

PENNSSTATE

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## **Guide to the William C. Darrah Collection of Cartes-de-visite, 1860-1900**

Accession number: 1989-0020H  
University Libraries  
The Pennsylvania State University  
Special Collections Library  
Historical Collections and Labor Archives

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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Darrah, William C.
<b>Title:</b>	William C. Darrah Collection of Cartes-de-visite, 1860-1900
<b>Accession number:</b>	1989-0020H
<b>Provenance:</b>	Purchased from William Culp Darrah in 1989.
<b>Extent:</b>	62,608 photographic prints (cartes-de-visite)
<b>Repository:</b>	Pennsylvania State University, University Libraries, Special Collections Library

## Administrative Information

### Access

Unrestricted access.

### Preferred Citation

William C. Darrah Collection of Cartes-de-visite, 1860-1900, Accession 1989-0020H, Historical Collections and Labor Archives, Special Collections Library, University Libraries, Pennsylvania State University.

## Arrangement

The collection is divided into two sub-collections, the Synoptic Series and the Photographer Series. The Synoptic Series is organized into six categories: 1) Technical: includes posing, studio properties, staging, processes, and card types; 2) Subject of images: includes agriculture, costumes, Civil War, native peoples, railroads, occupations; 3) Personalities: includes artists, composers, clergy, military personnel, political figures, actors; 4) Scenic: includes outdoor scenes, architectural subjects, cityscapes, landscapes; 5) Imprints: includes advertising, advertising art, prices, awards; 6) Photographers: includes women photographers, African-American photographers, renowned photographers, photographers with other occupations (e.g., cleric, dentist, physician, jeweler, watchmaker), photographers from other lands (e.g., Mauritius, Ceylon, Singapore, Malta, Turkey, Algeria, Tunisia, Trinidad).

The Photographer Series is organized by geographic location (U.S. states or name of country).

The Synoptic Series is organized by the six categories and arranged thereunder alphabetically by the photographer's surname.

The Photographer Series is organized by geographic location, U.S. states first then foreign countries, and arranged thereunder alphabetically by the photographer's surname.

## Biographical Note

William Culp Darrah was born 12 January 12 1909, in Reading, Pa. He received his B.S. degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1931, and did graduate study there, 1931-1933. Darrah's career included instructor in botany and paleobotany, and research curator at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1934-1942; advisory editor, *Chronica Botanica Co.*, 1939-1957; research and development engineer, Raytheon Manufacturing Co., Waltham, MA, 1942-1951; professor of biology, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa., 1952-1974, professor emeritus, 1974-1989; Director, Adams County Public Library, 1952-1955; and research associate in paleobotany, West Virginia Geological Survey, 1974-1989.

Darrah was a member of the Botanical Society of America, Society for the History of Technology, and Adams County Historical Society (director, 1954; curator, 1959-1964). He published several books on botany ( *Principles of Paleobotany*, *Chronica Botanica*, 1939, 2nd edition, Ronald, 1960; *Textbook of Paleobotany*, Appleton, 1939; *An Introduction to the Plant Sciences*, Wiley, 1942; Powell of the Colorado, Princeton University Press, 1951; *A Critical Review of the Pennsylvanian Floras of Eastern North America*, privately printed, 1970), local history ( *Pithole: The Vanished City*, privately printed, 1972; *Engineering at Gettysburg College*, Gettysburg College, 1973), and photography *Stereo Views: A History of Stereographs in America*(, privately printed, 1964; *An Album of Stereographs; or, Our Country Victorious and Now a Happy Home: From the Collections of William Culp Darrah and Richard Russack*, Doubleday, 1977; *The World of Stereographs*, Darrah, 1977; *Cartes de Visite in Nin[e]teenth Century Photography*, Darrah, 1981; *Intentions and Techniques, 1985: An Exhibition of Photographs from the Lehigh University Collection and Nineteenth Century Pennsylvania Photography as a Folk Art from the William C. Darrah Collection*, Lehigh University Art Galleries, 1985); and contributed more than 125 articles to science and history journals. Darrah traveled throughout France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and in the eastern United States doing geological fieldwork. He maintained a large cross-indexed research collection of stereographs. He died 20 May 1989.

