

WHERE **SCIENCE****HISTORY****AND****ART** CONNECT

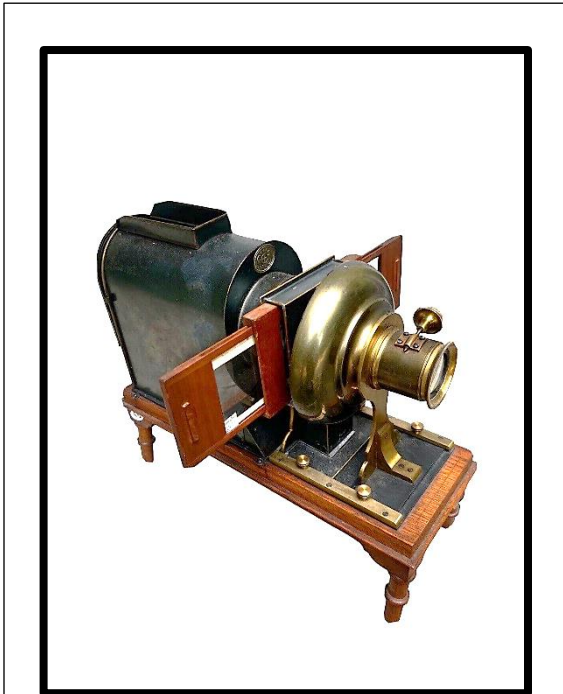
To: Friends of Raven Hill

From: Cheri

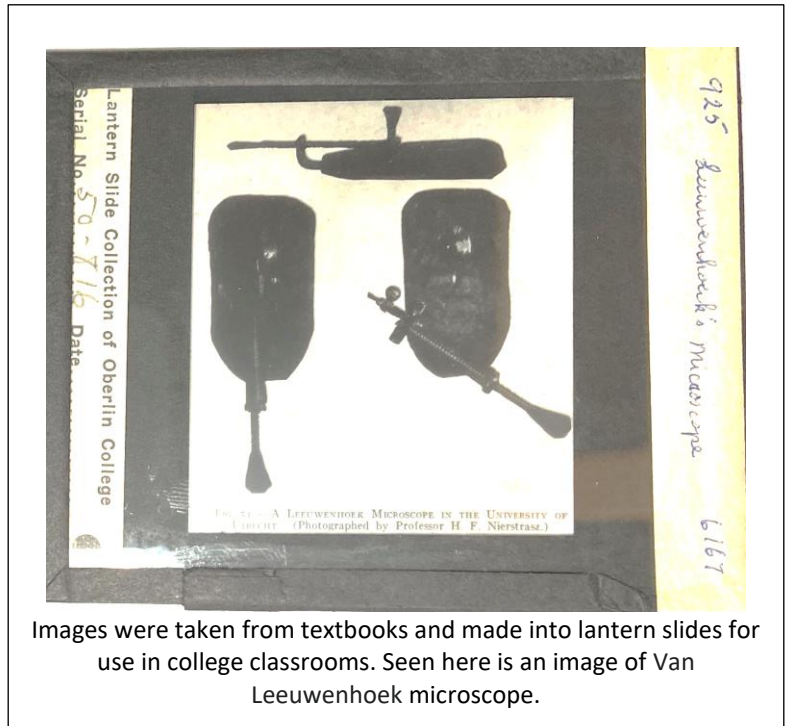
Date: January 13, 2024

Re: *exploring hidden treasures*

Most people know that Raven Hill is an orphanage for animals that people buy at pet stores and then don't want—the animals get too big or become too expensive to feed or people move on to other interests. What people don't always realize is that we are also an "orphanage" or repository for other things that people don't want or need anymore; things that no one in their family wants, but things that are too good to just throw away or take to a resale shop.



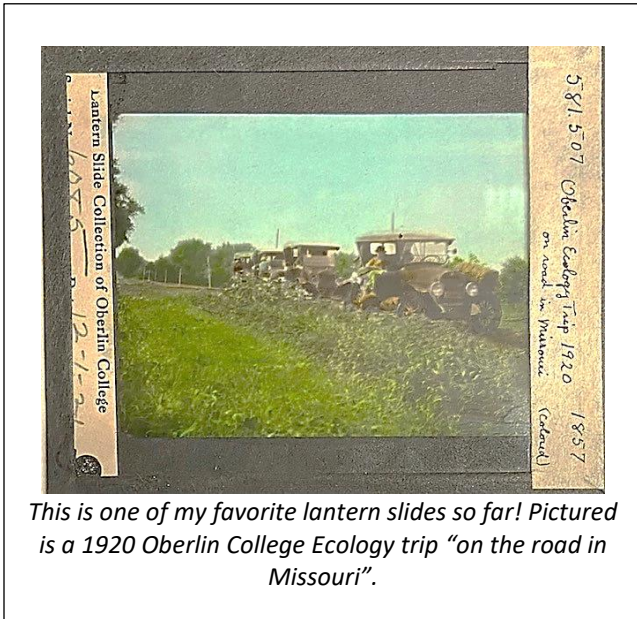
Magic lantern slide projectors were popular in the late 1800's. Images were projected both for entertainment and education.



Images were taken from textbooks and made into lantern slides for use in college classrooms. Seen here is an image of Van Leeuwenhoek microscope.

