Digitisation

David ‘Rex’ Hazlewood (1886 – 1968) was born in Dulwich Hill in Sydney’s Inner West and grew up in the suburban areas around Homebush, Chatswood and Epping. He first trained as a tailor in a city clothing warehouse but it was Rex’s father, David, who was himself a keen amateur photographer who fostered the same passion in his son.

In 1909, when he was 23, Rex began training for the Baptist ministry and the two years spent in country New South Wales as student pastor allowed him to take photographs of Yeoval, Manildra and Molong. On his return to Sydney in 1911, he took photographs of the areas around his family home in Epping – including several series of the new developments in the north western suburbs, government works and the newly-built Central Markets (now Paddy’s Markets) in the city.

Two horse - drawn floats
His photographs recall the farming days of Sydney’s outer suburbs, including fruit-growing in Epping and timber-hauling in Carlingford. Some time between 1911 and 1916, Rex Hazlewood began to identify himself as a professional photographer and he appears to have gained several contracts to record the progress of large government building projects. He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in 1916 and left for England in 1917. He served at the Western Front, and at the end of 1918 he was appointed an official war photographer until his return to Australia in November 1919.

After his marriage to Robin Kendall in 1920 and the birth of his son, Rex Hazlewood continued to take photographs, probably on a contract basis and for commercial postcards. Some of these postcards were taken with his rotating panoramic camera – 75 examples of panoramic negatives are held in the Mitchell Library’s collection. By the late 1920s, Rex was finding it impossible to make ends meet as a freelance photographer. His brothers owned a nursery in Epping. Rex worked for them, taking photographs of gardens, plants and animals to illustrate their catalogues and writing articles on plants and garden design. He developed a passion for landscape design and delivered illustrated talks on the topic to interested groups. Rex Hazlewood left his brothers’ nursery in around 1935 and undertook various jobs until the end of the Second World War, when he began a business selling wholesale roses to nurseries. His last series of photographs recorded a European trip taken with his wife in 1956-57.
Several years after the death of Rex Hazlewood his niece Mrs. Jean Edgecombe went through his photographic collection and selected around 1000, mostly glass plate negatives, to donate to the State Library of New South Wales in 1973. More content was given in 1987, 1991 and 1992, and in 1993 his son Laurence donated the remaining plates (about 130) to the library.

The library has now completed digitising the collection of:
1248 glass negatives
30 silver gelatin prints
5 printed postcards
75 panoramic photographs

The Hazlewood photographic collection of Sydney and New South Wales is now available to the public through our online catalogue [3].

**United States Naval Fleet, Sydney Harbour, Rex Hazlewood, 1925** [4]

You can also explore some of Rex's panoramas in high resolution using our DX LAB’s Pano-scope viewer [6].

**References**

**Authors**
Curatorial, Research and Discovery, State Library of New South Wales, 2017


**Links**