THE MAGIC LANTERN MAN

THEOPHILUS HOPE D'ESTRELLA

by Mildred Albronda
THE MAGIC-LANTERN MAN

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Self Portrait of Theophilus Hope D'Estrella with his students in front of Douglas Tilden's monumental Bear Hunt. c. 1896.
CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND WORK of
THEOPHILUS HOPE D'ESTRELLA

Teacher, lecturer, writer, artist, photographer, traveler, philanthropist, and, above all, the children’s friend.

“We have in mind a man who can neither speak nor hear, yet he is in frequent demand for public entertainments, and is a welcome visitor at social gatherings and in home circles. He is clever with pencil and crayon, a good card player, a palmist of no mean ability, and expert at pantomime and sign-presentations, a member of the Sierra Club, the California Camera Club...(and equally at home in sweater or evening dress.) He is a photographer who has won prizes in more than one contest. He has hundreds of fine lantern slides...."

Editorial,
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my many deaf friends in the Bay Area who have encouraged me to bring to light the extraordinary life of Theophilus Hope d'Estrella as an outstanding model for deaf heritage for more than one hundred years. The idea of writing about d'Estrella, specifically, came from a suggestion of Max Knight, former Principal Editor for the University of California Press, Berkeley, who later offered valuable suggestions in editing the manuscript. Very personal thanks are tended to Eric Albronda, Ann Liska, Winifred Cress, and Dorothy Aggeler, without whose encouragement in the beginning I would never have continued on this project. Dr. Henry Klopping, Superintendent, California School for the Deaf (now at Fremont), gave me permission to dig through old files, closets, and boxes of papers in the school basements to uncover much of the source material. Ralph Neesam, Editor of the California News and Director of Outreach and Training, offered encouragement throughout the entire project. Jeanne Albronda Heaton offered valuable suggestions at proofreading time.

It was a rare privilege and learning experience for me to assist Renee Beller Dreyfus, Curator of Education and Interpretation, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, in planning the exhibition of original photographs of Theophilus Hope d'Estrella, held at the M. H. deYoung Memorial Museum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, May 17, 1978 - May 1, 1979. Of this exhibition, the late art critic Alfred Frankenstein wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle, May 25, 1978: “He used Photography as one of several means of communication... The prints are small but sharp and elegantly composed. The whole is full of high spirits and a sense of comradeship.”
Peter Palmquist, photographer at Humboldt State University and author of many articles and books on western photographers, came into the project later on, his assistance in preparing the negatives from original photograph albums, editing the photographs, and the original design of the book has been indispensable.

Julian Singleton brought the final design elements together.

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FOREWORD

As the California School for the Deaf, Fremont, celebrates its 125th anniversary, it is fitting that the work of the first student enrolled in the school—Theophilus Hope d'Estrella—is the subject of the book. I am pleased that our graphic arts students and their instructor, Julian Singleton, are publishing *The Magic Lantern Man: Theophilus Hope d'Estrella*. I regret that John Galvan who spent many volunteer hours preparing photographs for the book did not live to see this labor of love completed.

Mildred Albronda, author of *Douglas Tilden: Portrait of a Deaf Sculptor*, former Docent for the Deaf at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and Research Associate for the Historical Library and Museum, California School for the Deaf, has done a marvelous job in writing about the life and work of Theophilus Hope d'Estrella. His story is one to inspire deaf children to learn about the arts and to succeed through personal effort.

This treasury of photographs and lore also helps preserve an important part of California’s glorious history.

Henry Klopping,
Superintendent
*California School for the Deaf, Fremont*
*November, 1985*
INTRODUCTION

California was aswarm with photographers in the late nineteenth century. Many were “expert amateurs” who left a legacy of exquisite images of special moments and places, creating pictorial diaries of our past. This book is about such an image maker.

Theophilus Hope d'Estrella was an extraordinary person; he could neither hear nor speak. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, d'Estrella’s disabilities did not stop him from becoming a teacher at the California School for the Deaf, Berkeley, a lecturer on nature (using sign language), a writer, a world traveler, a sportsman, a mountain climber, and an outstanding amateur photographer. His artistic and aesthetic development included five years of formal study of drawing and painting; his pantomime performances were much sought after in both hearing and deaf groups. His writings, recording memories of his activities, often reveal sources of his creativity—a rare thing to discover about an artist.

My fascination with d'Estrella grew from previous research concerning his life-long friend Douglas Tilden, California sculptor, who was also deaf. The most productive sources of information were d'Estrella's news columns, "The Itemizer," which he wrote over a period of forty-four years in the news bulletin published by the California School for the Deaf. Its first issue, in 1885, was the Daily News; then the Evening News; two years later it became the Weekly News; and finally the California News, a monthly magazine. It is still being published. In "The Itemizer" d'Estrella concerned himself with the activities of students, alumni, and sometimes himself, providing an illuminating source of information. When I finished reading his last column, written shortly before his death in 1929, I suffered a sad feeling of loss of communication with this delightful man, d'Estrella. He had preserved faithfully the flavor of his own life, his concern for his fellow deaf friends, and

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.
(Rachel Carson, Sense of Wonder)
especially his love of children. He often wrote articles for the school newspaper about morals, manners, animals, scientific phenomena, his vacation “tramps” in the wilderness of the Sierra Nevada, trips further afield, and education of the deaf. He also wrote to correct widespread misunderstandings about the innate capabilities of the deaf child. D’Estrella confided to the “Itemizer”: “It is almost a miracle that a deaf child should be able to speak well, when he has no idea of sounds.” He deplored the prevailing ideas of “deaf and dumb” and the implication of lack of intelligence. He was dismayed by the popular notion that an institution for the deaf was an asylum for the insane and mentally retarded. Many intelligent people, even today, still believe that the deaf, like the blind, learn by braille. Deafness, being invisible, is perhaps the most misunderstood and ignored disability. It can lead to severe communication barriers, loneliness, and isolation. D’Estrella devoted his life to teaching deaf children the highest art—the joy of living. His photographs of them reflect that aim.

This monograph and portfolios discuss mostly D’Estrella’s little-known talent as an expert-amateur photographer—particularly as a photographer of deaf children—spanning a period of twenty-four years (1886-1910). D’Estrella’s unique sense of wonder in the world around him, his heightened ability to see, was transmitted to his students through his personality and his photography. He shared his joyful discoveries of nature’s secrets with the children as they tramped over the hills of Berkeley and on the near-by beaches gathering shells, rocks, and small marine animals. Together, d’Estrella and the children rode the ferry boats across the Bay to San Francisco, hopped onto steam streetcars to explore Golden Gate Park, the Cliff House, the Presidio, Fort Point, and mysterious Chinatown, and walked along the

“The problems of deafness are more complex, if not more important, than those of blindness. Deafness is a much worse misfortune because of the loss of the most vital stimulus—the sound of the voice that brings language, sets thoughts astir, and helps us in the intellectual company of man.”

Helen Keller (London, 1933)
legendary “Path of Gold” on Market Street that ended at the ever-fascinating waterfront. His perceptive photographic images of these holiday tramps around the Bay were often transferred onto glass plates as lantern slides for the children’s joy, awe, amazement, and education. They referred to him affectionately as “the magic-lantern man.”

D'Estrella, in addition to making his own slides from photographs he had taken of the children and of his travels, borrowed many commercial slides for educational purposes from the California Camera Club of which he was a member. The most popular commercial lantern-slide shows were of political and historical figures and of great battles of the American Revolution and of the Civil War. Comic characters—especially those that moved—brought joy and laughter. Slides of far-away places and foreign peoples stretched the children’s imaginations. D'Estrella firmly believed that slides “illustrating children and animals in their joys and sorrows, and in pranks and acts of kindness, helped the children to love and sympathize, as well as turn from and resist evil.”

Thousands of d'Estrella’s negatives were destroyed in a fire in his studio workshop in 1910. The lantern slides and albums of his snapshots, stored in another building, were spared. The photographs in this book are printed from negatives made from the d'Estrella Collection of lantern slides and from copy negatives of prints.

D'Estrella’s gentle, sensitive, documentary, pictorial images from a past era, portraying primarily activities of deaf children who attended the West's first special school for the deaf, evoke warm feelings in the viewer of the universality of childhood, tending to create a deeper understanding between the two worlds of the deaf and the hearing.

Mildred Albronda
Theophilius Hope d'Estrella (1851-1929)
EARLY CHILDHOOD, 1851-1860.

Theophilus Hope d'Estrella was born in the district known as Happy Valley in San Francisco on February 6, 1851, to his Swiss-French father, whom he never knew, and his Mexican mother, who died then he was five years old. His father's last name was de Rutte; d'Estrella changed his name from de Rutte to d'Estrella—his own choice, guided by romantic leanings—when he was sixteen years old. All that d'Estrella ever learned of his father was that he was a wine merchant who acted as the first consul in California for France and Switzerland. D'Estrella's mother's health was delicate. Later in his long life, as memories of childhood haunted him, he recalled the warm feeling of his mother's kisses, of her caresses, and of the touch of his hand in hers as they walked to the neighborhood church. Another childhood memory was the joy that overwhelmed him one Sunday morning when he first heard a faint ringing of church bells. Vibrations from the bell clapper rippled through the air making his heart beat faster and his steps quicken. He never forgot that moment: It often tinkled through his memory. Occasionally, during his lifetime, he heard faint sounds in his left ear.

When d'Estrella was born, San Francisco was still a goldrush town, a community of young people and of action and hope everywhere; it was also a place of violence and vigilantes. "Out of this era with all its picturesque qualities, contradictions, impossibilities, realities, fables, promises, failures, successes, sins, flashes of grace, benevolences, tragedies, and noble deeds, sprang Theophilus d'Estrella," wrote his life-long friend Douglas Tilden, the sculptor, for d'Estrella's eulogy many years later, adding: "He was the incarnation of romance which California, itself a romantic element, created in a wild moment; and throughout his career, he carried that quality which
made his personality stand out in so striking a manner." And yet, Tilden ended, reflecting metaphorically, "He was a quiet brook running between green banks."

When d'Estrella's mother died, he was turned over to a guardian, a young Mexican woman, who had several children of her own and treated him without sympathy. She did not know how to communicate with this shy, strangely silent child whose mother, she thought, had overprotected him with her love. He had no language; he could neither hear nor speak, he did not understand the meaning of words either in Spanish or English. Haltingly, d'Estrella and his guardian developed a system of communication based on natural gestures growing out of the woman's Mexican temperament and the little boy's natural desires. Now life became a challenge. The alert, bright child was
drawn to the ways of the streets mainly to avoid the harsh treatment of his guardian. He often ran away, and his guardian would beat him for that. He would run away again, drawn to the tantalizing smells and sights of the waterfront, to the mysteries and alleys of Chinatown, to the comings and goings on Market Street, to sneaking rides on the ferry boats to see "the beautiful oak trees and wild poppies in the meadows of Oakland," all the while stealing bits of food to satisfy his hunger, and nickels and dimes to satisfy his sweet tooth for candy. He reasoned that anything that felt good, must be good; the beatings felt bad and he did not want to stay around for the painful lashes.

Many years later, an eminent pioneer psychologist, Professor William James, M.D., of Harvard University, became interested in the thoughts of a person without a formal language. His study led him to a series of communications with d'Estrella and the subsequent publication of "Thoughts Before Language: A Deaf-Mutes Recollections," in the Philosophical Review, November 1892, Volume I. According to this account, d'Estrella wrote to Dr. James: "How much I loved to go to the bay... a dozen blocks away... what a splendid tramp it was! Good-natured sailors taught me to draw pictures of ships. It awakened in me a vague feeling of mystery—sadness—loneliness." Dr. James concluded that abstract thoughts occurred before the means of expressing them to others. D'Estrella's reminiscences helped to settle for Dr. James the idea that moral conscience was intuitive, when d'Estrella confessed to a childhood theft which became too heavy a burden for him. One day he had taken a gold coin from a butcher's till. When he presented it to a confectioner, he received not only his pieces of candy but a whole handful of change. The coin he had taken was a $20 gold
piece. He did not understand the bounty he received in change; he felt uneasy, alarmed, and guilty, and he never took money again.

SCHOOL DAYS, 1860-1873.

