

**Stereograph Collection**  
**MS 37**

Finding aid created by Natalie DeMuro  
January 2025

Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections  
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## Summary Information

<b>Repository</b>	Enoch Pratt Free Library, Special Collections
<b>Title</b>	Stereograph Collection
<b>Creator</b>	Keystone View Company, Underwood & Underwood Publishers, other manufacturers (unknown).
<b>Date [inclusive]</b> <b>Date [bulk]</b>	1890s-1970 [inclusive] 1900s-1910s [bulk]
<b>Extent</b>	23 boxes total: 18 of stereographs, 1 box of stereoscopes, 4 boxes of circulating containers. Approx. 15 linear feet.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Mixed Materials [Box]</b>	Circulation containers. Photos. Stereograph images (two images on cardboard stock). Stereoscope viewers (hand-held and tabletop).
<b>Container</b>	Special Collection's Manuscript Room; Seventh Stack
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The Stereograph* Collection contains over 3,300 stereoview images (Stereographs) from the 1890s-1920s, but a bulk of the collection's images are from the 1900s-1910s. Most of the collection's images are of scenes from around the world (travel) and history (especially WWI (1914-1918)). The collection also has anthropological images and pictures of 20<sup>th</sup> century industries in the United States. There are scientific images of flora and fauna species, as well. For viewing the stereographs, there are several hand-held stereoscopes from the Keystone View Company and one tabletop stereoscope. Finally, the collection includes some of the circulating containers used when the Enoch Pratt Free Library circulated the stereographs to the public.</p>

\*Stereographs consist of two nearly identical photographs paired to produce the illusion of a single three-dimensional image. These were used as a popular form of "parlor entertainment" in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and stereographs were used in schools and libraries for educational purposes in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Historical

In 1838, Sir Charles Wheatstone published a paper titled “Contributions Physiology of Vision,” wherein he describes how human binocular vision functions. Building upon theories of depth perception in human vision, Wheatstone demonstrates how the two eyes receive slightly different images and combine them to create a 3D representation that the mind fathoms in visual space (Silverman, p. 729). To demonstrate this phenomenon, Wheatstone created a tabletop device that mimics binocular vision, which was the first stereoscope. Wheatstone’s original paper includes simple line drawings that illustrate his theory, but “the advent of stereoscopic double photographs, called ‘stereographs,’ extended dramatically the range of stereoscopic subjects” (Silverman, p. 734). Stereographs consist of two nearly identical photographs paired to produce the illusion of a single three-dimensional image. In 1859, physician and poet Oliver Wendell Holmes designed a hand-held viewer for stereoscopes, which allow the viewer to look at the image up close and in 3D (Stereograph Cards (1850s-1940s)). These hand-held stereoscopes allowed more individuals to access stereographs, and along with further advancements in photography, stereographs became widely popular through the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Silverman, 734). Images of global views and historic moments could be captured and viewed closely as three-dimensional scenes, which made stereographs widely popular for entertainment and education. Stereographs were most popular between 1870 and 1920 as “parlor entertainment” items, but in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they gained expanded popularity through their uses in schools and libraries as educational tools (Malin, 73).

The Enoch Pratt Free Library’s Stereograph Collection is a legacy holding. Like many educational institutions, EPFL acquired stereographs and stereoscopes for the library’s collection, and these served as educational items for patrons to view images from around the world and historic scenes. The stereographs were made publicly available through the Picture Collection, and the items circulated to the public from the 1930s-1970. The images were organized by “set” numbers and grouped by subjects, so individuals could request specific topics to view (e.g. “Set 1- Egypt”). Eventually, the stereograph collection was retired from circulation and remained the Picture Collection before eventually being added to Special Collections.

### Bibliography:

Brenton J. Malin, “Images: Stereoscopes, Technocracy, and Popular Photographic Physicalism,” *Feeling Mediated: A History of Media Technology and Emotion in America*, NYU Press, 2014. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qg33k.6>

Robert J. Silverman, “The Stereoscope and Photographic Depiction in the 19th Century,” *Technology and Culture*, Oct., 1993, Vol. 34, No. 4, Special Issue: Biomedical and Behavioral Technology (Oct., 1993), pp. 729-756. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3106413>

Stereograph Cards (1850s-1940s), Prints & Photographs Online Catalog (PPOC), Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/stereo/background.html>.

