

**The New York Public Library
Humanities and Social Sciences Library
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William Henry Jackson Papers
1862-1942
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Table of Contents

Summary	iii
Related materials note.....	iv
Biographical note.....	v
Scope and content note	vi
Arrangement note	vi
Series descriptions and container list	1
SERIES I. LETTERS TO HIS WIFE, 1894-1896	1
SERIES II. DIARIES, DIARY TRANSCRIPTS, NARRATIVES, PHOTOGRAPHS, 1862-1942	2
SERIES III. NOTEBOOKS, SKETCHBOOKS, EPHEMERA	5

Summary

Main entry:	Jackson, William Henry
Title:	William Henry Jackson Papers, 1862-1942
Size:	2.6 linear feet (8 boxes)
Source:	Gift of Clarence S. Jackson (son of William Henry Jackson), 1942; 1947
Abstract:	William Henry Jackson was an American photographer, artist and writer best known as the photographer for the U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories in 1870-1879 who produced some of the earliest photographs of Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming wilderness areas. The collection consists of diaries, letters, photographs, sketchbooks, notebooks, and ephemera.
Access:	Apply in the Special Collections Office for admission to the Manuscripts and Archives Division. Microfilm of letters and diaries must be used in lieu of originals.
Preferred citation:	William Henry Jackson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
Special formats	Diaries, maps, photographs, sketchbooks
Alternate formats:	Diaries, 1862-1901 available on microfilm. Letters to his wife, 1894-1896, available on microfilm. Typed transcript of diary, 1869 June 29 [sic] -September 27 (1869) available in NYPL Digital Gallery. Typed narrative/reconstruction, 1867-1869. "Omaha and the Union Pacific" (1867-1869) available in NYPL Digital Gallery.

Related materials note

Robert Brewster Stanton Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

The Photography Collection of The New York Public Library holds an extensive collection of Jackson's photographs and stereographs. His [Mammoth prints of Colorado and Wyoming](#) are among the images available through the NYPL Digital Gallery.

Many of Jackson's Detroit Publishing Company photographs and those taken during the World's Transportation Commission expedition are available on the Library of Congress [American Memory](#) website.

Biographical note

William Henry Jackson, artist and renowned photographer of the American West, was born in Keesville, New York in 1843. He began his career at the age of fifteen with jobs retouching photographs in Troy, New York and later Rutland, Vermont. In 1862 Jackson enlisted in the Union Army. He served for nine months with Company K of the 12th Vermont Regiment before returning to his job in Rutland.

In 1866 Jackson made his first trip to the West. Starting out from New York City, he made his way to California and back as far as Omaha by working a variety of menial jobs, as “bull-whacker” on a wagon train, farm laborer, and mustang driver. After a year of arduous work for little compensation, Jackson returned to studio work for a commercial photographer in Omaha.

He arranged to buy out the owner fairly soon thereafter, and with one (and later two) of his brothers opened Jackson Brothers studio. Shortly after the completion of the transcontinental railroad, Jackson left the business in the hands of his wife and brothers, and made use of the new railroad to spend the summer photographing the wilderness to which he now had easier access. He photographed the railroad line, railroad workers, the new settlements that had grown up along the line, and the spectacular landscapes of the Wyoming Territory. The summer's work sold well, being the first prints available of that wilderness area. His work so impressed Ferdinand V. Hayden, director of the U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, that Jackson was asked to accompany the Survey's expedition during the summer of 1870. The following year he became an official photographer and closed his Omaha studio. For the next eight years he spent his summers with its field expeditions and the remainder of the year printing his photographs and assisting in the preparation of the Survey's heavily illustrated reports of its work. He produced some of the earliest views of the natural wonders of the American landscape in Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah, in particular the area known as “The Yellowstone” which became the first national park.

When funding for the Survey was discontinued in 1879, Jackson opened a new studio in Denver. During the nearly twenty years that he maintained the studio he completed numerous commissions from railroads, hotels, states, and municipalities. He produced the illustrations for the official report of the World's Columbian Expedition of 1893 and spent over two years abroad with the World's Transportation Commission (1894-1896) photographing ancient and modern modes of transportation.