After d'Estrella's ninth birthday, a group of ladies met at the Oriental Hotel near Market and Bush streets to form a Society for the Instruction and Maintenance of the Indigent Deaf, and Dumb, and Blind. D'Estrella's guardian, hearing of this, promptly dumped him on their doorstep, and d'Estrella became, appropriately, the first male pupil of the school that had quickly developed from the ladies' meeting. The institution officially opened its doors on May 1, 1860, in a rented wooden cottage at 17 Tehama Street in San Francisco. D'Estrella later wrote in a third-person biographical note: "This orphan boy had such hard luck with his guardian that he passed four years as a run-away urchin, often living by himself and undergoing the vicissitudes of evil peculiar to the days of '49. He entered the institution and found it more like a home than a school—perhaps that is the reason why he never has been away except for vacations." D'Estrella remained throughout his long life connected with what later became known as the world-renowned California School for the Deaf, Berkeley. For him it was his home—he never married.

D'Estrella soon learned the sign language of the deaf from his first teacher, William A. Crandall, who was himself deaf. Flying fingers opened a new world of exciting communication. D'Estrella now had sufficient food, protection, supervised play, and loving companionship. He later reported in his "Itemizer" news column: "The California School for the Deaf was founded one block from the base of Rincon Hill . . . magnificent views toward the bay. The boys went fishing . . . and wading . . . There were few wharves . . . in the spaces
"Vaccination for Smallpox."
Dr. Warring Wilkinson supervises the school physician and nurse in trying to stop the deadly disease that left many childhood victims with impaired hearing.

between there were shanties, junk shops, and foot bridges of odd sorts—full of interest.” He recalled the inspiration he felt when the celebrated Bret Harte guided him and his classmates through the United States Mint where Harte worked. He also remembered his amazement when Emperor Norton, the legendary character, came to the school and proclaimed with a flourish that he would issue an edict commanding the state legislature to give the school whatever money they wanted. And d’Estrella was intrigued with the tale told in gesture and fingerspelling by his long-time friend General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo of how he, the general, had lassoed two bears on the site of the Palace Hotel in the early days.

Warring Wilkinson, an eminent deaf educator from New York, became principal of the school in
1865 and remained in that position for forty-four years. This kind gentle, brilliant man became more that a teacher and friend to d’Estrella—he was in effect a loving father. Wilkinson believed in the far-reaching effects of art as part of the deaf child’s curriculum. He recognized and encouraged the use of drawing and painting as a means of expression and as a tool for learning broader relationships. The aesthetic atmosphere and encouragement that Wilkinson fostered during his tenure did much to develop the talents of three of outstanding students: Douglas Tilden who became a world-renowned California sculptor; Granville Seymour Redmond who distinguished himself as a California landscape painter, and d’Estrella. Sign language and art were integral parts of their lives. Sign as a visual pattern of thought was for them a beautiful art form in space.

The school in San Francisco soon grew, and in 1869 was moved to Berkeley, then a hamlet of one hundred persons. Four years later, in 1873, the University of California opened its doors nearby and became a friendly neighbor. The new California School for the Deaf campus, nestled at the foot of the Berkeley hills facing the Golden Gate, spread over one hundred and thirty-one acres of land for school buildings, vegetable gardens, fruit trees, farm animals, and a dairy. In addition to classroom studies, the boys and girls helped with the daily chores and tree planting; Saturdays were for hiking on the nearby hills, wading at the beaches, and exploring the Bay Area. Many of d’Estrella’s creative perceptions were honed by his active participation in the school-sponsored Abbe de L’Epee Literary Society; students, age twelve and up, were encouraged to participate in debating (using sign language), parliamentary procedures, and pantomime entertainment, resulting in a wide exploration of classical literature and the development by d’Estrella of a remarkable poise on the platform. In the final year of his life, d’Estrella recalled with...
amusement the beginnings of the literary group:

The boys met on December 9, 1871, to form the new society, the Excelsior Debating Society, and they resolved to admit girls to the privilege of membership. Thus while so many people had been vexing themselves about the problems of women's rights to no purpose, we had solved it so far as we were concerned, in a satisfactory way, and have as yet no reason to repent our decision. "Itemizer", *California News*, April 9, 1929.

Camping-out became popular in California. In 1871, d'Estrella journeyed to Yosemite Valley, mostly on foot, which began a life-long love affair with the Sierra Nevada wilderness. His enchantment was enhanced when he met the naturalist John Muir working in Hutchinson's saw mill in the Valley. In later years, John Muir was amused and pleased with d'Estrella's pantomime interpretations of Muir's mannerisms for the nightly camp-fire entertainment of the Sierra Club of which d'Estrella was a member.

In June 1873, d'Estrella and Charles Smith were the first pupils to graduate from the California School for the Deaf, Berkeley.

**HIGHER EDUCATION, 1873-1885.**

Four months later, d'Estrella became the first deaf student to attend the nearby University of California as a regular student, an unprecedented achievement. He registered "as a new undergraduate on October 10, 1873 in the College of Science at the age of 21." The following spring, an event occurred which had a decisive influence on d'Estrella.

In April 1874, the distinguished photographer Eadweard Muybridge was engaged to photograph the elegant Ruskinian Gothic stone structure of the California School for the Deaf, where d'Estrella was still in residence. D'Estrella was fascinated with Muybridge's every move during his three days of
Rear of the school building looking westward toward Berkeley and the Golden Gate. The University of California can be seen at the right. Photograph taken in April 1874 by Eadweard Muybridge.
A student writes: "The institution (CSD) being in the Athens of the Pacific, near fine academics and the State University, the intellectual atmosphere is clarified in the pure and balmy air of the Pacific, playing through the Golden Gate—a most picturesque scene of earth, water, and sky, favorable to the appreciation of exalted ideas of man."

making a series of photographs of the school. Two handsome photographic prints (17x21) remain extant of that visit. Standing on the porch of the magnificent new building, d'Estrella was moved to write a short essay in his University note-book entitled, "Our Landscape":

Before me . . . nature lifts her curtain and reveals as pretty a landscape as one wishes to see. Where I stand is a gently sloping eminence . . . The terrace is about 300 feet above the level of the sea. The sloping plain is dotted with gardens, and farms, that, when it is spring, it is one spreading sheet of green set with floral jewels . . . extends about three miles till it reaches the bay of San Francisco. Immediately to the right stands the aspiring town of Berkeley, with the massive buildings of the State University . . . partly embowered in the shades of the beautiful California live-oaks and laurels that line Strawberry Creek . . .

In front is the land-locked bay of San Francisco, bearing on its bosom, a fleet of ships, whose flying ensigns tell of nearly all the nationalities of the globe . . . The gentle Pacific Ocean is all beyond the Golden Gate . . .

Sometimes, when the setting of the sun clothes the occidental sky in a blaze of color, it makes such landscape as leads one to say with old Izaak Walton. "Low, what glory hast thou in heaven for the good, when thou dost provide such beauty for bad men on earth?" How extensive our landscape, how varied, how beautiful!

— T. d'Estrella, Nov. 5th, 1874, Univ. of Calif.

About this time, Warring Wilkinson engaged d'Estrella to teach a class in drawing on Saturday mornings at the school, paying him five dollars a month. D'Estrella remained for three years at the University. Professor Edward Roland Sill, well-known poet, declared d'Estrella one of the best students in his classes of English, rhetoric, and history. D'Estrella studied both German and French. He especially enjoyed the classes in physics with Professor John LeConte, one of the organizers of the University of California, and also with Professor Joseph LeConte—famed geologist. Latin and Greek mythology were d'Estrella's special delights. Among his collection of five hundred books, which he later bequeathed to the California School for the Deaf library, several volumes on
botany and conchology are well-worn testaments of being favorites as well. D'Estrella was a good student, but mathematics proved a stumbling block toward his graduation. D'Estrella then taught school full time for three years at his old alma mater. In 1879, as a result of his persistent attempts to be admitted, Virgil Williams, director of the San Francisco Art Association's California School of Design in San Francisco (now the San Francisco Art Institute), finally accepted d'Estrella as a student. Williams previously had held that it was "impossible to teach a deaf-mute."

Williams and d'Estrella became fast friends communicating mainly by pencil and paper. D'Estrella saved the notes, more than one hundred pages, excerpts of which were published in the West's Literary magazine, The Overland Monthly, March 1887, shortly after William's death, under the title: "Virgil Williams Art Notes to a Deaf-Mute Pupil." D'Estrella was awed at the ease with which William wrote, never hesitating for a word:

"It (a sketch of d'Estrella's) is awfully careless. Do not try after Hill (Thomas Hill, California landscape painter). Try after Jerome and Bonnat or any great French master. Tom Hill has a great deal of knowledge and can afford to neglect details... You have his carelessness without his knowledge. I want you to feel and reach the Poetry of Drawing." For three months, d'Estrella struggled with his charcoal studies of the plaster cast of the Venus de Milo. One morning, Williams stopped by d'Estrella's easel, smiled and commented.

You have learned to love this Venus... To see, feel, and really appreciate the beautiful expression and soft undulations of the breasts and the voluptuous lips, it is necessary to draw them. Courage!... There is a heap of mystery about women, and the only way to give an idea of mystery and beauty is to make it indefinite.

One day d'Estrella complained of William's harsh criticism of his work, to which Williams replied: "You must take the bitter with the sweet."
When d'Estrella was a student at the School of Design in San Francisco, he and Douglas Tilden enjoyed a camping and sketching trip together. These sketches by d'Estrella from his "Illustrated History of Big Tree Camp, Austin Creek, Duncan's Mills, California. From August 16 to September 9, 1882."
"D'Estrella's Dream."

1882.
"I often tramped from early dawn until breakfast, and again until lunch, and after suppertime—mostly along the coast-cliffs I loitered like a snail and gazed with such longing as only an artist can feel and know. It was like being shut in silence. The self-sculptured cliffs are impressive and the little arched coves are lovely coming out in silhouette against the horizon bed of the summer sky; the water ripples idly along the sheltered smooth beach; the rest are lost in reverie . . . Here and there among the breakers is an extraordinary perfect and beautiful aquarium where shells live in multitudes; tiny saucy fishes dart out in a none-of-your-business manner, and dwarf crabs peep out with suspicion . . ." T. d'Estrella, 1888.

If the ecstasy of drunkenness were not followed by reaction and pain, the whole world would be continuously and gloriously drunk."—John Ruskin's *Ruskin on Painting*. Williams wrote: "That book is very pleasant reading for young ladies, but you will get no practical benefit from it. The author is a charming descriptive writer, but a conceited and prejudiced old ass." When Williams was convalescing at home from an illness, he wrote to d'Estrella: "I was thinking of you last night. I always give my pupils the benefit of my private criticism while in bed during wakeful hours. I have had a great deal of sympathy for you since my illness. I heard with difficulty, and I can estimate slightly the affliction you have labored under, and let me say that I can only admire you for your patience and perseverance, which has enabled you to accomplish so much."

Williams went on to define art, the necessity of developing skills, and gave a summary of his
methods of portrait painting. D'Estrella, who was moved by the French painter Millet's somber paintings, nevertheless agreed with William's comments: "As for Millet, I admire his work very much, but he was too Calvinistic for my nature. He delighted in depicting the woes, sufferings, and sorrows of the peasantry. I should like rather to depict their joys and pleasures. There are few lives into which pleasure does not enter. They love, court, and marry. They gather the grain and of the grapes they make wine; they drink, dance, and are merry. That is the side of life I like best, and I do not doubt you do also." D'Estrella carried this philosophy into his photography.

D'Estrella studied drawing and painting at the art school for five years. He was delighted in the fall of 1881 when his fellow-student and special friend, Grace Carpenter (later known as Grace Carpenter Hudson), eminent painter of Indian children, won the coveted Alvord first award for her drawing of Achilles from a plaster cast, and d'Estrella came in second.

In the summer of 1882, d'Estrella and Tilden went camping to a favorite place near the Russian River north of San Francisco. Lively excerpts from d'Estrella's "Illustrated History of Big Tree Camp—From Aug. 16 - Sept. 9, 1882", include:

**Wednesday, August 16th, 1882:**

Ho for Duncan Mills! . . . We are to camp out and sketch from amidst the beauties of nature—this under inspiration and guidance—not a fickle flirting goddess. A most delightful ride. Plenty of country girls at the station, though how plump and robust they looked!—how gay in calico dress!—innocent and free in manner. Mashing not allowed.

**August 17:**

Visited the mills. Our camp was pitched . . . in a shady spot with all the necessary accesses.
Grace Carpenter Hudson and d'Estrella in her studio in Ukiah, c. 1888.
around—water, wood, game, etc.

*August 18:*

Thanks to Doug's talent for constructiveness, we made a hammock out of a large piece of bark (with ferns for cushion). Sketching five hours.

*August 19:*

Words are not enough to describe the way we sketch out daily. Time is precious.

