**East of the Mississippi: Nineteenth-Century American Landscape Photography**

**October 6, 2017 – January 7, 2018**
From the might of Niagara Falls to the grandeur of the Mississippi River, the landscape of the eastern half of the United States served as a powerful source of mythmaking for a nation finding its identity in the nineteenth century. This search for identity coincided with the invention of photography, which was quickly conscripted as an accomplice in the exploration, documentation, and even the making of the eastern American landscape. With some 175 photographs in a variety of media and formats, this exhibition charts the trajectory of landscape photography east of the Mississippi over the course of sixty years—from the earliest known landscape daguerreotypes taken in the United States in 1839 and 1840 to the meditative prints Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen made at the close of the century. These photographs constitute a rich chapter of America’s visual culture, revealing much about the preoccupations of a young and growing country.

Photographers often sought out scenes of unaltered beauty in the eastern half of the country, but were equally fascinated by the built environment in and around cities, from Boston and Philadelphia to New Orleans. Coupling the documentary with the aesthetic, they trained their cameras on the transformations wrought by the Civil War and by new enterprises including tourism and industrialization, particularly the advent of the railroad. Initially celebrating the march of progress, eastern photographers later addressed the destruction of the wilderness and the need for its preservation. Balancing nature and culture, the photographs on display present a vision of a nation filled with natural wonders, brimming with innovation, and undergoing rapid yet unstoppable change.

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**The Early Decades: 1840s–1850s**

Photography was introduced to the world in 1839. When the new medium arrived in the United States that year, it first established itself in major cities along the east coast and in New Orleans before spreading into the interior. Photographers based in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston recorded the scenic vistas of tourist destinations such as the White Mountains and Niagara Falls. This gallery presents some of the oldest known photographs made in the United States, including the first photographs of Niagara Falls (which are also the first photographs of Canada) made by Hugh Lee Pattinson in April of 1840. Many early practitioners came to the medium from scientific or mechanical backgrounds, drawn to its seemingly magical ability to reproduce nature. And most adopted the daguerreotype, named after its French creator Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre. This process fixed an image onto a silver-coated copperplate. Characterized by a mirror-like surface and precise detail, the daguerreotype dominated photography in the United States for the next decade and a half.

The 1850s marked a period of transition. Processes that used paper or glass negatives to make positive prints began to be adopted more broadly. Although they lacked the crystalline precision of daguerreotypes, paper prints made from negatives were reproducible, a characteristic that encouraged the commercial potential of photography and the marketing of American scenes. By the end of the decade, paper prints had largely replaced the daguerreotype.

John W. Draper (American, born England, 1811–1882)
*View of Broadway Featuring the Unitarian Church of the Messiah*, 1839–1840
Daguerreotype
National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution, Washington

Articles about daguerreotypes appeared in the United States as early as September 1839, exciting interest in the process. Draper, a professor of chemistry at New York University, promptly tried his hand with the new medium. Like many of the earliest practitioners, he chose easily accessible subjects, in this case the street across from the university building in which he worked. For a time, Draper collaborated with Samuel F.B. Morse (of Morse code fame) to make daguerreotypes in New York City.

Henry Coit Perkins (American, 1804–1873)
*View of Newburyport Looking Northward from Harris Street Church*, c. 1839
Daguerreotype
Historical Society of Old Newbury, Newburyport

A medical doctor, Perkins was interested in a variety of scientific pursuits, including meteorology, astronomy, and optics. In 1839 he had a local manufacturer make a camera for him so that he could experiment with the new medium. He was among the earliest to make daguerreotypes from a bird’s-eye perspective. This scene of his hometown in Massachusetts, taken from a high vantage point in a church, was one of the first photographic town views to be made in the United States.

Samuel A. Bemis (American, 1793–1881) *Crawford Notch and Hotel*, *White Mountains, New Hampshire* 1840–1842 Daguerreotype Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005 (2005.100.207)

A watchmaker and dentist, **Bemis** was among the first to try the new medium in the United States and produce a series of landscapes. He primarily made daguerreotypes of Boston and the White Mountains. The area had already been depicted in paintings, including one by Thomas Cole, leader of a generation of painters dedicated to the American landscape. Such images helped spur development, as witnessed by the inn featured in Bemis’s daguerreotype.

Hugh Lee Pattinson (British, 1796–1858)
*Horseshoe Falls* and *American Falls*, 1840
Daguerreotypes

Robinson Library, Newcastle University, England

Pattinson was the first to photograph Niagara. A British industrial chemist, he traveled to New York in late 1839 to pursue business interests and purchased a daguerreotype camera while there. Despite having just learned the new process, Pattinson captured the majesty of the falls in his Niagara daguerreotypes—now deteriorated probably owing to the poor quality of the plates available at this early stage. One of them served as the basis for an engraving in the French publication presented below.

Friedrich Salathé (Swiss, 1793–1858)
after Hugh Lee Pattinson (British, 1796–1858)
*Niagara, Chute du Fer à Cheval (Horseshoe Falls),* 1842
Aquatint in Paul de la Garenne and Noel-Marie-Paymal Lerebours, *Excursions daguerriennes: Vues et monuments les plus remarquables du globe* (Paris, 1842)
Hans P. Kraus Jr., New York

Based on a daguerreotype by Pattinson, this print of Niagara Falls added two boats that suggest the tourist industry. Niagara was the only North American scene in this publication featuring the most remarkable sights and monuments in the world. Almost all the illustrations were made after daguerreotypes, marking the first time a publication of landscape and architectural views relied on photography.

