

MG-240
William W. Stoey Collection, 1893-1925

Approx. 10 cu. ft.
Level 2

box 3(end)

1-0907 "Things we see, hear and do" by W. W. Stoey (handwritten) 1 Volume

This volume serves multiple purposes:

- 1) Diary entries, Dec. 27, 1893 - April 28, 1895, reflecting his interest in natural history with descriptions of plants and wildlife he observed in the Harrisburg area and recording the organization of a "Naturalist Society" on April 24, 1894, names of Natural Science Association of Harrisburg, President W. M. Fahnestock; V. Pres. Miss M. Dock; Sec. B. W. Demming; Executive Committee: Dr. J. H. Fager,) Miss V. Hogland, W. W. Stoey.
- 2) One page essay by W. W. Stoey entitled "One of two things" in which he emphasizes the virtues of diligence and frugality.
- 3) Descriptive listing of each photograph (Nos. 1-2416) in rough chronological order entitled "Negatives by W. W. Stoey," dating from Nov. 5, 1895 through Aug. 31, 1925 (including entries for copies of earlier daguerotypes, tintypes, work of other Harrisburg photographers, and commercial stereographs).
- 4) "Parts of No. 4 Falcon" (Bicycle), 1895 1 page
- 5) "Record of Cyclometer for 1895" 1 page

Glass Plate File (4X5, 5X7) over 2300 items 8 cu. ft.

Nos. 1-2414 corresponding to Stoey's descriptive negative listing. Most are in good condition.

Copy Prints - made from Stoey's plates (4X5, 5X7, 2 cu. ft.
mounted 11X14)

About 500 of the glass plates have been reproduced in print form.

William Wesley Stoey, b. Nov. 28, 1864, d. Nov. 28, 1925 was originally a resident of Middlesex Township, Cumberland County. He served in the Civil War with Company A, 7th Penna. Reserves, 36th Regt.; was imprisoned at Andersonville; released; and was enrolled in Company I, 190th Regt. He was a member of G.A.R. Post No. 116.

The Harrisburg City Directory lists Stoey's occupation as taxidermist. His shop was in his residence at 1126 North Front Street, Harrisburg. The collection suggests that his photographic work was more than an avocation. For example, his negative list shows "City Crooks for Jno. Morgan," portraits "for Post Cards," "views of Hbg. Cemetery for Mr. Barnes" (Harry M. Barnes was Superintendent of Harrisburg Cemetery), monuments for "Berger and High Stone Cutters". A portion of his work, at least, seems to have been done for other people.

1st 5 Items in box 3(end)

Many of his early photographs reflect his interest in natural history. For instance, Wetzells Swamp (later Wildwood Park), often mentioned in his diary, is the location for several photos. He also copied commercial stereographs of natural points of interest in other states and countries.

The total scope of the collection is wider than natural history. It reflects the social history of Harrisburg and neighboring counties. The collection contains many portraits including "mug shots" of criminals as well as informal views of people at work and play (from a blacksmith at his forge to a group bicycling down river road), residences, gardens, houses of worship, hotels, places of business, industry, and street scenes. Transportation is well represented with canals, railroads, bridges, roads, many types of vehicles (including horse drawn, bicycles, boats). A glimpse at recreation in the period is afforded with such scenes as the river carnival on the Susquehanna or boys fishing. Stoey documented the ruins of the State Capitol building, McKinley's funeral train, and Grand Opera House fire as well as natural phenomena like the eclipse of the sun, ice on the Susquehanna, and heavy snow. Some photographs appear to have been taken for their artistic value such as baskets of fruit, clouds, and copies of paintings by Dr. Fager and B. I. Lingle. The subject of death comes up frequently in the collection in photos of cemetery markers (including Marlin E. Olmstead and other prominent Harrisburgers), graves, floral arrangements, corpses, and work being done in Harrisburg cemetery. The collection provides glimpses of many Harrisburg families, one of which is the Stoey and marriage related Yingst family including ancestor Governor Joseph Ritner. Stoey's photographic work is of fine quality. Using techniques such as double exposures, flashlight, telephoto lens, and fast exposures he is able to reproduce a variety of subjects with remarkable clarity. In doing so, Stoey has given us a view of culture and environment in the Harrisburg area during a quarter century.

"This catalogue and all negatives presented by W. W. Stoey, 1226 Walnut St. To Boyd P. Rothrock (Curator, State Museum)...
Received catalogue Jan. 20, 1926
Received negatives Jan. 22, 1926 (signed) B. P. Rothrock"

Patriot Monday, Nov. 30, 1925

William Stoey, Civil War Veteran Dies

William Wesley Stoey, a veteran of the Civil War, died Saturday at his home, 1226 Walnut Street, on his seventy-ninth birthday.

As a boy, Mr. Stoey enlisted in the Union Army in 1864, serving for some time with Company A, Seventh Pennsylvania Reserves. On May 5, 1864, the entire regiment was captured by the Confederates and imprisoned at Andersonville. Of 200 recruits, composing part of the regiment, Stoey was the only man who survived the horrors of the prison. He was paroled November 28, 1864, his eighteenth birthday, and sent to the Government hospital at Annapolis, Md. He later served with Company I, 190th Regiment of Pennsylvania until the end of the war.

Mr. Stoey lived at "Hardscrabble" for fifty-five years, thirty-eight years of which he resided at 1126 North Front Street, where he conducted a taxidermist shop, known to many old Harrisburg people. He was a member of Post No. 116, G.A.R.

Harrisburg Cemetery

Mr. Stoey is survived by one daughter, Ida L. Stoey; four brothers, John R. and Washington L. Stoey, of Harrisburg; Dr. O. P. Stoey, of Newville; Elmer E. Stoey, Roxboro, and one sister, Clara E. Rogers, of Mechanicsburg.