In 1898 Jackson closed his studio and entered into partnership with the Detroit Photographic Company (later Detroit Publishing Company), manufacturers and distributors of colored picture postcards, prints, and fine art reproductions. He acted as field photographer for the firm, both shooting new photographs and purchasing the work of other photographers, until 1902 when he gave up field work to act as plant manager. He retired from the firm in 1924.

Jackson stayed quite active in retirement. He wrote two memoirs, *The Pioneer Photographer* (with Frank Driggs, 1929) and *Time Exposure* (1940); painted murals of Western scenes for the National Park Service; and acted as spokesman and recording secretary for the Oregon Trail Memorial Association. He died in 1942 at the age of 99.

Scope and content note

The William Henry Jackson Papers, 1862-1942, consist chiefly of his diaries, (including diary transcripts, reconstructions, and narratives) which span the years from his enlistment in the Union army during the Civil War at the age of 19 until his death in 1942 at the age of 99. The remainder of the collection consists of letters written to his wife while abroad, 1894-1896, two sketchbooks, four notebooks, and a few pieces of ephemera that had been tucked into the diaries.

The diaries vary in depth and breadth of coverage, as well as in format. Some are original holograph journals. Others are holograph or typed transcripts made by Jackson from the originals. Some which appear to be transcripts are Jackson's narrative reconstructions based on the original diaries; others are memoirs based on brief notes.

These "diaries" as a whole cover his nine months in the Vermont Regiment, 1862-1863; his first trip West in 1866-67; the opening of his studio in Omaha; his photography along the line of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869; his "photographic campaigns" with the U.S. Geological Survey, 1870-1878; his travels abroad with the World's Transportation Commission, 1894-1896; and his years in retirement, 1925-1942.

There are no diaries covering his years as a commercial photographer in Denver, 1879-1897, and only one diary (1901) and one notebook related to the 27 years he worked for the Detroit Photographic Company (later Detroit Publishing Company).

His years as photographer for the World's Transportation Commission are the most extensively documented. Supplementing his five diaries of the world tour, 1894-1896, are approximately eighty-five letters written to his wife during the three years he was abroad; twenty-nine photographs taken in India, New Zealand, and Korea; two pieces of printed ephemera; and two typescript essays, "A Brief Account of My Travels Abroad with the World's Transportation Commission" and "The World's Transportation Commission Calls On the Maharajah of Kashmir."

Arrangement note

The William Henry Jackson Papers are organized in the following series:

Series I. Letters to his wife, 1894-1896

Series II. Diaries, diary transcripts, narratives, photographs, 1862-1942

Series III. Notebooks, sketchbooks, ephemera

Series descriptions and container list

Box Fol Reel

Series I. Letters to his wife, 1894-1896

This series contains approximately eighty-five letters Jackson wrote to his second wife, Emilie Painter Jackson, during his travels abroad with the World's Transportation Commission. The letters recount the pleasures and many frustrations he experienced while working as the Commission's photographer. He comments on local customs, the foibles of his traveling companions, (especially the Commission's leader, Joseph G. Pangborn), varied eating and sleeping arrangements, hardships met with in his photographic work, and his nagging financial worries and concern about the welfare of his family during his extended absence. Many of the letters are quite long, but break off abruptly, often without closing or signature, so that they could be included in the day's outgoing mail.

The letters are addressed from many locales including London, France, Algeria, Gibraltar, Egypt, India, Siam, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Macao, Korea, Japan, China, Siberia, Moscow, and Berlin. His letters from Russia are dated according to the Julian calendar (Old Style) but are interfiled chronologically with his other letters as if the dating system were unchanged.