Frederick Langenheim (American, born Braunschweig, 1809–1879) and William Langenheim (American, born Braunschweig, 1807–1874) *Panorama of the Falls of Niagara,* 1845 Five daguerreotypes Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005 (2005.100.495)

The sheer size of Niagara posed a dilemma for image makers: while artists could use large canvases to convey scale, daguerreotypists were limited by the sizes of plates. The Langenheim brothers addressed the issue by combining five daguerreotypes into a panorama and mounting them in a setting that mimics a viewing platform with architectural columns, planks of a roof, and a railing. Proud of their accomplishment, the Langenheims made eight sets of the Niagara panorama and sent them to President James Polk, Queen Victoria, and other European royalty. Other photographers, including William Southgate Porter, adopted the format to capture similarly monumental subjects.

Platt D. Babbitt (American, 1822–1879) *Niagara Falls* c. 1855 Daguerreotype National Gallery of Art, Washington Robinson Family Fund in memory of C. David Robinson and Clinton and Jean Wright Fund

Niagara was the most photographed natural site in the eastern United States in the nineteenth century. Even before the photographers came, the falls had long been celebrated through numerous paintings, drawings, and especially prints. Babbitt, the first to set up a daguerreotype business exclusively devoted to landscape, constructed his own photography pavilion at a prime location across from the falls to cater to the tourists who swarmed there. His compositions capture visitors as they gaze upon the vista, underscoring their pure communion with the falls by eliminating any signs of the commercial development that marred the site.

James E. McClees (American, 1822–1887) *Entrance to Woodlands Cemetery,* 1858 Salted paper print The Library Company of Philadelphia

As landscaped green spaces within the urban environment, cemeteries such as this one in Philadelphia took on a role similar to parks, where the public could enjoy the day and even picnic.

James E. McClees (American, 1822–1887) *Fairmount Water Works*, 1855 Salted paper print Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington Museum purchase from the Charles Isaacs Collection made possible in part by the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment

McClees operated a successful studio in Philadelphia in the 1850s. His main business was portraiture, but he also made numerous views of the city and its environs. Fairmount Water Works, an important feat of municipal engineering, supplied water from the Schuylkill River to Philadelphia. Surrounded by formal gardens and designed to evoke the splendor of Greece and Rome, the complex became a popular tourist attraction that was frequently photographed (including by William Southgate Porter, shown nearby).

Franklin White (American, 1813–1874) *Snow Arch in Tuckerman’s Ravine,* 1858 Salted paper print Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA, Museum purchase

Trained as a painter, White set up shop as a daguerreotypist in the mid-1850s in Lancaster, New Hampshire. This view of hikers on Mount Washington illustrates the sort of excursions to the area that were becoming increasingly popular. It was published with the nearby scene of the aftermath of a storm in an 1859 portfolio of landscape photographs.

Frederick De Bourg Richard (American, 1822 – 1903) *Chew’s House, Germantown,* 1859 Salted paper print The Library Company of Philadelphia

Richards was both a photographer and a landscape painter. In the late 1850s, he made a series of photographs in Philadelphia and its suburb of Germantown, concentrating on historic buildings that would appeal to antiquarians. Built by the prominent jurist Benjamin Chew in the 1760s, this house was an important site in the Battle of Germantown (1777) during the Revolutionary War.

Josiah Johnson Hawes (American, 1808–1901) *Winter on the Common*, 1850s Salted paper print Collection of William L. Schaeffer

Hawes operated a flourishing daguerreotype studio in Boston with his partner Albert Sands Southworth. Though primarily known for their portraits, they also sold views of landscapes, buildings, and monuments. Hawes began using paper processes in the 1850s, making city views such as this one of Boston’s central public park, the Common.

Thomas Easterly (American, 1809–1882)

*Connecticut River Valley,* c. 1845

Daguerreotype

Vermont Historical Society, Leahy Library

This landscape, one of Easterly's earliest daguerreotypes, is inspired by picturesque compositional strategies borrowed from painting, including using large trees as framing side screens and centrally locating the river, which leads the eye on a path over varied terrain into the background. Easterly incised two lines of a poem by a poet of the American Revolution era into the metal plate that underscore the pastoral sensibility of the image: “No watery glades through richer valleys shine,/Nor drinks the sea a lovelier wave than thine.”

Robert Montgomery Bird (American, 1806–1854) *Delaware Water Gap,* 1853 Salted paper print and paper negative The Library Company of Philadelphia

A Philadelphia playwright, novelist, editor, and amateur chemist, Bird experimented with making prints from paper negatives. He used the negative of a scenic site outside the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania to make the adjacent paper print. To create the positive image, the negative was put in contact with light-sensitized paper in a printing frame and exposed to sunlight, which caused the image to form spontaneously (to “print out”). Unlike many of the practitioners in this room, Bird remained an amateur, pursuing his own interests in pictures rather than working commercially.