## Scope & Contents

The Stereograph Collection contains over 3,300 stereoview images (stereographs) from the 1890s-1920s, but a bulk of the collection's images are from the 1900s-1910s. Stereographs produced by the Keystone View Company make up the majority of the collection, but many of the stereographs in the collection were produced by Underwood & Underwood Publishers. A small number of the stereographs were produced by other, unknown manufacturers (no manufacturer is listed on the cards). Images of the world (travel) and history (WWI, 1914-1918) are the most dominate subjects of the images in the collection. The collection also has images of industries from the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States, and there are images of flora and fauna (science). There is a collection of stereoscopes (dates unknown), which are used to view the stereographs. Also in the collection are the specific containers used to group the cards into "sets" from when the Enoch Pratt Free Library circulated the stereographs to the public from the 1930s to 1970; however, not all of the subjects have a corresponding circulating container. When the collection was removed from circulation (reason unknown), images were moved from their circulating containers, but there is no information for what happened to these containers.

## Arrangement

The Stereograph Collection's arrangement mixes found structure with new arrangements. Originally, the stereographs were grouped according to "set" numbers, which were used when the stereograph collection circulation as part of Enoch Pratt Free Library's public collection (1930s-1970). Once the items were withdrawn from circulation, the stereograph collection became a "legacy collection." It may have been at this time when some of the stereographs were removed from their circulating containers. The stereograph collection was partially inventoried and a subject guide was created in 2014; however, this was an incomplete guide. In 2024, all items from the stereograph collection were inventoried and re-arranged for more optimized organization and storage.

The sets were incorporated into collection series listed below, which reflect larger, overarching subjects.

- Series I: Geography & Travel
- Series II: History & Anthropology
- Series III: Industries
- Series IV: Science
- Series V: Objects

The subjects are organized alphabetically rather than by set numbers. Some of the original set number groupings were retained, but some sets were separated for improved organization and findability. Original set numbers have been noted in this record, and the set numbers can still be seen on the back of some stereographs.

Series V: Objects contains the accessory items related to the stereographs, and includes several stereoscopes. Other objects in the series include the circulation containers, which have been retained separately from the stereographs. The original circulation containers are organized within storage boxes according series numbers with some intermixing of Series I and Series II (i.e. Box 22 hold all of the circulating containers from Series III: Industries sets). The items are listed alphabetically in this guide for consistency.

Storage note: Boxes 1-19 are stored in the SPC Manuscript Room while boxes 20-23 are stored in Seventh Stack.

## Administrative Information

### Publication Information

Enoch Pratt Free Library, Special Collections

### Preferred Citation

Stereograph Collection (1890s-1970), Special Collections, Enoch Pratt Free Library/Maryland's State Library Resource Center.

### Conditions Governing Access

By appointment only (443-984-2451, [spc@prattlibrary.org](mailto:spc@prattlibrary.org)). Unrestricted.

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Unknown. Legacy items from Enoch Pratt Collection.

## Controlled Access Headings

### *Geographic Names/Places*

- Africa
- Asia
- Cities
  - African
  - Central American
  - European
  - South American
  - United States
- Europe
- National Parks – United States
  - o Yellowstone
  - o Yosemite Valley
- North America
- Oceania
- South America
- Railroad Views

### *Names*

- Keystone View Company
- Underwood & Underwood Publishers

### *Subjects*

- Anthropology
- Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Centenary
- Geography
- History
- Indigenous peoples
  - Arctic
  - North American
- Industries
- Natural World
- Photography
- Science
- Stereocards
- Stereographs
- Stereoscopes
- Stereoviews

## Collection Inventory

Series I: Geography & Travel	Set Number	Number of Items	Box
Africa [Algeria, Congo, South Africa, Uganda]	30	13	1
Asia [China, Korea, Siam; Turkey]	n/a	8	1
Austria & Switzerland	30	19	1
Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine	30	15	1
Canada	n/a	16	1
Central America & the Caribbean [Bahamas, Costa Rica, Cuba, Jamaica, West Indies (British & French), Nicaragua, Salvador, Venezuela]	29	25	1
Egypt	1	111	1
Europe	63	75	2
Europe [Belgium, Bohemia, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Jugoslavia, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Spain]	30	35	2
France	30	21	2
Germany	29 & 30	20	2
Holland	74	27	2
Holy Land	69	32	2
India & Ceylon	n/a	8	2
Ireland	29	17	2
Italy	23	99	2 & 3
Italy & Rome	30	20	3
Japan	36	112	3
London & English Views	29	20	3
Mexico	29	14	4
Mexico	64	34	4
National Park – Yellowstone	25	26	4
Netherlands	30	8	4
New York City	29 & 68	17	4
New Zealand & Australia [Tasmania]	55	31	4
Palestine – Middle East [Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria]	n/a	31	4
Palestine	4	103	4 & 5
Panama	2	23	5
Panama	42	41	5
Philippines	n/a	9	5
Scotland & Wales	29	13	5

