Overview of the Collection
Title: Isaac Bonsall Collection of Photographs
Dates (inclusive): approximately 1862-1880
Bulk dates: 1862-1864
Collection Number: photCL 491
Creator: Bonsall, Isaac, 1833-1909, photographer.
Extent: 54 photographs in 2 boxes: albumen prints; various sizes
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: This collection contains 54 photographs by photographer Isaac H. Bonsall (1833-1909) chiefly depicting the
landscape and Union Army operations during the American Civil War in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the surrounding
regions, from approximately 1862 to 1865. The prints primarily document encampments, buildings, artillery, steamships,
railroad bridges, and soldiers. Two images were not taken by Bonsall and include copyright information for photographer N.
Brown.
Language: English.
Note:
Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact
Reader Services.
Publication Rights
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and obtaining necessary permissions rests with the researcher.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Isaac Bonsall Collection of Photographs, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Received as four separate accessions:
  Items 13-30, and 41, gift of John Boland, December 2008.
  Items 40, 42-45, and 47-51, purchased for the Huntington from the Andrew Smith Gallery by the Library
  Collectors' Council, January 2009.
  Items 1-12, 31-39, 46, and 52-53, gift of John Boland, November 2009.
Biographical Note
Isaac H. Bonsall (1833-1909) was born in December 1833. He grew up around Cincinnati, Ohio, and opened his own
photography studio there in the 1850s. In the late 1850s, he moved to Kansas, and worked primarily in the Leavenworth
area, including in a brief partnership with ambrotypist John T. Needles. During this time, he also worked in New Orleans,
Louisiana. Bonsall returned to Ohio in late 1859.
In September 1862, Bonsall joined the Union army. He was attached to the engineering department of the Army of the
Cumberland and assigned to photograph maps at the headquarters of General William S. Rosecrans. While with the Army,
he also photographed soldiers and officers and documented military building and engineering projects and the aftermath of
battles. In particular, Bonsall documented the area and projects around Chattanooga, Tennessee, during the Siege of
Chattanooga in late 1863 and into 1864.
Bonsall was discharged from the Army in 1865 and following his wartime service returned to running his photography
gallery. In 1871, he returned to Leavenworth, and in 1872 relocated to Arkansas City, Kansas, where he worked as a
photographer, as well as in local government. In Arkansas City, he apprenticed photographer William S. Prettyman. Bonsall
Isaac Bonsall Collection of Photographs: Finding Aid

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Photographs

Note

Titles devised by the cataloger are enclosed in square brackets.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Photograph Description</th>
<th>Physical Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>[Portrait of a Union soldier], approximately 1863-1864</td>
<td>11 x 7.5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>[U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Wm. S. Rosecrans], approximately 1862</td>
<td>11 x 7 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>[Line of shelters covered with branches near Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>7 x 11 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>[Tents of Battery Mitchell &amp; Co., Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>[Stone house with men on porch and with horses, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>[Artillery squad in a Union Redoubt, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>[Aiming siege guns at Lunette Mitchell, inside of Fortress Rosecrans, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>[Artillery and Infantry squads by siege guns in Redoubt inside Fortress Rosecrans], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>[Overview of Chattanooga, Tennessee, looking toward Lookout Mountain], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>[Army post below Signal Hill, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>House presented to Lt. Genl. U.S. Grant by the Citizens of Galena, Ills., approximately 1865</td>
<td>oval 18.5 x 13.5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>[Machinery and elevation drawings of Chattanooga Water Works], approximately 1864</td>
<td>20.5 x 24 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>[Union army artillery squad posed with cannon], approximately 1864</td>
<td>13.5 x 18.5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Physical Description</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>[Tents of Battery Mitchell &amp; Co., Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>[Skirmish site at farm near Lookout Mt.], approximately 1863-1864</td>
<td>13.5 x 18.5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>[Union cavalry squad and carriage traveling, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>13.5 x 18.5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>[Back view of large clapboard house, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>[Two-story house with veranda, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>7 x 11 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>[Large wooden clapboard house, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>[Large wooden clapboard house, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>15 x 22 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>View of mess at supper [Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864</td>
<td>22 x 15 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title transcribed from handwritten note on verso.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>[Group of 7 Union Army soldiers posed in demonstration of eating at mess, possibly Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1862-1863</td>
<td>11 x 7 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>[Seated Union army officer], approximately 1862-1863</td>
<td>11 x 7 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Union Army Major/Lt. Colonel, possibly at General Rosecrans' headquarters, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1862-1863</td>
<td>11 x 7 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>[Elevation drawing of Chattanooga Water Works by C.H. Elliott], approximately 1864</td>
<td>12 x 25.5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photograph of drawings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>[Crawfish Spring, Georgia], 1863</td>
<td>26 x 33 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>[Grazing cattle and pigs in Rocky Valley near Arkansas, Kansas], approximately 1875-1880</td>
<td>20 x 25.5 cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 29.1

[Group portrait of large group of men, well-dressed, with hats and many wearing ribbons, as for a convention], approximately 1881

Note
Includes several U.S. flags and numerous rifles. Concession tents in background. Possibly Arkansas City, Kansas or nearby. (Former Sgt. I. H. Bonsall was one of a roster of veterans that established a new encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic in 1881. Possibly a scene of veterans.)
Physical Description: 25.5 x 31 cm