Frederick Langenheim (American, born Braunschweig, 1809–1879) and William Langenheim (American, born Braunschweig, 1807–1874) *Wirebridge over the Schuylkill, US Navy Yard, and Gray’s Ferry,* 1850 Four salted paper prints Missouri Historical Society, Saint Louis, *Langenheim Album*

The enterprising Langenheims were the first to offer paper prints commercially, selling scenic views made in and around Philadelphia, Niagara, and Washington, DC. They advertised the paper print’s advantages—noting, for instance, that it had no glare, unlike the mirrorlike surface of the daguerreotype, and thus was easier to view. This sheet, with four separate photographs attached to it, came from the earliest published series of American landscape views. The project, which was not a commercial success, was short-lived.

Frederick DeBourg Richards (American, 1822–1903) *The Hole in the Wall,* 1859 Salted paper print Black Dog Collection

A section of the brick wall around Christ Church burial ground in Philadelphia had recently been replaced with fencing (“the hole”) in order to allow passersby a view of Benjamin Franklin’s grave.

James Wallace Black (American, 1825 – 1896) *View in Willey Mts,* 1854 Salted paper print Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum Transfer from the Fine Arts Library, Harvard University

By the late 1840s, a steady stream of guidebooks helped turn the White Mountains of New Hampshire into a popular tourist destination. Black, a photographer based in Boston, represented the rocky, tree-strewn region in more than thirty prints. This one shows the same pass captured by Samuel A. Bemis in his daguerreotype. In many of his pictures Black avoided signs of civilization, but in others he trained his eye on farms, buildings, and roads, as in the view of the nearby lake.

Victor Prevost (French, 1820–1881)
*The Woodlawn Hotel, Bronx.* c. 1854
Waxed-paper negative
Museum of the City of New York, Gift of Mrs. Alec N. Thompson, 1956

Much of Prevost’s work picturing the urban environment of New York survives only as paper negatives, as for example this view, made when the Bronx was still largely undeveloped.

Victor Prevost (French, 1820–1881) *Rocky Hillside,* c. 1854 Salted paper print Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art Gift of John Goldsmith Philips, 1940 (40.102.9)

Unlike most of the earliest photographers in the United States, Prevost began his career as an artist. Trained as a painter in Paris, he had worked as a lithographer before immigrating to New York in 1848, where he made a series of photographs of New York City and surrounding areas.

**Photography and Painting: 1850s–1860s**

Exchanges between landscape painters and photographers in the mid-nineteenth century moved the new medium toward more aesthetic concerns. A number of photographers—including John Moran and Charles and Edward Bierstadt—had close ties to the art world and worked side by side in nature with painters, while others often chose the same picturesque sites beloved by artists. Although photographers sometimes sought to adapt traditional ways of presenting landscape, they also explored new modes of composition that were tied to effects associated with photography, such as a cropped field of vision or flattened perspective.

The British art critic John Ruskin inspired a generation of artists to paint with painstaking precision, exhorting them to scrutinize nature by “rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing.” Photography, which could meticulously reproduce details, fostered just such an aesthetic, and some practitioners turned to the close study of nature. Through the work of Moran, Bierstadt, and others, eastern landscape photography cohered as an artistic endeavor. Allying the medium more firmly to contemporary developments in painting, they thereby helped develop a burgeoning market for landscape photographs.

William James Stillman (American, 1828–1901) *Photographic Study,* 1859 Albumen print from *Photographic Studies by W. J. Stillman. Part I.* *The Forest. Adirondac Woods* (1859) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas

In the summer of 1858, **Stillman** organized a Philosophers’ Camp in the Adirondacks for a circle of intellectuals from the Boston area that included Ralph Waldo Emerson. Stillman, who studied landscape painting with Frederic Edwin Church and was the main advocate of John Ruskin’s writings in America, returned the next summer with a camera. Instead of the sweeping landscapes and scenic sites described in guidebooks, he made close-up studies (a term he borrowed from the visual arts) of trees and ferns in the spirit of Ruskin — the first American photographs of this kind. The variety of flora is paralleled in the exquisitely detailed foregrounds of paintings by Asher B. Durand, an artist Stillman championed.

John Moran (American, born England, 1831–1902) *The Wissachickan Creek near Philadelphia,* c. 1863 Stereoscopic albumen prints The Library Company of Philadelphia

**John Moran**, brother of the landscape painter Thomas Moran, specialized in photographing architecture and landscapes in Pennsylvania and New Hampshire in both stereographic and single formats. He was a staunch advocate for photography as a fine art, as an equal to painting. He often worked alongside Thomas and produced images that balance meticulous attention to detail with general atmospheric effects—a trait shared by his brother’s paintings, as in the view of the mountainous landscape surrounding the Juniata River in Pennsylvania.

**Charles and Edward Bierstadt** operated a flourishing studio in New Bedford, Massachusetts, selling stereographs and landscape views. In 1860 they spent time in the White Mountains photographing with their brother, the painter Albert Bierstadt, who later produced paintings based on the sketches and photographs made on that trip.

**Stereographs**

Introduced to the United States in the 1850s, stereography offered the illusion of three-dimensionality by mimicking the depth perception of the human eye: two photographs are made simultaneously side by side from viewpoints separated by a few inches—the approximate distance between two eyes—and then viewed through the lenses of a special device to come together as one image (two such devices are in this room). Comparatively economical to buy, the stereo, more than any other photographic format, created a mass market for photographs of landscape views and allowed an “armchair traveler” to visually explore other parts of the country. Many photographers established a regional practice, specializing in particular areas from the Northeast to the South, especially after the Civil War. The stereograph remained enormously popular through the 1880s.

