



Guide to the John K. Hillers Photographs, 1871-1889 and undated

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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Summary

Collection Title:

John K. Hillers photographs, 1871-1889 and undated

Creator:

Hillers, John K., 1843-1925

Abstract:

John K. Hillers was an important early American photographer and one of the first to photograph the Grand Canyon and the high plateaus of central and southern Utah. Collection contains albumen photographs spanning the years 1871-1889. Most of them are landscapes made in Utah, but there are also landscapes from California and several photographs of Native Americans made in New Mexico. The photographs are organized into six series.

Extent:

1.6 Linear Feet
40 Items

Physical Location:

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Language:

English

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

RL.00543

Permalink:

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/hillersjohnk/>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], John K. Hillers Photographs, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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Background

Scope and Content

John K. Hillers, one of America's most important early photographers, was one of the first to photograph the Grand Canyon and most of the high plateaus of central and southern Utah. In the fall of 1872, at the request of the Western lands survey, Hillers turned his lens from features of the landscape to its Native American inhabitants and photographed the Zuni and San Juan Pueblos. The 40 single albumen photographs and the 539 prints in the photograph album in this collection span the years 1871-1889.

Of the 40 single photographs in the collection, 33 are landscapes, many of which Hillers made in Utah. Five of the landscapes are from California. Seven photographs portray Native Americans, primarily Pueblo and Zuni in New Mexico. These photographs are organized into six series: **Official Identification of the Survey Series**, **Gold Border Series**, **Indian Series**, **1873 Powell Survey Series**, **Black Border Series**, and the **California Series**.

The photograph album added to this collection contains 539 original albumen prints, most of which were taken by Hillers on the Second Expedition; others were taken by E. O. Beaman and James Fennemore on the same Expedition. The majority are from the Colorado River region in Colorado and Utah, and feature landscapes and vistas, expedition camps, Paiute Indians, and natural features. The prints may have been assembled by Hillers himself, or by John Powell as a gift for a patron or Congressman.

Biographical/Historical

Chronology

Date	Description
1843	John Karl Hillers born in Brinkum, Germany (Hanover)
1852	Arrived in the U.S., settling with his family in N.Y.C.
1861-1865	Served in the artillery during the Civil War

Date	Description
1870	Resigned from the U.S. Army
1871	Joined the John Wesley Powell Expedition as a boatman and photographer's assistant
1872	Became Powell's photographer-in-chief
1881-1900	Served as the Geological Survey's chief photographer
1900-1919	Retired from the Geological Survey, but still worked for the Survey on a part-time basis
1925	Died

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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askRL@duke.edu

URL: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of

the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Acquisition Information

The John K. Hillers Photographs were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a purchase in 1972.

These and other photographs by western expeditionary photographers were purchased from Lowdermilk's bookstore in Washington, D.C. prior to its liquidation.

Processing Information

This collection was previously processed by Rubenstein Archivist Bill Erwin in 1982. Erwin conducted a great deal of research used to identify photographs made by western expeditionary photographers. Every effort was made to retain both the organization and informational aspects of his work except when they conflicted with more modern practices.

Information folders available in the repository contain copies of earlier catalog records and bibliographic information for related sources including sources in which these photographs have been published.

Additional folders contain photocopies of photographs annotated by the National Archives, and reference prints made from copy negatives held in this collection.

Quotation marks indicate a title taken directly from the photograph, or from a printed caption on the mounting board. A title taken from a handwritten caption on the mounting boards is not enclosed in quotation marks.

Processed by Chris Black, November 2004.

Encoded by Chris Black, Michael Shumate.

Completed September 2006.

All original accessions described in this finding aid.

Addition 2011-0205 processed and encoded by Paula Jeannet, March 2011.