One such donation came from Benz Microscope in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Bob Benz spent his days crisscrossing the state selling, cleaning and repairing microscopes. Bob visited my Boyne City classroom and I started taking our microscopes down in the summer for their annual cleaning and repair. That relationship continued after Raven Hill opened and Bob maintained our microscopes also. One spring, I got a call from Bob. They had purchased an old card catalog with the intention of storing small microscope parts in the drawers. The card catalog was filled with Oberlin College's lantern slide collection, which now resides at Raven Hill Discovery Center. It's one of the Center's hidden treasures, just waiting to be catalogued and displayed!

Magic lanterns are the precursors of modern slide projectors. You may remember watching 35 mm slides projected onto a screen or the living room wall and now, we use PowerPoint for visual presentations. Before those 35 mm slides, people would create glass slides by painting images onto glass, using a light to illuminate them and optics like mirrors to project them at a large size. These glass slides were called lantern slides and were projected with a lantern slide projector for groups to enjoy. When photography came along, someone figured out how to put photographic transparencies onto glass plates.



Lantern slides were used for home entertainment and public lectures, speaking tours and in college classes to add visuals to a presentation. The slides were sold commercially or you could have your own photos made into a lantern slide. They were popular in the 1890's, once electricity became available for use as a safer light source. Before that, candles, alcohol and kerosene were used.

Athanasius Kirchner, a Jesuit priest, is usually considered the inventor of the first magic lantern in 1671. The apparatus was a box containing an oil lamp which illuminated painted glass slides through a lens. At first, lantern slides were considered a child's toy and the slides were small. It was in 1849 that the more "modern" lantern slide was invented by two Philadelphia brothers, William and Frederick Langenheim.

Lantern slides consist of two sheets of glass, one of which has an image on one side of it. A second piece of glass covers the image. The two pieces of glass are bound all around by a black paper tape. Such slides were produced originally by hand drawing and later by using black and white photographs. Some lantern slides were hand colored to make them more interesting.



Raven Hill’s lantern slide collection has yet to be fully explored and inventoried, but we are already finding creative uses for these elegant glass ages. For one thing, a lantern slide is typically 4 by 3.25 inches—a perfect size for “Lantern Slide notecards”, which Raven Hill uses and also sells in the Center’s gift shop!

One series of lantern slides consists of real slices of tree branches, commonly referred to as “tree cookies”. Very thin slices of trees were made into lantern slides and Raven Hill commissioned artist Kirby Snively to frame them. Kirby made the frame from several different woods, which he identified by woodburning the tree names on the frame. The “tree cookie” series hangs in the Center’s window where natural sunlight illuminates the slides and highlights the annual rings in the various woods. We are looking forward to finding additional uses for other lantern slides as we delve into the collection more. If you are interested in helping to sort and inventory lantern slides, please reach out. We would love to get this project moving forward.



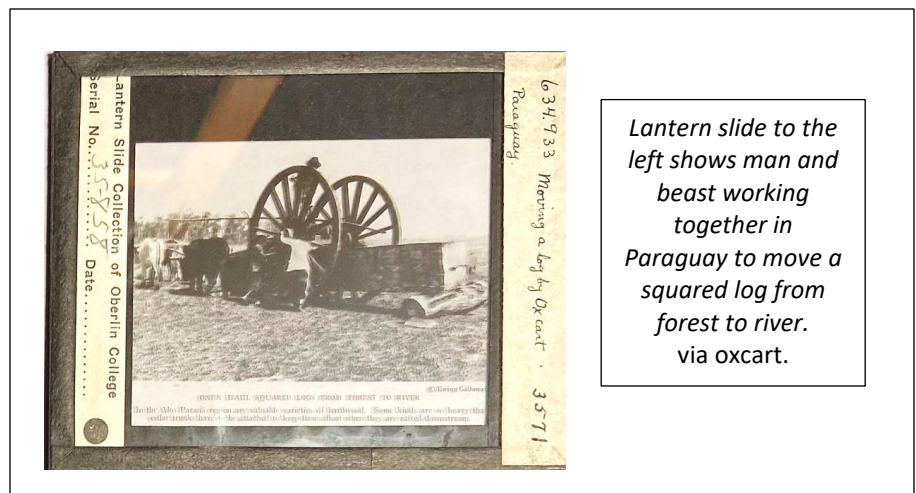
The annual rings are clearly visible in these tree cookie lantern slides. Check them out next time you visit. This is just a sneak preview of the 24 lantern slides in this beautiful display.

Meantime, this is a great time to visit the Center. Raven Hill is open weekends—noon to 4pm on Saturdays; 2pm to 4pm on Sundays, as well as holidays and other times by appointment. Families and field trip groups can visit and explore both indoors and outside or book a science, history or art class for all ages and abilities. The Center is a perfect place for scout and 4H activities, birthday parties for youngsters & adults, retreats, weddings and other gatherings.

Outreach programs, like “Reptiles To Go” or “STEM To Go” that come to **YOUR** site are also available for booking. Small group “assemblies”, classes and touring exhibits, like **History Heritage & STEAM**, can travel to schools and public libraries, as well as other venues.

For more information about onsite or outreach programs, email info@miravenhill.org or call Cheri at 231.536.3369.

Until next time, **Cheri**



Lantern slide to the left shows man and beast working together in Paraguay to move a squared log from forest to river. via oxcart.