

J S Battye Library of West Australian History
State Film Archives – Collection Listing

FN 44

A TRIP TO ROTTNEST

Provenance

Unknown

Access

The State Library does not provide access to original moving image archive material, which in this case is held by the National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra. In some cases, alternative formats such as VHS or DVD are available for researchers' use.

Copyright Restrictions

The Commonwealth Copyright Act 1968 regulates copying of moving images. It is the user's legal obligation to determine and satisfy copyright.

In 1969, after an item about the work of the State Film Archives appeared in a Perth newspaper, an anonymous donor brought in a film while into the Archives Office was unattended. Without label or title, it was a 35mm nitrate negative of a film about Rottnest Island. Considering that nitrate film can seriously deteriorate over twenty years, this film was in remarkably good condition. Unfortunately, the beginning of the film, including the title frames, is missing.

Later research has identified the production as "A trip to Rottnest", which was first shown in Perth at the New Theatre Royal on 8th May 1912. An advertisement on p.2 of 'The West Australian' that day claims it was "photographed for the West Australian government by Spencer's own expert for exhibitions abroad", and the next day on p. 6, the paper described it as "reflecting perfectly the manifold scenic beauties of that well known pleasure resort".

The film was probably sponsored by the Government to promote interest in the Island as a tourist and holiday attraction. It was then only a few years since the prison establishment had been closed and Rottnest began its transformation into a popular resort. The ferry Zephyr offered regular day and evening trips to and from the Island. A retail store was opened in January 1911, and the following summer camping facilities were made available.

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“A trip to Rottnest” shows passengers boarding the Zephyr at Fremantle, and disembarking at Rottnest, camping at Thomson Bay and swimming at ‘The Basin’. It also shows the store and other buildings, the lookout, the lakes, the salt works, panoramas and coastal scenes.

As it is one of the earliest films produced in WA, State Library Archives staff would like to hear from anyone who knows how it survived the 57 years prior to its arrival here.

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