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Related Materials

Related Material

The following collections in the Duke University David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library may contain related material:

William Bell Photographs, 1872
William Henry Jackson Photographs, 1869-1878
and undated
Timothy H. O'Sullivan Photographs, 1868-1873

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Names and Subjects

- Zuni Indians -- Pictorial works
 - Arizona -- Photographs
 - Paiute Indians -- Pictorial works
 - Pueblo Indians -- Pictorial works
 - Indians of North America -- New Mexico -- Pictorial works
 - Indians of North America -- Pictorial works
 - Landscape photography -- West (U.S.)
 - Landscape photography -- Southwest, New
 - Photographers -- United States
 - Documentary Photography -- United States
 - Utah -- Pictorial works
 - Nevada -- Pictorial works
 - Albumen prints
 - Wyoming -- Pictorial works
 - Photograph albums
 - Colorado -- Pictorial works
 - California -- Pictorial works
 - Beaman, E. O.
 - Fennemore, James
 - Hillers, John K., 1843-1925
 - Geological Survey (U.S.)
-

Collection Inventory

Official Identification of the Survey Series, 1875-1877

Physical Description: 1 box

Scope and Contents note

The photographs are not dated, but eight of the landscapes have printed headings for the "Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, Second Division, J.W. Powell, Geologist in Charge." John Wesley Powell became the director of the Second Division in 1875, and the organization was renamed the Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region in 1877. Thus, these eight pictures were printed and mounted during 1875-1877. Additionally, an artistic gold border surrounds each image. The photographs were not numbered or captioned, but someone has pencilled captions on the back of the boards. The following list uses these captions.

On Boulder Creek, Utah, Foot Logs (caption
pencilled on verso) Box 1 > Print JKH.P1

Physical Description: 7.25-7.5 x 9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

On Boulder Creek, Utah, Mabel's Rapids
(caption pencilled on verso) Box 1 > Print JKH.P2

Physical Description: 7.25-7.5 x 9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

On Boulder Creek, Utah, Driftwood Falls
(caption pencilled on verso) Box 1 > Print JKH.P3

Physical Description: 7.25-7.5 x 9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Ward's Cascade near Red Gate, Utah (caption
pencilled on verso) Box 1 > Print JKH.P4

Physical Description: 7.25-7.5 x 9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Falls (caption pencilled on verso) Box 1 > Print JKH.P5

Physical Description: 7.25-7.5 x 9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

He-och Creek (caption pencilled on verso) Box 1 > Print JKH.P6

Physical Description: 7.25-7.5 x 9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Spring Creek (caption pencilled on verso) Box 1 > Print JKH.P7

Physical Description: 7.25-7.5 x 9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Lake on the Back of an Ancient Moraine
(caption pencilled on verso) Box 1 > Print JKH.P8

Physical Description: 7.25-7.5 x 9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

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Gold Border Series, undated

Physical Description: 1 box

Scope and Contents note

The gold borders around the images are identical to the gold borders around the photographs on which the name of the Survey was printed. In this series there is no printing. These photographs were also not numbered or captioned, but someone has written captions on the front of the boards using purple ink. Someone else has further identified some of the photographs with pencilled notations on the back of the boards. The list below uses these handwritten captions.

View on Boulder Creek (handwritten in ink on front of board)

Box 1 > Print JKH.P9

Physical Description: 7-7.5 x 9-9.5 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Sloping Walls (handwritten in ink on front of board)

Box 1 > Print JKH.P10

Physical Description: 7-7.5 x 9-9.5 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Annie's Glen (handwritten in ink on front of board)

Box 1 > Print JKH.P11

Physical Description: 7-7.5 x 9-9.5 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Scope and Contents note

Or Winslow's Cascade, Winslow Creek, Utah (caption pencilled on verso)

Mouth of Tantalus Cañon (handwritten in ink on front of board)

Box 1 > Print JKH.P12

Physical Description: 7-7.5 x 9-9.5 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Boulders (handwritten in ink on front of board)

Box 1 > Print JKH.P13

Physical Description: 7-7.5 x 9-9.5 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Scope and Contents note

on Boulder Creek, Utah (caption pencilled on verso)

Logs (handwritten in ink on front of board)

Box 1 > Print JKH.P14

Physical Description: 7-7.5 x 9-9.5 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Scope and Contents note

on Boulder Creek, Utah (caption pencilled on verso)

Goblin's Archway (handwritten in ink on front of board)

Box 1 > Print JKH.P15

Physical Description: 7-7.5 x 9-9.5 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

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Indian Series, undated

Physical Description: 1 box

Scope and Contents note

The gray mounting boards and the printed black borders around the images are the same as in the Black Border Series. The Zuñi and San Juan pueblos in the following photographs once existed in New Mexico.