*August 22:*

Dinner—corned beef soup, crackers, jelly, butter, cheese, coffee, and pickles—one of the creations of Doug's genius. Cut a handful of meat into pieces, mix with mashed crackers, put some little vinegar and bits of pickle in, let the hash remain in pan of boiling water for 15 minutes, season with bay leaves.

*August 23:*

Sometimes sketching, sometimes taking rests, sometimes watching the men and oxen go down for dinner and come back to work . . . . What a realistic picture of life with contrasts of light and richness of color. I estimate each meal costs us each only 12½ cents. We eat plenty and enjoy vulgar health . . . . I tried fishing—ill luck. The only bait I can make is a bit of raisin. Thus when I get out of patience while trying my masterly skill, I eat raisins up, one after another—its object is to stop my impatience and encourage me again . . . .

Every day looks more like home, though minus a mother-a sister-a sweetheart.

*August 24:*

No other freedom and independence of walking than the enjoyment of rambling with a keen eye and a sketch book in hand. It naturally induces hardihood and strength of limb, freedom of breath, vigor of constitution; it makes men familiar with works of God in the field and forest, with their kaleidoscope, which are unknown to the dwellers of pent-up cities.

After sketching, we strolled aimlessly, and per
chance dropped into one of the China-houses. We were interested in watching the unintelligible gambling and deadly opium smoking. Then went to a saloon. Honest to say, we did not drink.

August 26:

The moon was full and the effect of her queenly light upon this forest-part was beautiful and poetical.

August 31:

Art school begins September 17th. At noon and sunset the hammock is the best thing to enjoy a quiet rest so that I can study nature in mind more deeply and mysteriously than in sketching.

September 7:

I have made 54 sketches—5 given a way, 5 sold . . . . Two men at the camp play on a banjo and a violin for me at night. I never regret my deafness, but for the sake of music.

September 9:

Good Bye. With unshaven beard and unblackened shoes I look like a tramp, but thanks, O! to Art—my portfolio saves me from this disgrace . . . . Got up at 2:30 a.m.—3 hours and 15 minutes of walking (to the trains). Crackers not yet out. Finis.

As a member of the San Francisco Art Association, d'Estrella exhibited oils and watercolors in the annual Spring Exhibitions at the California School of Design for several years. Some of these were sold. One small oil painting was accepted in the California State Fair in Sacramento. In 1896, d'Estrella exhibited fifteen studies of trees and water in the Spring Exhibition of member's works of the Guild of Arts and Crafts, in San Francisco.

When d'Estrella finished his studies at the art school in 1884, he was appointed teacher of drawing and painting at the California School for the Deaf, a position he held until the art
department was discontinued because of lack of funds in 1923.

D'Estrella's influence as an art teacher was widespread, evoking the awakening and enhancement of aesthetic and artistic possibilities for many of his visually oriented students. He agreed completely with Douglas Tilden who wrote so eloquently: "Knowledge of the mechanical part of art . . . and acquaintance with its aims as an intellectual force will constitute an education: a boy will certainly be a better carpenter, a better engineer, and even a better editor or minister for having taken lessons in the art department." It was d'Estrella who recognized and carefully nurtured the budding talent of Granville Redmond, bringing him to the attention of the Board of Directors who

D'Estrella visited and photographed his former pupil Granville Redmond in Los Angeles in December 1898, shortly after Redmond returned from five years study of painting in Paris. Redmond became one of the foremost landscape painters in California in the early 20th Century.

Granville Redmond paints his sister Lulu, 1898.
provided funds for Redmond's advanced study at the California School of Design and at the Academy Julien in Paris. Redmond later became one of the leading landscape painters in California during the first decade of the twentieth century.

INTEREST IN PHOTOGRAPHY, 1886-1910.

In 1886, d'Estrella enthusiastically embraced the study of photography, becoming at once a serious student. For the next twenty-four years he pursued his visions in this new medium. His first attempt at image making shows a faded outline of a wagon in front of a barn presumably taken on the grounds of the California School for the Deaf, Berkeley. Mr. Charles Wilkinson, principal of the California School for the Blind, and brother of Warring Wilkinson, principal of the California School for the Deaf, taught d'Estrella and his friend Tilden the elements of creating a likeness on paper. By this time, photography was growing out of its infancy.

The accepted birthdate of photography is 1839, when the daguerrotype process amazed the world the first time it was displayed in Paris. This marvel was soon brought to the United States, and the silver-plated copper images captured the imaginations of many creative artists. Photographers fanned out over the continent accompanying the pioneers who explored the West and those who sought the gold fields of California. Further advances of new cumbersome photographic equipment, wet-plate emulsions, and lack of traveling facilities for two more decades, attest to the valiant efforts of such men as C.L. Weed, Carleton E. Watkins, Timothy H. O'Sullivan, Eadweard J. Muybridge, and William Henry Jackson, who were among the first to photograph the western United States. The earliest photographs of the West were primarily documentary landscapes and portraits. Pictorial and romantic subjects came later.
Waring Wilkinson, 1866, in his annual report to the Governor of California wrote: “Speech and language are not the same... Words are arbitrary signs of ideas, settled and understood by usage. A sign of the hand is no more arbitrary, and may be as suggestive, when agreed upon by a community to represent a definite idea. Upon this fact the sign-language has been devised, whereby the eye is made to do the office of the ear, the hand becomes the vicar of the tongue. The languages of gestures is the vernacular of the deaf-mute, by means of which knowledge is imparted.”
Technology improved the process, and after the mid-1880s the somewhat easier, boxed, dry-plate material became available; railroads opened up travel to the wilderness areas and Eastman offered the hand camera to the world. By the end of the nineteenth century, photographers swarmed over California—especially the San Francisco Bay Area. D'Estrella probably never used the complicated wet-plate method. He purchased his first hand camera in 1895.

Long before d'Estrella's interest in photography was kindled, he hiked and camped over the nearby hills of the Bay Area, the Sierra Nevada mountains, and the vast beaches of the California coastline. It followed that he wanted to capture on film the inspiration he felt from nature's wonders, and to share his joy with others. D'Estrella's pictures of water are deep-felt and would make a fascinating portfolio of photographs. Perhaps his interest in the movement of water stems from his childhood experiences on the waterfront of San Francisco Bay, which preceded the later influence from photographer Muybridge, who in his own early career was fascinated with the movement, rhythm, and reflections of water. Flowing sparkling water stirred d'Estrella deeply. He was thrilled when he "heard the roar of the water" tumbling madly down over the rocks to quiet pools below, and his whole body felt the vibrations and the cool spray. The seashore at Santa Cruz and Mendocino recreated his spirit as he was drawn to the chaos of the wild waves and the quiet depths of tide pools. During his winter vacations, for thirty-four years his soul was inspired by the bare trees reflecting their shapes and forms in the quiet waters of the Rio Chico, which trickled through the twenty-thousand-acre Rancho Chico. Long summer vacations found d'Estrella often
Picnic at the Berkeley beach, May 1892.

"In a Rippling Chorus."

"Mr. d'Estrella took several photos of the picnic party on the bay beach, West Berkeley. Students fanned out over a five mile radius for the holiday. The girls walked along Dwight Way, West Berkeley, and the bay. They sat three hours rambling along the beach enjoying the sea breeze in the warmth of the sun. The tide came in and tempted the girls to wade.

"The Itemizer", The California News, June 4, 1892.
“Taking Toll, 1894.” D’Estrella and Grace Carpenter Hudson.

“Every summer Mr. d’Estrella hies himself to the mountains and is busy with sketch-book and camera until the opening of school ... Added interest was given to the scenes by the introduction of human figures. A member of the party, Charles Green, editor of Overland Monthly wrote a poem to accompany this dramatic series.”

—“The Itemizer”, The California News, January 12, 1895.

TAKING TOLL

I.

“I think you’re very rude indeed, to stop my going by,
And threaten me such dreadful things if I should even try,
I really, truly, don’t believe you mean a word you say,—
So please to stand aside, sir, and let me go my way.”

II.

“Don’t grieve yourself so, pretty one, for just one little kiss;
You surely ought to render toll in such a place as this,—
And if you knew the happiness you’ve given me, why then
It might be you would turn around, and come right back again.”

—Charles Green, Editor of Overland Monthly, December, 1894.
hiking around on foot in the mountains, shooting with his camera where others had not ventured. Year after year d'Estrella returned to the Sierra Nevada with John Muir's Sierra Club.

In the summer of 1888, d'Estrella spent eight weeks in and around Ukiah in Mendocino county as the guest of Grace Carpenter Davis, his old art-school friend, and her parents. He enjoyed the way Grace treated him—as if he were not deaf. D'Estrella reveled in the aesthetic atmosphere of Grace's studio home, near her parents, where he had a room for the summer. Sketching and taking photographs occupied much of their time. One of his photographs shows a small shack in the woods with the perhaps telling legend "lovers' retreat." He also enjoyed dabbling in watercolors for the first time. There was time for d'Estrella to improve his
Dutch Windmill — Holland, 1889.

This photograph was exhibited in the California Camera Club's Annual Exhibition in February 1898. D'Estrella bought many commercial large photographs while on his European trip of 1889 which he later mounted for the children's enjoyment. He apparently did not take many photographs himself.
photographic techniques under the guidance of Aurelius Carpenter, Grace’s father, who was a professional photographer among his many talents. Several dozen slides made from Carpenter’s negatives are in the d’Estrella collection. The family and a few friends went into nearby redwood forests for several short camping trips. D’Estrella confided later to the “Itemizer”: “Nowhere can one come so close to nature’s heart as when camping out” and “I had no idea ladies could improve camp life so much—singing and dancing. It appears to me that women are to camp life what salt is to meat.”

D’Estrella was repelled, at first sight, by what he considered “the poor beggarly conditions” of the many Indians he encountered as he roamed the countryside around Ukiah. He later wrote of
"Last Wednesday, the long-expected holiday came for Mr. d'Estrella's class. They went over to the city and took the cars to the Presidio... walked about and saw how the soldiers drilled and how the band played music. Beyond the fort by the sea cliffs they lunched on sardines, turkey, pickles, marmalade, and cake... The morning at first threatened as though it were going to rain, but... it became sunny with crisp sea-breeze and continued pleasant all day. The teacher took four pictures."

—"The Itemizer", *The Weekly News*, April, 1891.
On February 6, 1890, d'Estrella celebrated his 39th birthday by giving his students a holiday to Golden Gate Park, and the Cliff House: "The weather was lovely and they had a good day's work in studying nature. The next morning they wrote in their journals. The best one is printed herewith."

—"The Itemizer", The Weekly News, February 15, 1890

JOURNAL ON THE BIRTHDAY OF MR. D'ESTRELLA
by a pupil

"Yesterday Mr. d'Estrella had a birthday. He asked Mr. Wilkinson to let his pupils have a holiday. Mr. Wilkinson said yes. At a signal we changed our clothes and got ready. We felt happy. After chapel, Mr. d'Estrella walked with us to the depot. We waited for the cars. The cars came, and we got in. The cars went to the piers and reached it. We got off and went into the ferry-boat. We saw many gulls on the bay and talked about them. The boat reached the city. We got out and took seats in a cable car. It went long. We passed many people and many houses. We reached Golden Gate Park. We walked through the trees. We saw the clean roads and green grass. We walked down and into the flower house. We felt warm. We saw many pretty flowers. We were curious. There were different orchids, ferns, banana-trees, and palm-trees and many gold fishes. We walked out and saw Garfield Monument and Key Monument. We walked and saw a deer park. There were nineteen deer. We petted some of them. We walked to the playground. We jumped on the spring-board and swung in the boxes. We played the giant's stride. Mr. George Murphy let us ride the donkeys and goats. David nearly fell from the donkey and Ethel nearly fell from the goat. Mary's saddle slipped and she nearly fell. The donkey kicked Simgond on the hand. I pulled the reins hard. We were happy but we felt tired. We went into the lunch-room and had sandwiches, bread, cake, pie, and coffee. We got some candy. The cars went fast and we felt cool. We reached the ocean and walked on the beach. We went up to the Cliff House and saw many seals. They lived on the rocks in the sea. They fell off, swam and came up again. The billow rolled. Then we went to the dummy-cars and went the other way. The cars ran slowly along the steep cliffs, and went through the tunnel. We saw cemeteries. We changed cars and reached the ferry depot. We got into the boat and reached the pier. We went in the cars to Berkeley. Mr. Wilkinson invited Mr. d'Estrella into his house and Mrs. Wilkinson gave a large cake to him. He had a good time. Some friends gave some beautiful things."

