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## **Stereograph card collection**

**Title:** Stereograph card collection  
**Collection No:** MSS.461  
**Extent:** 1 cubic foot  
**Inclusive Dates:** 1874-1905, 1977

**Abstract:** The collection comprises stereograph cards and a stereoscope. The cards, predominantly from the United States, are of scenic and historic places, historic events, and for entertainment.

**Processed by:** Gerald Chaudron, 2014-2021.  
**Access:** Open to all researchers.  
**Language:** English, German  
**Preferred Citation:** Stereograph card collection, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

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## Administrative history

Stereographs, an early form of three-dimensional photograph, were a major vehicle for popular education and entertainment in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Stereographs were also used for journalistic reporting on many of the current events of the period: parades, disasters, and political events. The Civil War and the Spanish-American War are also documented on stereocards with textual commentary. The stereograph, otherwise known as the stereogram, stereoptican, or stereo view, were two almost identical photographs placed on cardboard side by side, to be viewed with a stereoscope. When viewed through a stereoscope, the photograph appeared three-dimensional. The author Oliver Wendell Holmes invented an affordable stereo viewer for the American market.

Stereography, from the outset, was a commercial success. Entrepreneurs often re-used images without giving proper credit to the photographer. The cards were in such demand that many believed libraries devoted exclusively to stereographic images would have to be constructed. It was a democratic invention because the photographs reached across class lines, and were affordable even to the poor and lower middle class. Many displayed views of far-away lands, making the travel experience, through photography, available to the general population. Its affordability and availability made stereography a widespread phenomenon spanning over sixty years. They became a popular photographic medium in Europe in the mid-1800s, and through mass production methods became widely distributed in the United States by the 1880s. By the latter half of the 19th century, many towns had their own resident stereograph photographer, which means there were plenty of local subjects available for people with stereoscopes to go with their more exotic images. Stereographs reached their peak of popular distribution in the years 1902-1935 through the business efforts of such companies as the Keystone View Company and Underwood & Underwood.

Underwood & Underwood was established at Ottawa, Kansas in 1882. They eventually moved to New York City in 1891. They originally operated as distributors of stereocards of Eastern views to new markets in the West. In 1895 they began producing packaged sets of views with descriptions earmarked for the education market. The Keystone View Co. was formed in 1892 in Meadville, Penn. by B.L. Singley, a former salesman at Underwood & Underwood. This company became the major publisher of stereographs in the world after 1920. In 1898 they organized their highly successful Education Department which produced boxed sets for school instruction of images and descriptive text illustrating culture, industry, commerce and politics world-wide. Although the company hired its own professional photographers, they also purchased rights to other negatives including several series of Underwood and Underwood negatives in 1912. Orders for Keystone sets continued to be filled by the company as late as 1970.

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## Scope and contents

The collection comprises stereograph cards and a stereoscope. The cards are of scenic and historic places from all over the United States, including New York City, Niagara Falls, the White House and the mausoleum of President McKinley. They include photographs of the military parade which took place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1887 to celebrate the centennial of the U.S. constitution (for information on the celebration see <https://archive.org/stream/historyofcelebra02carsrich#page/n347/mode/2up> ). One interesting group is of Hot Springs, Arkansas, taken in 1886, while another documents the Mississippi River near Memphis around 1880. There are also cards which were produced for entertainment, either showing comic scenes or melodramas.

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## Subject terms

Hot Springs (Ark.)--Photographs.  
Memphis (Tenn.)—Photographs.  
Memphis Industrial Exposition—Photographs.  
New York (N.Y.)—1860-1910--Photographs.  
Niagara Falls (N.Y. and Ont.)--Photographs.  
Philadelphia (Pa.)--History—19<sup>th</sup> century--Photographs.  
Stereographs--1850-1910.  
Waterfronts--Tennessee—Memphis—Photographs.  
White House (Washington, D.C.)—Photographs.

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## Inventory

### Box 1

Folder

#### **Stereograph cards:**

- 1 American Views: New York City:
  - The Tombs
  - Court House
  - American Views: Central Park, N.Y.: Oak Bridge.
  - Central Park, N.Y.: Arch Over Walk.
  - Standard Series, American Scenery: Residence of the Late A.T. Stewart (Cnr. 34<sup>th</sup> Street & 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue), New York.
  - Popular series: American Views: Beauties of the Hudson River. – (Winter). No. 6689.  
Sugar Loaf Mountain near West Point. Published by E. & H.T. Anthony & Co., 591 Broadway, New York.

