



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Lester Shanks Collection of Covered Bridge Photographs and Ephemera

NMAH.AC.1244

Alison Oswald.

2012

Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
Business Number: Phone: 202-633-3270
Fax Number: Fax: 202-786-2453
archivescenter@si.edu
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	2
Scope and Contents	2
Arrangement	3
Names and Subjects	
Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements	3
Container Listing	
Series 1: Photograph Albums, 1963 - 2006	5
Series 2: Slides, 1971 - 1997	7
Series 3: Guide Books, 1876 - 2009	9
Series 4: Maps, 1850, 1982	10
Series 5: National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, Inc., 2005 - 2010	11
Series 6: News clippings, 2008, 2006	12
Series 7: Postcards, 1963, 1985, 1965, 1970, undated	13
Addenda	14

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Lester Shanks Collection of Covered Bridge Photographs and Ephemera
Date:	1876-2010 (bulk 1973-2008)
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1244
Creator:	Shanks, Lester (Collector)
Extent:	3 Cubic feet (16 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	The collection is comprised of the results of Shanks's research on covered bridges, mostly in America but also covered bridges in Canada and Switzerland. Included are albums containing color photographs of covered bridges, slides of covered bridges, postcards depicting covered bridges; maps, and guidebooks; newsletters, magazines, and newspaper clippings on the subject of covered bridges.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated by Eunice C. Shanks on August 11, 2011.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Bridges (series), circa 1818-1940 (AC0060)

Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Bridges: stereographs, circa 1868-1902 (mostly circa 1875-1880) (AC0060)

Beata Drake Covered Bridge Collection, 1954-1981 (AC0998)

Raymond E. Wilson Covered Bridge Collection, 1958-1974 (AC0999)

Samuel E. Reed Bridge Collection, 1947-1964 (AC1001)

Lucinda Rudell Covered Bridge Collection, 1942-1979 (AC1028)

Robert Bagby Stereographs and Lantern Slides, 1919; circa 1940-1960 (AC1185)

Processing Information

Processed by Alison Oswald, archivist, 2012.

Preferred Citation

Lester Shanks Collection of Covered Bridge Photographs and Ephemera, 1876-2010 (bulk 1973-2008), Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

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

Shanks, an employee of Baltimore Gas and Electric for over 40 years, was a covered bridge enthusiast and collector. He set a goal of photographing every covered bridge in America. Lester Shanks died October 10, 2010.

Scope and Contents

The collection is comprised of the results of Shanks's research on covered bridges, mostly in America but also covered bridges in Canada and Switzerland. Included are albums containing color photographs of covered bridges, slides of covered bridges, postcards depicting covered bridges; maps, and guidebooks; newsletters, magazines, and newspaper clippings on the subject of covered bridges.

Series 1, Photograph Albums, 1963-2006, consists of bound albums of black-and-white and color photographs by Shanks documenting covered bridges in the United States and other countries. The series is arranged geographically and then alphabetically. Some of the states have documentation preceding the photographs which lists the counties where the covered bridges he photographed were located. Shanks assigned a number to each state and each county for organization purposes. The number 35-04-03 means Ohio-Ashtabula County-third photograph in the group. The majority of photographs are identified.

In some instances, correspondence, brochures, fliers for covered bridge activities, invitations to covered bridge events, and copies or portions of *Covered Bridge Topics*, a quarterly journal published by the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, containing articles and information relating to covered bridges, are also included. *Wooden Covered Spans*, the newsletter for the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Society of Pennsylvania is also present. The covered bridge photographs from Switzerland were taken by Leonard Reich.

Series 2, Slides, 1971-1997, consists of color slides taken by Shanks documenting covered bridges in Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec, Canada, and Switzerland. The slides depict bridge interiors, side elevations, landscape views surrounding the bridge, river views, views of the road leading up to the bridge, and restoration work. Each slide is labeled with the name of the state/country/province, county and/or township, date, name of bridge and in some instances, the name of the river the bridge spans. Other numbers such as 38-63-22 are also present on the slides and represent a numbering system Shanks applied to his slides, which are keyed to states and counties. Shanks assigned a Roman numeral and Arabic numeral system to some of the slides (e.g. I-1 to I-100) and (13-1 to 13-100). This arrangement has been retained and while there is no key to it, the slides are arranged chronologically.

Series 3, Guide Books, 1876-2009, consists of bound guide books about covered bridges. The most significant of the guide books is the *The Stranger's Guide in Baltimore and its Environs*, 1876. This small pocket guide book contains sketches of public buildings, monuments, notable localities, resorts, and suburban drives. The guide book is intended to show strangers where to go and what to see when in Baltimore.

Series 4, Maps, 1850, 1982, contains two maps for the city of Baltimore and Baltimore County, Maryland.