—The Weekly News, February 15, 1890.
his summer trip that Grace had helped him change his mind about the Indians; "Of course she knows best. She says the Indians are far from beggars. They are independent . . . . They work just enough to supply their needs, and love and money can get them to work no more." A few years later, Grace became famous for her paintings of Indian children.

That summer vacation was "such a time of pleasure" that it exceeded d'Estrella's expectations; he found Grace to be "the kind of woman not soon forgotten." She encouraged d'Estrella to contribute pantomime performances to the campfire entertainments to the delight of everyone. He also enjoyed performing before her classes of small

D'Estrella's sense of humor in compositional relationships shows these young gardeners capricious poses in 1888. Many years later, d'Estrella, seeing the photograph recalled: "In 1870, under the gardeners' instruction, I learned how to fertilize sand in wooden boxes three-feet square and one-half foot deep—how to test one thousand seeds—how to keep them moist and guarded against pests . . . . After school a gang of boys dug holes and we planted the young seedlings. Several hundred eucalyptus were planted . . . . About fifteen hundred evergreen and deciduous trees, including Monterey cypress, pinus insignis, a great variety of acacias, and Australian gums, elms, maples, ashes, willows, etc., were set out, with a fair supply of peaches, apricots, cherries, etc., to supplement the orchard."

"The Itemizer", The California News, April 25, 1929. 43
D'Estrella coming out of his dug-out darkroom, Oregon Cascade Mountains. 1892.
Transportation to vacation spots was by stagecoach, horse, or walking, in the early days.

children in the public schools. Besides, Grace taught d'Estrella something about taxidermy; they successfully dressed two heads of bucks they had shot. Their friendship continued throughout his life.

The following summer, 1889, d'Estrella received a scholarship for a study visit to the art centers of Europe. His travels culminated in a month’s stay in Paris with his friend Douglas Tilden, who was now ensconced in his own atelier successfully producing monumental bronze sculpture. As teenagers they had fantasized of one day waking up in this city of their dreams. They could hardly believe their good fortune. D'Estrella was moved to “see the beautiful Union flag, gallantly borne by Buffalo Bill on his black steed” when they celebrated the fourth of July visiting Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show in Paris. The two young men were wined and dined royally at the International Congress for the Deaf held in July as part of the Paris International Exposition. D'Estrella was one of twenty-five delegates from the United States. Tilden was elected one of the vice-presidents. D'Estrella was proud of his friend Tilden when after several days of heated debates the Congress adopted unanimously Tilden’s resolution that the American combined system, which used both speech and signs, was the best method of communication for the largest number of deaf persons. D'Estrella wrote a series of thirty-one articles about his European trip in the school bulletin when he returned. Few photographs were taken.

On May 17, 1892, Muybridge again cast his spell over d'Estrella when Muybridge delivered a lecture on animal locomotion with his "zoopraxiscope" to the students and faculty of the California School for the Deaf, with interpretation in sign language. D'Estrella was delighted that Muybridge spent two whole days around the school. D'Estrella probably also
witnessed Muybridge's earlier demonstration of the first recorded public exhibition of "pictures that moved," which had been shown at the School of Design in San Francisco twelve years earlier on May 4, 1880, when d'Estrella was a student there.

CALIFORNIA CAMERA CLUB

With the advent of dry-plate photography, camera clubs sprang up all over the United States. The organizational meeting for the California Camera Club had been held March 20, 1890, in San Francisco. The object of the group, as stated in the constitution, was "to increase and diffuse the knowledge of those natural laws which relate to the action of light, and particularly to promote

"The eye behind the camera is far more important than the lens in front of it." —Arnold Genthe.

“Resting on the hike.”
improvements in photography and kindred art and sciences, and the formation of a social, scientific and art center for photographers." The club became a charter member of the Association of Camera Clubs of America and quickly grew to be the largest club in the world. The first year the membership roster had four-hundred members. It was considered the happy meeting place of the pictorialist and the realist, both professional and amateur. The club’s success was attributed to the diversified membership—from the owners of the simplest box camera to those with the most expensive imports. Members shared exhibits in the Academy of Sciences Building on Market Street: Women were accepted as members. More than 19,000 people attended the monthly exhibitions held in the club’s meeting rooms the first year.

D’Estrella was considered an expert-amateur photographer when he joined the California Camera Club in November 1891. Many of his photographs appeared as illustrations in The Overland Monthly often under a company name. It is possible that he sold or gave photographs to companies which specialized in selling illustrations. The attribution of photographs of this era is often difficult or impossible because of this practice, and d’Estrella was a nonaggressive man apparently not interested in credit.

Outings for camera work were an important part of the club’s activities. In the summer of 1897, d’Estrella accompanied other members for three weeks of recreation and photography to Yosemite Valley. This was the first time d’Estrella had visited Yosemite in twenty years. Edwin Markham, poet of Man with the Hoe, was in the party and surprised d’Estrella by communicating with him by fingerspelling. Markham had a deaf brother, who had been one of d’Estrella’s early schoolmates. Some of d’Estrella’s photographs taken on this outing were displayed the following February in the Camera Club’s Annual Print.
"Her Cheery Face Made all Cares Vanish."

Now and then I remember how your eyes dance into light, how your lips open in laughter, and how your cheeks dimple in harmony.

A hearty, wholesome laugh is the best medicine.

T. d'Estrella

California 1-7-04.

The following ode was found among a student's memorabilia. She died in 1915. This may have been penned for a senior autograph book:

"Now and then I remember how your eyes dance into light, how your lips open in laughter, and how your cheeks dimple in harmony.

A hearty, wholesome laugh is the best medicine.

—T. d'Estrella

California 1-7-04."
Exhibit. “No work is attracting more attention than that of Theophilus d’Estrella,” reported the San Francisco Chronicle for February 25, 1898, “His vision sharpened by misfortune and made accurate by a splendidly drilled mind, seems to divine the instant that gives the camera the most interesting response . . . . He has some excellent water effects and bits of animal life. In this collection is a wonderful snapshot of a great Newfoundland dog in the very act of springing into the air to seize a stick held by his mistress. This print is as clear as a carefully timed exposure, yet every point of it represents action.” This huge dog, “Mascot,” belonged to Grace Carpenter Hudson. Mascot apparently was the darling of many photographers in the club. There are more than a dozen lantern slides of this lovable dog in the d’Estrella Collection made from different photographers’ negatives.

The acceptance of photography as an art was a controversial heated issue. As early as 1893, following the enthusiastic acceptance by the public of the regular monthly exhibits, the committee for the annual exhibit of the California Camera Club applied to the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art for space for an exhibit—1,500 prints were offered. The offer was rejected. The San Francisco Morning-Call, October 19, 1893, reported that the “people in charge of the Institute evidently considered the camera artists no artists at all and not worthy of notice.” Spirits were low. No annual exhibit was held that year.

However, exhibits of fine arts photographs were being held elsewhere in the world. London held its first annual “salon” in 1893, Paris in 1894, Washington, D.C. in 1896, and Philadelphia in 1898. Finally, representatives from the California Camera Club, the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art, and the Camera Craft magazine staff met in September 1900 and agreed to hold the first annual exhibition in January 1901 in the palatial

“A true spirit of comradeship is most needful to the photographer in perpetuating, with his camera, the fugitive charm of childhood, and with that alone can he find the right means of interesting the child, so that pictures full of animation and freshness will reward his efforts.”

—Arnold Genthe
Camera Craft, Dec. 1901.
building of the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art on Nob Hill. The salon was an enormous success. Fourteen hundred photographs from all over the world were submitted to the jury of selection—four hundred and seventy-five were accepted. The San Francisco Chronicle reported that never before had there been such a large gathering of distinguished Californians—attendance was record breaking with more than one thousand people. Nothing like this had ever been seen in the West before.

On January 24, 1901, the jury of awards consisting of Messrs. W. H. Lowden, L. P. Latimer, and C. Chapel Judson, awarded the following first-prize medals in the various divisions: portraiture to Arnold Genthe, landscapes to F. H. Maude, still life to W. J. Street, animal studies to T. H. d'Estrella, and architecture and interiors to R. J. Waters. Arnold Genthe who won the overall grand prize commented in “A Critical Review of the Salon Pictures,” in the Overland Monthly, on d'Estrella’s entry as “a good snapshot of two cats on the lookout for rats.” Two other photographs by d'Estrella, Day Dream, and On Guard, were exhibited in the first salon.

Salons now became yearly events. The Second Annual Photographic Salon, held in 1902, was more international in scope; d'Estrella was not listed as participating. Beaumont Newhall wrote in his History of Photography that “the style of the Americans was characterized by soft focus, deep shadows, relieved with brilliant highlights and strong linear compositions.” In the Third Annual Photographic Salon, held in October 1903, fewer photographs were exhibited in an attempt to improve the aesthetic qualities. From one thousand entries, one hundred and seventy-five were accepted, including d'Estrella’s “Rio Chico”. In defense of the small number of photographs used, Arnold Genthe wrote in his critique of the “Third San Francisco Salon” in the Camera Craft,
"A Morning O'Luck on Eel River," c. 1888.
November 1903: “The result of that severity is an exhibition of really good photographs that show evidence of individuality and artistic feeling, and a serious striving for pictorial effect, the stand taken by the selection committee may appear more justified.” Of d’Estrella’s entry, Genthe commented “D’Estrella has managed to produce the effect of a steel engraving in his Rio Chico.” At this time, in a separate room, San Franciscans had the opportunity to see the works of some of America’s greatest photographers such as Mrs. Kasebier, Steichen, Clarence White, Stieglitz, and others. This loan collection was known as the Photo-Secession group for which Alfred Stieglitz acted as director. The object of the members was advancement of photography as applied to pictorial expression. No mention was made in the “Itemizer” of d’Estrella entering other competitions.

On the weekend of October 19-20, 1901, one hundred and thirty California Camera Club members took four thousand photographs of San Francisco and of ships on the Bay. “Nothing escaped the amateur photographers” reported the San Francisco Examiner. The photographs were to be used primarily “for slides to be exchanged with other clubs to be thrown on screens all over the world.” Among the participants listed were: W. E. Dassonville, T. H. d’Estrella, Dr. Arnold Genthe, Fred Monsen, A. J. McFarland, W. J. Street, and Miss J. F. Banks. D’Estrella took thirty-two pictures of the waterfront, the portion of the city assigned to him. Through its membership in the American Lantern Slide Interchange, the California Camera Club, as one of its main activities, sent out sets of lantern slides each year dealing with the glories of picturesque California. D’Estrella made many contributions to this project.

LANTERN SLIDES

Camera Craft, the official publication of the California Camera Club, published in its first issue of
May 1900: "The American Lantern Slide Interchange stands well in the front in American educational institutions. The use of the magic lantern is rapidly increasing among all classes of photographers. Lantern work is one of the most beautiful and fascinating of photo recreations." Three years before, Alfred Stieglitz, father of modern photography, had declared in October 1897, "The past twelve months of the Camera Club of New York will, without question, be known in the pages of its annals as the 'Lantern-Slide Year'". He considered the lantern slide one of the finest ways to look at a photograph.

The children at the California School for the Deaf in Berkeley affectionately called d'Estrella the Magic-Lantern Man, because he usually offered them thirty to forty slide exhibits each year from November to May. Aside from borrowing and purchasing commercial slides, d'Estrella prepared many of his own slides, learning much of his technique of preparation from A. J. McFarland, chairman of the California Camera Club Lantern Slide Committee. D'Estrella had been appointed McFarland's assistant. Eventually d'Estrella acquired more than two thousand slides for his personal collection; about eight hundred were commercial and the other twelve hundred were photographed and prepared by himself. He was a perennial educator recognizing the far reaching effects of the visual impact of the lantern slide for his hearing-impaired students. He believed in the vast possibilities of lantern slides as tools in the classroom and as a form of entertainment.

As early as 1850, photographic slides were introduced in the United States. A lantern slide is a glass-plate positive transparency, not a negative, either black and white or hand-colored with transparent oils, with a same size sheet of clear glass covering and protecting it. The pieces of glass are secured by binding all four edges with black
tape. D'Estrella's glass slides measured 3½ x 4 inches. The term magic lantern applied to the projection equipment—the stereopticon—and the slide was viewed by projection on a screen as a positive image. The commercial slides which d'Estrella either borrowed or bought were indeed magic for his students, with the wide range of subject matter opening many new doors of awareness: Artistic, scientific, humorous, religious, pictorial, scenic, historical, literary, and exotic—international. Lantern slides were the forerunners of the modern day movies and television bringing images of worldwide phenomena to the masses.