Use microfilm reel 4

1	1	4	1894
	2	4	1895 January - April
	3	4	1895 May - August
	4	4	1895 September - 1896 February

Box Fol Reel

Series II. Diaries, diary transcripts, narratives, photographs, 1862-1942

This series contains Jackson's original diaries for the period of his service in the Union Army, 12th Vermont Regiment, Company K (1862-1863); the summer spent photographing along the line of the Union Pacific Railroad in Nebraska, Wyoming and Utah (1869); his first field excursion as unofficial photographer with the United States Geological Survey in the Wyoming Territory (1870); and fragmentary diary notes for his final summer with the Survey in Yellowstone (1878). The series also contains five diaries covering his world tour with the World's Transportation Commission, 1894-1896; three of the five are devoted to the Siberian portion of the trip. These are accompanied by transcripts of the diaries, typescripts of two articles Jackson wrote about his experiences on the trip, and twenty-nine photographs taken in India, Korea, and New Zealand. Finally, there is one diary, 1901, covering three months spent in California, Oregon, and Washington shooting and purchasing photographs for the Detroit Publishing Company, and twenty volumes of diaries kept during his retirement, 1925-1942. Some of the 19th century diaries contain his sketches and doodles, which are not always reproduced in the transcripts.

The series also includes Jackson's transcripts and reconstructions of his diaries for 1866-1867, 1873, 1874, and 1875. The original diaries are among the collections of the Colorado Historical Society in Denver.

Finally, the series contains typed narratives made by Jackson during the preparation of his memoirs. Some recount the same material covered by the diaries and transcripts; others cover periods for which there are no diaries extant.

All the material in this series has been arranged in rough chronological order according to the time period of the subject matter. Jackson's original diaries are accompanied by transcripts and narratives covering the same period, even though the latter may have been prepared many years later.

			1862 August 18 - 1863 July 16
2	1	1	holograph diary (Use microfilm reel 1)
	2	1	holograph transcript, 1915 (Use microfilm reel 1)
			1866 May-Dec; 1866 Dec-1867 Aug
--	--	1	holograph diaries (2 vols.) Use microfilm reel 1. Originals at Colorado Historical Society.
3	1	1	holograph reconstruction (Two volumes in one) (Use microfilm reel 1.)
	2	---	typed reconstruction (Includes both volumes) (Not microfilmed)
			1869 June-September
4	1	1	holograph diary (Use microfilm reel 1) Digitized version available.
	3	---	typed transcript Not microfilmed. Digitized version available.
			1870 August-November
	2	1	original diary (Use microfilm reel 1)
	3	2	typed transcript (Use microfilm reel 2)
			Photographic Campaigns of 1869 1870 1871 1872
			Title on enclosure in which the two typed essays were kept. The dates 1870 and 1872 are crossed out. In Jackson's hand.
		1	Omaha and the Union Pacific, 1867-1869 (typescript)(Use microfilm reel 1). Digitized version available.
4	1		The Yellowstone, 1871 (typescript)(Use microfilm reel 1)

