



### Children's Coloured Lantern Slides

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Part Of: Archives General File Collection

Description Level: 3 / Series

Fonds Number: M8 / V8 / S8

Series: Accession Number : 2019.88

Sous-Fonds: V8

Accession Number: 2019.88

Reference Code: V8 / 2019.88 / PS - 1 to PS - 35

GMD: Transparency  
Lantern slide

Date Range: [c.1895]

Physical Description: 35 photographs : col. slides ; 6.5 x 22.5 cm

History /  
Biographical:

The Ernst Plank Company (EP) was located in Nerumberg, Germany and operated from 1866 until 1930. The company was known for their production of copper and tin toys, specifically stationary and locomotive toy steam engines and carriages, they also produced a variety of magic lanterns and lantern slides. When they first began producing lantern slides, the standard shape of a slide was a square piece of glass about 8cm x 8cm and, depending on the style of magic lantern being used, may have a wooden frame built around the glass. Styles changed as methods for printing slides and lantern designs advanced – by the 1880's the wooden frame was removed entirely from the slides and replaced with thin strips of coloured binding tape that protected fingers from the glass edges.

Originally, hand painted black silhouette images on glass or wax paper were used to create projected pictures, followed closely by the use of colour paints to create entire scenes. Printed images soon replaced hand-painted slides, allowing for cheaper production and more widespread use.

A popular format for commercially manufactured lantern slides was a long piece of glass (usually no more than 23cm long) on which multiple images could be printed in order to tell a smoother story. This allowed for two different kinds of display. The first display has smaller pictures printed in circular or square frames with a solid black border and shown as independent images of a larger narrative with pauses in between. The second display option for these slides is as a panoramic scene with the entire area coloured in (or just with figures displayed like on a stage) so they could seamlessly slide from one side to the other.

This long thin kind of slide was ideal for home use and could be easily handled by children. Ernst Plank also produced a toy magic lantern out of lightweight tin that could be lit with a small oil lamp specifically for use by children. Slides meant for that kind of lantern were printed on celluloid or on a single plane of glass with a thin layer of transparent lacquer to protect the image. This created a thinner, more lightweight and less delicate slide ideal for small hands. When a toy magic lantern was purchased it came with 1 or 2 sets (each set consisting of 12 slides) in the lantern's box, additional sets of a particular theme could be purchased independently.

Magic lanterns varied greatly in design and material depending on the use. Professional showmen would have multi-lens lanterns lit by powerful chemicals or high-voltage lightbulbs that would allow them to project clear images onto a large screen for a theater audience. There were also simpler lanterns that could be powered by oil lamps, multi-wick candles, gas lighting, or electricity in the home. One of the most popular themes for slide shows were images from international travel, but domestic scenes, Christmas, and famous historic battles were also very common.

### Scope & Content:

Series contains 35 children's magic lantern slides done in colour, machine-printed rather than hand-painted. There are 4 distinct grouping of the slides:

2019.88-1-12 depict the story "The Transvaal War" [manufactured in 1895?]. Each slide has 3 separate images with black borders and are numbered sequentially so that the showman could keep track. There is no maker's mark, but according to a note placed in the accompanying lantern slide box, this set was made by the Ernst Plank Company. The slides depict portraits of men in various uniforms, battle scenes, and soldiers in uniform. Each slide is bordered with green paper in good condition.

2019.88-13-16 are unrelated EP slides bordered in red paper of varying condition. 13 has 4 travel images separated with a black border; 14 is a long slide showing 4 boys in play dress as a marching band; 15 is a panoramic sea scape with ships and a harbour. A section of the coloured glass along the top slightly to the left of centre has been chipped off; 16 is a panoramic pastoral Dutch scene set in the springtime. The supporting glass piece has been badly damaged and is missing on the left end of the slide.

2019.88-17-28 are all travel scenes with 4 images to a slide separated with a black border and no maker's mark. The images contain a mixture of people, animals, buildings and temples (mainly made from stone), boats, and landscapes from North America, Africa (with an emphasis on Egypt), and what could be either South America or Eurasia. All slides are bordered in red paper of fair to good condition.

2019.88-29-35 are unrelated EP slides of various styles bordered in red paper in fair to good condition. 29 depicts 4 caricature portraits with a black border; 30, 32, 34 are long slides with 4 individuals on each that are not separated from each other with borders, but are not part of a larger scene; 31, 33, 35 are all panoramic pastoral Dutch scenes set in both springtime and winter.

### Notes:

Accompanying the slides is what appears to be an original lantern slide box, made of wood and covered in faded purple paper with a steam engine train image on the top and a logo containing the initials "E.P." The logo consists of a 4-spoke wheel with wings on either side and 3 stars above. One short end of the box is missing and the sliding lid is either warped or stuck and does not open. A sticky note placed inside the box states that the green-line lantern slides (2019.88/PS-1 to PS-12) accompanied the box.

### Subject Access:

Lantern slide  
Children  
Education  
Entertainment

### Language:

N/A

### Conservation:

New binding tape, supports for broken glass

### Creator:

Ernst Plank Company

### Biographical Source

[https://www.luikerwaal.com/newframe\\_uk.htm?merk\\_ep1\\_uk.htm](https://www.luikerwaal.com/newframe_uk.htm?merk_ep1_uk.htm)

### Notes:

<https://libraries.psu.edu/findingaids/2328.htm#toc>

### Title Source:

Title based on contents of series.

### Processing Status:

Processed

## Images



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