The first Magic Lantern Exhibition held at the California School for the Deaf climaxcd the traditional Washington's birthday celebration on February 22, 1888. All Berkeley was invited to the school's auditorium. School members congratulated themselves on their good fortune to possess one of McAllister's new Universal Oxygen-hydrogen Stereopticons with complete appointments, purchase at the staggering cost of $500. The evening was a huge success despite the misgivings of a learned University of California professor who asked: "Do you know anything about oxygen? Why, the slightest mistake might occasion an explosion."

In the following weeks the children applauded the blood-and-thunder images of great battles of the American Revolution and of the Civil War on land and sea, Roger's domestic genre statuary, sights of far-away places, and comical characters of Diogenes, Jonah, and Sancho Panza. Some of the slides produced the effect of motion which was accomplished by a special arrangement in the machine.

In the light of the current revival of interest in the period of our past now commonly referred to as the American Renaissance, 1876-1917, the lantern slide should receive more recognition for its
"A Friend in Need,"

This young man became a master craftsman at Shreve and Company jewelers, and he fathered a future Dean of Students at CSDF.
Tall ship at the Golden Gate, c. 1900.

"In the glory of the sunset,  
In the purple mist of evening,  
not only delight the eyes of the young,  
but tend to purify and enoble the souls of all."

—T. d’Estrella.
contribution as one of the recorders of the material culture of that era. What were these forces that contributed to the enormous popularity of the lantern slide as entertainment and as an educational tool? The term the American Renaissance was first used in the 1880s. It grew out of the awareness which developed following the Centennial Exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876, commemorating the hundreth anniversary of America's independence. Many Americans, well schooled in the European Renaissance, began to realize that America, too, had a past. Centennial Exposition, with displays of progress and history, was an affirmation of American virtues and industry. The vigorous spirit of rebirth—a renaissance—was "in the air," centering primarily in the eastern part of the United States. Photographers, especially with their lantern slide projections and lectures, probably influenced many viewers toward a greater appreciation and enthusiasm for the art, science, and industry of past cultures as well as of their own. It was during this time that photography slowly became recognized as a fine art.

Recently, Richard Guy Wilson, in his superb catalogue for the museum exhibition, American Renaissance, 1876-1917, wrote that the American Renaissance "can only be understood in relation to the cultural currents of the period." He suggests that there were three important aspects: nationalism, idealism with its genteel tradition, and cosmopolitanism. Nationalism was at a high pitch; Americans immortalized their heroes and virtues in monumental commemorative art works. The idealism emerging from the genteel tradition was manifest in part, by the new wealth and affluence of first generation millionaires, in personal architectural splendors, City Beautiful movements, and ideal art all relating to Italian Renaissance impulses. On the surface, the American
First Auto at CSDB, 1901.

"Dr. Caldwell drove recklessly in Golden Gate Park at 10 m.p.h."


D'Estrella and his friend Douglas Tilden both deplored the coming of the automobile. They felt there would be widespread changes in people's use of their leisure time, and in their perception of beauty.
Renaissance was filled with high purpose. Cosmopolitanism stemmed from increasing interest in the exotic and the beautiful from world-wide cultures, and in new scientific discoveries, exciting the imaginations and creative urges of many Americans. The photographers responded to these cultural currents often developing individual styles of presentation.

California developed her own brand of nationalism when she joined the United States in 1850. Thereafter, patriotic feelings ran high. The first United States armed forces, all volunteers, ever to leave the country for combat left from the port of San Francisco for the Philippines in 1898. D'Estrella urged his students to identify with their country's history by involving them in masquerades, costume making, and participation in theatrical events concerning virtues and morals of political and historical figures. The portrait of George Washington was an icon in the classroom. The California School for the Deaf held their major celebration—a masquerade—on Washington's birthday; it was the highlight of the year.

Many Californians, d'Estrella among them, had long held the dream of developing another Athens on the Pacific Coast. In fact, Berkeley, with the University of California, became known as the Athens of the Pacific. San Francisco's aspirations to develop along classic lines, planned by architect David Burnham, were halted abruptly by the disaster of the 1906 earthquake and fire. D'Estrella grew up in an atmosphere dominated by architectural ideals. The first school building of the California School for the Deaf to be located in Berkeley was termed Ruskinian Gothic. D'Estrella lived and studied in that neoclassical building for six years before it was destroyed by fire. It was replaced with a Romanesque revival complex of buildings which was d'Estrella's home and place of work for the reminder of his life—more than fifty
years. In 1889, from the native cultural background which surrounded him, d'Estrella added three months of study and travel to the art capitals of Europe. He enthusiastically brought back to his students new ideas about Paris and its Beaux Arts tradition, and about Italy and the Italian Renaissance. He took few photographs himself, but purchased many commercial photographs from which he later made lantern slides. In the summer of 1896, d'Estrella visited and photographed the new Renaissance-inspired mansions of Newport, Rhode Island. He was especially pleased when he discovered and photographed Cornelius Vanderbilt II's home, The Breakers, with its elaborate wrought-iron grill work.

The mania for world expositions seized d'Estrella along with millions of others. D'Estrella attended the Paris International Exposition, 1889; the Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, New York, 1901; the St. Louis Louisianna Purchase Exposition, 1904; the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, Seattle, 1909; the Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, 1915; and others. The influence of Italian Renaissance ideals could be seen everywhere in the architecture, art, and sculpture. San Francisco had her own fair, the California Midwinter Exposition, held in Golden Gate Park, 1894. D'Estrella and his students together visited and explored the mysteries and wonders of this glorious manifestation of increasing culture in the West. Here, a new note was introduced—Egyptian-inspired architecture. However, one of the crowning glories for d'Estrella's students was Gustave Dore's mammoth bronze vase, The Vintage, at the entrance of the museum (now the M. H. deYoung Memorial Museum) building. The children delighted in the antics of the cupids and insects that adorn Dore's baroque masterpiece which civic leader Mr. deYoung had purchased from the Chicago
Exposition in 1893 where the vase had been displayed for the first time. Children, today, are still delighting in their own personal discoveries of this treasure which is now situated in the rotunda of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum, San Francisco.

Many books and magazine articles expressing the heightened art consciousness concerning the Italian Renaissance began to appear in the 1870s. Among d’Estrella’s personal collection of five hundred volumes, many titles attest to his interest in this period. D’Estrella avidly read works of art critic and painter John Ruskin, and of his infatuation with Italy. Classic Greek myths and literature were a source of inspiration for education through photography. The lantern slides were the perfect medium for d’Estrella’s visually oriented students. Students showed great joy and excitement when d’Estrella, with his natural language of signs and pantomime, explained the various artistic symbols of Greek tragedies. The children’s imaginations were set on fire with creating costumes and masquerades which followed. Photographs and lantern slides of the events could be reviewed again and again as the children achieved a closer identification with the past. In d’Estrella’s own albums, along side of his photographs of wilderness area, he often included handwritten poems by nineteenth-century classic poets. He reveled in relating noble ideas of classic literature to his own ideas of nature; these photographs, too, were transferred to lantern slides.

Landscape architecture became part of the architectural vision, especially on the East Coast. However, in the west the vast open spaces and majestic Sierra Nevada inspired a reverence for a different past—the eternal and sublime in nature. California became a mecca for photographers primarily because of its scenic natural wonders.
Yosemite Valley in the Sierra Nevada was considered a symbol for all California. It was often referred to as "a cathedral of nature." Lantern slides of Yosemite received instant world-wide acclaim in one of the first exhibitions from the West to be sent outside the United States by the American Lantern Slide Interchange. The lure of the exotic and the foreign offered something special to newcomers to California. The West was as exotic and foreign to non-Californians as Venice, Rome, or Timbuctoo. The sublime in nature was also in abundance—California photographers have become world famous capturing these images. D'Estrella was conscious of these forces and used them in his photography for educational tools as well as entertainment for his students.

During his summer vacations from teaching, d'Estrella explored the wilderness areas of California, often on foot and alone, sketching, and shooting with his camera. He wanted to share with the children, during the long winter evenings of the school year, his sense of wonder and re-creation of his own spirit through his perceptions of water, trees, rocks, animals, logging, and mining operations. D'Estrella recreated his own joy of the wild free days of the summer with lantern slides and snapshots. Of his own special gifts, he wrote: "The beauties of nature in the mountains can be more readily understood, more naturally appreciated, through the medium of signs rather than words because of their descriptive aptness." He considered it his mission to spark the children's imaginations of the world beyond their knowledge, and at the same time to create joy and satisfaction in their own immediate surroundings.

D'Estrella was considered an expert amateur, who cultivated his skill in the photographic process, printed his negatives for his numerous albums, and duplicated these images expertly on glass lantern slides. He often made slides from negatives of...
fellow photographers to fill in his own slide lectures. Attributions of the negatives are usually noted on the slide. Many slides made from the collection of Southwest Indian photographer Adam Clark Vroman are in d'Estrella’s collection. It is known through “The Itemizer” that d'Estrella, along with other camera friends, visited and photographed the Hopi Snake Ceremony at Oraibi in 1902. Vroman photographed the same ceremony; it is difficult to assess from the slides who photographed which images. Original notes of d'Estrella’s slide lecture about the trip exist. He was often called on to deliver this lecture in the community. The slides of the Indian children were his special delight. Also in d’Estrella's collection are a few slides from images of the pioneer northern California photographer A. W. Ericson, whose daughter Elma was a favorite of d'Estrella's when she was a student at the California School for the Deaf. Elma married another deaf student, Jim Bean, also an amateur photographer. D’Estrella enjoyed visiting the Ericson’s home in Arcata on several occasions and photographing the northern California countryside in Humboldt county.

As early as 1903, interest in the new moving pictures began to replace the fascination of the lantern-slide magic for the children. By 1910, the California School for the Deaf had purchased new motion-picture equipment for the school—planning two or three movies a month for the students. In October, they saw four different movies in one week. D’Estrella deplored the commonplace use of “the movies and of the automobile,” both of which he considered brought wide-spread changes in people’s use of leisure and in their perceptions. There seemed to be less time for contemplative leisurely pursuits. The aesthetic ideals of the European Renaissance were beginning to decline; artists and photographers were turning away from
Teachers Charles Strong Perry and d'Estrella spent many long hours gathering treasures from around the world for the opening of this fascinating museum.
classical ideals of universal truths. Photographers looked to the cities for inspiration in social change, the world war clouds were gathering, and optimism was at a low point.

D’Estrella’s photographic career culminated, in October 1910, in what he called “a run of ill luck.” First he fell, breaking his left arm. Then, a few days later, on the evening of October 30, a fire broke out in the wooden shop building where he had his studio. The flames destroyed d’Estrella’s photographic equipment including several thousand negatives and five cameras. His lantern slides and albums, stored in another building, were spared. D’Estrella gazed at the charred ruins, walked away, and wrote in “The Itemizer”: “I don’t know if I will return to photography.” He never did.

LATER YEARS, 1910-1929

D’Estrella continued his yearly summer outings with the Sierra Club with occasional trips afar to Alaska, Canada, and Mexico. The California Camera Club’s Viewfinder, September 1923, commented on the success of the evening reunion of the Grand Canyon and Yosemite Valley trips with Mr. d’Estrella’s pantomime performance the hit of the evening: “He is one of the most popular members of the Camera Club and is often called on to give reproductions in the sign language. “ He frequently gave lectures in sign language to the various deaf organizations in the Bay Area, about his travels and about his ideas of education for the deaf. He also continued his slide lectures in a limited way—the most popular one was about the Hopi Indians. D’Estrella’s writing took more and more of his time as his circle of correspondence with former alumni widened. He frequently wrote in “The Itemizer” about recollections of past events such as a memorable eight-week trip spent tramping around in the wilds of the Oregon
Cascade Mountains in 1892. With pride, he wrote of climbing twelve peaks (each more than 10,000 feet high, including Mt. Whitney) after his fiftieth birthday. The summer of his seventieth year he made a successful ascent of Half Dome in Yosemite Valley. Hundreds of photographs remain of the jaunts he made before 1910.

In 1903, d'Estrella had met Helen Keller. He often pondered over the impact of their brief meeting: “I was walking around the grounds of the school with Helen Keller; she was telling me that the sense of touch was the most important sense we have and that the possibility of its development is incalculable. Touch is more accurate and delicate than the sense of hearing.”

D'Estrella's uncanny sense of touch and movement endeared him to his fellow hiking club members, as a Seattle newspaper wrote, following the Sierra Club outing to Mt. Rainier in 1905: “Theophilus d'Estrella, the silent member of the Sierra Club, may well be rated the most popular man in that organization—Wonderful power of touch. The slightest jar, unnoticed by others, is felt by him—Nothing escapes his vision, and although he does not appear to be watchful he is nevertheless cognizant of every move that is going on about him.”

