

Joseph Boggs Beale:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Beale, Joseph Boggs, 1841-1926
Title:	Joseph Boggs Beale Collection
Dates:	circa 1870s-2005
Extent:	4 oversize boxes, 2 document boxes, 1 flat box (2.67 linear feet)
Abstract:	Ranging in date from 1865 to the 2000s, the Joseph Boggs Beale Collection consists of Beale's watercolor paintings used for magic lantern slide, glass slides, publications that highlight the artist, and merchandised reproductions of his work. The majority of this collection contains Beale's watercolor paintings.
Call Number:	Film Collection FI-078
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Gift, 2012 (12-11-006-G) Provenance Note: Forty one watercolor painting were acquired from the American National Insurance Co. (ANICO), which purchased over 673 of Beale's magic lantern watercolor painting in the early 1970s. Glass magic lantern slides, reproduced illustrations, and published materials featuring Beale's work were acquired from Terry and Deborah Borton.
Processed by:	Stephanie Tiedeken, 2013
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Famed magic lantern slide artist Joseph Boggs Beale was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on December 10, 1841. He was the eldest child of Louise Boggs McCord (1815-1887) and Dr. Steven Thomas Beale (1814-1899), a prominent dentist and founder of the Pennsylvania Association of Dental Surgeons. Beale demonstrated an aptitude for drawing while attending the prestigious Philadelphia's Central High School and later the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. In 1862, the twenty-year-old Beale returned to Central High School as a professor of writing and drawing, winning the position over realist painter Thomas Eakins.

During the Civil War, Beale served with the Company D, 2nd Regiment, Blue Reserves of Philadelphia. He was quickly appointed to regimental artist and created battle sketches for various publications. After the war, he became an illustrator for numerous magazines including, *Harper's*, *Frank Leslie's Weekly*, and the *Daily Graphic*. Beale lived in Chicago for several years with his wife, Mary Louise Taffart, before returning to Philadelphia in the early 1870s. Much of the artist's work was lost in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

After Beale's return to Philadelphia, the prosperous glass slide dealer Caspar W. Briggs & Sons hired the talented illustrator to produce original slide designs for early projectors, known as magic lanterns. Illustrated glass slides were placed inside these machines and the image was projected onto a screen as a form of entertainment. Beale created 1,804 black and white paintings during his time at Caspar W. Briggs & Sons. The artist used a range of dark paints on charcoal gray paper, highlighted with Chinese opaque watercolors. The result, luminous and detailed illustrations with dramatic color contrast. Many of Beale's paintings chronicle American history from Native American folklore, colonization, the federal period, Civil War, to Victorian life. His illustrations also capture, Biblical and popular narrative stories.

By the time of his death on February 26, 1926, Beale had become renowned for his realistic magic lantern paintings. Several years after the artist's death, a large quantity of his work was discovered in the home of a glass slide producer from Germantown, Pennsylvania. Since then, Beale's paintings have been dispersed into public and private collections.

Sources

Robb, David M., Jr., and Frances Osborn Robb. *Star-Spangled History, Drawings by Joseph Boggs Beale*. Compiled by American National Insurance Company. Galveston, TX: American Printing Company, 1975.

"Speaking of Pictures." *LIFE Magazine*, January 8, 1940, 4-6.

Wainwright, Nicholas B., and Joseph Boggs Beale. "Education of an Artist: The Diary of Joseph Boggs Beale, 1856-1862." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, October 1973, 485-510, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20090791>. (accessed 14 July 2013).

Scope and Contents

Ranging in date from 1865 to the 2000s, the Joseph Boggs Beale Collection consists of Beale's watercolor paintings used for magic lantern slides, glass slides, publications that highlight the artist, and merchandised reproductions of his work. The majority of this collection is made up of Beale's watercolor paintings, which were produced in Philadelphia beginning in the 1870s. The collection is divided into two series: I. Joseph Boggs Beale's paintings; II. Related Materials.

Beale's watercolor paintings, which makeup the first series, are arranged alphabetically by painting title and primarily depict various periods of American history. Some of the paintings, like *Columbus Predicts Eclipse*, document European exploration of the American continent. Others detail the colonial and early federal periods. Five paintings, part of an incomplete sequence, chronicle the life and death of President Ulysses S. Grant. The largest volume of paintings illustrate Edward Everett Hale's short story, "A Man Without A Country," published in the December 1863 issue of the *Atlantic*. The narrative follows an American Army Lieutenant, Philip Nolan, who renounces his country during a treason trial. Nolan is forced to live the rest of his life at sea without speaking or hearing news of the United States. The story is a Civil War allegory and intended to promote the Union cause. Illustrations of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Match Girl*, remain the only non-historical paintings in the collection. *The Little Match Girl* sequence is incomplete, missing one of the eight paintings adapting the Danish author's short story.

Series II. Related Materials include artifacts and printed items which place Beale's work in the context of his own life and the magic lantern industry. Particularly notable, are the glass magic lantern slides produced from Beale's paintings. Three of the eight glass slides in the collection do not depict illustrations painted by Joseph Boggs Beale. The January 8, 1940 issue of *LIFE Magazine* published a brief two-page biography on Beale, containing eight of his paintings and a photograph of the artist. The series additionally contains (but not limited to) Beale illustrated postage stamps, a commemorative plate, sheet music, and a short religious film.

Related Material

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia houses the Arthur Colen Collection of Joseph Boggs Beale Papers (1856-circa 1973).

Separated Material

The DVD performance of The American Magic Lantern Theater was cataloged with the Moving Image collection and placed into cold storage.

