

McAllister Graphics Collection

Library Company of Philadelphia

1322.F; 1540.F; 5737.F; 5742.F; 5743.F; 5750.F; 5754.F; 5759.F; 5770.F;
5774 1/2.F; 5775.F; 5778.F; 5780.F- 5781.F; 5786.F; 5792.F-5795.F.

MCALLISTER GRAPHICS COLLECTION

circa 1745- circa 1896
(bulk dates 1830-1870)

circa 9, 500 items

January 2007

Descriptive Summary

Repository

Library Company of Philadelphia
1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107-5698

Call Number

1322.F; 1540.F; 5737.F; 5742.F; 5743.F; 5750.F; 5754.F; 5759.F; 5770.F;
5774 1/2.F; 5775.F; 5778.F; 5780.F; 5781.F; 5786.F; 5792.F-5795.F.

Creator

McAllister, John A. (John Allister), 1822-1896
McAllister, John, 1786-1877

Title

McAllister Graphics Collection

Inclusive Dates

1795-1896

Quantity

Circa 9,500 items

Abstract

The collection contains photographs, prints, maps, textiles, scrapbooks and watercolors and drawings collected by Philadelphia antiquarians and father and son John McAllister Jr. and John A. McAllister. The graphics, which predominately date to the 19th century, primarily document Philadelphia architectural, social, and political history; early photography; and the Civil War. The collection is catalogued on the item-, series-, and collection- level on the library's on-line catalog, WolfPAC. Digital files of representative items from the collection are also included on the library's digital asset management system, ImPAC.

Administrative Information

Restrictions to Access

The collection is open to researchers.

Acquisition Information

Gift of John A. McAllister; forms part of the McAllister Collection.

Processing Information

The McAllister Graphics Collection material was formerly housed within several folio albums that had been created after the McAllister Collection arrived at the Library Company. The material was removed from the albums, arranged, described, and catalogued under grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the William Penn Foundation. The collection was processed by Erika Piola. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this finding aid do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Preferred Citation

This collection should be cited as: [indicate specific item or series here], Prints & Photographs Department, The Library Company of Philadelphia. For permission to publish materials or images in this collection, contact the Coordinator of Rights and Reproductions, Library Company of Philadelphia, 1314 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA 19107-5698. Please include complete citation(s) when making a request. See the Library Company's website, <http://www.librarycompany.org/>, for further information.

Associated Names

Brady, Mathew (1823 (ca.)-1896)
Barnard & Gibson
Baxter, De Witt Clinton (ca. 1829-1881)
Birch, William Russell (1755-1834)
Boston Chemical Printing Company
Currier & Ives
Gardner, Alexander (1821-1882)
Heerbrandt, Gustav
Homer, Winslow (1836-1910)
Jackson, Andrew (1767-1845)
Lincoln, Abraham (1809-1865)
King & Baird
Langenheim (Firm)
Levy & Cohen
Magnus, Charles
McClellan, George Brinton (1826-1865)
McAllister & Brother
McAllister family
McAllister, John A. (John Allister) (1822-1896)
McAllister, John (1786-1877)
McArthur, John (1823-1890)
McLoughlin Bros.
Moran, John (1831-1903)
McClees, James E. (1821-1887)
Newell, Robert (1822-1897)
Odiorne, Henry B. (1805-1860)
Prang, Louis (1824-1909)
Rhiza, John
Richards, F. De B. (Frederick De Bourg) (1822-1903)
Rosenthal, L. N. (Louis N.)
Simons, Montgomery P. (1816-1877)
Stephens, H. L. (Henry Louis) (1824-1882)
Watson, A.

