

James Hope (1818/19-1892)
Papers, 1854-1983 (bulk: 1856-1872)
MSA 529 & Size D

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 and Julia Hope's four children who survived to adulthood were: Henry Francis (b. Oct. 4, 1842-d. Jun. 2, 1916); (James) Douglas (b. Feb. 1, 1846-d. Jan. 24, 1929); Julia Adelaide or "Addie" (b. Nov. 13, 1848-d. Mar. 20, 1871); and Jessie (b. Nov. 30, 1850-d. Jan. 24, 1893). Addie married George A. Stearns in 1868; she died in 1871 in the Argentine Republic, where she is buried.

(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
- “Captain James Hope, realistic artist of Watkins Glen,” 1818-1892, p. 1 ff.
- “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
- 13 *Through Watkins Glen; descriptive and illustrated guide book*, 2d ed., compiled by J. D. Hope, 1920
- 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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