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

NMAH.AC.0183
NMAH Staff
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: W. L. Armstrong Washingtoniana Glass Negative Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0183
Date: 1865-1885
Extent: 1 Cubic foot (2 boxes)
Creator: Minor, Frank (photographer)
Armstrong, W. L., Mrs.
Language: English

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 Aitchen 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.

Processing Information
Collection processed by NMAH Staff, undated

Preferred Citation

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

Geographic Names:
- 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.

Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 1
Libby Prison [glass plate negative], 1865
1 Item (Silver gelatin on glass.; 8.0" x 10.1")
Image(s): Libby Prison [glass plate negative].
Armstrong, W. L., Mrs., Collector
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.

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

Local Numbers
AC0183-0000001.tif (AC Scan No.)

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

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

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.

Image(s)

[Battle of Manassas or Second Bull Run panorama or cyclorama building with Washington Monument in the background: b & w photoprint], 1865
1 Item (7.9" x 9.9")
Image(s): W. L. Armstrong Washingtoniana Glass Negative Collection: 1865-1885
Armstrong, W. L., Mrs., Collector
Building was located on National Mall in Washington, DC. Scanned from copy print. Original is glass plate negative.

In collection control file.

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

Silver gelatin on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0183-0000002 (AC Scan No.)

86-345 (OPS neg. no.)

Topic: Cycloramas
Manassas Panorama -- Washington (D.C.) -- 1880-1890

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 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.
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