Subjects

Asylums – Pennsylvania - Philadelphia
Banks – Pennsylvania - Philadelphia
Churches – Pennsylvania - Philadelphia
Commercial streets - Pennsylvania – Philadelphia
Delaware River (N.Y.-Del. And N.J.)
Dwellings - Pennsylvania - Philadelphia
Europe – Pictorial works
Fairmount Park (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Fashion
Germantown (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Government buildings – United States
Great Central Fair for the U.S. Sanitary Commission (1864 : Philadelphia, Pa.)
Hotels – Pennsylvania - Philadelphia
Independence Hall (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Industries – Pennsylvania - Philadelphia
Laurel Hill Cemetery (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Markets – Pennsylvania - Philadelphia
Middle Atlantic States – Pictorial works
Pennsylvania - Maps
Pennsylvania – Pictorial works
Philadelphia – Pictorial works
Philadelphia - Maps
Photography – 19th century
Politics & government – United States
Portraits – 19th century
Presidential elections – United States
Schools – Pennsylvania - Philadelphia
Stores & shops – United States
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 – Campaign & battles
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 – Economic & industrial aspects
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 - Military life
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 – Military facilities
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 - Military personnel
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 - Social aspects
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 – Transportation
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 - Women
Universities & colleges – Pennsylvania - Philadelphia
Wissahickon Creek (Pa.)

Format and Genre

Albumen prints
Cartes de visite
Certificates
Chromolithographs
Engravings
Engravings – Color
Envelopes
Handkerchiefs
Landscape prints
Lithographs
Lithographs - Color
Maps
Marine prints
Panorama prints
Political cartoons
Portrait photographs
Portrait prints
Salted paper prints
Scrapbooks
Stationery
Stereographs
Wood engravings

Biographical/Historical Notes

Father and son collectors John McAllister Jr. (1786-1877) and John A. McAllister (1822-1896) descended from John McAllister Sr. (1753-1830). -A Scottish émigré with antiquarian interests, McAllister Sr. established a cane and whip manufactory business in Philadelphia around 1781. Under the family's proprietorship, from McAllister Sr. to his son John Jr., and grandsons William Y., John A., and Thomas H. McAllister, the business expanded to include the manufacturing of spectacles in 1799, and by the mid-1850s had completely evolved into the city's premier optician's shop.

The evolution of the family business reflects John McAllister Jr.'s interest in the development of early photography in Philadelphia. The McAllisters' opticians' shop supplied Philadelphia pioneer daguerreotypists with camera lenses and other optical equipment. McAllister himself claimed to have been the first customer in Robert Cornelius's daguerreotype studio when Cornelius opened his doors on May 6, 1840. McAllisters' shop carried a wide range of optical and photographic products and equipment, including camera lucidas, camera obscuras, magic lantern projectors and slides, and stereoscopes and stereoviews. The shop sold and published stereographs and cartes de viste.

John Jr., after retirement from the family business, focused on collecting books, pamphlets, maps, prints, newspapers, and manuscripts about the history of Philadelphia, and was a respected authority on the subject. McAllister Jr. also collected works by early photographers, such as Frederick DeBourg Richards, Henry Odiorne, and James McClees. In addition, he commissioned local photographers to take portraits of himself and members of his family, and to capture images of his family's homes and businesses.

His son, John A., who had a more mercurial interest in the family business, was an avid collector of materials documenting the Civil War, including recruitment and advertisement posters, broadside ballads, envelopes, manuscripts, and photographs.

Collection Overview

Over 9,000 visual materials compiled by father and son antiquarians John McAllister Jr. and John A. McAllister comprise the McAllister Graphics Collection administered by the Print and Photograph Department. The collection contains photographs, prints, maps, textiles, scrapbooks and watercolors and drawings. The material, which dates from the mid-eighteenth to late nineteenth century, predominately includes prints and early photography documenting Philadelphia; Civil War photographs, prints, and ephemera; regional maps; political cartoons; and portraiture. The majority of the graphics collection is described as items on the searchable online catalog, **WolfPAC**, with the remaining material described as series or collections. Several of the collection-level records describe collections of Civil War related graphics including Civil War stationery, Civil War photographs, and the Civil War envelope collection. A sampling of the McAllister Graphics Collection can also be searched on the library's digital asset management system, **ImpAC**. Digital files of representative graphics from the collection, enhanced by collection summaries, item descriptions, and links to corresponding on-line resources, are contained in the database.