Item 29.2

[Portrait of an unidentified man with beard wearing white shirt and plain coat], approximately 1875-1880

Note
Attributed to Bonsall by donor. Possibly a self-portrait[?].
Physical Description: 15 x 12 cm

Item 29.3

[View of stores and businesses on Summit Street, Arkansas City, Kansas], approximately 1875-1880

Note
Shows storefronts, boardwalk, horses, carriages, businesses with signs. C. R. Sipes' hardware store, seen at left, was established around 1870 on Summit Street. (Source: William G. Cutler, "History of the State of Kansas, Cowley County, Part 9").
Physical Description: 20 x 25.5 cm

Item 30

After the charge, 1862

Physical Description: image 15 x 22 cm, mount 25.5 x 30.5 cm
Note
Title transcribed from handwritten frame. Matted; "Entered ... 1862, by N. Brown, Photographer ..."--copyright statement on image; "Fort Robbinette near Corinth ... Sept. 6th & 7th 1862"--note on verso

Item 31

Fort Robbinette at Corinth [Mississippi], 6th & 7th of Sept. 1862

Physical Description: image 15 x 22 cm, mount 25.5 x 30.5 cm
Note
Title and date transcribed from handwritten mote on verso. Matted; "Entered ... 1862, by N. Brown, Photographer ..."--copyright statement on image

Item 32

[Three-story house with picket fence, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864

Physical Description: image 14.5 x 18 cm, mount 29.5 x 24.5

Item 33

[Military Bridge, Chattanooga, Tennessee, taken from the Navy Yard], approximately 1863-1864

Physical Description: 26 x 31.5 cm

Item 35

[Chattanooga Railroad Yards #3, Tennessee], approximately 1863-1864

Physical Description: 25 x 33 cm

Item 36

[Man at Lulah Lake, Lookout Mt., Georgia], approximately 1863

Physical Description: 32 x 26 cm

Item 37

[Slope of Lookout Mt., Georgia], approximately 1863

Physical Description: 26 x 33.5 cm
Photographs
Photographs (Items 1-13, 16-33, 35-41)

| Item 38 | [Lulah Falls, Lookout Mt., Georgia], approximately 1863 |
| Item 39 | [Tennessee River near Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1863 |
| Item 40 | [Indian Mound, near Chattanooga, Tennessee, sanitary garden for convalescents], approximately 1864 |
| Item 41 | [Lulah Falls, Lookout Mt., Georgia], approximately 1863 |
| Item 43 | [Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864 |
| Item 44 | [Camp of U.S. Colored Infantry at Chattanooga, Tenn., near Sanitary Garden], approximately 1864 |

Box 2
Oversize and matted photographs (Items 14-15, 34, 42, 45-53)

| Item 14 | [Partial artillery squad in a Union redoubt, Fortress Rosecrans, Murfreesboro, Tennessee], approximately 1863-1864 |
| Item 15 | View of the tents of Battery Mitchell & Company ..., approximately 1863 |
| Item 34 | [Close-order Black Platoon Drill in Parade Plaza near Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1864 |
| Item 42 | [Group of Union Military and Civilian Men, Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1863-1864 |
| Item 45 | Military bridge across the Tennessee River at Chattanooga, built Oct 1863, approximately 1863-1864 |

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Photographs
Oversize and matted photographs (Items 14-15, 34, 42, 45-53)

Item 46  Genl. Thomas and Staff, and Genl. King, Point Lookout, Lookout Mt., approximately 1863
Physical Description: image 28 x 22 cm, mount 40.5 x 38 cm

Item 47  Genl. Hooker on Point Lookout, Lookout, Mt., approximately 1864
Physical Description: image 28 x 21.5 cm, mount 45 x 38 cm
Note
Title transcribed from handwritten caption.

Item 48  Steamboat [Bridgeport], U.S. Navy Yards, 1864
Physical Description: image 25 x 33 cm, mount 33 x 43 cm
Note
Title and date transcribed from handwritten caption; matted.

Item 49  [Steamboat Kingston on River Chattanooga, Tennessee], approximately 1863-1864
Physical Description: image 26 x 30.5 cm, mount 35.5 x 43 cm

Item 50  [Infantry company in formation, Chattanooga Railroad Yards], approximately 1863-1864
Physical Description: 32.5 x 36 cm
Note
Matted.

Item 51  The Navy Yard Chattanooga, Tenn., Capt. Slayton's Mill. I.H. Bonsall, photographer, approximately 1863-1864
Physical Description: image 26 x 32 cm, mount 38 x 45.5 cm
Note
Title transcribed from handwritten caption.

Item 52  Officers, 1st U.S. V.V. Eng'rs ... I.H. Bonsall, Art., approximately 1865
Physical Description: mount 38 x 46 cm
Note
39 head-and-shoulder portraits of the officers of the 1st United States Veteran Volunteer Engineers, centered around a larger portrait of Col. William E. Merrill, pasted on board with decorative border, with names captioned below each photograph. Title transcribed from handwritten caption.

Item 53  Non-Com'd State, 1st U.S.V.V. Engr's, approximately 1865
Physical Description: mount 38 x 46 cm
Note
8 head-and-shoulder portraits of non-commissioned officers of the 1st United States Veteran Volunteer Engineers, centered around a larger portrait of Lieutenant Horace D. Olds, pasted on board with decorative border, with names captioned below each photograph. Title transcribed from handwritten caption.