Old Man, Seated in Full Dress. Photographed in studio setting.[?]

Box 2 > Print JKH.P16

Physical Description: 7.5 x 9.25 inch print mounted on a 10.75 x 13.75 inch board

Alternative Form Available:

copy negative available: JKH.N16

"Zuñi Watching"

Box 2 > Print JKH.P17

Physical Description: gray board with a printed black border around the image; 7.25 x 9-9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch

Alternative Form Available:

copy negative available: JKH.N17

"Zuñi Transportation"

Box 2 > Print JKH.P18

Physical Description: gray board with a printed black border around the image; 7.25 x 9-9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch

"Governor of San Filipi, Showing Manner of Using _____" [Pump Drill].

Box 2 > Print JKH.P19

Physical Description: gray board with a printed black border around the image; 7.25 x 9-9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch

"Woman Polishing Pottery"

Box 2 > Print JKH.P20

Physical Description: gray board with a printed black border around the image; 7.25 x 9-9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch

Alternative Form Available:

copy negative available: JKH.N20

"Moki Hairdresser" Box 2 > Print JKH.P21

Physical Description: gray board with a printed black border around the image;
7.25 x 9-9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch

"Ke ____ Ox Cart" [Kesushe?]. Box 2 > Print JKH.P22

Physical Description: gray board with a printed black border around the image;
7.25 x 9-9.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch

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Black Border Series, undated

Physical Description: 1 box

Scope and Contents note

The images in this series are mounted on boards that have black decorative borders around the photographs that are very similar in conception but different in detail from the gold borders around the images of the above two series. The tone of the images in this series is distinctly darker than in other series. In one case, a direct comparison is possible. There are identical views of Winslow's Cascade in both this series and in one of the others. Someone has pencilled captions on the backs of the boards, and the list below uses these captions.

Winslow's Cascade on Winslow Creek, Utah
(caption pencilled on verso) Box 2 > Print JKH.P23

Physical Description: 9.25 x 7.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Scope and Contents note

(same as Annie's Glen and Winslow's Cascade in preceding series)

Old Time Rocks, Tantalus Cañon, Utah (caption
pencilled on verso) Box 2 > Print JKH.P24

Physical Description: 9.25 x 7.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

Driftwood Falls, Boulder Creek Utah (caption
pencilled on verso) Box 2 > Print JKH.P25

Physical Description: 9.25 x 7.25 inch print mounted on a 13 x 15 inch board

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Powell Survey Series, 1873

Physical Description: 1 box

Scope and Contents note

Hillers made these ten photographs on the Powell Survey during 1873. He took most, if not all, of them in Utah and in the Grand Canyon. The photographs do not have captions or other marks of identification. Comparison with prints and negatives at the National Archives has provided the identification of these photographs. The relevant National Archives number has been provided in the list below.

Mary's Veil, Bullion Canyon (source: National Archives)

Box 3 > Print JKH.P26

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archives Number 57-PM-27

Grand Canyon Looking East from Toroweap
(source: National Archives)

Box 3 > Print JKH.P27

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archives Number 57-PS-431 and PM-51 (431)

Colorado River at Mouth of Little Colorado
River (source: National Archives)

Box 3 > Print JKH.P28

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archive Number 57-PS-435 and PM-15 (435)

Aquarius Plateau Lake. Bee Lake (?). (source:
National Archives)

Box 3 > Print JKH.P29

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archives Number 57-PS-448 and PM 29 (448)

Grand Canyon. The Sockdologer. Heaviest
Single Drop. (source: National Archives)

Box 3 > Print JKH.P30

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archives Number 57-PS-449 and PM-12 (449)

Alternative Form Available:

copy negative available: JKH.N30

Grand Canyon (source: National Archives) Box 3 > Print JKH.P31

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archives Number PM-14 (451) Negative destroyed

One of Three Lakes in Kanab Canyon above the
Village of Kanab, Utah (Middle Lake) (source:
National Archives)