**The Altered Landscape: 1850s–1860s**

As America industrialized, technological innovations such as steamships and railroads sped up the pace of life and fundamentally altered the eastern landscape. Accompanying this transformation was the rise of a genre of industrial and railroad views—subjects found in the graphic arts but seldom in paintings. A technical feat in its own right, photography was the perfect medium for making pictures of these massive, often breathtaking ventures. Such photographs were frequently marketed in stereographic format to the public, or were commissioned as promotional material or documentation by companies or the government. The development of the coal and oil industries attracted photographers who celebrated the engineering achievements used in the extraction and production of fossil fuels. The railroad, however, was perhaps the most photographed industrial subject, with numerous railways employing photographers to publicize their growth. Photography also helped draw attention to the dramatic transformation of cities—for example, the daguerreotypes of Thomas M. Easterly capture the evolution of Saint Louis from an agrarian to an industrialized economy, while the works of Jay Dearborn Edwards document the expansion and growing prosperity of New Orleans.

Jay Dearborn Edwards (American, 1831–1900)

*View of the New Orleans Cotton Wharves*, 1858–1861

Coated salt print

Museum Purchase, Tina Freeman Fund, 2105.53

After establishing a photography studio in New Orleans, Edwards documented the changing face of the city in views made over a four-year period. He captured its expansion in the years before the outbreak of the Civil War, photographing newer, tree-lined neighborhoods with wide streets suitable for promenading. He also made pictures of docks and landings, showing goods such as stacked bales of cotton and the steamers that transported them from Louisiana plantations to New Orleans. The steam-powered ships, which had significantly increased the speed of transportation, symbolized technological progress.

Theodore Lilienthal (American, born Prussia, 1829–1894)

*St. Charles Hotel*, 1867

Albumen print

Museum Purchase, Maya and James Brace Fund, 2013.21

In early 1867, Lilienthal was hired by the city council of New Orleans to produce a portfolio of large photographs of New Orleans that could be given as a gift to Napoleon III on the occasion of the International Exposition that year. This photograph depicts the St. Charles Hotel on St. Charles Avenue, two blocks off of Canal Street. Lilienthal’s substantial print was contact printed from a glass negative of equal size—the largest known to have been produced in New Orleans in the nineteenth century. The giant pocket watch hanging down from John Lazarus’s Great Southern Watch Depot reveals an informative detail: that this picture was made just a couple of minutes after ten o’clock in the morning.

Unidentified Photographer

*Saint Louis & New Orleans Packet, R. J. Lackland* , 1857–1861

Salted paper print

Museum Purchase, Tina Freeman Fund, 2016.18

The riverboat *Rufus J. Lackland* was built in 1857 and then intentionally sunk in 1861 after having been seized by the Confederates, who sought to block a part of the Yazoo River near Vicksburg from advancing Union ships with the boat’s sunken hull. During the month of June 1859 the pilot of the *Lackland* was Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain). It was only the second ship he had piloted since receiving his official pilot’s license in April of 1859.

John Horgan, Jr. (American, 1858–1926)

*Mathew's Place, Lobdel Station, Jas. S. Richardson's Dahomey Property,*

*Bolivar Co., Miss., Mississippi Valley Route,* c. 1891

Albumen silver print

The Daniel Wolf Landscape Collection, Denver Art Museum

John Horgan, Jr.

American, 1858–1926

*"Joe's Bayou," W.W. Gordon's Lum and Bozman Plantation, Madison Parish, LA, Q & L Rt.****,*** c. 1891

Albumen silver print

The Daniel Wolf Landscape Collection, Denver Art Museum

Based in Birmingham between 1888 and 1892, Horgan was one of Alabama’s major commercial and industrial photographers. He also worked on a commission for New Orleans cotton magnate James S. Richardson. This photograph stands out in that it illustrates the primary use of the landscape in the nineteenth-century South for an agricultural economy and changing systems of labor. Many of the men and women working on this cotton plantation were likely born into slavery. At the time of this photograph, however, they would have been working for Richardson as day laborers or sharecroppers. Horgan displayed his photographs of Mississippi and Louisiana at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Thomas H. Johnson (American, 1821–death date unknown) *Von Storch Shaft,* c. 1863–1865 Albumen print National Gallery of Art, Washington Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund

When **Johnson** moved to Scranton in 1863, he sought opportunities to work for industries that were changing the landscape of the surrounding Lackawanna Valley, where anthracite coal was mined and processed for transport to eastern cities. His series of views of the region for the Delaware and Hudson Railroad and Canal Company included the striking architecture constructed to mine the coal.

Thomas H. Johnson (American, 1821–death date unknown)

*Von Storch Breaker* c. 1863–1865

Albumen print

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund

This view shows the inclined plane that transported coal cars across the river and up to the mouth of the breaker, where coal would be dumped, crushed, and sorted into uniform sizes.