The growing political activities of newly formed organizations of the deaf captured d'Estrella’s interest. He was elected treasurer of the National Association of the Deaf. Later, as fourth vice-president, he was a member of the Executive Committee. D'Estrella was also active as secretary in the formation of the first California Association of the Deaf in 1906 spearheaded by his friend Douglas Tilden. In 1913, he assisted Tilden in the organizational procedures of forming the American Federation of the Deaf.

D'Estrella devoted many hours to preparation
for the new Educational Museum which opened at
the school in 1917. He was pleased to read that
he and a fellow faculty member, Winfield Runde,
were elected to the Faculty Club of the University
of California to honor their achievements as
educators of the deaf—the only deaf men so
honored.

D'Estrella continued teaching until shortly
before his death, October 8, 1929. His last
words in "The Itemizer" were written in the issue for
September 1929. The California News devoted
the whole issue, November 1929, to eulogizing
their beloved friend and teacher, who had been a
vital continuing force in the school since the day it
first opened its doors—almost seventy years before.
Winfield Runde, Gallaudet alum, a close friend and
Editor of the California News, wrote "The Last
Rites: A Fitting Honor."

The funeral services for Theophilus Hope d'Estrella were
held at the school Friday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock on
October 11, 1929 . . . . The warm autumn haze of October
settled over the school. A faint breeze stirred the flag which
hung at half mast . . . . It was a fitting time of the day when
all that was mortal of him, who so often held the center of
the stage, lay there in the calm peacefulness of the sun-
filled hall. The very elements seemed to blend beautifully
into the occasion, making of it a harmonious whole—the
glorious end of a life well spent."

Memorial notes concurred that d'Estrella had
helped to show thousands of deaf students how
life can be lived courageously, usefully, and joyfully
despite almost any disability—but above all, he was
the children's friend.
D’Estrella’s photographs of mountains, water, trees, and animals communicate his sense of the balance and quality of life in the wilderness areas. As a teacher, d’Estrella wanted to expand the horizons of his young student’s minds. For the deaf, who experience a lack of auditory stimuli, visual perceptions are the main tool of learning. D’Estrella shared his enthusiasm and love of the wild-free days of his summer hikes into the Sierra Nevada with John Muir’s Sierra Club by lantern slides, poetic sign language, pantomime, the written word, and albums of photographic prints for the children to enjoy.

D’Estrella’s classical art training as a painter, along with his innate creativity and curiosity in nature, helped him to discern broader relationships, which he passed on to his students. Direct observation, drawing, photographic prints, and lantern slides were aesthetic aids in this process of education—education through art. D’Estrella had a strong sense of organizing the visual elements of shape, texture, line, form, and light and dark in his photographs to convey to the viewer his sense of the subject.

His ideal landscapes are almost removed from reality with their sense of pictorial romanticism. Texture and shadowy forms are seen in the water-textured rocks. The children were almost tempted to walk into the print of the grove of eucalyptus trees. For d’Estrella, the roar of water falling over rocks set in motion vibrations of visual sound. His images of quiet reflecting water captured a feeling of stillness, solitude, and beauty.

When d’Estrella first visited Yosemite Valley in 1871, he probably journeyed on foot, for it was not until 1874 that roads for wagons and stage-coaches reached the Valley. D’Estrella was an inveterate hiker and he quickly accepted the Sierra Club’s enthusiasm “to know and appreciate the
beauty and inspiration of the mountains and to be educated to become a defender of the wilderness.”

It is not known exactly when d'Estrella joined the Sierra Club. In 1902, he wrote an account of his joining the second annual four-week outing to King’s River Canyon. There he met and enjoyed the companionship of his former deaf colleague, Anita Gompertz, sister-in-law of Joseph N. LeConte, one of the intrepid leaders of the club.

The Sierra Club outings rotated between Yosemite National Park and the Kern River area for several years. D'Estrella’s albums of photographs and many lantern slides remain of these trips. D'Estrella remembered as one of his most delightful outings the climb to the top of Mt. Whitney with two hundred other members in the summer of 1903.

D'Estrella’s photographs of nature are visual representations of deeply felt moments of oneness with the world. His chief concern was to convey this feeling to the children and thus ensure a richer more meaningful environment for them.

“Everyone Needs Beauty as well as Bread.”
—John Muir.
The rolling hills of the California landscape stirred the creative imagination of d'Estrella and of his fellow photographers in the California Camera Club. The soft contours of the undulating terrain lent themselves to the photographer's pictorial images that followed closely the misty backgrounds and the soft outlines of the tonalist landscape painters at the turn of the century.
“One of the most beautiful little fairy lakes that a painter or a poet can imagine . . . this is Leonard Lake . . . It is encircled by clumps of noble trees extending from the water’s edge to the surrounding mountains. When its surface is unruffled, one can see in its clear depths the inverted pictures of all the objects around . . . When a breeze sweeps over its placid bosom, the polished mirror of the lake is shattered. But the effect is beautiful. In this way the water varies from dark emerald to a delicate greenish-white, with a tinge of blur—a constant source of delight.”

D'Estrella's fondness for this pictorial grove of eucalyptus trees on the Berkeley hillside stemmed from his remembering that he had personally planted these trees many years before in 1870.
Mr. d'Estrella made for the fourth time a Christmas pilgrimage to Chico. What attracts him is the winter: sinewy oaks, stately sycamores, and creeping vines, skeleton-like all in all, growing on both sides of the creek north of town, giving striking effects both in the sunshine and under the clouds.

"Cloudiness gave a peculiarly attractive aspect up the creek through sturdy big oaks and tall slender sycamores with hanging vines. Water high—banks overfilled (trees throwing reflections therein). Mr. d'Estrella plodded about in warm thick boots; went up the creek and took eighteen negatives."

—"The Itemizer", *The California News*. January 9, 1897.
“Squaw Rock, Mendocino County.” — Lover's Leap. 1888.

D'Estrella's romanticism shows in his bucolic landscapes. He often waited hours for just the decisive moment to capture a pastoral scene of fading sunlight and lengthening shadows.
"Tears came to my eyes" recalled d'Estrella when he revisited the countryside at Big Meadows and saw that it was being destroyed to make way for progress and Lake Almanor.
D’Estrella’s anticipation of an entire summer in the Oregon mountains prompted him to write: “It is a great privilege to be free to fully enjoy the glorious summer days. Dressed in loose fitting garments, the mind filled with fresh thoughts, the heart pulsating with keen pleasures—the eyes wide awake and grasping—these are the means with which to have a good vacation.” Three months later he commented: “A packhorse brought us safely to the heart of the Cascades. A land of wild mountains and rushing, roaring, foaming streams . . . We were alone.”

“A Summer Trip to Oregon,”
The Weekly News, Nov. 26, 1892.

Elkhorn Creek, Oregon, 1892.
"Mrs. Davis (Grace Carpenter) and self often took to sketching among the romantic solitudes... What I took with my camera was good. I have a very fine negative of ferns which shows a fine composition and an exquisite graduation of light and shade. This I took after three hours waiting for the desired atmospheric effect, and my patience was well paid for."


"All thro' the long, bright days of August,
Its leaves grew green and fair,
And waved in hot midsummer's noon,
Its soft and verdant curls."
Eldorado County, 1898.

D'Estrella wanted to develop his lantern slide lecture about mining and logging operations in the Mother Lode county. The first four weeks he spent in Volcano, Amador County and took many snapshots of miners at work. The second four weeks were spent in Georgetown, Eldorado County, . . . "Many negatives were taken in the mines, logging camps, woods, and lakes. The longest trip was about forty miles on one of the roughest mountain roads . . . One of the lakes was artificially enlarged to seventeen miles long, with hundreds of drowned pines standing about in the water like skeletons. Mr. d'Estrella lived ten days on venison, bear meat, grouse, and trout."

—"The Itemizer," *The California News*, September 3, 1898
One of the many snow-formed lakelets, Lassen Hot Springs, 1893.

"Mr. d'Estrella was ten weeks in the Sierras of Plumas and Lassen. He pursued pleasures in wild nature like a butterfly—on foot and hand. He fished, tramped, rowed, sketched, "shot" with the camera, and in short saw much. While at the famous Hot Springs he visited many places of interest—Geysers, Boiling Lake, Devil's Kitchen, Cinder Cone, King's Falls, Twin and Snag Lakes, of which a description will be given some time."

—"The Itemizer," The Weekly News,
“Falls of the Santiam River, Oregon, 1892.”

“Rising and leaping,
Sinking and creeping,
Swelling and sweeping,
Showering and springing,
Flying and flinging,
Writhing and ringing,
Eddying and whisking,
Spouting and frisking,
Turning and twisting,
Around and around,
With endless rebound.”

—“A Summer Trip” by d’Estrella,
The Weekly News,
November 26, 1892.
In 1897, the California Camera Club hosted a three-week outing to Yosemite, mixing the business of picture making with the pleasure of outdoor socializing. The San Francisco Chronicle, February 25, 1898, commented on the excellent photographs of water effects taken by d'Estrella on that outing and exhibited in the club's Annual Spring Exhibition.

"To the artist it is a revelation of color and effect; to the philosopher a revelation of quite another character, typifying life past and present. Great sheets of spray, sparkling in the sun like diamond dust, are blown here and there—making a delightful memory forever."

—T. H. d'Estrella

Vernal Falls, Yosemite Valley, 1897
Fisherman's Dock, San Francisco.

From the days of the gold rush until the turn of the century, the fishing fleet was composed of lateen-rigged sailboats. D'Estrella developed an aesthetic appreciation of the little boats and of the waterfront as he was drawn to the daily life on the wharves from his earliest childhood experiences. Fisherman's Dock was located at the east end of the Union Street before it was moved to its present location in 1901; it was always a favorite spot for picture making.
D'Estrella was intrigued with wharves, ships, and cargoes that sailed into San Francisco Bay. The "General Roberts", a 1,914 ton sailing ship, plied the oceans from her home port of Liverpool occasionally berthing in San Francisco Bay.
D'Estrella treasured the beauty of Yosemite. He wrote, "Scene after scene breaks upon wondering eyes with majesty . . . The deaf loved Yosemite—some went by stage, some on foot, some on horseback, and some in camping wagons."

—"The Itemizer", *The California News*, October 7, 1905.
D'Estrella's friendship with the children at the California School for the Deaf in Berkeley is the key to understanding his photography. D'Estrella's compassionate images include pictorial, documentary, and realistic genre, with a large element of romanticism; social comments are subtly imbedded in the photographs of the children. A few months after d'Estrella became engaged in photography, he met his old art teacher Virgil Williams in Lowden's amateur photographic gallery in San Francisco. Williams enthusiastically encouraged d'Estrella in his new interest. He especially liked d'Estrella's images of life at the school. "I am sure," Williams wrote on a pad to d'Estrella, "that in your life at the Institution there must be some episodes that you alone could understand and express. You are not like other men and you must see things differently. There must be something peculiar, interesting, and touching that all would recognize as pertaining to the deaf... and if you can hit upon something that is pathetic, and yet unites beauty with affliction you are sure to make a success of it. Try to do something for the deaf-mutes."

D'Estrella did not see the children as pathetic. To him, the pathos was implicit in the ignorance and misunderstandings leading to the prejudices of the hearing world, which he felt ultimately led to a lack of educational, occupational, social, and cultural opportunities for the deaf. D'Estrella agreed with Wilkinson's early impassioned plea in his annual report to the California State Legislature: "The asylum idea seems fixed in the minds of the public. These pupils are not sick, criminal, insane, or feeble-minded, but ordinary boys and girls with a heavy physical handicap." Historically, these sometimes forgotten, often abused, children were thought of as uneducable. Aristotle has stated that the power of learning is in hearing, so the deaf
cannot learn. During the middle ages a deaf person was seen as odd, comical, and depraved; deafness was a punishment of God.

For some children attending the California School was the first time they would find anyone with whom they could communicate. Age requirements for admission generously included ages six to twenty-five. When desperate and resigned parents, many from isolated outlying communities, heard of the extraordinary school, they eagerly brought forth their children of any age for whatever educational opportunities might be bestowed upon them.

