Descriptive Summary

Title: Brady's National Photographic Portrait Galleries album of Civil War-era carte de visite portraits

Date (inclusive): 1861-1865

Note

Possible range of dates of photographs based on date of 1862 on one photo, and military and dress styles of subjects.

Collection number: 94/71

Creator: Brady's National Photographic Portrait Galleries, photographer.

Physical Description: 1 album (32 photographic prints on carte de visite mounts) : albumen, 16 x 13 cm (album)
Title-page bordered in purple and gilt frame, with title "Album for Photographs" in purple and gilt, with name along lower margin of New York lithographer Frederick (Friedrich Ludwig) Heppenheimer (1826-1878): "Lith. of F. Heppenheimer, 22 & 24 N. William St., N.Y."

Album contains 32 carte de visite photographs (approx. 16.1 x 10.1 cm), consisting of paper photographs mounted on thin cardboard backs, with printed logo on verso of Matthew Brady's New York and Washington, D.C. studios ("Brady's National Photographic Portrait Galleries, Broadway & Tenth Street, New York: and 352 Pennsylvania Av. Washington"), each of which is slipped into a sleeve on recto and verso of 20 album leaves, in which a gilt-framed window has been cut. Eight of the windows are empty.

Bound in 19th-century light brown leather; both covers decorated with deeply-embossed cartouche within an embossed border with ornamental corner-pieces; embossed decoration on spine; two large ornamental brass clasps; all edges gilt; gold and white decorated endpapers.
Spec. Coll. copy: in beige cloth clamshell box, with box label "Brady Portrait Album."

Abstract: Album of carte de visite photographs from the Civil War era, containing portraits, including many of Union Army soldiers and officers, produced at the photography studio of Matthew B. Brady, the National Photographic Portrait Galleries, probably the New York studio, including five portraits of women and two of young children.

Language: Finding aid is written in English.

Language of the Material: Materials are in English.

Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library Special Collections.

Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Physical location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact UCLA Library Special Collections for paging information.

Restrictions on Access

Open for research. STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact UCLA Library Special Collections for paging information.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Brady's National Photographic Portrait Galleries album of Civil War-era carte de visite portraits (Collection 94/71). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

UCLA Catalog Record ID

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Biography/History

Nineteenth-century American photographer, best known for his portraits and documentation of the American Civil War. Mathew Brady came to New York as a young man of sixteen, worked as a jewelry case designer, and on the side studied photography with various teachers, one of whom was the photography pioneer, Samuel F. B. Morse. He eventually established studios in New York in 1844, and in Washington, D.C. in 1849, and began earning awards for his daguerrotypes portraits, and later, his ambrotypes and albumen prints. His studios did a brisk business in producing carte de visite portraits for soldiers about to go to the front, as the Civil War broke out in 1862. Brady set out to document the war, and organized a staff of travelling photographers, including Alexander and James Gardner, T. H. O'Sullivan, T. C. Roche, S. C. Chester, and David Knox, whom he sent out into the field to record the people, places, and battles of the war. Despite his great achievements and prominent place in the history of photography, Brady died alone and impoverished on Jan. 15, 1896.

Scope and Content
Most of the portraits are men in military uniforms of the Union Army, many standing with their swords, and wearing hats, sashes, gloves, and in one case, a caped overcoat. Two of the soldiers assume a Napoleonic pose, their hands inside their unbuttoned jackets. Several of the men wear non-military dress—one, in a black satin robe appears to be a member of the clergy or an academic, while others, in long dress coats, might be lawyers or businessmen. One photo, dated 1862, identifies its subject as James Gillette, a private in the 71st Regiment of the New York State Militia, who was captured at Bull Run, held five months in Richmond Prison as a prisoner of war with the Southern Confederates, and returned to New York in 1862. Other photos are identified with names of Captain Isaac Nicoll of Company G of the 124th Regiment, who enlisted Aug. 20, 1862 in Goshen, N.Y. at the age of 22 years, and who was killed in action on July 2, 1863 at Gettysburg; F.C. Green, and Corcoran. The women, one of whom is identified as Mrs. Edwin May, wear satin gowns with broad pleated or ruffled skirts, their hair in clusters of ringlets on each side, or drawn back smoothly in a snood. Also included are two portraits of young girls, perhaps three or four years of age in white dresses.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

Subjects
Gillette, James, fl. 1862-1864 --Photographs.
Nicoll, Isaac, 1840-1863 --Photographs.
United States. Army --History --Civil War, 1861-1865 --Photographs.
Soldiers --New York (State) --Photographs.
Carte de visite photographs --Specimens.
United States --History --Civil War, 1861-1865 --Photographs.
New York (State) --History --Civil War, 1861-1865 --Photographs.

Genres and Forms of Material
Portrait photographs.
Cartes de visite.
Photographic prints.
Photograph albums.

Other Index Terms Related to this Collection
Album for photographs
Brady, Mathew B., approximately 1823-1896.

Related Material
Part of the Photograph Album Collection (Collection 94) in UCLA Library Special Collections.