Thomas H. Johnson (American, 1821–death date unknown) *Waymart,* c. 1863–1865 Albumen print National Gallery of Art, Washington Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund

Waymart, Pennsylvania, was one of the dozens of towns that sprang up alongside the railway built by the Delaware and Hudson Railroad and Canal Company to cater to the growing coal industry and house the influx of workers. Here, the stripped foreground dotted with tree stumps focuses attention on the changing landscape.

Thomas M. Easterly (American, 1809–1882)
*St. Louis Levee*, 1852
Daguerreotype
Missouri Historical Society, Saint Louis, Thomas Easterly Daguerreotype Collection

All of the daguerreotypes on this side of the case and two on the opposite side were made by Thomas Easterly. Easterly was a singular practitioner of the daguerreotype, continuing to use the process into the late 1860s, long after most photographers had switched to paper processes. While he photographed near Niagara in 1853, he concentrated on documenting the transformation of Saint Louis over two decades as the city became industrialized. In three of the images, an area known as Chouteau’s Pond evolves from a rural oasis to a gritty landscape. Lead mined nearby was used in the factory, featured in the background, which shipped its wares throughout the nation on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Easterly also focused on this river commerce in images of docks and boats. Among the most exceptional physical transformations that he captured was the dismantling of a large earthen mound, one of many built all over the region for both burials and dwellings by communities of the Mississippian culture (c. 800 – 1700).

George Gardner Rockwood (American, 1832–1911) *Bethesda Terrace, Central Park, New York,* c. 1862 Albumen print Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal

Established in 1853, Central Park evolved over the following decade into a majestic landscape with grand architectural features. The Department of Public Parks in New York City hired Rockwood to supply images of the transformation to reproduce in its annual reports. When he made this photograph, the area around the Bethesda Terrace was still under construction, as indicated by the planks on which several figures stand.

John A. Mather (American, born England, 1829–1915) *David Beaty Farm, Looking South from Saw Mill, West Hickory Creek, Pennsylvania*, c. 1868 Albumen print The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri Gift of Hallmark Cards, Inc., 2005.27.502

 Mather had moved to Titusville, Pennsylvania, in 1860, one year after the first flowing oil well was struck in the area. In the ensuing oil rush and for the next five decades, he made a specialty of photographing oil regions, sometimes working from a portable darkroom on a flatboat. Owners of new wells, such as the farmer whose property is featured here, often called on Mather to make photographs that would encourage investors.

Attributed to Lewis Emory Walker (American, 1823–1880) *Construction of Washington Aqueduct,* 1858–1859 Salted paper print National Gallery of Art, Washington Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund

Hired by the Treasury Department in 1857 as its official photographer, Walker was one of the earliest practitioners to document construction. He is the likely photographer of a series of views of the Washington Aqueduct, which was built by the US Army Corps of Engineers to bring water from the Potomac River to Washington, DC. Here, stone is unloaded by crane on a Potomac River wharf, with Georgetown visible in the distance.

James F. Ryder (American, 1826–1904) *Atlantic & Great Western Railway,* 1862 Albumen print Collection of William L. Schaeffer

In the spring of 1862, the Atlantic and Great Western Railway tapped Ryder, who ran a thriving studio in Cleveland, to record its expansion through New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Featuring excavations, bridges, stations, buildings, and the countryside through which the tracks ran, his photographs were intended to secure for the company investment capital from abroad. Ryder did not identify the pictured locations on the photographs’ mounts: his photographs convey the railway’s progress through the landscape rather than the specifics of place.

Joel E. Whitney (American, 1822–1886) *Fort Snelling* c. 1865 Albumen print National Gallery of Art, Washington Clinton and Jean Wright Fund

Fort Snelling lies on the Mississippi River between Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The fort was an important site during the 1862 Dakota War and during the Civil War, when soldiers were sent there for training. None of its turbulent associations are apparent in Whitney’s picture, which focuses on the beauty of the surrounding scenery. A single contemplative figure in the center foreground emphasizes the allure of the prospect.

George Kendall Warren (American, 1834–1884)

*View of the Harvard Campus*, 1862–1864

Coated salt print

Museum Purchase, Tina Freeman Fund, 2015.51

George Kendall Warren

American, 1834–1884
*View of Harvard Campus,* 1858
Salted paper print in *Harvard Class Album of 1858*
Private collection, courtesy of Lee Gallery, Winchester, Massachusetts

The idea of the school yearbook originated with Warren. Based in the Boston area, he specialized in making photographic portraits of the graduating classes and professors of West Point, Yale, Harvard, and other colleges, as well as carefully composed views of campus buildings and environs, which seniors could select and then bind into personal albums (see the album in a case nearby).

**The Civil War**

The Civil War marked the first sustained use of photography during an armed conflict. The Union army employed photographers to help survey the land, make maps, and document the building of military infrastructure such as railroads and bridges. (The Confederates relied less on the medium, as their ability to obtain photographic supplies was limited.) Photographs also brought the war to the general public, and entrepreneurs took the opportunity to sell pictures related to the conflict. The war posed a new challenge to photographers: how to portray and memorialize the epic scale of army life and death. Although exposure times for the medium were too long to allow the recording of combat action, photographers captured the aftermath of battles and the destruction wrought by them, the deployment of armies, and their encampments. By the time photographers arrived, most fallen soldiers had already been buried; therefore, few images of the dead were made. Some wartime photographs celebrate preparation for battle, while others are suffused with melancholy, fashioning the altered landscape into a meditation on mourning.