For the children who attended this special school for the first time, a new world opened;

Picnic, Thanksgiving Day, 1887. Berkeley Hills,
joyous communication quickly developed from the natural poetic sign language, camaraderie followed exploring the wonders of the hills of Berkeley and the Bay Area of San Francisco. D'Estrella's photographic perceptions reveal the inner feelings of his subjects. Only one photograph shows the children signing. D'Estrella was influenced by Victorian morals and manners; a strong stigma was still attached to the use of hands in a gesturing way, or to the scratching of the head, nose, ears, or bottom. Victorians had frowned on anything but the polite posture with quiet folded hands for children and the young. D'Estrella with his own background of understanding of the loss of parents and silent isolation was indeed the children's friend. One photographer commented that it was difficult to photograph the deaf because they always seemed to be straining to understand instructions. There is no evidence of this in d'Estrella's work.

D'Estrella's romantic inclinations created images of the children's activities which coincide with the late Margery Mann's definition of pictorial photography. She wrote in the catalogue, California Pictorialism, 1977, that "Pictorial photography is the conscious attempt to turn beautiful objects and experiences into beautiful images, and therefore to assure the position of the medium in the hierarchy of art." From the depths of his being, d'Estrella experienced sign language as the natural, gut-level, physically beautiful expression of his innermost feelings and thoughts. The expression of this experience is the serenity of the faces and body positions, which he captured in his photographs.

D'Estrella was a natural teacher who understood the dreams, fantasies, hopes, and despairs of the school children; he photographed them individually or in groups, recording make-believe activities and genre scenes. The school's annual masquerade celebration, with costumes
referring to classical myths and fantasy were especially intriguing to d'Estrella. He did not take candid photographs, but his approach is informal. Exposures were deliberate. There is a conscious reaction of warmth and acceptance—a relaxed pose.

The children give a sense of wanting to please and of having fun being photographed, of wanting to record for all time a special moment—the magic moment of the conscious pose unconsciously affirming the close relationship between the photographer and the children.

Full of love, compassion, and understanding, d'Estrella's photographs reflect the poignant revelations of the interactions between him and the children who adored him. The faces of the children and their body postures reflect their shared respect and confidence.

D'Estrella’s photographs represent deeply felt moments: of the quiet serenity of being; of shouts of laughter, joy, and pride; of courage and love; and poignant moments of longing for an equal chance in life.
A deaf student's reply: "Let me tell you of the music that I hear: To me nature is a great musician, for the motions of the running river, the quivering of the leaves, the bird on the wing, the changing seasons, the rising sun, the lips moving in songs and of innumerable other sights all afford music, the tunes of which vary in sweetness and pathos. The tune of sunrise is my favorite and I often listen to the memory of it . . . . Therefore closed as I am from all worldly music, I feel richly recompensed in this music of my inner self."

D'Estrella delighted in capturing the architectural design element of the new Romanesque building on the campus of the California School for the Deaf. Through these halls many students went to higher things. The report of the principal, in 1888, stated: "The number of pupils is one hundred sixty, and they are divided into the ten classes. In the highest class pupils study Latin, and six have entered the University of California. These instances illustrate the facts that the deaf are capable of pursuing their studies, if encouraged to do so, company of those who can both hear and speak—a fact not generally recognized."

Through these halls, 1888.
“Considered the most up-to-date school for the deaf in the world—the school is a gem. The girl's dormitory is divided off into alcoves by wooden partitions, which do not reach the ceiling, so that each girl has a private sleeping apartment, while all of them are in the same room... From the front windows and from the portico of the school building one looks over the bay through the Golden Gate, upon the broad Pacific Ocean. It is one of the finest views in California.”

Report to the Legislature, W. Wilkinson, Principal, 1888.
Blind students were included in the school from the beginning. However, this was never a successful arrangement as the needs of the deaf and of the blind are almost opposite to each other. Finally, in 1921, the two schools were officially separated although they still share some physical facilities on the campus.

D'Estrella wrote "If you had to choose between two afflictions, which would you select, blindness or loss of hearing?" I would rather be blind, of course," replied a well informed young blind man. "Fancy the horror of a life without music or the sound of voices." 'Deaf, of course,' replied a deaf teacher. 'my eyes are worth a dozen pair of ears. I know what life is. I walk around and enjoy myself. I see my friends. I read and take pleasure in pictures. I play ball and row. I run cross-country races, I go to the theater.'

Weekly News, May 24, 1890.
D'Estrella's title typifies his sensitivity to the importance of "being in touch," actual touching between persons in their attempts to communicate. He often remembered his walk around the grounds of the school with Helen Keller, in the summer of 1903, when she told him: "The sense of touch is the most important sense we have and its possibility of development is incalculable. Touch is more accurate and delicate than hearing."

"A Gentle Rebuke."
The gestures and posture of the young lady evoke a universal predicament of humanity—puzzlement in the classroom. Through the language of photography, d'Estrella has revealed also the uniqueness of this child in capturing the artistic interest of the moment.
“It is vigorously and persistently explained by the teachers of the deaf that the children in their charge are there to be educated, not simply cared for, and that the institutions are schools not asylums. The following outline gives some idea of the plan of instruction pursued in most schools for the deaf in America:

**Morning session: 8 - 1**

much drill in use of language, either by writing, speech, or the manual alphabet. Also instruction in arithmetic, geography, history, etc.

**Afternoon session: 1 - 4**

in the industrial department during which time the boys are taught printing, carpentry, gardening, and other work, while the girls learn sewing and other domestic duties.

Night session:

an hour or more for study of next day’s lessons.”

Over the years, D'Estrella's entries in his Itemizer column reveal his devotion to patriotic symbolism, especially concerning the "father of our country". This trend also continued with many photographers in the United States long after the Centennial celebration of 1876. The mischievous expression of the young boy belies the placard around his neck.

"I cannot tell a lie," 1904.
For many years celebrating Washington’s birthday was the highlight of the school year, culminating in a masquerade party. Preparation began months in advance, with the students often making their own costumes and props. In the photographs of children in costume, d'Estrella has achieved excellence while taking us along to fantasy land. Dressing up offered important opportunities for hi-jinks between the children. They assumed playful positions that were natural for them. D'Estrella captured their individuality as much by the implied motion of their figures as by their expressions.
D'Estrella's drawing class

"Mr. D'Estrella has made an addition to the Art School by having a room fitted up as an art-gallery for visitors. On one wall hang the studies of the pupils in crayon and charcoal, and on the other the works of Mr. D'Estrella in charcoal, oil, and photography. The plaster-works of Mr. Douglas Tilden make the appearance of the room unique and attractive."

—"The Itemizer," The Weekly News, October 15, 1887.

A visiting professor wrote of CSDB, February 19, 1887: "the most remarkable institution for the deaf in the world... The Art Department evidences of work of the very highest order. It is well furnished with plaster casts, models, drawing boards, pictures and samples of pupil's work, and a photographic dark-room with many photos on the walls."
D'Estrella was a serious student of the classics. He liked to talk about classical literature and mythology using pantomime and sign language. Often his students were eager to read about and to re-enact classical characters for their annual masquerade.

"Classic Beauty."
Sewing and mending skills were emphasized, not only for their domestic value but also for their occupational possibilities. The students often designed and made their own costumes for the annual masquerade.
Life at the school offered many opportunities for peer support. The girls who were taught the art of sewing, mending, and fashion design often helped each other with fittings, adjustments, and bolstering each other's pride in getting dressed up. The lights and shadows, and the curves of the skirts and postures, create an eye-catching arrangement.
"Miss Bradley's Cooking School, 1887."

"In the cooking school room, a beautiful pictorial effect has been obtained by the selection of handsome colored china and its aesthetic arrangement."

---Principal's Report, 1888.
"Waiting on Table — Learning a skill."
Courtesy, Oakland Museum.
Arrested moments of action were difficult to accomplish before the advent of the hand camera, especially with several human figures in the picture. D'Estrella's careful attention to detail helped him achieve this goal.
For the second time this season, the Foothills baseball team crossed bats with the University of California Dental College and we hit the ball all over the field. Final score 18 - 7.

The haunting direct gaze of the two girls standing on the foot bridge, at the end of the wooden-plank walk leading from the school to downtown Berkeley, suggests a powerful symbolism of innocence, loneliness, and social isolation, reflecting d'Estrella's concern for the chances of these young ladies in the hearing world.
"A Daughter of the Sunrise Land, April 1902."

Young beauties from exotic foreign lands were favorite subjects for photographers. D'Estrella posed his Japanese student in her native kimono under flowering wisteria blooms.
D'Estrella has caught a moment of touching and sharing—a warm friendship—expressed by a firm handclasp and a gentle hug.
D’Estrella’s romantic pictorial tendencies were attracted to young girls befriending kittens. His eye was quick to note compositional arrangements of curving walks, stone against wood, and creeping vines and plant life.

Five years of study of drawing and painting at the San Francisco School of Design had taught him a great deal about design elements of line, shape, and form.
D'Estrella, as a painter-turned-photographer, intuitively was able to get in touch with his subject. His artistic likenesses demonstrate his insight to perceive the character of his sitter. His compassion for and interaction with each person brought out unique personality traits in his individual portraits. One is reminded of an Eakins portrait in oil. D'Estrella visited Philadelphia in 1896 and was surely familiar with Eakin's paintings. In d'Estrella's images above we see the same symbolism that Eakins used of a girl supporting her elbow on the piano with her head on her hand, turned away from the sheet of music as if she is rejecting the sound that does not reach her ears. The quiet, yet sad, expression of her face says something about her character and her fate and about d'Estrella's psychological insight into picture making.
Sharing a magazine or book in close touch with a chosen friend made dreams become reality. Life-long friendships were spawned as each day brought marvelous new revelations of each to the other.
D'Estrella encouraged the children to hike in the warm sunshine of the Berkeley hills. Many years later, d'Estrella wrote, "In the early days there was no gymnasium or library for the children, no moving picture theaters or other amusements. We had to depend almost entirely upon our own resources for recreations, bodily and mentally. The boys used to take long walks up and down hills, mile after mile, on Saturday afternoons and tell their tenderfoot experiences in the evenings . . . . All day picnics, mostly under the auspices of the literary society, were enjoyed on the hills."

Horse and Companion, 1887.

The lights and shadows exquisitely portraying the sensitive alertness of the horse with his silent companion mirror the perception of the photographer.
"A Bevy of School Girls, 1888."

The lyricism of this group arrangement hardly conveys the feeling of being posed. The girls' relaxed-confident expressions reflect the photographer's rapport with his subjects.
Masquerades and play acting were important for the pictorialist and the deaf children.

"The Goose had drooped feathers of soft paper and webbed feet. She was led with a silk ribbon by Mother Goose."

—"The Itemizer", 
The California News, 
Feb. 27, 1904.

Big Bird, Masquerades, 1904.
D'Estrella's romantic imagination created this image of the hedge of wisteria with its solid mass of hanging flowers surrounding Durham Hall—the home of the older deaf girls. Twenty years later d'Estrella wrote: "Wisteria in full bloom—delicate lavender, beautiful and very fragrant made Durham Hall resemble an old castle—romance lures the green vines which creep up the red brick walls, the wide circular veranda and the stone steps."

Bubble parties were popular. Prizes were given for the largest, the prettiest, the best chain, and for the bubble that rose the highest and lasted the longest. Special effects were made by adding bluing and cochineal. "The recipe: Into a pint of warm water, shave a piece of brown laundry soap about an inch square, containing a good proportion of lye. When this is thoroughly dissolved, add a tsp. of gum arabic and stir till melted. Then a tsp. of glycerine to a quart of cold water. For the little people, strawberry or currant juice for pink bubbles and orange juice for yellow are perhaps safer."

—"The Itemizer", The California News, May, 1904.
“Lohengrin,” c. 1897.

This young man went on in 1897 to become the first male student from CSDB to be accepted at Gallaudet College, Washington, D.C. — still the only liberal arts college for the deaf in the world.
The graceful movements of fencing and the colorful costumes made this sport a favorite with the girls’ team. Prowess in athletics and skilled feats in outdoor games were important extracurricular activities for these children who could not hear—hearing the sound of language was not essential for good performance in most sports activities. The graceful postures often caught d’Estrella’s eye.
Twin dressed as a Dutch girl. c. 1905
Norah, opposite page, and Sally were twins; they became expert models for d’Estrella’s carefully posed photographs in front of the stone wall with its creeping vines.
Stream of Life, c. 1888.
By the North Fork of the Feather River, Big Meadows, Plumas County.

D’Estrella was fascinated with the symbolism of moving water; it seemed to bring forth his deepest feelings. He wrote beside the photograph:

“A slumberous sound, a sound that brings
   The feelings of a dream,
As of innumerable wings
As, when a bell no longer swings,
Faint the hollow murmur rings
O’er meadow, lake and stream.”
—Longfellow.