- Beauties of the Hudson. No. 382. Idlewild. The Residence of N.P. Willis. Published by E. Anthony, 501 Broadway, New York.
- Centennial Views: Philadelphia, PA.:  
Belmont Avenue looking North.  
Pump Annex, Machinery Hall.
- Washington's Bed and Room where he died, Mt. Vernon. Photographer: N.G. Johnson, 309 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Washington, D.C, 1880. Inscription in ink: R.H. VanSchaack, July 23, 1880.
- 2 American Scenery: Washington, D.C.: Model of Patent Office.  
American Views: Niagara Falls Scenery: 430. New Suspension Bridge. – Interior.  
Davis, Table Rock, Niagara Falls, Canada West.  
New H Series: American Views:  
View at Niagara.  
Niagara in Winter.  
Falls in winter. Possibly Niagara Falls.
- Cincinnati and its Suburbs: The Lodge, Spring Grove Cemetery. Photographer: Charles Waldack, 160 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Cincinnati, Oh.
- Views of St. Louis & Vicinity: 76. Interior of Great Republic (Mississippi River steamer). Photographer: Boehl & Koenig, 104 North Fourth Street, St. Louis, Mo.
- Views of Shaw's Missouri Botanical Garden (tinted). Photographer: Boehl & Koenig, 104 North Fourth Street, St. Louis, Mo.:
7. Residence of Mr. Henry Shaw.  
14. Central View from Palm-House (tinted).
- 3 American H Scenery: Stereoscopic Views: Chinese Joss House, San Francisco, Ca.  
American Series: Colorado Scenery: [illegible] Balanced Rock.  
396. Flower Bed and Fountain; Lincoln Park, Chicago, Ill. (tinted). Keystone View Company, Meadville, Pa.  
5001. "It's Fleecy Whiteness Tinged with Emerald Green", Nevada Falls, Yosemite Ca. Valley, Keystone View Company, Meadville, Pa. Photographer: B.L. Singley, 1897.
- Stereoscopic Cards of American and Foreign Scenery: Universal Series, Sold by Agents Only: 2803. Utah. Salt Lake City, Mormon Temple.  
Magnolia Blossoms.  
P209. P-26391. Boats at the Wharves along the Mississippi River, Memphis, Tenn.  
Keystone View Company, Meadville, Pa. [The educational information on verso suggests this card was made many years after the original photograph was taken.]
- The Art Nouveau (Platino) Stereograph, C.H. Graves, Publisher, Philadelphia, Pa.,  
Universal Photo Art Co., Philadelphia, Pa.:
3760. East room, White House, Washington, D.C., 1900 (tinted).  
5495. 'Mid brilliant blooms. Washington Park, Chicago, Ill., 1900 (tinted).  
5557a. Blessed Virgin Alter. Easter. St. Vincent's Church, Los Angeles, Ca., 1903?
- 4 Universal Photo Art Co., C.H. Graves, Publisher, Philadelphia, Pa.:
- Enfolded in the flag he loved, he lies in dreamless sleep. Interior of President

- McKinley's tomb, Canton, Ohio, May 30, 1902.
3761. Green Salon. White House, Washington, D.C., 1900.
3763. Red Salon. White House, Washington, D.C., 1900.
3764. President's Desk. Cabinet room, White House, Washington, D.C., 1900.
- Taylor and Huntington, Hartford, Connecticut: Photographic War History 1861-1865, The War for the Union, "2002. Gen. W.T. Sherman ("Old Tescumseh.")".
- Views of Hot Springs, Ark., 1886. Photographer: Clary, Hot Springs:
- Jail.
  - Mud Bath, Magnesia Springs, 1886.
  - Ozark Bath House
  - Rockafellow's Bath House
  - Corn hole or foot bath
  - City of Siloam
  - 5 Birds eye view of the valley
  - Big Iron Spring
  - Big Iron Bath House
  - Old Iron Spring, 1886
  - Bath Houses
  - Arsenic Spring
  - Arsenic Hotel
- Military Day, Constitutional Centennial Celebration, Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pa., 1887 September 16 (3).
- 6 Unidentified woman.
- German stereo cards:
- Petite Scenes. Woman in peasant costume counting coins. Photographer: E. Biegner & Co., Jäger-Strasse 42, Berlin; Publisher: Sophus Williams, 31 Leipziger-Strasse, Berlin.
  - Bilder aus dem Deutschen Leben/ Gems of German Life. Two women at a window.
- Universal Photo Art Co., C.H. Graves, Publisher, Philadelphia, Pa.: 7021. "Visions of Sauerkraut," Germany, 1900. People standing next to piles of cabbages.
- Mid South Coliseum, Ringling Bros. Circus, 1977 June 22. People at a table selling posters.
- Drama:
- "Return of the Wanderer." Man and two women beside gravestones.
  - "17. A healthy crowd" (tinted). Group of women with man buried in sand on a beach.
  - "18. The old, old story" (tinted). Man talking to seated woman.
- Publisher: Webster & Albee, Rochester, NY:
- 2. "Bliss." Couple asleep on couch with another couple in sleepwear
  - 53. "We have both been here before." Couple kissing on hammock.
- 7 14. "Mr. Jones Remove your hat." Woman in bed speaking to man about to get into the bed.
279. "He won't know it." Woman searching trouser pockets while man sleeps.