The McAllister Graphics Collection includes the work of near a dozen early Philadelphia photographers that documents the city between 1844 and circa 1870. Daguerreotypes, paper photographs, stereographs, and cartes de visite, by pioneer photographers such as the Langenheims, Frederick De Bourg Richards, and James McClees, form the core of the early photograph collections within the department. Work by the **Langenheims** includes the "first news photograph" of Philadelphia, a daguerreotype of Girard Bank during the Nativist Riots of 1844, and photographs issued circa 1855-circa 1862 that show business interiors, panoramic views of the city, Fairmount Park, and scenes along the Delaware Riverfront.

Views of the changing architectural landscape of the city photographed by **Frederick De Bourg Richards** and **James McClees** in the 1850s represent some of the earliest paper photographs of Philadelphia that are administered by the department. Their work is complemented by later city views photographed circa 1860-circa 1870 by **John Moran**, **Robert Newell**, **Henry Odiorne** and **Montgomery Simons**. These aforementioned photographs show city businesses, residences, hotels, theaters, historic landmarks, public buildings, markets, churches, street scenes, and landscape views of the Wissahickon. The State House (Independence Hall), blocks of Chestnut Street, Laurel Hill Cemetery, Fairmount Water Works, and Germantown are well illustrated in these images.

Some of the oldest photographic views of Philadelphia church exteriors and interiors represent another noteworthy segment of photographs in the McAllister Graphics Collection. Issued as stereographs circa 1860-circa 1863 by **McAllister & Brother**, the photographs provide images of such prominent religious structures as Christ Church, St. Peter's Church, Gloria Dei, and St. Mark's Church. Other stereographs included in the

McAllister Graphics Collection are views of Chestnut Street published by **Bartlett & French** and **Bartlett & Smith**; views of Lincoln's funeral and hometown photographed by Schreiber & Glover; and interiors of the Union League.

Cartes-de-visite portraits, several of religious leaders, military figures, and politicians, also form a significant portion of the photographs. In addition, a large number of cartes de visite comprise the **McAllister Family Portrait Collection**. The collection contains images of John McAllister Sr., John Jr., and John A. as well as the men's children, siblings, wives and extended family. Several of the McAllister family cartes-de-visite portraits were published circa 1860s by McAllister & Brother.

Published prints including engravings, lithographs, and relief prints form another large segment of the McAllister Graphics Collection. Nineteenth-century business advertisements, portraiture, political cartoons, cityscape and landscape views, predominately published in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and London, constitute the majority of the prints. A substantial portion visually documents Philadelphia. Near a hundred are illustrations clipped from guidebooks, city directories, and periodicals showing city businesses, industries, churches, benevolent and educational institutions, and public buildings.

The 1856 prospectus for and plates from the 1859 "**Baxter's Panoramic Business Directory of Philadelphia**" provides another interesting example of views of Philadelphia included in the collection. Published by engraver Dewitt C. Baxter the prints show storefronts on blocks of Chestnut, Third, and Market streets complemented by advertisements for the depicted businesses. In addition, reprints from original plates of William Birch's "**Views of Philadelphia**" and "**County Seats**" published in 1860 by John A.'s father, John McAllister Jr., showcases the collector's reverence for local history.

The McAllisters also collected prints with a national content, including portraits, political cartoons, and clipped illustrations. Portrait prints depict historic figures, prominent businessmen, celebrities, renowned physicians and scientists, and other individuals of note. The subject matter of the political cartoons focuses particularly on presidential elections, the Bank Wars during the Jackson Administration (1828-1836), and the Civil War. The clipped book and periodical illustrations depict historic sites, prominent landmarks, street scenes, and landscape views in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Many of these prints were removed from Charles Dana's *The United States Illustrated; in Views of City and Country...* (New York: Hermann J. Meyer, 1853) and John Howard Hinton's *The History and Topography of the United States* (London: I.T. Hinton, & Simpkin & Marshall, 1830-1832).