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	<u>Reel</u>	
4	4	1	1873 May 15-September 4 typed transcript/reconstruction of diary for this period entitled "US. Geological Survey of Colorado"
			Use microfilm reel 1. Original diary in Colorado Historical Society
	5	1	1874 July 15-October 12 holograph narrative/transcript
			Use microfilm reel 1. Original diary in Colorado Historical Society
	6	1	1875 June 22-October 13 holograph transcript of original diary in Colorado Historical Society
			Use microfilm reel 1
	7	1	Narrative for the year 1877 (typed narrative) (Use microfilm reel 1)
			1878 July 22-October 19
	8	3	original diary/notes
			Titled "Original Notes of the Expedition of 1878." Use microfilm reel 3.
		3	Fragmentary Notes of the 1878 Expedition" (typed transcript of diary/notes) (Use microfilm reel 3)
		3	1878 "Wind River Mts. and the Yellowstone" (Use microfilm reel 3)
			World's Transportation Commission trip, 1894-1895
5	1	4	Diary, 1894 September 26-1895 July 28
	2	4	Diary, 1895 July 29 - October 7
	3	4	Diary, 1895 September 26 - December 16 (Old Style) (Vladivostock to Blagovestschensk)
	4	4	Diary, 1895 December 16-1896 January 8 (Old Style)
	5	4	Diary, "Krasnoyarsk," 1896 January 23-March 5 (Old Style)
	6		Diaries, 1894 October 3 - 1895 October 3 (Typed transcript)
	7		Diary, 1895 September 22-October 3 (Holograph transcript of diaries)(Korean trip starting from Chee Fu, China)
	8		1895 October 5-1896 February 3 (Typed transcript of diaries) Entitled, "Across Siberia with the World's Transportation Commission"
	9		A Brief Account of My Travels Abroad with the World's Transportation Commission" (Typescript narrative)
	10		The World's Transportation Commission calls on the Maharajah of Kashmir" (T typescript narrative)
			Invitation to state banquet from the Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir, 1895 Announcement of parade of state troops at Jammu on 12 February 1895 in honor of the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	<u>Reel</u>	
5	11		<p>Photographs</p> <p>India</p> <p>#504 [Tiger]#508 [Two elephants carry Commission members (?)#509 General group at the Residency, Jammu. The Maharaja entertaining the Lieut. Gov. Fitzpatrick and the W.T. Comm.</p> <p>New Zealand</p> <p>#358 [Bella, a Maori Guide, Sitting at Edge of ... Geyser]#750 [Visitors to geyser]#751 [Geyser]Five portraits, unnumbered, including Maala Keepa (Wanganni), Te Heuheu (Tanpo chief) and his wife</p> <p>Korea</p> <p>#814 Pak [on horseback] #819 WHJ [Jackson on horseback] #902 Korean village inn #949 Central part of Seoul. King's palaces in right hand distance #950 Seoul. Left of panorama #953 View on the Nau in Central Korea #954 Yi Ung Yul [portrait] #955 The Front of the Procession. #956 A portion of the magistrate's retinue. His sedan at left. #957 [Two Koreans with wine, biscuits & baggage preparing meal at a wayside inn] #962 Wonsan (Ginsen). Left. #963 Wonsan. Right. #968 In the hills back of Wonsan #996 The Mapkush</p>
6	1 2 3 4 5 6	5	<p>Diary , 1901 September 26 - November 13 (California, Washington, Oregon)</p> <p>Narrative, 1925 June 27 - July 1</p> <p>Five year diary, 1925-1929</p> <p>Diary, 1926</p> <p>Diary, 1929 July 18 - August 3 (Includes historical notes)</p> <p>Diaries, 1930 (4 vols.)</p>
7			Diaries, 1931-1942 (13 vols.)

Box Fol Reel

Series III. Notebooks, sketchbooks, ephemera

The final series consists of two undated sketchbooks containing sketches and floor plans of pueblos, presumably made during his U.S.G.S. field work; four notebooks containing lists of photographs taken for the Detroit Publishing Company (1903, 1904, 1906); undated notes on art history; notes (1929 and undated) on the history of the American West, made in the course of his work for the Oregon Trail Memorial Association; and a few pieces of ephemera that had been tucked into the diaries, including a roster of Company K of the 12th Vermont Regiment, a military pass issued to Jackson (1863), a map of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, and a death notice of his second wife, Emilie Painter Jackson (1918).

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| 8 | 1 | <p>Notebook with USGS photo numbers, n.d.</p> <p>Notebook, Art-Old Masters, painting</p> <p>Notebook, undated</p> |
| | 2 | Notebook, 1903 Jan. 21-Feb 14, 1904, 1906 (two entries 1904; 1906) |
| | 3 | <p>Notebook, 1929</p> <p>Notes on early exploration of the West for Oregon Trail Memorial Association</p> |
| | 4 | <p>Sketchbook - Indian pueblos</p> <p>Sketchbook - Plans and sketches of pueblos</p> |
| | 5 | <p>Ephemera</p> <p>Military pass permitting private W.H. Jackson, Co. K, 12th Vt. to make a map of the Picket Line. Signed A.P. Blunt, Col. 2nd Brigade, 1863 April 2(Note: Negative and positive photostats accompany original.)</p> <p>Roster of Company K, 12th Vermont Regiment, U.S. Volunteers. In Jackson's hand. [1900?]</p> <p>Typescript of poem, "We Are Coming, Father Abraham, 300,000 More" by John A. Gibbons. Hicksite Quakers.</p> <p>Clipping. Death notice of Emilie Painter Jackson, 1918</p> <p>Map of the Trans-Siberian Railroad</p> |