Index Terms

People

Beale, Joseph Boggs, 1841-1926.

Organizations

Caspar W. Briggs & Sons.

Daily graphic (New York, N.Y.).

Frank Leslie's illustrated newspaper.

Subjects

Artists--American--19th Century.

Lantern projection.

Lantern slides--1860-1900.

United States--History.

Places

Philadelphia (Pa.).

Document Types

Lantern slides.

Paintings (visual works).

Postage stamps.

Serials (publications).

Sheet music.

Series I. Paintings, circa 1870s

Balboa Discovers Pacific, May 1543, circa 1870s	Container 1.2
Battle of Buena Vista, 1847, circa 1870s	Container 1.3
Burial of De Soto, 1543, circa 1870s	Container 1.4
Columbus and Crew, 1492, circa 1870s	Container 1.5
Columbus Predicts Eclipse, 1493, circa 1870s	Container 1.6
Daniel Boone, circa 1870s	Container 1.7
Death of Maxmillian, 1847, circa 1870s	Container 1.8
Decatur at Tripoli, 1804, circa 1870s	Container 1.9
Discoveries of the Cabots, 1497, circa 1870s	Container 1.10
Fremont as the Pathfinder, 1842, circa 1870s	Container 1.11
General Wolfe Climbing the Heights of Abraham, September 12, 1759, circa 1870s	Container 2.1
Grant Aiming Cannon at Chapultepec, circa 1870s	Container 2.2
Grant, Death of U. S. Grant, July 23, 1885, circa 1870s	Container 2.3
Grant, Funeral of Grant, circa 1870s	Container 2.4
Grant, Grant Lying in State, circa 1870s	Container 2.5
Grant, Inauguration of Grant, circa 1870s	Container 2.6
Hunter and Indians, circa 1870s	Container 2.7
Impressment of American Soldiers for the British Navy, Cause of the War of 1812, circa 1870s	Container 2.8
The Little Match Girl, No. 1, circa 1870s	Container 2.9
The Little Match Girl, No. 2, circa 1870s	Container 2.10
The Little Match Girl, No. 3, circa 1870s	Container 3.1
The Little Match Girl, No. 4, circa 1870s	Container 3.2

The Little Match Girl, No. 6, circa 1870s	Container 3.3
The Little Match Girl, No. 7, circa 1870s	Container 3.4
The Little Match Girl, No. 8, circa 1870s	Container 3.5
The Man without a Country, No. 3, Damn the U.S., circa 1870s	Container 3.6
The Man without a Country, No. 7, Dancing aboard French Ship, circa 1870s	Container 3.7
The Man without a Country, No. 2, Derision by Others, circa 1870s	Container 3.8
The Man without a Country, No. 12, Discussing the Map, circa 1870s	Container 3.9
The Man without a Country, No. 1, Discussion with Burr, circa 1870s	Container 3.10
The Man without a Country, No. 9, A Gift of Sword to Nolan, circa 1870s	Container 4.1
The Man without a Country, No. 10, If Anyone Died, circa 1870s	Container 4.2
The Man without a Country, Nolan Aiming the Gun, circa 1870s	Container 4.3
The Man without a Country, No. 4, Nolan Reading, circa 1870s	Container 4.4
The Man without a Country, Nolan Transferring Ships, circa 1870s	Container 4.5
The Man without a Country, No. 11, Tell Them They Are Free, circa 1870s	Container 4.6
The Man without a Country, No. 5, Threw the Book to Sea, circa 1870s	Container 4.7
Queen Annie's War, 1702 & 1713, St. Augustine, Florida, circa 1870s	Container 4.8
Scott Entering Mexico, 1847, circa 1870s	Container 4.9
Settlement of Delaware, 1638, circa 1870s	Container 4.10

U.S. Scouts Overtaken by Indians, circa 1870s

Container 4.11

Series II. Related Materials, circa 1870s-2005, undated

Catalog of lantern slides, undated	Container 5.1
Film, Yield Not To Temptation, circa 1965	Container 5.2
Glass magic lantern slides	
Home From the War, circa 1870s	Container 5.12
Light, circa 1870s	Container 5.13
The Mayflower, circa 1870s	Container 5.14
Sunset Glows With Rubies, circa 1870s	Container 5.15
Untitled (not Beale slide), circa 1870s	Container 5.16
Untitled (not Beale slide), circa 1870s	Container 5.17
U.S. History 1 (not Beale slide), circa 1870s	Container 5.18
Village Blacksmith, circa 1870s	Container 5.19
Merchandised reproductions	
Betsy Ross Showing The First Flag, commemorative plate, undated	Container 7.1
Paul Revere's Ride, prints, undated	Container 5.3
Reproduced Beale illustrations, undated	Container 5.4
Published material	
The American Magic Lantern Theatre, publicity material, circa 2005 (DVD separated to Moving Image collection)	Container 5.5
The Grade Teacher, journal, November 1939	Container 5.6
Harper's Weekly Journal, 1865	Container 1.1
Joseph Boggs Beale's, American Pictorial History, undated	Container 5.7
LIFE Magazine, 8 January 1940	Container 5.8
Professor Teel's Grand Moral Entertainment Art Show!, poster, undated	Container 1.1

Star-Spangled History, drawings by Joseph Boggs Beale, 1975

Container
5.9

Sheet music, Star-Spangled Banner, undated

Container 5.10

Postage stamps

Lincoln Douglas Debate 1858-1958, stamps, circa 1958

Container
5.11

Seven Wonders of the World, stamps, circa 1997