## Scope and Content

The carte-de-visite was the most influential and diverse type of photograph produced between 1860 and 1900. Virtually every studio in the world adopted this format, resulting in a dramatic transformation of the business and profession of photography. Within a single decade, the 1860s, carte-de-visite photography invaded every aspect of daily life and placed the photographic image on a par with the printed word.

The William C. Darrah Collection includes 62,608 cartes-de-visite. It was assembled systematically over a period of more than thirty years (1957-1988) by Mr. Darrah. Collecting was initiated in 1954 as part of a project to document, through examination of actual imprinted images, the existence of as many nineteenth-century photographers as possible. Darrah chose to collect the carte format because daguerreotypes and ambrotypes (1840-1860) were seldom imprinted or signed.

Acquisitions were of two types: (1) the purchase of select cartes to illustrate technical and aesthetic aspects of carte-de-visite photography, and (2) the purchase of random lots of 100-2,000 cartes from sources in twenty-eight states in order to achieve the widest geographic representation feasible.

The quantity and diversity of U.S. photographers represented in the collection may be judged by the following breakdown, representing the U.S. states with the most cartes in the collection and the U.S. states with the most photographers in the collection. The U.S. states with the greatest number of cartes-de-visite in the Photographer Series are Massachusetts (11,200), New York (7,300), Pennsylvania (4,600), Illinois (3,300), Ohio (2,800), New Hampshire (1,800), Connecticut (1,650), Maine (1,550), Michigan (1,200), Iowa (1,050), Wisconsin (1,000), New Jersey (850), Indiana (800), California (600), Rhode Island (550); nine states had fewer than 25 each.

The U.S. states with the greatest number of photographers represented in the Photographer Series are New York (2,175), Pennsylvania (2,035), Illinois (1,400), Ohio (1,285), Massachusetts (1,230), Iowa (670), Michigan (560), Wisconsin (485), California (475), Missouri (340), Maine (340), Kansas (320), New Hampshire (300), Vermont (270), Minnesota (260); six states have fewer than twelve each.

There are 3,600 cartes-de-visite representing the work of 2,700 photographers from countries other than the United States. Countries with the greatest number of cartes in the collection include: Great Britain, Germany, France, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Denmark, Austria, and Switzerland.

Darrah compiled eleven separate card files to index the collection: 1) Photographer, 2) Geographic (U.S. and Canada), 3) Geographic (foreign), 4) Technical, 5) Subject, 6) Personalities, 7) Scenic, 8) Imprint, 9) Photographer Topical, 10) Synoptic, 11) Locality (U.S. and Canada). These indexes are available in-house. A separate Access database identifying and describing each image is also available in-house.

## **Index Terms**

These materials are indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Pennsylvania State University. Researchers wishing to find related materials should search the catalog under these index terms.

## **Personal Name Subject**

Darrah, William Culp, 1909- -- Photograph collections

## **Topical Subjects**

African-American photographers

Carte de visite photographs -- Specimens

Images, Photographic -- Specimens

Photographers -- United States

Portrait photography -- Specimens

Women photographers

## **Form/Genre Terms**

Cabinet photographs

Cartes-de-visite

Tintypes

## **Container List**

### **Photographer Series**

Photographer Series.

The Photographer Series includes cartes-de-visite representing the work of more than 21,000 photographers. For many photographers there is a single carte, for others there may be ten or more than 100. Large numbers often indicate a career span of 20 to 35 years, and show the sequence of workmanship and the variety of the photographer's production.

