre Reconstruction.

---

---

## Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

## Subjects

San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (Calif.)

Greek Theatre (Berkeley, Calif.)

Golden Gate International Exposition, (1939-1940 ;, San Francisco, Calif.)

Architecture--California.

Architects--California.

Public housing--California--San Francisco.

## Genres and Forms of Material

Architectural drawings.

Architectural records.

Photographs.

## Index Terms Related to this Collection

Born, Esther, 1902-1987.

## Project Index

The following is a list of architectural projects from the Ernest and Esther Born Collection. For instructions on interpreting the Project Index, see **The Guide to the Project Index** at <http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives/pindex/guide.htm> .

The Project Index list is arranged alphabetically by Project/Client Name and contains information, where available, about the location, date, project type, creators, and formats for each project in the collection.

## Project/Client Name (location, date, project type) Creator [role] Format [Ms=Manuscripts, Dr=Drawings, Ph=Photographs]

- Alcatraz Development (San Francisco, CA; 1969; commercial) Collaborator: Charles Trieschmann (developer) [Ms, Dr, Ph]
- Alliance Francaise, seal (San Francisco, CA; 1982; educational) [Ph]
- BART, Balboa Park (San Francisco, CA; 1972-1979; transportation) Photographer: Roger Sturtevant, Roy Flamm [Ms, Ph]
- BART, Design and Research (International; 1965-1971; transportation) [Ph]
- BART, Finished Project (San Francisco, CA; 1972-1974; transportation) [Ms, Ph]
- BART, Glen Park (San Francisco, CA; 1972-1981; transportation) Photographer: Roger Sturtevant, Roy Flamm, Bechtel Corp., Ray Frayne [Ms, Dr, Ph]
- BART, Lake Merritt (Oakland, CA; 1969; transportation) [Ph]
- BART, parking signs (unknown; n.d.; transportation) [Ph]
- California Redwood Association (San Francisco, CA; 1958-1959; commercial) Photographer: Davis [Dr, Ph]
- Davis, H.F. (San Carlos, CA; 1950; residential) Photographer: Esther Born [Dr, Ph]
- Ford, Robert D., improvements and garage (Ross, CA; 1956; residential) [Dr]
- Golden Gate International Exposition (San Francisco, CA; 1938-1940; cultural) Photographer: Esther Born, Roger Sturtevant [Dr, Ph]
- Gump's Department Store, Exhibit (San Francisco, CA; 1941; cultural) [Ph]
- Herbert Hoover Memorial (Palo Alto, CA; 1977; educational) [Ms, Ph]
- Horn, Walter (Richmond, CA; 1941, 1951, 1954; residential) Collaborator: Serge Chermayeff [Dr]
- Housing Authority of the City of San Francisco: North Beach Place Housing Project, CAL-1-11 [see North Beach Place Housing Project] (San Francisco, CA; 1942-1950; residential-multi) Collaborator: Henry Gutterson (architect), Thomas Church (landscape architect) [Ms, Dr, Ph]
- Embarcadero Crescent (San Francisco, CA; 1961; planning) Collaborator: John S. Bolles; Photographer: Aero Photographer [Dr, Ph]
- Fisherman's Wharf (San Francisco, CA; 1961; planning) Collaborator: John S. Bolles; Photographer: Aero Photographer [Dr, Ph]
- Justin Herman Plaza (San Francisco, CA; 1973; municipal) [Dr]
- Lawton Kennedy Exhibition: San Francisco Art Commission Gallery (San Francisco, CA; 1972; cultural) [Dr]
- Macy's Department Store, displays (San Francisco, CA; 1948; commercial) Photographer: Roger Sturtevant [Ph]
- Mazour, Anatole G. (Palo Alto, CA; 1947; residential) Collaborator: Thomas Church (landscape architect) [Dr]
- Merchants Exchange Building, improvements (San Francisco, CA; 1962; commercial) [Ms]

- 
- North Beach Place Housing Project (San Francisco, CA; 1942-1950; residential-multi) Collaborator: Henry Gutterson (architect), Thomas Church (Landscape Architect) [Ms, Dr, Ph]
  - Olsen & Heffernan Warehouse (San Francisco, CA; 1949-1950; commercial) [Dr]
  - Pacific School of Religion (Berkeley, CA; n.d.; educational) [Ms, Ph]
  - Ping Yuen Housing Complex, sculpture (San Francisco, CA; 1959; residential-multi) [Dr]
  - Pro-Helvetic, Exhibit (San Francisco, CA; 1980-1981; cultural) Collaborator: Design Workshop [Dr]
  - Quillen, I.J. (Palo Alto, CA; 1941; residential) Photographer: Esther Born [Dr, Ph]
  - Quillen, I.J., addition and pool (Palo Alto, CA; 1962; residential)
  - San Francisco Fire Department, plaque, job # 3531 (San Francisco, CA; 1973; governmental) [Ms, Dr]
  - San Francisco Legion of Honor, plaque (San Francisco, CA; 1974; cultural) [Dr]
  - San Francisco Port Authority: Embarcadero Crescent, Fisherman's Wharf [see Embarcadero Crescent] [see Fisherman's Wharf] (San Francisco, CA; 1961; planning) Collaborator: John S. Bolles; Photographer: Aero Photographer [Dr, Ph]
  - San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Justin Herman Plaza plaque [see Justin Herman Plaza] (San Francisco, CA; 1973; municipal) [Dr]
  - St. Gall Restoration, exhibit (Berkeley, CA; 1982; educational) [Ms, Ph]
  - Stanford University: Herbert Hoover Memorial [see Herbert Hoover Memorial] (Palo Alto, CA; 1977; educational) [Ms, Ph]
  - United Nations Plaza Fountain (San Francisco, CA; 1974-1985; governmental) Collaborator: Lawrence Halprin (landscape architect) [Ms, Dr, Ph]
  - UC (University of California): Greek theatre Reconstruction (Berkeley, CA; 1954-1963) Collaborator: Lawrence Halprin (landscape architect), Walter Steilberg (engineer); Photographer: Pirkle Jones, SF Examiner [Ms, Dr, Ph]
  - UC: Doe Library (Berkeley, CA; 1954; educational) [Dr]
  - Yates, J. Perry: Castle Rock Ranch (Napa, CA; 1967; residential) [Dr, Ph]