Series 5, National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, Inc, 2005-2010, consists of copies of the *Covered Bridges Topics*, the official magazine for the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, Inc. (N.S.P.C.B.) and the newsletter for the N.S.P.C.B.

Series 6, Newsclippings, 2006, 2008, consists of two articles from *The Post Standard*, New York about covered bridges.

Series 7, Postcards, 1963-1985, consists of color postcards of covered bridges from a variety of locations in the United States. The postcards are arranged alphabetically by state. Some bear cancelled postmarks, but the majority are blank.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into seven series.

Series 1, Photograph Albums, 1963-2006

Series 2, Slides, 1971-1977

Series 3, Guide Books, 1876-2009

Series 4, Maps, 1850, 1982

Series 5, National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, Inc., 2005-2010

Series 6, News clippings, 2006, 2008

Series 7, Postcards, 1963-1985

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Gloves must be worn when handling unprotected photographs, negatives, and slides.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Bridges -- Switzerland
- Bridges -- United States
- Covered bridges -- Switzerland
- Covered bridges -- United States

Types of Materials:

- Books
- Ephemera -- 19th century
- Ephemera -- 20th century
- Maps -- 20th century
- Newsletters -- 2000-2010
- Pamphlets -- 1950-2000
- Photograph albums -- 20th century

Photographs -- 20th century
Photographs -- Color transparencies -- Acetate film -- 20th century
Picture postcards -- 20th century
Postcards
Slides (photographs) -- 1950-2000
Travel brochures

Places:

Baltimore (Md.) -- 19th century
Switzerland

Container Listing

Series 1: Photograph Albums, 1963 - 2006

Box 1, Folder 1	Alabama, 1990, 1994, 2005
Box 1, Folder 2	Arkansas, 1994
Box 1, Folder 3	California, 1986, 1991
Box 1, Folder 4	Connecticut, 1972
Box 1, Folder 5	Delaware, 1973, 1983
Box 1, Folder 6	Georgia, 1984, 1989, 1990, 1994
Box 1, Folder 7	Illinois, 1980, 1995, 2004
Box 1, Folder 8	Indiana, 1969, 1975, 1989, 1995, 1997, 2003
Box 1, Folder 9	Kansas, 1993
Box 1, Folder 10	Kentucky, 1979, 1989
Box 2, Folder 1	Maine, 1981
Box 2, Folder 2	Maryland, 1971, 1974, 1977, 1983, 1988-1989, 1993, 1995-1996
Box 2, Folder 3	Maryland (old prints), 1971, 1973, 1989, undated
Box 2, Folder 4	Massachusetts, 1981, 1984
Box 2, Folder 5	Michigan, 1978
Box 2, Folder 6	Minnesota, 1976
Box 2, Folder 7	Mississippi, 1986, 2005
Box 2, Folder 8	Missouri, 1994, 2002
Box 3, Folder 1	New Hampshire, 1981, 1983-1984, 2006
Box 3, Folder 2	New Jersey, 1983

Box 3, Folder 3	New York, 1980, 1983, 1985, 1992, 2003-2004
Box 3, Folder 4	North Carolina, 1978, 1995
Box 3, Folder 5	Virginia, 1982
Box 4, Folder 1	Ohio, 1975, 1978-1979, 1982-1984, 1989, 1995-1997, 2004
Box 4, Folder 2	Oregon, 1986
Box 5, Folder 1	Pennsylvania, 1963, 1979-1983, 1973-1978, 1985, 1987-1989, 1997, 2000-2006
Box 6, Folder 1	Rhode Island, 2002, 2005
Box 6, Folder 2	South Carolina, 1978, 1985, 1993, 1995
Box 6, Folder 3	Tennessee, 1994
Box 6, Folder 4	Vermont, 1967, 1977, 1984, 1987, 2003-2004
Box 6, Folder 5	Virginia, 1977, 1982, 2003
Box 6, Folder 6	Washington, 1986
Box 6, Folder 7	West Virginia, 1975, 1979, 1989-1990, 1996
Box 6, Folder 8	Wisconsin, 1986, 1995
Box 6, Folder 9	New Brunswick, Canada, 1972, 1981, 1987-1988, 1998
Box 7, Folder 1	Ontario, Canada, 1980
Box 7, Folder 2	Quebec, Canada, 1985
Box 7, Folder 3	Switzerland, 1983, 1990, 1992, 1994