The McAllister Graphics Collection also contains about 100 eighteenth and nineteenth-century maps. The maps primarily document Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, in addition to North America, including specific U.S. states and Canada. Street, ward,

property, and railroad route maps comprise the majority of the content of the cartography. Other subjects include navigational charts; plans of the 1864 Philadelphia Sanitary Fair and 1893 World Columbian Exposition; Benjamin Franklin's chart of the Gulf Stream; and several Civil War campaign and battle maps. Another map of note within the collection is the circa 1833 "Map of the West Coast of Africa, from Sierra Leone to Cape Palmas, including the Colony of Liberia. Compiled chiefly from the surveys and observations of the late Revd. J. Ashman [sic]" showing the free black emigrant colony founded after 1822 by Ashmun, a member of the American Colonization Society.

A large number of items in the McAllister Graphics Collection reflect the collecting efforts of John A. McAllister during the Civil War. The **Civil War graphics** include prints and photographs of camps, forts and battlefields; political cartoons; portraiture; certificates; architectural and engineering plans; textiles and ephemera. A large segment of the prints are lithographic views of camps and battle scenes, with over 100 printed by the Philadelphia printer L.N. Rosenthal and New York firm Currier & Ives as well as a small number printed on textiles by Boston Chemical Printing Company.

Also significant is the Civil War ephemera, which includes envelopes, stationery, and paper novelties such as toy soldiers. The **Civil War Envelope** and Stationery collections contain over 10,000 items illustrated with patriotic designs and slogans. The designs depict portraits of historic and prominent military figures, military scenes, state seals, cartoons, Liberty, American eagles, flags, and other military and patriotic emblems. Several envelopes by prolific publishers King & Baird and Charles Magnus are included in this collection. A smaller ephemera collection is the **Civil War paper soldiers**. The paper toys, a small number published by McLoughlin Bros. and G. Heerbrandt, depict soldiers from over a dozen different New York regiments and are shown with guns, riding on horseback, and in the charge of battle.

Over 70 watercolor drawings, cartes de visite, and collecting cards showing the work of illustrator **Henry Louis Stephens** form another interesting niche of the Civil War material. The graphics evoke sentimentality, patriotism, and humor in the portrayal of the transformation of a slave to a soldier; the conscription of an anthropomorphic rabbit; the dynamics of international relations between the Union, Confederacy, Mexico and Europe; and caricatures of Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan during the 1864 presidential election. Other collecting cards in the McAllister Graphics Collection include a series satirizing camp life published in 1864 by Boston lithographer L. Prang after the work of Winslow Homer. Additional Civil War prints include a birds-eye view of the buildings of the 1864 Great Central Fair for the U.S. Sanitary Commission in Logan Square, views of volunteer hospitals and refreshment saloons, certificates for military service, John Rhiza's circa 1862 engineering plans for Union Civil War fortifications at the Battle of Stones River, and John McArthur's architectural drawings for Mower General Hospital built in Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia in 1862.

The Civil War photographs primarily contain stereograph and cartes-de-visite series issued by the prominent Civil War photographers Mathew Brady, Barnard & Gibson, Alexander Gardner, and Levy & Cohen. The over 150 views principally depict the aftermath of Union campaigns in the South, including the fall of Richmond. Other significant series of Civil War-era photographs include images photographed by A. Watson of the **Great Central Fair in Philadelphia**, and interior views of the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon taken by Robert Newell. Cartes-de-visite caricatures satirizing military figures, battles, the home front, camp life, the Confederacy and African Americans are also a significant portion of the Civil War photographs. Three scrapbooks of Civil War envelopes and portrait prints and photographs of prominent military and political figures comprise the Civil War material in the McAllister Graphics Collection as well.

The McAllister Graphics Collection also contains the “European Views” and “Costume” scrapbooks. The former contains printed views and photographs of Europe that show city, land and seascapes of European countries including, England, France, Germany, and Italy. The latter contains nineteenth-century fashion plates and prints, dozens removed from *R. Ackerman’s Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufacturers, Fashions and Politics*, of American and English costume.