Another poem written beside same picture (in photo album):

I’ve wandered east, I’ve wandered west,
   Through many a weary way;
But never, never can forget
   The luve o’life’s young day.
—Motherwell
This provocative photograph is reminiscent of d’Estrella’s nostalgic comments about Strawberry Canyon: “The Great Memorial Stadium of the University of California has absorbed one of the loveliest little spots along Strawberry Creek. Long before the houses were built thereby, it was a popular spot on Saturday afternoons for the girls to go climb, and swing in branches of the trees, wade in the creek and make mud pies. These pastimes were the joy of their hearts. Some of the boys went to hunt snakes, frogs, and field mice. This carefree life disappeared with the advent of more people.”

Outings and picnics to Golden Gate Park included the Japanese Tea Garden, the animal pens, the botanical gardens, the children's playground, and the M. H. deYoung Memorial Museum. D'Estrella wrote: "Golden Gate Park was a favorite spot because it is a school of nature as well as a resort for pastime . . . The children entered the museum and saw a great many things of interest, most of which they cannot remember now . . . Two things on the first floor that interested them the most were Napoleon's vest and the Egyptian mummies."

The sad postures of these students reflect the devastation that resulted from the earthquake and fire which destroyed much of the city. D'Estrella wrote of the area where his first school was situated, "It is desolate now... Nothing but bent pipe and old brick was left."
Male students were taught carpentry. Some became skilled cabinet makers. These book cases, originally designed by Wright and Sanders, were made by the students and are the basis for the new Historical Library and Museum at the California School for the Deaf in Fremont, California.

"Another branch of drawing has been added ... specialty for carpenter boys ... Practical work and art cannot do without each other ... Even if carpentry is of itself a science, it may be made the medium of expressing artistic ideas by the use of the pencil."

—"The Itemizer", The Weekly News, April 7, 1894.
Six Boys Imitating the Suffragettes." 1909.

In 1909, six young male students demonstrated their parody of women’s lib by parading in fashionable bosoms, dresses, hats, scarves, and carrying tell-tale placards. D’Estrella compiled a well-worn scrapbook of clippings about women and their doings from the 1890s.
"Sweet Girl Graduate, June 1903."

From this girl's future family came three generations of outstanding students at CSDB. Again D'Estrella has posed her in a genteel pictorial pose so popular with some photographers.
This photograph suggests being taken on a last afternoon hike in the nearby Berkeley hills following a graduation ceremony at the California School for the Deaf. The girls are looking down, nostalgically, on the cluster of school buildings below, out over the town of Berkeley, and on to the bay and out through the Golden Gate. D’Estrella would have liked the symbolism for the final image in the book culminating twenty-four years of photography.

Remembering the past, we gain strength for the future, c.1909
THEOPHILUS HOPE D'ESTRELLA
(1851-1929)

CHRONOLOGY

1851 — Born February 6, in San Francisco, California. Presumably deaf at birth.
1856 — Orphaned, age five.
1860 — First student admitted to the California Institution for the Education and Care of the Indigent Deaf and Dumb, and the Blind, May 1, San Francisco, now the California School for the Deaf, Fremont.
1869 — School moved to Berkeley, California.
1873 — Graduated from the California School for the Deaf. First deaf student admitted to the University of California, Berkeley. Attended for three years in the science curriculum.
1874 — Met photographer Eadweard Muybridge in April when Muybridge photographed activities and buildings at school.
1876 — Taught school for three years at CSD.
1879 — Admitted to San Francisco Art Association’s California School of Design in San Francisco, now San Francisco Art Institute. Studied drawing and painting there for five years. Member of San Francisco Art Association.
1884 — Appointed teacher of drawing and painting at the CSD, Berkeley, and held position until 1923.
1885 — Begun writing news column for school paper: “The Itemizer.” Continued writing column for forty-four years.
1886 — Took first photograph and immediately became a serious student of photography. Exhibited sketches and paintings in San Francisco Art Association’s Annual Exhibition.
1887 — Wrote article for the March issue of Overland Monthly. “Virgil Williams Art Notes to a Deaf-Mute Pupil.” Visited long-time friend General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo at his home, Lachrima Montis, in Sonoma, took eight photographs. Seven weeks hiking and photographing in Plumas county, also seashore at Santa Cruz.
1888 — Lantern slide exhibitions started at the school; soon gave 30-40 exhibitions per year. Eight weeks summer visit with old art school friend, Grace Carpenter Hudson in Utah, photographing and sketching in Mendocino county. Painted first watercolor.
1891 — Six weeks hiking, sketching, and photography in Plumas county.
1892 — Eight weeks summer backpacking trip sketching and photographing the wilds of the Oregon Cascade mountains.
1893 — Ten weeks in the Sierra Nevada Plumas county and Mt. Lassen area. Prepared photographic exhibition of school activities for the Chicago World Columbian Exhibition.
1894 — Six weeks hiking, sketching, and photographing in the Mt. Shasta area.
1895 — Purchased first hand camera. Went with Camera Club to Russian River—members took 500 photographs. Two weeks camping in Mendocino.
1896 — Three months journey to the East Coast. Elected Treasurer of National Association of the Deaf at Convention in Philadelphia. Exhibited fifteen paintings (sketches) in San Francisco with the Guild of Arts and Crafts as a member.
1897 — Three weeks visit to Yosemite Valley with the California Camera Club—hiking and photographing.
1898 — Eight weeks hiking and photographing logging and mining in Amador and Eldorado counties.
1899 — Visit to photographer A. W. Ericson's family in Arcata, California. Five weeks hiking and photographing in Humboldt county. Elected 4th Vice-President of National Association of the Deaf, Executive Committee.

1900 — Five weeks hiking and photographing the Sonora, Yosemite, and Colombia regions, California.

1901 — First-prize medal, Animal Section, First Photographic Salon held in San Francisco at the Mark Hopkins Art Institute. Visit to New York, Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, and Canada.

1902 — Visit to King's River Canyon with the Sierra Club for four weeks, and to Plumas county for two weeks. Photographed the Hopi Indian snake ceremony at Oraibi in Arizona (two weeks).

1903 — Visit to Kern River Canyon with the Sierra Club for four weeks and climbed to top of Mt. Whitney. Then visit to San Diego, Coronado, Los Angeles, and Catalina Island.

1904 — Four weeks in Yosemite and Hetch Hetchy areas with the Sierra Club. Visit to St. Louis Exposition in Missouri. Prepared photo exhibition of the school for this exposition.


1906 — Four weeks visit to King's River Canyon with the Sierra Club.

1908 — Three weeks visit to Mexico.

1909 — Five weeks in the King's River Canyon with the Sierra Club, then on to Oregon, Seattle, and Mt. Rainier.

1910 — Visit to King's River Canyon with Sierra Club, 1910 Wrote in the "Traveler": "I have camped out for forty years." Visit to Colorado Springs National Association of the Deaf Convention. Started showing motion pictures at the school.

Evening of October 30, a fire destroyed d'Estrella's studio, all of his camera equipment including five cameras, and more than two thousand negatives. This catastrophe ended his active photographic career.

1915 — Assisted with arrangement of banquet for the National Association of the Deaf Convention, held concurrently with the Pan-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco.

1917 — Prepared for Educational Museum at GSD.

1921 — Visit to Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows, ascending Half-Dome.

1922 — Visit to British Columbia and Alaska with Sierra Club.

1923 — Visit to Grand Canyon with the California Camera Club.

1924 — Visit to Glacier National Park with Sierra Club.

1928 — Trip with Sierra Club to Canada — climbed mountains.

1929 — Forced to stop teaching because of ill health. Died of cancer, October 8, 1929.
THEOPHILUS HOPE D'ESTRELLA
EXHIBITIONS

1886-1891 — Exhibited oil paintings, watercolors, and sketches in the annual exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association's California School of Design.
1896 — Exhibited paintings as member of the Guild of Arts and Crafts, San Francisco.
1891-1910—Exhibited photographs with the California Camera Club. Supplied lantern-slides for the American Lantern-Slide Interchange for several years.
1901—Received First Prize Award, Animal Section, First Photographic Salon, Mark Hopkins Institute of Art, San Francisco.
1903—Exhibited in Third Photographic Salon.

RECENT EXHIBITIONS

1977—"The Seeing Eye", Ohlone College Library, Fremont, Ca.
1978—M. H. deYoung Memorial Museum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. (held over for one year by popular demand).
1978—"To Hear the Call", Oakland Museum (May 5-June 4).
1979—"Yosemite", Downtown Center Museum, San Francisco.
1982—"Celebration 82", Heller Gallery, University of California, Berkeley, California. (May 2-15, 1982) (same exhibit as at Gallaudet).

PHOTOGRAPHS IN PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

California School for the Deaf, Fremont
twenty-nine albums
misc. loose photographs
1200 lantern-slides
Oakland Museum, Oakland, California
Santa Cruz City Museum, Santa Cruz, CA (two albums, c. 1886).
California Historical Society, San Francisco, CA (lantern-slides).
"Sun House" Historical Museum, Ukiah, California (1 album & loose photos).
Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
General Vallejo's Historical Landmark Home, Sonoma, California.
Drama and Arts Center, Seattle Central Community College, Seattle, Washington (copy prints).

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*Catalogue of the Third San Francisco Photographic Salon*, 1903.


D'Estrella, T. H. "A Summer Trip, 1888." Seventeen articles in the California News (from September 26, 1889 to January 12, 1889).

D'Estrella, T. H. "A Summer Trip to Paris." Thirty one articles in the California News (from October 26, 1889 to June 7, 1890).

D'Estrella, T. H. "A Summer Trip to Oregon." Five articles in the California News (from October 29, 1892 to December 17, 1892).

D'Estrella, T. H. "Jottings from Mr. D'Estrella's Trip." Six articles in the California News (from September 19, 1896 to March 27, 1897).

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AFTERWORD

Recent research revealed d'Estrella's Holographic Will, filed October 24, 1929 (#47528), in the Alameda County Courthouse. His bequests give us an insight into what was truly important to this man. His rich legacy of compassion and concern for the children he loved lives on today. He wrote his bequests:

Firstly, One-fourth of the bulk of my money is to be given to the California School for the Deaf Berkeley towards the Juvenile Library.

Secondly, One-fourth to the said school toward the Art School Fund.

Thirdly, One-fourth to the California Association of the Deaf toward their Home for the Aged Deaf Fund.

Fourthly, One-half of the Last fourth to the said school toward the Award and Scholarship Fund.

Fifthly, One-fourth thereof (the last fourth) to the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of which I have been a member since 1885.

Sixthly, One-fourth thereof (the last fourth) to Miss Carrie Douglas of Visalia, California, if she survives me.

Seventhly, Books: First selections for said school's libraries.

Eighthly, Pictures: First selection for said school classrooms. Scrapbooks: At disposal of the head of the school.

Ninthly, Photographs: Place in custody of the school.

Tenthly, Lantern Slides: Selections to be made for the school, the Camera Club, and the Sierra Club.

Eleventhly, Stamp collection to be sold and money thereof to be turned over to the Library, the Art, and the Scholarship Funds.

Twelfthly, Bric-a-brac, curios, etc. to be disposed of at the discretion of the head of the school, either for the school museum or to persons who care for them.

Signed, T. H. d'Estrella  
June 29, 1929  
(entire will written in d'Estrella's handwriting)

Elwood Stevenson, Principal of the school, was designated executor. The account settlement totalled $3,111.07, and was divided according to d'Estrella's wishes.

More than fifty years later, d'Estrella's legacy lives on. The new California School for the Deaf Fremont has a magnificent small Historical Library and Museum, the contents of which come largely from d'Estrella's bequest of books (250 known to have belonged to him have been found), his photograph albums (29 still exist), numerous
scrapbooks of clippings, and his lantern slides (1200 still extant).

D’Estrella’s bequest to the California Association of the Deaf for the Home for the Aged Deaf Fund was part of the seed money which grew into their new unprecedented California Home for the Aged Deaf (CHAD) in Arcadia, California.

Two of Grace Carpenter Hudson’s oil portraits of Indian children were left possibly to Mr. Stevenson. Whereabouts unknown.

Several deaf people have confided in sign to the writer that Carrie Douglas was d’Estrella’s sweetheart. No specific information has been found to substantiate this possible legend. Some said “It was fitting that she should die only three months following d’Estrella’s death.” Perhaps, here lies a poignant unfulfilled romance which may remain a mystery forever.

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-Pencil-drawing, self-portrait,
Theophilius Hope d’Estrella, 1885.