Overview of the Collection

Title: James E. Taylor Collection
Dates (inclusive): approximately 1861–approximately 1900
Collection Number: photCL 300
Creator: Taylor, James E., 1839-1901
Extent: 246 sheets in 7 boxes
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Photo Archives
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org

Abstract: Collection of 3 disbound scrapbooks of Civil War photographs, clippings, and some original artwork compiled by illustrator and Civil War correspondent James E. Taylor (1839-1901), presumably in the mid 1880s. The scrapbooks contain over 1,530 items including images from noted Civil War photographers Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, Timothy O'Sullivan, George N. Barnard, Andrew J. Russell, and others, as well as handwritten annotations by Taylor and supplementary ephemera and clippings from contemporary newspapers and magazines. Some of the photographic prints are possibly one of a kind. The scrapbooks focus on the Eastern Theater of the war, primarily depicting locations and events in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Included in the scrapbooks are views of battlefields, street views of towns, buildings and ruins, military camps, field hospitals, portraits of Civil War generals and soldiers, and images of casualties and battle scenes. There are several loose pencil and pen-and-ink sketches by Taylor located at the end of volume 2.

Language: English.

Note:

Access
Digital surrogates exist for the scrapbooks in the Huntington Digital Library; advance arrangements for viewing the originals must be made with the Curator of Photographs. The collection is open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, please visit the Huntington's website: www.huntington.org.

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Preferred Citation
James E. Taylor Collection. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance
Provenance unknown; in Library as of May 1928.

Biographical Note
Illustrator and Civil War correspondent James Edward Taylor (1839-1901) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on December 12, 1839. Taylor studied drawing at Robert Connor's Academy of Design as a young man, and in 1860, moved to New York City to study art. Following the start of the Civil War, Taylor served two years as a sergeant in the Tenth New York Volunteers (National Zouaves) and began drawing illustrations of the war during his service. In 1863, Taylor was hired by Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper as a "special artist." He drew illustrations for General Philip Sheridan's Shenandoah Valley campaign in August 1864, and later followed the armies of Generals Benjamin Butler and William Tecumseh Sherman. Taylor compiled a manuscript of these war experiences, including hundreds of illustrations, now at the Western Reserve Historical Society. After the war, Taylor created large, heroic paintings for veterans and a public eager to commemorate the historic events. The scrapbooks contain photographs documenting Taylor's paintings from the 1880s.

In 1867, Taylor accompanied United States delegations to Wyoming and later Kansas, to chronicle treaty negotiations with Native Americans, including the Medicine Lodge Treaty, and Taylor became known as the "The Indian Artist" for his drawings of Native Americans.
Taylor presumably started collecting Civil War photographs during, or soon after the end of the war. In the early 1880s, Taylor also began searching for photographs to aid an effort by General Albert Ordway and Colonel Arnold Rand of the Massachusetts Command Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States to preserve the photographic history of the war.

Taylor worked for Leslie's until 1883, and he died in New York City on June 22, 1901.

Sources:

• Taylor, James E. With Sheridan Up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864: Leaves From a Special Artist's Sketch Book and Diary (Cleveland, Ohio: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1989).

Scope and Content

This collection consists of 3 disbound scrapbooks of American Civil War photographs, clippings, and original artwork compiled by illustrator James E. Taylor. The combined 246 pages of the three 15 x 12-inch scrapbooks hold over 1,530 items including images (often uncredited) from noted Civil War photographers such as Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, Timothy O’Sullivan, George N. Barnard, Andrew J. Russell, J. D. Edwards, and others. Some of the photographic prints are possibly one of a kind. The scrapbooks focus on the Eastern Theater of the war, primarily depicting locations and events in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Included in the scrapbooks are views of battlefields, street views of towns, buildings and ruins, military camps, field hospitals, portraits of Civil War generals and soldiers, and images of casualties and battle scenes. Along with photographs, Taylor included handwritten annotations as well as supplementary ephemera material and clippings from newspapers and magazines. Taylor compiled each page deliberately, and the photographs assembled on a page tend to relate to one another, specifically or loosely, though the pages themselves do not follow a strict chronological, geographical, or thematic progression. In some cases, Taylor grouped the images in terms of specific events, but also in categories like military prisons or feats of military engineering. Additionally, there are several loose pencil and pen-and-ink sketches by Taylor located at the end of volume 2. A couple of the sketches appear to be in a finished state, while others are possibly preparatory sketches.