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Slides, 1971 - 1997

Box 8, Folder 1	I-1 to I-100, 1971 - 1973
Box 8, Folder 2	II-1 to II-100, 1975 - 1976
Box 8, Folder 3	III-1 to III-100, 1975 - 1976
Box 8, Folder 4	IV-1 to IV-100, 1976
Box 9, Folder 1	V-1 to V-100, 1976 - 1977
Box 9, Folder 2	VI-1 to VI-100, 1977
Box 9, Folder 3	VII-1 to VII-100, 1977
Box 9, Folder 4	VIII-1 to VIII-100, 1977 - 1979
Box 10, Folder 1	IX-1 to IX-100, 1979
Box 10, Folder 2	X-1 to X-100, 1979 - 1981
Box 10, Folder 3	XI-1 to XI-100, 1981 - 1983
Box 10, Folder 4	XII-1 to XII-100, 1983
Box 11, Folder 1	13-1 to 13-100, 1983
Box 11, Folder 2	14-1 to 14-100, 1983 - 1984
Box 11, Folder 3	15-1 to 15-97, 1984
Box 11, Folder 4	16-1 to 16-100, 1985
Box 11, Folder 5	17-1 to 17-100, 1985 - 1986
Box 12, Folder 1	18-1 to 18-100, 1986 - 1987
Box 12, Folder 2	19-1 to 19-100, 1987 - 1988
Box 12, Folder 3	201-1 to 20-100, 1988 - 1989
Box 12, Folder 4	21-1 to 21-100, 1989
Box 12, Folder 5	22-1 to 22-100, 1989 - 1994

Box 13, Folder 1	23-1 to 23-100, 1994 - 1995
Box 13, Folder 2	24-1 to 24-100, 1995 - 1996
Box 13, Folder 3	25-1 to 25-43, 1997
Box 14	Slide tray organization sheets, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Guide Books, 1876 - 2009

Box 14, Folder 2	Brock, Dan. World Guide to Covered Bridges, 2009
Box 14, Folder 3	Lanks, Herbert. Covered Bridges, 1970
Box 14, Folder 4	Petersen, Hegen. Kissing Bridges, 1965
Box 14, Folder 5	Sesquicentennial of Casselman River Bridge and the History of Little Crossings (Maryland), 1813-1963, 1963
Box 14, Folder 6	Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland, 1877 (reproduction), 1877
Box 14, Folder 7	Stanger's Guide in Baltimore and its Environs, 1876
Box 14, Folder 8	Tour Guide to Historic Sites in Allegany County, Maryland, 1990
Box 14, Folder 9	Ohio Covered Bridge Guide, 1960
Box 14, Folder 10	Guide to Columbia-Montour Counties (Pennsylvania), undated
Box 14, Folder 11	Bedford County Covered Bridges (Pennsylvania), undated
Box 14, Folder 12	Covered Bridges of Columbia County, Pennsylvania, 1972
Box 14, Folder 13	Covered Bridges of Somerset County Pennsylvania, 1798-1978, 1979
Box 14, Folder 14	Perry County Tourist and Recreation Guide (Pennsylvania), 1976
Box 14, Folder 15	Centennial History of the Philippi Covered Bridge (West Virginia), 1852-1952 , 1952

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Maps, 1850, 1982

Box 14, Folder 16	City and County of Baltimore (reproduction), 1850
Box 14, Folder 16	Tracing of Baltimore County, 1982

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, Inc., 2005 - 2010

Box 14, Folder 17 Covered Bridge Topics, 2005 - 2010

Box 14, Folder 18 National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges (N.S.P.C.B.), 2005 - 2010

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: News clippings

Lester Shanks Collection of Covered Bridge Photographs and
Ephemera
NMAH.AC.1244

Series 6: News clippings, 2008, 2006

Box 14, Folder 19

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Postcards, 1963, 1985, 1965, 1970, undated

Box 7

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Addenda

Box 15, Folder 1	Christmas card, undated
Box 15, Folder 2	Photographs, rebuilding bridge after fire, Philippi, West Virginia, 1990-11-13
Box 15, Folder 3	Shirley Ryon at bridge, Huntington Hotel, Pasadena, California, 1985
Box 15, Folder 4	Photographs of bridges in Baltimore County, Maryland, 1922-1940s
Box 15, Folder 4	Photographs of covered bridges in Vermont, 1967
Box 15, Folder 5	Prints of covered bridges by Blosser, undated
Box 15, Folder 6	Color postcards (3 1/2 x 5 1/2), undated
Box 15, Folder 7	Color postcards (4 x 6), undated
Box 15, Folder 8	Color postcards (5 x 7), undated
Box 15, Folder 9	World Guide to Covered Bridges, 1972
Box 15, Folder 10	World Guide to Covered Bridges, 1980
Box 15, Folder 11	World Guide to Covered Bridges, 1989
Box 15, Folder 12	Romantic Shelters, A Supplement to the 1989 World to Covered Bridges, 1989
Box 15, Folder 13	Covered Bridge Topics, Fall 2009
Box 15, Folder 14	Jerusalem Mill, Harford County, Maryland, 2006
Box 16	Index cards of bridges viewed by date

[Return to Table of Contents](#)