



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the W. L. Armstrong Washingtoniana Glass Negative Collection

NMAH.AC.0183

NMAH Staff

Digitization of this collection was made possible by Andrew and Anya Shiva.



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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	2
Scope and Contents	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	
8" x 10" negatives, silver gelatin unless identified as collodion	4
4" x 5" negatives, all silver gelatin	6

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	W. L. Armstrong Washingtoniana Glass Negative Collection
Date:	1865-1885
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0183
Creator:	Minor, Frank (photographer) (Photographer) Armstrong, W. L., Mrs.
Extent:	1 Cubic foot (2 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Glass plate negatives of views of Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia.
Digital Content:	Image(s): W. L. Armstrong Washingtoniana Glass Negative Collection

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Mrs. W. L. Armstrong, February 3, 1986.

Provenance

The donor was given the plates by Frank Minor [Miner?], the uncle of a friend, Mrs. Whitney Aitcher of Laurel, Md. Minor had obtained the plates from an unidentified friend who knew of his photographic interests; apparently they had been in his possession for some years before he gave them to Mrs. Armstrong, for she noted that he was unable to print them "by that time" due to failing eyesight.

Available Formats

Collection scanned in 2021.

Processing Information

Collection processed by NMAH Staff, undated

Collection digitized by Noah Stewart, digital imaging technician, 2021.

Preferred Citation

W. L. Armstrong Washingtoniana Glass Negative Collection, 1865-1885, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Photographer(s) and circumstances of creation unknown.

Scope and Contents

11 8" x 10" and 10 4" x 5" glass photonegatives, some marked "1885", one marked "1865" and "Libby Prison"), but most seem from ca. 1885; silver gelatin except two silver collodion plates, one of which bears the "1865." The large plates were stored in a nineteenth-century wooden, grooved plate box (now stored separately). Images depict buildings and sites in Washington, D.C., including: aerial or bird's-eye views possibly taken from the (unfinished?) Washington Monument; the Manassas Panorama building with the completed (capped) Monument visible in the background; Washington street scenes, especially Pennsylvania Avenue; the Smithsonian castle; the U.S. Capitol; the White House; and dredging operations to create Hains Point.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Architecture -- 1880-1890 -- Washington (D.C.)
- Buildings -- 1880-1890 -- Washington (D.C.)
- Capitols -- 1880-1890
- Cities and towns -- 1880-1890
- Cycloramas -- 1880-1890
- Dredging -- 1880-1890 -- Washington (D.C.)
- Libby Prison -- 1880-1890
- Paintings -- 1880-1890
- Panoramas -- 1880-1890
- Streets -- Washington (D.C.)
- United States Capitol (Washington, D.C.) -- 1880-1890
- Washington Monument (Washington, D.C.) -- 1880-1890
- Waterfronts -- Washington (D.C.)

Types of Materials:

- Aerial views -- 1880-1890 -- Washington (D.C.)
- Photographs -- Black-and-white negatives -- Glass -- Collodion -- 19th century
- Wet collodion negatives

Names:

- Smithsonian Institution -- 1880-1890

Places:

Hains Point (Washington, D.C.) -- 1880-1980
Manassas (Va.) -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
Washington D.C. -- photographs -- 1860-1890
White House (Washington, D.C.)

Container Listing

8" x 10" negatives, silver gelatin unless identified as collodion

Box 1, Folder 1 [Libby Prison / Richmond / 1865 \(on negative\)](#), with soldiers and tents in foreground, prison building in background. Collodion, but copied from another photograph. Sky area opaqued; left edge ragged and broken. SI neg. no. 86 353.

Box 1, Folder 1 [Libby Prison \[glass plate negative\], 1865](#)
1 Item (Silver gelatin on glass.; 8.0" x 10.1")
Collector: Armstrong, W. L., Mrs.
Language: English.
Notes: AC0183-0000001.tif (AC Scan No.)
Unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Glass plates must be handled with cotton gloves.
Confederate prison in Richmond, Virginia. Small group of men and soldiers standing amid six tents in foreground. Glass plate is slightly chipped around the edge.

Names: Libby Prison
Topic: Tents
Soldiers -- Civil War
Civil War, 1861-1865
Prisons
Prisoners of war

Place: Virginia -- 19th century
Richmond (Va.)
Confederate States of America
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Genre/Form: Photographs -- 1860-1870 -- Black-and-white negatives -- Glass

Box 1, Folder 2 [Smithsonian Institution "castle" building, exterior. #86 347.](#)

Box 1, Folder 3 [Manassas Panorama building with Washington Monument in background. Sign on building: "BATTLE OF MANASSAS OR SECOND BULL RUN." "1885" on plate. #86 345.](#)

[Battle of Manassas or Second Bull Run panorama or cyclorama building with Washington Monument in the background: b & w photoprint], 1885
1 Item (7.9" x 9.9")

Image(s): [W. L. Armstrong Washingtoniana Glass Negative Collection](#)

Collector: Armstrong, W. L., Mrs.

Language: English.

Notes: AC0183-0000002 (AC Scan No.)

86-345 (OPS neg. no.)

Silver gelatin on paper.

In collection control file.

Unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves.

Building was located on National Mall in Washington, DC. Scanned from copy print. Original is glass plate negative.

Topic: Manassas Panorama -- Washington (D.C.) -- 1880-1890
Cycloramas
Genre/Form: Photographs -- 1860-1870 -- Black-and-white negatives -- Glass
Place: Manassas (Va.) -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Box 1, Folder 4	Copy of painting of Civil War cavalry battle, probably from Panorama above. Plate broken and taped together. #86 348.
Box 1, Folder 5	Collodion copy of painting of men rowing boat with U.S. flag. #86 346.
Box 1, Folder 6	Bridge (possibly Chain Bridge?). Emulsion varnished, poor condition. #86 351.
Box 1, Folder 7	U.S. Capitol. #86 354.
Box 1, Folder 8	Aerial view of river, negative marked 1885. Shows dredging operations underway to create parkland named after the supervising engineer, Maj. Gen. Peter C. Hains. Photograph reproduced in: Douglas E. Evelyn and Paul Dickson, <i>On This Spot: Pinpointing the Past in Washington, D.C.</i> (Washington, D.C.: Farragut Publishing Co., 1992), pp. 92-93. #86 350.
Box 1, Folder 9	Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol, showing Fitch, Fox, & Brown and Solari's Hotel, with horse drawn trolley. Plate marked "Penn./Ave./1885." #86 349.
Box 1, Folder 10	Aerial view, showing Smithsonian Castle, Arts and Industries Building, and the Capitol. #86 344.
Box 1, Folder 11	Aerial view, including river. Negative marked 1885. #86 352.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

4" x 5" negatives, all silver gelatin

Box 2, Folder 12	Street scene. #86 342.
Box 2, Folder 13	Pennsylvania Avenue, looking toward Capitol, with crowd. Similar to no. 9. #86 343.
Box 2, Folder 14	U.S. Capitol. #86 335.
Box 2, Folder 15	Aerial view, with U.S. Capitol in distance. #86 334.
Box 2, Folder 16	Aerial view. #86 336. Plate broken.
Box 2, Folder 17	Aerial view, with standing man in foreground. #86 337.
Box 2, Folder 18	Aerial view. #86 338.
Box 2, Folder 19	Aerial view (taken from Washington Monument?) toward Capitol. #86 339.
Box 2, Folder 20	Aerial view, showing Ellipse and White House. #86 340.
Box 2, Folder 21	Aerial view. #86 341.
Box 3	Artifact, original wooden plate box

[Return to Table of Contents](#)