Publisher: Universal Photo Art Co., C.H. Graves, Publisher, Philadelphia, Pa.:  
“6009. Hallow e’en Party, An intruder,” 1899. Man surprises five women.  
“6. Hands! Hands! I wonder if ....?”, 1901. Woman points to man with  
handprints on his back.

Publisher: George W. Griffith, Philadelphia, Pa., 1903. Distributed by Griffith &  
Griffith:

“2492. (4) All alone.” Woman seated on chair.

“2493. (5) Thinking of one far away.” Woman seated on floor leaning on  
chair with handkerchief.

“2494. (6) Sad news from the battlefield.” Woman seated on chair with  
newspaper dropped on the floor.

“2495. (7) “For my country I can e’en give up my Jack.”” Woman lying  
on the floor.

2496. (8) “Oh, Jack, not killed, but only wounded.” Woman reaching out  
to uniformed man with injured arm.

Polychrome stereo view, Comic series set, published by Barnes-Crosby Co.,  
Chicago. Reproduced from original stereoscopic photograph by H.C.  
White Co., N.Y., 1905: “42. Baby’s delight. The morning bath (tinted).”  
Woman and young child in a small tub on the floor

- 8 Memphis, Tennessee. Photographer: Bingham and Craver/Bingham and Hilliard:  
People relaxing near reservoir with buildings of the waterworks near the Wolf  
River in background.  
Levee view with steamboat “T.E. Eckert”.  
Tug on Wolf River.  
Steamboat “Rene Macready”.  
Memphis riverfront with steamer “Oakland” and St. Louis and Mississippi Valley  
Transportation Company barges.  
Memphis riverfront with steamers including “John Overton”.  
Steamer “W.W. O’Neil” and barges.  
Tugboat “James O’Connor” and barges, Mississippi River 6 miles above  
Memphis.  
Quarantine station and National Board of Health River Service boat, Presidents  
Island.  
Steamboat and river services barge.  
Steamboat docked at quarantine station, Presidents Island.  
Interior of Industrial Exposition Hall, Memphis.(2).
- 9 1. Underwood and Underwood, publishers, Works and Studios, “What a mighty power  
for good is a united nation” – President McKinley at Memphis, Tenn., 1901 (two  
versions). McKinley spoke in Court Square on April 30, 1901.  
2. “No. 153. Carnival at Memphis, Tenn. On Illinois Central Railroad.” Parade on Main  
Street, undated. Publisher: E.L. Clement, Chicago, Ill. Businesses in background  
include the Arlington Hotel, C.A. Dammann and Company, and Charles J.  
Scherer.  
3. “14307. Main Street, Memphis, Tenn.” Photographed and published by B.W. Kilburn,

Littleton, N.H., 1901. On the right can be seen the Armstrong Furniture Company at 306-310 Main Street.

4. "No. 149 (3427) Steamer Thompson Dean at Memphis". "American Scenery" series, no publisher or date. The Mississippi River side-wheel packet "Thompson Dean", the second steamer of that name, was built in Cincinnati in 1872. Named for one of the boat's owners, the "Thompson Dean" cost \$180,000 to build and furnish. Considered one of the finest steamboats of its day, it received a gold medal at the Cincinnati Industrial Exposition. During the winter months, the "Thompson Dean" ran between St. Louis and New Orleans, while the rest of the year it traveled between Cincinnati and New Orleans. In 1882, the boat's cabin and engines were transferred to a new hull, and it became the side-wheel packet "Will S. Hays".
  - 10 Memphis, Tennessee, 1904, Lynn C. Skeels, 807 Fine Arts Building, Chicago:
    1. "127, Group, Memphis, 1904." Racetrack.
    2. "135, Visitors on track, Memphis, 1904." Racetrack.
    3. "140, The levee, Memphis, 1904."
    4. "142. Front Street, Memphis, 1904." Looking north with Customs House at left.
  - 11 "925-Unloading Cotton on the Levee, Memphis", "Metropolitan Series", undated.
- Box 2** Holmes stereoscope, Underwood & Underwood, New York, Patented October 11, 1904.