

PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Rhode Island Collection
VM 014
James N. Arnold Image Collection
1907-1923 (bulk 1920-1921)

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Number: VM 014
Title: James N. Arnold Image Collection
Creator: Arnold, James N. (James Newell), 1844-1927
Dates: bulk 1900-1920
Quantity: 29 boxes, 18 linear feet

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition: The collection was transferred from Knight Memorial Library sometime before 2009.

Accruals: No accruals are expected.

Custodial history: James N. Arnold bequeathed his library and archival collection to the Elmwood Public Library Association, later named Knight Memorial Library, upon his death in 1927. During the years when Knight Memorial Library was a branch library of the Providence Public Library, the Arnold library of published materials was broken up and distributed amongst the library system. The glass plate negatives were transferred to the Providence Public Library sometime before 2009.

Processed by: The collection was partially processed by James DaMico and digitized by AS220 in 2009; collection was fully processed and finding aid written by Kate Wells in 2016.

Conservation: The glass plate negatives were cleaned by photographers at AS220 as part of the digitization process in 2009.

RIGHTS AND ACCESS

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Providence Public Library, Rhode Island Collection department.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to use the following citation format: *[item number]*, *[item title]*, *James N. Arnold Glass Plate Negative Collection, Rhode Island Collection, Providence Public Library*

Property Rights: Copyright has been assigned to Providence Public Library.

INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Separated material None.
Published descriptions None.

Location of originals Not applicable.
Location of copies Digital surrogates made in 2009 and 2017 and are available on www.provlibdigital.org.
Publication note Not applicable.
Subject headings Photography -- 19th century
Photography -- 20th century
Rhode Island -- History
Rhode Island -- Pictorial works
Photographs. aat

SEE ALSO MSS 033 James N. Arnold Collection

HISTORICAL NOTE

James Newell Arnold (1844-1927) was a writer, editor, historian and genealogist specializing in Rhode Island history. Arnold was born on August 3, 1844 near the village of Knightsville in Cranston, Rhode Island to Captain James Lincoln Arnold, a farmer, and Amey Underwood. Arnold was a descendent of Thomas Arnold who joined Roger Williams in Providence in 1636, and of Benedict Arnold, Rhode Island colony's first governor. Sometime in his childhood, Arnold contracted an ailment that led him to the use of crutches for mobility throughout his life. In 1868, James Arnold moved the family to a farm in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. Following this move, Arnold began his project to inventory historic burial grounds and to document the history of old Narragansett families.

Arnold's professional work as a historian and writer began in earnest in the 1880s. Arnold traveled throughout Rhode Island collecting and transcribing local church records, pension rolls, burial records and town papers. He edited and published *The Narragansett Historical Register*, an 8 volume set on the history of southern Rhode Island, from 1882-1891. During that time, he moved to Providence in 1884 and worked as the assistant to historian Edward B. Hitchcock. From 1891-1912, he compiled and published his seminal work, *Vital Records of Rhode Island*, the first comprehensive set of vital records for the state covering 1636-1850 in 21 volumes.

In addition to his work on Rhode Island history, Arnold researched his Arnold family genealogy extensively, located and transcribed Revolutionary War newspapers, researched the Narragansett Indian tribe, and wrote numerous newspaper articles. Arnold died at Dexter Asylum on September 27, 1927 and was buried in a family plot in South Kingstown.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

This collection contains over 1100 glass plate negatives and 201 print photographs created by and/or collected by James N. Arnold. The images in the collection depict scenes across Rhode Island including beaches, farms and landscapes as well as activities and community events such as ice skating, parades, football games and community gardens.

Upon his death in 1927, Arnold bequeathed his library and research materials to the Elmwood Public Library in Providence, Rhode Island (now the Knight Memorial Library branch of Providence Community Libraries). The original bequest included 1500 genealogical works, 2500 bound volumes and over 10,000 pamphlets in addition to his research and manuscript materials and glass plate negatives and photographs. The library of published items (genealogical works, bound volumes and pamphlets) was not maintained as a discrete collection. Arnold's image collection was transferred to the Providence Public Library sometime before 2009 and his manuscript materials were transferred to the Library in 2015.