Series I. **Personal Papers 1938-1971**

**Physical Description:** 10 folders and one flat file.

**Subseries Scope and Content Summary**

This series consists of drawings of mosque details and designs from Tunisia in addition to travel slides of various locales throughout Europe.

---

**A. Travel Slides 1965-1971**

---

**B. Writings and Artwork 1924**

Series II. **Professional Papers 1929-1989**

**Physical Description:** 2 folders.

**Subseries Scope and Content Summary**

This series contains negatives of Carl F. Gromme's Anderson Ranch and a San Francisco residence designed by John Eken Dinwiddie.

---

**A. Reference Files n.d.; 1938**

**Series III. Project Records 1960-1985**

**Physical Description:** Boxes 2-4, 8; and 23 flat files.

**Subseries Scope and Content Summary**

This series consists of photographs and drawings for numerous private residences; presentation renderings for improvements to San Francisco's Alcatraz Island, Embarcadero, and Fisherman's Wharf; and drawings for the North Beach Place Housing Project. The project files also include a number of design projects for plaques, exhibits, and publication

**Arrangement**

Arranged alphabetically by project/client name.

---

**A. Project Files**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

**B. Photographs**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

**C. Drawings**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

**Series IV. Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) 1965-1981**

**Physical Description:** Boxes 5-7 and one flat file.

**Subseries Scope and Content Summary**

This series includes research for BART signs, files, construction photographs, and drawings for the Balboa, Glen Park, and Lake Merritt BART stations.

---

**A. Project Files**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

**B. Photographs**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

**C. Drawings**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

Series V. **Golden Gate International Exposition 1938-1940**

**Physical Description:** Boxes 2-15.

**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series is primarily photographic and contains many photographs by Esther Born.

---

**A. Photographs**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

**B. Drawings**

**\*\*See Project Index**

Series VI. University of California, Berkeley Greek theatre Reconstruction 1954-1963

**Physical Description:** Boxes 9-4; and 4 flat files.

**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series includes limited information concerning performances at the Greek theatre from 1904 through 1957. In addition, it contains correspondence with the Hearst Corporation, building contractors, and UC administrators. This series also contains historical information about the theater's sculptural elements and their installation and numerous drawings concerning the various stages of construction, in addition to photographs and text.

---

**A. Project Files**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

**B. Photographs**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

**B. Drawings**

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

SERIES I. Personal Papers 1938-1971

---

A. Travel Slides 1965-1971

Box 1, Folder 1	Aachen: Dom Rathaus 1965
Box 1, Folder 2	Carrara, Lericci 1971
Box 1, Folder 3	Cologne: Cathedral, Opera House, Museum 1965-1966
Box 1, Folder 4	Montreal: The Expo 1967
Box 1, Folder 5	Montreal: Bonaventure Hotel and General Views 1967
Box 1, Folder 6	Montreal: Villa Marie, Banks, General 1967
Box 1, Folder 7	Stockholm: Water Views and Mills Garden 1965
Box 1, Folder 8	Stockholm: Town Hall; London: Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Embankment 1965
Box 1, Folder 9	Garden 1965
Box 1, Folder 10	London: Zoo 1965

---

B. Writings and Artwork

Folder FF 1	Tunisian Mosque Details 1924
-------------	------------------------------

SERIES II. Professional Papers 1929-1987

---

A. Reference Files

Box 1, Folder 11  
Box 1, Folder 12

Anderson Ranch designed by Carl F. Gromme (negatives) n.d.  
H.W. Smith Residence designed by John Eken Dinwiddie  
(negative) 1938

SERIES III. Project Records 1960-1981

---

A. Project Files

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

B. Photographs

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

C. Drawings

**\*\*See Project Index**

SERIES IV. Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) 1960-1981

---

A. Project Files

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

B. Photographs

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

C. Drawings

**\*\*See Project Index**

SERIES V. Golden Gate International Exposition 1933-1940

---

A. Photographs

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

B. Drawings

**\*\*See Project Index**

SERIES VI. University of California, Berkeley Greek theatre Reconstruction 1954-1963

---

A. Project Files

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

B. Photographs

**\*\*See Project Index**

---

C. Drawings

**\*\*See Project Index**