Introduction

The collection consists of the correspondence and miscellaneous family papers of James Hope (1818/19-1892), a landscape and portrait painter from Castleton, Vermont, New York City, and Watkins Glen, New York. The collection includes family photographs as well as photographs and postcards of Hope’s paintings. The collection was purchased by the Vermont Historical Society in 2009 (ms. acc. no. 2009.6). It is shelved in one flip top archive box (.5 linear feet) and one size D folder.

Biographical Notes

James Hope was born in Scotland on November 29, 1818. After the death of his mother, his father immigrated to Canada. Hope’s father died in 1831, and James left Canada to apprentice as a wagon-maker in Fairhaven, Vermont. In 1841, he married Julia Marietta Smith (b. December 28, 1820) in West Rutland.

Hope developed a skill for portraiture (and later for painting landscapes). After studying in Montreal, he supported his family by teaching painting and drawing at Castleton Seminary. In the early 1850s, he took a studio in New York City where he painted and marketed his work during the winter and returned to his home in Castleton in the summer. In 1872, Hope built a studio and art gallery in Watkins Glen, New York, where he lived until his death on October 20, 1892. Julia Hope died in Watkins Glen September 2, 1906.

During the Civil War, Hope served as a Captain in the Second Vermont Regiment. He made “on-the-spot sketches” which he later developed into paintings of several great battles of the war.


(James) Douglas Hope was born February 1, 1846 and spent his boyhood in Castleton, Vermont. In 1872, he moved with his family to Watkins Glen, New York. He learned the art of photography and became known as the “glen photographer”. In 1878, he married Emily Akester, daughter of Robert (1818-1908) and Sarah Bravinder Akester. Their children were Helen B. and James Akester Hope. James A. Hope (d. 1954?) married Louise Green.
For additional biographical information for James and James D. Hope see Folder 0.

Organization

The collection is organized in five series, three of which are generations of the Hope family.

I. First Generation: James (1818-1892) and Julia Smith (1820-1906) Hope
II. Second Generation: (J.) Douglas (b. 1846); Jessie (b. 1850); Julia Adelaide ("Addie") (b. 1848-1872)
III. Third Generation: James Akester and Louise Green Hope
IV. Photographs
V. Miscellaneous.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of the correspondence and miscellaneous family papers of James Hope (1818-1892), a landscape and portrait painter from Castleton, Vermont, New York City, and Watkins Glen, New York. The collection also includes family photographs as well as photographs and postcard reproductions of Hope’s paintings.

The correspondence between Hope and his wife, Julia, from 1856-1872 is the focus of the collection. In these letters, which have been transcribed, Hope, living in New York City in order to paint and market his work, writes of professional disappointments as well as his worries about poor food and his health. In her letters from Castleton, Julia expresses her financial worries and domestic concerns. By the spring of 1872, however, Hope is enthusiastically planning the studio he will build in Watkins Glen, New York, where the family will live until a house is completed.

Brochures and articles about James Hope include an undated catalogue of eighty-three of his paintings; several 1870’s brochures for “Hope’s Glen Art Gallery;” and a 1983 article from the Watkins Express, “Captain James Hope, realistic artist of Watkins Glen”. Reproductions of Hope’s five large canvases, “The Battle of Antietam,” include two photographs and a series of postcards.

Among the oldest photographs in the collection are an undated ambrotype of Robert Akester and an 1850s Hallotype portrait of James Hope. The work of Hope’s son, J. Douglas, a professional photographer, is represented in the collection. He compiled a 1920 guidebook to Watkins Glen illustrated with area photographs; several family photographs, including Julia Hope, are identified as the work of the J.D. Hope studio.

Related Collections in VHS Library

- James Hope Letters, MSA 230-231
For additional related library and museum collections, refer to the Finding Aid for MSA 230-231 in Folder 0.

Inventory

I. First Generation: James and Julia Smith Hope

MSA 529:1 James and Julia Hope, correspondence, 1856 and 1859
   1A _____, _____, _____, transcriptions
   2 _____, _____, 1864 and 1868
   2A _____, _____, _____, transcriptions
   3 _____, _____, 1870-72
   4 _____, _____, _____, transcriptions
   5 James Hope, misc. letters, 1890
   6 _____, poem, 1858
   7 _____, miscellaneous, 1866, 1875, and undated
   8 Famous Hope Canvases, catalogue of sixty three famous canvases by the late James Hope, A.N.A, Alexander Press, no author or date

Size D

Watkins Express, Watkins Glen, N.Y., November 9, 1983
   “Hope’s Glen Art Gallery,” brochures, Watkins Glen, N.Y., undated

9 Julia Hope, misc. family letters, 1854-69
10 _____, miscellaneous, undated

II. Second Generation: (James) Douglas, Jessie, and Julia Adelaide (“Addie”) Hope

11 Miscellaneous letters, 1868-1870s
12 _____, transcriptions
14 Miscellaneous

III. Third Generation: James A. and Louise Green Hope

15 Watkins Glen, New York, miscellaneous, 1930s
16 Miscellaneous, 1912, 1954 and undated

IX. Photographs

FB-5 James Hope, Hallotype by J. Gurney, portrait in full leather case, 1857?
17 _____, and Julia Hope, by J. D. Hope, photographer, 1890s
18 Reproductions of Hope artwork, paintings, undated:
   “On the Pamunky,” “The Bivouac,” and “The Natural Bridge”
19 _____, Antietam battle scenes and “Frowning Cliff,” Watkins Glen,
New York, 1873

20  William Akester (1785-1859), and Robert Akester (1818-1908), undated and 1898

FB-25  William Akester, ambrotype, undated

21  Hope family, misc., ca. 1890s?

22  Photographs and postcards of fires (Watkins Glen, New York?), undated

23  Miscellaneous, unidentified, undated

FB-5  Oversized tintype, unidentified woman standing amid rocks, undated

VI. Miscellaneous

24  Envelopes, undated

25  Miscellaneous, undated

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