While most of the images are contemporary to the Civil War, the scrapbooks are undated. Annotations and clippings suggest that Taylor began collecting materials after the Civil War, but primarily compiled and annotated the scrapbooks in the early 1880s, with additions being made through the end of the 19th century.

Alternative Form of Materials Available

Visit the Huntington Digital Library: United States Civil War to view digitized items from this collection.

• Taylor, James E. Catalogue and Price List of Photographs of James E. Taylor's Paintings and India Ink Designs of Our Civil War and Frontier History, 188-? (Call number: 91918)
• Photograph by George Prince of "Grand Review of the Army, Washington, DC, 1865," 1881 painting by James E. Taylor (Call number: photOV 10419)
• Papers of Horatio Nelson Rust (Call number: mssRU)
  See RU 248-249 for two letters from Taylor to Rust, 1900-1901.
• Papers of Benson John Lossing (Call number: mssLS)
  See LS 264 for undated letter from Taylor to Lossing.

Arrangement

The unbound scrapbook pages reside in 7 boxes as loose sheets in their original order.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Subjects

Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865 -- Assassination -- Photographs.
Sheridan, Philip Henry, 1831-1888 -- Photographs.
Taylor, James E., 1839-1901 -- Notebooks, sketchbooks, etc.
United States -- Armed Forces -- Photographs.
United States. Navy -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.
Confederate States of America -- Armed Forces -- Photographs.
Antietam, Battle of, Md., 1862 -- Photographs.
Battlefields -- United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861 1865 -- Photographs.
Generals -- United States -- History -- 19th century -- Photographs.
Gettysburg, Battle of, Gettysburg, Pa., 1863 -- Photographs.
Hampton Roads, Battle of, Va., 1862 -- Photographs.
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Pictorial works.
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Photographs.
Maryland -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Photographs.
South Carolina -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Photographs.
Pennsylvania -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Photographs.
Virginia -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Photographs.
Washington (D.C.) -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Photographs.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Barnard, George N., 1819-1902, photographer.
Brady, Mathew B., approximately 1823-1896, photographer.
Edwards, J. D. (Jay Dearborn), 1831-1900, photographer.
Gardner, Alexander, 1821-1882, photographer.
O'Sullivan, Timothy H., 1840-1882, photographer.
Russell, Andrew J., photographer.

Forms/Genres
Drawings.
Photographs.
Scrapbooks.

Scrapbooks
Access
The scrapbooks are fragile and access to the originals is restricted; please use the digital surrogates in the Huntington Digital Library.

Scrapbook One
Scope and Content Note
The first scrapbook of the Taylor collection is the largest of the three with 108 pages and some 730 images. This scrapbook also has the most diverse group of images, with no specific unifying theme running throughout. However, in general, the first scrapbook focuses on battlefield sites, carnage and destruction of war, and the notable military personnel.
Taylor dedicated many pages to battles at Antietam and Gettysburg. The pages for both battles contain many images of dead soldiers by Alexander Gardner, James Gibson, Timothy O'Sullivan, and others, as well as portraits of the Generals and their staffs, and views of the land and buildings of the battlefield.
Another important series in the first scrapbook are images and text related to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the execution of the conspirators. These pages contain five of Alexander Gardner's ten image series depicting the execution of the Lincoln conspirators in Washington, DC, on July 7, 1865.

Box 1
Volume 1 (Items 1-39)
Box 2
Volume 1 (Items 40-79)
Scrapbooks

Scrapbook One

James E. Taylor Collection:
Finding Aid