In 2008-09 the Library rehoused the glass plate negatives into enclosures and partnered with AS220 to scan the images. Some original boxes and envelopes for the glass plate negatives were found during processing and include notes that identify the plates that were inside each as found during the 2009 project. Approximately half of the print photographs are contact prints from the negatives and include written description of the image. The other half of the photographs are not associated with negatives in the collection.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

The collection is arranged into series according to format and size. Series related to glass plate negatives were created during the 2009 digitization project according to size and have been maintained. Additional series have been added to reflect prints and miscellaneous materials.

A partial itemized inventory is available and will be updated as the full collection is digitized.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Series 1: 3x5 negatives

Includes 22 3x5 glass plate negatives. Images include public and residential buildings and the Bunker Hill Monument. Images are ca.1899-1927.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Box</u>
GN350001 - GN350022	1

Series 2: 4x5 negatives

Includes 431 4x5 glass plate negatives. Images include children at school, play and in parades, crowds ice skating and at the beach, as well as family activities including clam bakes, in the back garden and on outings. Also included are images of cemeteries, landscapes of Lincoln Woods, graphite mines, farms and various residential and commercial architecture, Images are ca.1899-1927.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Box</u>
GN450001 - GN450050	2
GN450051 - GN450100	3
GN450101 - GN450150	4
GN450151 - GN450200	5
GN450201 - GN450250	6
GN450251 - GN450299	7
GN450300 - GN450349	8
GN450350 - GN450400	9
GN450401 - GN450432	10

Series 3: 5x7 negatives

Includes 544 5x7 glass plate negatives. The bulk of images include cemeteries, landscapes of beaches, waterfalls, mountains, monuments, and various residential and commercial architecture, Also included are images of a children's pageant and various family activities. Images are ca.1899-1927.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Box</u>
GN570001 - GN570050	11
GN570051 - GN570100	12
GN570101 - GN570150	13
GN570151 - GN570199	14
GN570201 - GN570250	15

GN570251 - GN570300	16
GN570301 - GN570350	17
GN570351 - GN570400	18
GN570401 - GN570450	19
GN570451 - GN570500	20
GN570501 - GN570547 (GN570545-47 are broken)	21

Series 4: 5x8 negatives

Includes 5 5x8 glass plate negatives. Images include architecture and landscapes, ca. 1899-1927.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Box</u>
GN580051-GN580005	22

Series 5: 6x8 negatives

Includes 143 6x8 glass plate negatives. Images include individual and group portraits, cemeteries, architecture, boats, various mechanical devices, commercial and residential buildings, ca. 1899-1927.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Box</u>
GN680001-GN680050	23
GN680051-GN680100	24
GN680101-GN6880143	25

Series 6: 8x10 glass plate negatives

Includes 3, 8x10 glass plate negatives. Images include a house, ship and beach scene.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Box</u>
GN8100001-GN8100003	25

Series 7: Contact prints by AS220**Oversized Folder**

Includes 25 contact prints made from various glass plate negatives by AS220 Photo Labs during the digitization project in 2009.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Box</u>
25 contact prints	16	oversized

Series 8: Photographs printed from Glass Plate Negatives

Includes 71 photographic prints made from identified glass plate negatives within the collection. Prints are organized according to item numbers assigned to glass plate negatives.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Box</u>
18 photographs	1	26
15 photographs	2	26

14 photographs	3	26
19 photographs	4	26
15 photographs	5	26
17 photographs	6	26

Series 9: Photographs

Includes 105 print photographs not associated with glass plate negatives within the collection. Images are predominantly of gravesites of Governors of Rhode Island and domestic architecture in Rhode Island. Some photographs include stamps of photographer Horace A. Sweet of Providence. Images were found loose in box and have been arranged loosely by size. Photographs have been assigned unique item identification numbers and are arranged accordingly.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Box</u>
20 photographs	7	27
15 photographs	8	27
16 photographs	9	27
15 photographs	10	27
16 photographs	11	27
11 photographs	12	28
10 photographs	13	28
12 photographs	14	28

Series 10: Miscellaneous

Includes a group of postcards and documents related to various Rhode Island buildings as well as the original envelope sleeves and boxes of the glass plate negatives which include handwritten notes by Arnold.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Box</u>
Various postcards and documents related to R.I. architecture	15	28
Original negatives sleeves and boxes with Arnold's notes	not foldered	29