Box 1

Alabama

Box 1

Arizona

Box 1

Arkansas  
Box 1-3  
California  
Box 3  
Colorado  
Box 3-9  
Connecticut  
Box 9  
Dakota Territory  
Box 9  
Delaware  
Box 9  
Florida  
Box 9-10  
Georgia  
Box 10  
Hawaii  
Box 10  
Idaho  
Box 10-22  
Illinois  
Box 159  
Indian Territory  
Box 22-25  
Indiana  
Box 25-29  
Iowa  
Box 29-30  
Kansas  
Box 30-31  
Kentucky  
Box 31  
Louisiana  
Box 31-38  
Maine  
Box 39  
Maryland  
Box 40-72  
Massachusetts  
Box 73-77  
Michigan  
Box 77-78  
Minnesota  
Box 78  
Mississippi  
Box 78-80  
Missouri  
Box 80  
Montana

Box 80  
Nebraska  
Box 80  
Nevada  
Box 81-88  
New Hampshire  
Box 88-91  
New Jersey  
Box 91  
New Mexico  
Box 91-114  
New York  
Box 115  
North Carolina  
Box 115-125  
Ohio  
Box 126  
Oregon  
Box 126-147  
Pennsylvania  
Box 147-149  
Rhode Island  
Box 149  
South Carolina  
Box 149-150  
Tennessee  
Box 150  
Texas  
Box 150  
Utah  
Box 150-154  
Vermont  
Box 154  
Virginia  
Box 154  
Washington  
Box 154-155  
Washington, D.C.  
Box 155  
West Virginia  
Box 155-159  
Wisconsin  
Box 159  
Wyoming  
Box 177  
United States: unidentified  
Box 160  
Australia  
Box 160

Austria  
Box 160  
Belgium  
Box 160-161  
Canada  
Box 178  
Canada: unidentified  
Box 161  
Chile  
Box 161  
China  
Box 161  
Costa Rica  
Box 161  
Czechoslovakia  
Box 161  
Denmark  
Box 161-162  
France  
Box 162-164  
Germany  
Box 165-172  
Great Britain  
Box 173  
Hungary  
Box 173  
India  
Box 173  
Italy  
Box 173  
Jamaica  
Box 173  
Lichtenstein  
Box 173  
Lithuania  
Box 173  
Luxemburg  
Box 173  
Malta  
Box 173  
Mexico  
Box 173  
Netherlands  
Box 173  
New Zealand  
Box 173-174  
Norway  
Box 174  
Panama

Box 174  
Peru  
Box 174  
Poland  
Box 174  
Portugal  
Box 174  
Puerto Rico  
Box 174  
Russia  
Box 174  
Scotland  
Box 174  
South Africa  
Box 174  
Spain  
Box 174-176  
Sweden  
Box 176  
Switzerland  
Box 176  
Turkey  
Box 176  
Venezuela  
Box 176  
Wales  
Box 176  
West Indies  
Box 178  
Foreign: unidentified

## **Synoptic Series**

Synoptic Series.

The Synoptic Series includes cartes-de-visite representing the work of more than 3,200 photographers.

Box 179-189

Technical

Box 190-194

Subject

Box 196

Subject: Civil War

Box 195

Subject: Native Peoples

Box 196

Miscellaneous

Box 197-198

Personalities

Box 199

Scenic: United States  
Box 199  
Scenic: Canada  
Box 200-201  
Scenic: Foreign  
Box 201  
Anonymous  
Box 202-204  
Imprints  
Box 205-207  
Photographers  
Box 208  
Photographers: Women (United States)  
Box 209  
Photographers: Women (foreign)  
Box 210-211  
Tintypes  
Box 212  
Chronological  
Box 213  
Illustrations for Darrah's book, *Cartes de visite in Nin[e]teenth Century Photography*  
Box 214  
Philatelic  
Box 215  
Unprocessed  
Box 217-218  
Cabinet cards  
Box 216  
Cabinet cards: Pennsylvania photographers