Box 3 > Print JKH.P32

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archives Number 57-PS-464 and PM-31 (464)

Renshawe's Cascade or Pilling's Cascade
(source: National Archives)

Box 3 > Print JKH.P33

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archives Number: PM-28 (465) Negative destroyed

One of Three Lakes in Kanab Canyon above the
Village of Kanab, Utah (Lower Lake) (source:
National Archives)

Box 3 > Print JKH.P34

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archives Number 57-PS-466 and PM-26 (466)

The Race Looking up Bullion Canyon (source:
National Archives)

Box 3 > Print JKH.P35

Physical Description: 7.25 x 4.25 inch print mounted on a 9 x 14 inch board

Scope and Contents note

National Archives Number PM-24 (470) Negative destroyed

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California Series, circa 1880-1889

Physical Description: 1 box

Scope and Contents note

These five photographs have either printed titles or else titles handwritten on the back of the boards. The photographs themselves do not indicate the photographer's name. The Still Pictures Branch of the National Archives examined copies of these photographs, and identified them by comparison with photographs attributed to Hillers. Mr. Joe D. Thomas, Chief Still Pictures Branch, of the National Archives has written, however, that Hillers "may not have been the actual photographer." The photographs may date from the early 1880s. The images are mounted on gilt-edged and are identical in size and mounting to two photographs by William Henry Jackson. See his Yellowstone National Park Series. The numbers for the negatives to which they relate in the National Archives are provided below.

"Three Bothers, Yosemite" Box 3 > Print JKH.P36

Physical Description: 14 x 11 inches

Scope and Contents note

National Archives number: 57-PS-33

Capitan, Looking West, Yosemite Cal. Box 3 > Print JKH.P37

Physical Description: 14 x 11 inches

Scope and Contents note

National Archives number: 57-PS-37

Home of the Storm Gods, Yosemite Box 3 > Print JKH.P38

Physical Description: 14 x 11 inches

Big Trees. Mariposa. Box 3 > Print JKH.P39

Physical Description: 14 x 11 inches

Scope and Contents note

National Archives number: 57-PS-43

Granite Dome in Kings River Canyon, Fresno County. Box 3 > Print JKH.P40

Physical Description: 14 x 11 inches

Scope and Contents note

National Archives number: 57-PS-48

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Second Expedition Photograph Album Series, circa 1871-1876

Physical Description: 1 box

Scope and Contents note

Album of 539 original albumen photographs taken by John Hillers, E. O. Beaman, and James Fennemore during the second Powell Expedition along the Colorado River in Utah and Arizona, with some locations in Nevada and Wyoming as well. The largest majority measure 4.25 x 3 inches; another seven are 7.25 x 9.5"; and 53 are 4.25 x 7.25". Most of the photographs in this album have been identified as taken by John K. Hillers and may have been selected by Hillers himself, or by John Powell. Other photographs in the album were taken by E.O. Beaman and James Fennemore, the first two photographers on the Powell Expedition.

The images chiefly portray the landscape explored and documented by the Second Powell Expedition, including rivers, mountains, cliffs, and other features, but there are also over 100 photographs of Indians, mostly the Paiute of Utah, Arizona, and Nevada. Several of the earliest photographs in the album have a slightly out of focus quality, characteristic of E.O. Beaman's work. Foremost among the photographs that are identifiably by Beaman is a pair showing the Powell expeditionary party in their three boats on the Green River in Wyoming in May, 1871, as they began their journey. In both of these prints, Beaman's photographic apparatus can be seen. Several of the photographs show the Powell party at work or in camp, repairing their boat or relaxing.

More than one hundred of the photographs in this album are stereoviews of Southern Paiute Indians in Utah, Arizona, and Nevada. In several photographs John Wesley Powell or his associates can be seen interacting with Paiutes, either in informal meetings, observing Indian dances or groups, or in staged photographs (including one of Paiutes with a group of Mormons). The album is notable for the presence of two kinds of images of Native Americans: those that are taken by Hillers for the purpose of ethnographically accurate studies, during the 1872 expedition, and those that are instead more staged for public consumption, taken when Hillers returned to the area a year later. [Description partially taken from dealer description.]

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