South America [Argentine, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru]	29	28	5
South Sea Islands	56	27	5
Scandinavia [Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway]	29 & 30	30	6
Sweden	47	50	6
Tour of the World (Vol. V, Vol. VI)	31	98	6
Tour of the World (Vol. VII, Vol. VIII)	32	100	7
United States	73	98	7
United States Views	29	25	8
United States Views	68	51	8
Washington, DC	58	25	8
Washington DC & Philadelphia	23	9	8
World Views	n/a	73	8
Yosemite Valley	75	24	8

<b>Series II: History &amp; Anthropology</b>	<b>Set Number</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Box</b>
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Centenary Exhibition & Pageant	3	98	9
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Centenary Exhibition & Pageant	60	100	9
Community Helpers	67	25	9
Cowboys	44	19	10
European War, 1914-1918	5	35	10
Hunting & Fishing	70	15	10
Indians	52	28	10
Indians	53	23	10
Indians	54	24	10
Indigenous Arctic Peoples	38	26	10
Indigenous Arctic Peoples	66	24	10
Panama Canal	2	5	11
Panama Canal	29	1	11
Panama Canal	41	30	11
Panama Canal	42	6	11
United States History	28	64	11
World War I	33	74	11
World War I	34	95	12
World War I	35	100	12

<b>Series III: Industries</b>	<b>Set Number</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Box</b>
Industries – Clay	13	24	13
Industries – Coal	12	18	13
Industries – Copper	11	23	13



Industries – Cotton	9	23	13
Industries – Fishing	10	17	13
Industries – Glass	7	21	13
Industries – Leather	8	25	14
Industries – Linen	20	24	14
Industries – Misc. [farming, harvesting, trading, rice, mining]	27	52	14
Industries – Paper	19	26	14
Industries – Rubber	18	27	15
Industries – Silk	17	19	15
Industries – Steel & Iron	16	15	15
Industries – Sugar	15	23	15
Industries – Transportation	n/a	15	15
Industries – Wool	14	26	15

<b>Series IV: Science</b>	<b>Set Number</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Box</b>
Animals	65	116	16
Animals	70	29	16
Birds	39	24	16
Birds	40	27	16
Farm Animals	48	28	17
Flowers	49	94	17
Fruit	50	35	17
Fungi	6	5	17
Plants	24	24	18
Trees	21	34	18
Trees	57	39	18
Wild Flowers	26	23	18
Wild Flowers	59	25	18

<b>Series V: Objects</b>	<b>Box</b>
Handheld stereoscope, manufactured by the Keystone View Company (Meadville, PA). 8 stereoscopes in total (2 stereoscopes are missing parts).	19
Desktop stereoscope, manufacture unknow.	19
Circulating Container: Animals (Set 65)	23
Circulating Container: Animals (Set 70)	23
Circulating Container: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Centenary Exhibition & Pageant (Set 3)	21
Circulating Container: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Centenary Exhibition & Pageant (Set 60)	21
Circulating Container: Birds (Set 39)	23
Circulating Container: Birds (Set 40)	23
Circulating Container: Community Helpers (Set 67)	21
Circulating Container: Cowboys (Set 44)	21

Circulating Container: Europe (Set 63)	21
Circulating Container: Farm Animals (Set 48)	23
Circulating Container: Flowers (Set 49)	23
Circulating Container: Fruit (Set 50)	23
Circulating Container: Fungi (Set 6)	23
Circulating Container: Holland (Set 74)	20
Circulating Container: Holy Land (Set 69)	21
Circulating Container: Hunting & Fishing (Set 70)	21
Circulating Container: Indians (Set 53)	21
Circulating Container: Industries – Clay (Set 13)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Coal (Set 12)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Copper (Set 11)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Fishing (Set 10)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Glass (Set 7)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Leather (Set 8)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Linen	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Miscellaneous (Set 27)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Paper	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Rubber (Set 18)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Silk (Set 17)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Steel & Iron (Set 16)	22
Circulating Container: Industries – Wool (Set 14)	22
Circulating Container: Italy (Set 23)	20
Circulating Container: Japan (Set 36)	21
Circulating Container: National Park – Yellowstone (Set 25)	20
Circulating Container: New Zealand & Australia (Set 55)	21
Circulating Container: Palestine (Set 4)	20
Circulating Container: Panama (Set 42)	20
Circulating Container: Plants (Set 24)	23
Circulating Container: South Sea Islands (Set 56)	20
Circulating Container: Sweden (Set 47)	20
Circulating Container: Tour of the World (Vol. V, Vol. VI) (Set 31)	20
Circulating Container: Tour of the World (Vol. VII, Vol. VIII) (Set 32)	20
Circulating Container: Trees (Set 21)	23
Circulating Container: Trees (Set 57)	23
Circulating Container: United States (Set 73)	21
Circulating Container: Washington DC (Set 58)	20
Circulating Container: Wild Flowers	23
Circulating Container: Wild Flowers (Set 59)	23
Circulating Container: Yosemite Valley (Set 75)	20