Attributed to Henry P. Moore (American, 1835–1911) *Long Dock at Hilton Head,Port Royal, South Carolina*, 1862 or 1863 Salted paper print Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington Museum purchase from the Charles Isaacs Collection made possible in part by the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment

Moore visited Hilton Head Island in 1862 and 1863, documenting its occupation by the Third New Hampshire Regiment. The inclusion of a solitary figure in the water adds a note of pictorial interest that suggests the artistic background of Moore, a lithographer who had published town views.

John Moran (American, born England, 1831–1902) *View from the Observatory, Mower Army Hospital,* 1863 Albumen print The Library Company of Philadelphia

Moran photographed the Mower General Hospital, a major military facility in Philadelphia, for a series that he published for sale (nos. 108 – 111). The hospital treated thousands of patients who arrived directly from the battlefield by rail between 1863 and 1865, when it shut down at the conclusion of the war. Moran’s pictures from atop a central observatory capture something of the complex’s circular layout. The design, with pavilions radiating from central buildings, was thought to help prevent the spread of infection.

Andrew J. Russell (American, 1829–1902) *Rebel Rifle Pits, Bull Run,* 1863 Albumen print Stephen G. Stein Employee Benefit Trust

Russell was at Bull Run documenting the construction of the new railroad bridge (built to replace one that had been destroyed) when he made this photograph near the site. The title refers to the structures—ditches or mounds built of logs—used to conceal riflemen during battles.

George N. Barnard (American, 1819–1902) *Pass in the Raccoon Range, Whiteside No. 1,* 1864 Albumen print from *Photographic Views of Sherman’s Campaign* (New York, 1866) National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 1975

After the war, Barnard published a landmark volume on General William Tecumseh Sherman’s campaign from Tennessee through Georgia. The book combined photographs Barnard made both during and after the war. Some feature infrastructure such as this trestle bridge on the rail line between Nashville and Chattanooga, shown with the encampment of soldiers who guarded it.

George N. Barnard (American, 1819–1902) *Battle Field of New Hope Church, Ga., No. 2,* 1866 Albumen print from *Photographic Views of Sherman’s Campaign* (New York, 1866) The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Acquired by exchange with the Library of Congress Barnard’s portfolio includes images of disturbed ground or broken trees that evoke the battles fought there. Praised by reviewers as much for its artistry as for its war scenes, the publication interwove photographs of devastation and melancholic pictures made after the fact, conveying a sense of loss.

Isaac H. Bonsall (American, 1833–1909) *Lulah Falls, Lookout Mountain, Georgia,* 1863–1865 Albumen print Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art Purchase, Celia Tompkins Hegyi Gift, 2007 (2007.392)

One of many photographers employed by the Union army, Bonsall worked primarily in sites along the border of Tennessee and Georgia. After the Union army occupied Chattanooga in 1863, he photographed the majestic scenery around Lookout Mountain, where the Union had won a victory over the Confederates in a major battle. In this view of nearby falls, several soldiers spread out among the rocks to pose for his camera.

Timothy H. O’Sullivan (American, born Ireland, 1840–1882) *High Bridge Crossing the Appomattox, near Farmville, on South Side Railroad, Virginia,* 1865 Albumen print from *Gardner’s Photographic Sketch Book of the War* (Washington, 1866) National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa Gift of Phyllis Lambert, Montreal, 1975

O’Sullivan belonged to the corps of photographers sent into the battlefields to document the war. He supplied forty-four of the one hundred photographs published in Alexander Gardner’s book, which contained this and the nearby print.

Attributed to Egbert Guy Fowx (American, 1821–1889) *Dutch Gap Canal*, 1865 Albumen print Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia Museum purchase

The Dutch Gap Canal was constructed by Union troops beginning in late 1864 to bypass a bend in the James River near Richmond where Confederates had built batteries and attacked Union troops. The soldiers perched at the top of the cliffs impart a sense of the scale of the massive engineering project.

David B. Woodbury (American, 1839–1866) *Military Bridge, across the Chickahominy,* 1862 Albumen print from *Gardner’s Photographic Sketch Book of the War* (Washington, 1866) National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Phyllis Lambert, Montreal, 1975

Alexander Gardner, who had once headed Mathew Brady’s studio in Washington, DC, included Military Bridge in a landmark publication of one hundred photographs documenting the Civil War by a number of different photographers (see also nos. 100, 101). Organized chronologically, the photographs follow the Army of the Potomac from Bull Run to Appomattox. Here, Woodbury focused on the bridge built to enable reinforcements to come to the aid of Union troops attempting an advance toward Richmond in 1862.

**The Altered Landscape: 1870s–1890s**

Whether promoting industry or seeking to appeal to potential customers, photographers were willing participants in visualizing the American march of progress. Railroads increasingly sought to attract passengers with photographs that advertised the picturesque beauty of the countryside their locomotives traversed. Photographs were widely exhibited in hotel lobbies and railroad terminals and used for promotional purposes in newspaper advertisements, postcards, route books, and other materials. Throughout these latter decades of the century, photographers took a largely positive vision of industry. And photographs themselves played a part in the dramatic reshaping of the landscape—as in the case of those made by Henry Peter Bosse during a mapmaking survey to assess plans for improving navigation on the Mississippi River.

