

GLASS PLATE NEGATIVES COLLECTION

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

- Repository:** Crandall Public Library
Center for Folklife, History, and Cultural Programs,
Glens Falls, NY.
- Creator:** Crandall Public Library
- Title:** Glass Plate Negatives Collection.
- Dates:** ca. 1895–1915.
- Abstract:** This collection of glass plate negatives, at least some of which were taken by Glens Falls photographers Frank M. Taft and F. Beecher Mead, shows buildings, street scenes, countryside, river and lake views, portraits of individuals and groups, events and other scenes of Glens Falls and Lake George, New York, near the turn of the 20th Century. Included in the collection are a small number of acetate panoramic negatives. Photographic prints of many negatives are in the Crandall Public Library Photograph Collection.
- Quantity:** 6 cubic feet (20 boxes, ca. 800 glass plate negatives)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Frank M. Taft and F. Beecher Mead evidently worked together as photographers. The Glens Falls City Directories, 1895-1913, list Frank M. Taft as a photographer, located in the building partly occupied by Crandall Library at Monument Square in downtown Glens Falls. F. Beecher Mead is listed in the same directories from 1895-1911 with his place of business Taft Photography. The Glens Falls City Directories list Mead as a photographer as early as 1881. For most of the years between 1881 and 1895 his photography business was located at Monument Square in downtown Glens Falls. Mead's obituary (*Glens Falls Times*, Dec. 5, 1941) indicated Mead was associated for many years with Frank M. Taft in a photographic studio in the old library building opposite Monument Square. F. Beecher Mead's wife was Harriet E.

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE RECORDS

The Glass Plate Negative Collection shows buildings, street scenes, countryside, river and lake views, portraits of individuals and groups, events and other scenes of Glens Falls and Lake George, New York, near the turn of the 20th century. The collection is useful as a record of the business and social life of Glens Falls, and also of recreation on Lake George, including hotels and summer residences located there.

Most of the photographs were taken in Glens Falls. Many of the images show individual buildings and street scenes providing a record of architecture and the city landscape at the turn of the 20th century. Researchers will find images of businesses, residences, churches, and schools (such as Ridge Street School). Businesses in the collection include: Finch, Pruyn, and Company; Hotel Ruliff; Hotel Madden (all in Glens Falls); and the Fort William Henry Hotel in Lake George. Several major construction projects are shown, including the move of the second Glens Falls Insurance Company building, municipal construction projects such as the laying of trolley track in downtown Glens Falls, and dam construction on the Hudson River. The social life of the region is captured in images of may pole dances, theatrical performances, baseball, and vacationers at lakes. Civic celebrations shown include July 4th and Flag Day. There are also photographs of the fairgrounds, Masons, and trolleys.

A significant number of photographs illustrate natural settings outside of Glens Falls, such as rivers, waterfalls, farmland, countryside, rural roads, and lakes. Included are pictures of hotels, lakeside cottages, and boats on Lake George, and Bloody Pond south of Lake George.

Sizes of glass plate negatives vary (3.25 "x 4.25," 4" X 5," 4.25"x 6.75," 6.5" x 8.5," and 8" X 10"). There are 400 negatives of 8" X 10" size, and the remainder are smaller. The 8" X 10" negatives were taken ca. 1903-1915, the 6.5" X 8.5" ones in earlier years back to ca. 1890, and there are no clear date ranges yet established for the smaller sizes. Prints have been prepared from most of the 8" X 10" negatives, some of the 6.5" X 8.5" ones, and a few from the smaller size negatives. Panoramic negatives on acetate depict Lake George and Glens Falls scenes.

Included in the collection are some acetate panoramic negatives showing scenes of Glens Falls and Lake George. One of these negatives shows a Glen Street view adjacent to one known to have been taken by F. Beecher Mead.

PROVENANCE

There is evidence, provided below, to suggest that at least some of the photographs in this collection were taken by Glens Falls photographers Frank M. Taft and F. Beecher Mead. Furthermore, both from content of the images and the format of the negatives, these photographs were probably taken and collected for the purpose of preserving a visual history of Glens Falls and its surroundings, especially Lake George. Since Taft and Mead both worked in the building occupied by Crandall Library, it is indeed plausible that their photographs of Glens Falls came to be part of the Library's collections. Other photographs of F. Beecher Mead, not part of this collection, clearly were donated to the Library by his wife, Harriet Mead.

Two of the original paper boxes for the 4" x 5" glass plates are marked in pencil with the name of a Glens Falls photographer, Frank M. Taft.

One of the paper wrappers used to cover a glass plate negative was marked in pencil with the name, Mrs. F. Beecher Mead, indicating that these were Hudson River views for Mr. Sears [J. Thatcher Sears, Librarian of Crandall Library].