Daniel Bendann (American, 1835 – 1914) *Mount Washington (Looking East),* c. 1875 Albumen print Collection of William L. Schaeffer

The Northern Central Railway, which operated a route north from Baltimore through central Pennsylvania to the Finger Lakes region of New York, hired Bendann to make a series of views from a special train. Rather than including mechanical or engineering aspects of the railroad, Bendann mostly sought out tranquil, bucolic scenes, such as this view of an area outside Baltimore, which is now part of the city proper.

William H. Rau (American, 1855–1920)

*Morris Canal from Green’s Bridge, Lehigh Valley Rail Road*, c. 1895

Albumen print

National Gallery of Art, Washington,

Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund

William H. Rau (American, 1855–1920)

*Cliff View, Summit of Alleghenies, Lehigh Valley Rail Road*, c. 1895

Albumen print

National Gallery of Art, Washington,

Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund

**Rau** was a Philadelphia-based photographer who, like William Henry Jackson, had already established a reputation as a photographer of the West before being hired by an eastern railway. Rau worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad and Lehigh Valley Railroad, photographing the engineering feats and picturesque scenery along their lines. He often favored elevated viewpoints, setting his camera on top of his dedicated railcar or at times building special platforms.

Henry Peter Bosse (American, born Prussia, 1844–1903) *From Bluff at Franklin’s Coulee Looking Down Stream*, 1891 Cyanotype Black Dog Collection

A mapmaker with the Army Corps of Engineers, **Bosse** took part in a survey of the Mississippi River in the late 1870s. He subsequently made photographs recording its transformation—via dams, dredging, and shoreline protections—into an industrial artery that could more easily transport goods and resources such as timber. Though Bosse’s purpose when making the photographs along this wall was documentary, the deep, rich blue of the works—a result of the chemical process used to create the images— suggests that he approached the landscape with an artist’s eye.

Attributed to Benjamin Franklin Upton (American, 1818–after 1901)

Printed by Edward Augustus Bromley (American, 1848–1925)

*St. Anthony Falls and the Mill District*, 1869 (printed 1890)

Silver bromide print

Museum Purchase, Tine Freeman Fund, 2016.19

This panorama of the St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis includes a number of important details that are all identified in the accompanying key. Not only does it record the very active timber industry on the Mississippi River in the 1860s, it also captures the very first bridge to span the river from its source to its mouth. The negatives used to create this panorama were made in 1869 but the prints were produced in 1890. By that time, the original bridge, which was built in the 1850s, had been replaced.

William Henry Jackson and Company *High Bridge, Harlem River of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad* c. 1890 Albumen print George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York Gift of Harvard University

After serving in the Union army as an artist and mapmaker, Jackson (1843–1942) joined the US Geological Survey of the Territories in the West in the early 1870s. He improved his skills as a landscape photographer through his interaction with another participant, the painter Thomas Moran. In the 1890s, Jackson was hired by several eastern railroads to create views along their routes.

**Tourism, Preservation, and Artistry: 1870s–1890s**

Photography that focused on the natural wonders of different regions continued to flourish in the late nineteenth century. Pictures of Niagara Falls, the Adirondacks, and the Wisconsin Dells played a significant role in encouraging tourism and commercial development of these areas. Yet photographs were also used as tools in the fledgling environmental preservation movement to both celebrate the beauty of nature and bear witness to its degradation.

With the introduction of new techniques and equipment, practicing photography in the field became easier and an increasing number of amateurs took it up as a pastime. Professionals and ambitious amateurs explored ways to distinguish their work, such as making larger prints or emphasizing pictorial effects over clarity of detail. While many worked at the intersection of art and commerce, Alfred Stieglitz, along with his protégé Edward Steichen, championed aesthetic concerns. They placed a higher value on artistic qualities, as determined by the eye of the photographer, than on recording what was before the camera, thus opening the door for new approaches to landscape photography in the twentieth century.

George Barker (American, born Canada, 1844–1894)
*Disfigured Banks: Repulsive Scenery around Visitor Approaching Goat Island Bridge for First View of Rapids*
Heliotype in James T. Gardner, *Special Report of New York State Survey on the Preservation of the Scenery of Niagara Falls* (Albany, 1880)
National Gallery of Art Library, Washington, Image Collections

This landmark volume published by the New York State Assembly, which had commissioned a survey to study environmental impacts on Niagara, was illustrated with images by Barker revealing elements ruining the site. The report led to the establishment of Niagara Falls State Park in 1882.

Unidentified Photographer *View of Farm*, 1870s–1880s Tintype Collection of W. Bruce and Delaney H. Lundberg

Tintypes (not tin despite the name) are printed on a sheet of iron with a dark lacquer or enamel applied to it. The metal is prepared with a sensitized collodion solution and then placed into a camera to be exposed. After developing, the image appears as a positive against the dark support. Introduced in the mid-1850s, tintypes remained popular through the end of the century. Though most often associated with portraiture, the process was also used to photograph land and property.

George Bacon Wood Jr. (American, 1832–1909) *Entrance Drive and Statuary, at Estate of George W. Carpenter,“Phil-Ellena,” Germantown, Philadelphia,* 1888 Platinum print Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal

Wood was a successful genre and landscape painter before he turned to photography by 1881, exploring a variety of techniques. Two of his landscapes made with the same cyanotype process that Richards used for his nearby seascape are on display in the album in the case.

*Album Related to the Photographic Society of Philadelphia*, c. 1874–1886
Albumen prints and cyanotypes
Collection of William L. Schaeffer

Camera clubs proliferated across the nation in the second half of the century. The Photographic Society of Philadelphia, founded in 1862 for “amateur and practical photographers,” was more concerned with artistic practice than commercial interests. Groups such as this one nurtured landscape as a photographic genre: many of its members joined organized excursions to photograph sites outside the city. The two landscapes on the right are by George Bacon Wood Jr., whose view of a Philadelphia estate hangs nearby.

George Barker (American, born Canada, 1844–1894) *Niagara Falls,* 1886 Albumen print The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri Gift of Hallmark Cards, Inc., 2005.27.3503

Barker earned a reputation as the premier photographer of Niagara Falls in the 1870s and 1880s, producing dramatic mammoth-plate views. He also photographed in the South, capturing sultry landscapes like that of the resort area of Silver Springs, Florida included nearby.

Charles Bierstadt (American, born Prussia, 1819–1903) *The Rapids, Below the Suspension Bridge* c. 1883 Albumen print Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington Museum purchase from the Charles Isaacs Collection made possible in part by the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment

After moving to Niagara in the late 1860s, Charles Bierstadt (brother of the painter Albert Bierstadt) distinguished himself from the throng of photographers there by using artistic skills to create evocative views. Adopting a low viewpoint here that heightens the dynamic spray of water, Charles sought to convey a transient, pictorial effect.

Seneca Ray Stoddard (American, 1843–1917)
*Sunset from Wells House, Schroon Lake* , c. 1880
Stereoscopic albumen prints
Collection of Russell Norton

Stoddard was the preeminent photographer of the Adirondacks in the late nineteenth century, promoting the area as a wilderness retreat for busy urbanites and publishing guidebooks that featured his work. A vocal conservationist, he lobbied New York State to protect the region. He decried human manipulation of the environment, even as his livelihood was made possible by the tourist trade. While many of his photographs celebrate the beauty of the Adirondacks, he also captured the bleak consequences of damming.

Edward H. Fox (American, 1851–1919) *On Clear Fork, Rugby, Tennessee,* 1880s Albumen print Collection of William L. Schaeffer

Rugby, Tennessee, was established as a utopian, agrarian community where the younger sons of the British aristocracy could settle and pursue a worthwhile life, as they did not inherit the family estate. This view of the town’s natural environs suggests an untouched wilderness— yet the founding of Rugby and its growth were made possible only by its accessibility to the newly built rail line to Chattanooga.

William James Stillman (American, 1828–1901) *Beaver Brook,* 1874 Heliotype in *Poetic Localities of Cambridge* (Boston, 1876) Private Collection

Stillman paired his photographs with prose and poems by Boston intellectuals and friends Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and James Russell Lowell, thus linking the photographer’s vision of nature with the American literary tradition that revered it. This photograph is paired with Lowell’s poem “Beaver Brook.”

Henry Hamilton Bennett (American, 1843–1908) *Wisconsin Dells,* c. 1885 Matte silver print, probably printed 1890s Collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg

The impressive sandstone formations along the Wisconsin River in a region called the dells were largely unknown to the public when Bennett began photographing them. As tourism expanded, he marketed views of the Wisconsin Dells in his studio, by mail, and to passengers on the steamboats offering excursions on the river. The majority of his work is in stereoscopic format, but he switched to making larger prints in 1884 in an effort to market the artistry of his work and to compete with the proliferation of amateurs.

William Henry Jackson and Company *Mississippi River at Natchez, Mississippi*, c. 1890 Albumen print George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York Gift of Harvard University

Better known for his photographs of the western landscape (his photographs of Yellowstone helped convince Congress to designate the area as a national park in 1872), Jackson brought the same eye for grandeur to the eastern landscape. His panoramic prints of sites such as the Mississippi River rival paintings in size and capture the scope of a majestic topography—even as it was being transformed by industrial activity.

Frederick DeBourg Richards (American, 1822–1903) *Seascape,* c. 1885–1890 Cyanotype Philadelphia Museum of Art Gift of Harvey S. Shipley Miller and J. Randall Plummer, 2004

Richards, a landscape painter whose early photographs are featured in the second room of the exhibition, gave up working commercially in the 1860s but made impressionist views of nature as an amateur in the 1870s and 1880s.

Arthur Wesley Dow (American, 1857–1922) *Haystacks, Ipswich,* c. 1894 Platinum print National Gallery of Art, Washington Diana and Mallory Walker Fund

Dow was a successful painter and art teacher influenced by contemporary French open-air painting and Japanese art. He took up photography in the 1880s and devoted himself to landscape studies, particularly around Ipswich, Massachusetts, where he established a summer art school.

Alfred Stieglitz (American, 1864–1946) *An Icy Night,* 1898 Carbon print National Gallery of Art, Washington Alfred Stieglitz Collection

*An Icy Night* encapsulates Stieglitz’s belief that photography should produce pictures expressing a universal or poetic truth rather than a factual one. Neither it nor the adjacent photograph by Edward Steichen give any indication of place in their titles, which conjure up atmosphere rather than specific locale.