The boxes have printed labels, "M.A. Seed Dry Plate Company, St. Louis, MO. Extra Rapid Dry Plates for in or out-door Photography."

ORGANIZATION OF THE RECORDS

Organized topically and by size of glass plate:

8"x10"

Boxes 1a and 1b Buildings, Street Scenes, Trolley Tracks.

Boxes 2a and 2b Monument Square, Glens Falls, NY.

Box 3 Glens Falls Insurance Co., Finch Pruyn Co.

Box 4 River views, Bridges, Canals.

Boxes 5a and 5b Dam Construction.

Box 6 Countryside views.

Boxes 7a and 7b Portraits: baseball, theater, school children.

Boxes 8a and 8b Vacation homes, Vacationers.

4.25"x6.75"

Churches, Portraits, River views.

3.25"x4.25"

Box AA Falls, Churches, Trolleys, Four Mill.

Box BB Local history subject: churches, gravesites, paintings of historic events.

INDEX TERMS

- Topics:** Baseball—New York (State)—Glens Falls—Photographs.
Bridges—New York (State)—Glens Falls Region—
Photographs.
Buildings—New York (State)—Glens Falls—Photographs.
Canals—New York (State)—Glens Falls—Photographs.
Clothing and dress—New York (State)—Glens Falls—
History—Photographs.
Costume—New York (State)—Glens Falls—History—
Photographs.
Dams—Design and construction—New York (State)—Glens
Falls Region—Photographs.
Hotels—New York (State)—Warren County—Photographs.
Landscape—New York (State)—Warren County—
Photographs.
Mills and mill-work—New York (State)—Photographs.
Performing arts New York (State)—Glens Falls—
Photographs.
Recreation—New York (State)—Warren County—
Photographs.
Religious institutions—New York (State)—Glens Falls—
Photographs.
Schools—New York (State)—Glens Falls—Photographs.
Street-railroads—New York (State)—Glens Falls—
Photographs.
Transportation—New York (State)—Glens Falls—
Photographs.
- Places:** George, Lake (N.Y.:Lake)—History—Photographs.
Glens Falls (N.Y.)—Buildings, structures, etc.—
Photographs.
Glens Falls (N.Y.)—Commerce—Photographs.
Glens Falls (N.Y.)—Social life and customs—Photographs.
Hudson River (N.Y. and N.J.)—Photographs.
- Organizations:** Finch, Pruyn and Company, Inc. (Glens Falls, N.Y.)—
Photographs.
Fort William Henry Hotel (Caldwell, N.Y.)—Photographs.
Glens Falls Insurance Company (Glens Falls, N.Y.)—
Photographs.
Hudson Valley Railway (N.Y.)—Photographs.
- Important People:** Taft, Frank M.
Mead, F. Beecher, d. 1941.

Form/Genre: Dry collodion negatives.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation: Glass Plate Negatives Collection,
Center for Folklife, History, and Cultural Programs,
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

Processing Information: Arranged and described by Katherine P. Chansky and
Albert W. Fowler. Scanned and digitized by Kevin
Rogan.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

Box 1A – Glens Falls

Buildings, street scenes, trolley tracks

Box 1B – Glens Falls

Buildings, street scenes, churches

Box 2A – Glens Falls

Monument Square

Box 2B – Glens Falls

Monument Square

Box 3 – Glens Falls

Glens Falls Insurance Company
Finch, Pruyn, and Company

Box 4 – River Views

Bridges, canals

Box 5A – River Views

Dam construction

Box 5B – River Views

Dam construction

Box 6 – Countryside Views

Box 7A – Portraits

Baseball, theater, school groups

Box 7B – Portraits

Box 8A – Vacation, Lakeside Homes, Vacationers

Box 8B – Vacation, Lakeside Homes, Vacationers

Box 9 – Portraits, Street Scenes

Glens Falls buildings and Monument Square
Glens Falls Insurance Company
Portraits

Box 10 – Various Photographs

Country scenes
Bridges

Waterfalls and river views
Interior scenes
Monuments
Historic buildings

Box 11

Woodland scenes
Vacation homes
Lake George
Glens Falls buildings

Box 12 – Glens Falls

Churches
Glens Falls Insurance Company paintings

Box 13

Glens Falls buildings
Lake George
Hudson River
Panoramic photographs (acetate negatives)

Box 14

Hudson River
Lake George
Glens Falls

Box 15

Hudson River
Lake George
Glens Falls

Box 16

Hudson River
Lake George
Glens Falls

Box 17

Hudson River
Lake George
Glens Falls

Box AA

#1-29 from two boxes labeled "Canoe Trip"
Photographer may be Frank G. Taft.
#30-41 from box identified as "Lake George"
#42-51 from a box labeled "Views"

#52-66 from a box labeled "Views and Christ Church"

Box BB

Churches

Photographs of historical paintings