

Albany Institute of History & Art
Library

PC 7

WILLIAM H. NOYES COLLECTION

ca. 1922-1935, n.d.

1.76 lin. ft., 3 boxes

Series I. Albany Buildings
Series II. Albany Parks, Landscapes and Cityscapes
Series III. Scenes Outside of Albany

March 2001

Biographical Note

William Horace Noyes (1863-1928) was an avocational photographer whose profession was vocational education. He was a resident of Albany for just seven years from 1921, when he accepted a position with the State of New York, until his sudden death in the summer of 1928. In that short time, he created a number of images that are notable for their expression of the quiet beauty that he found in the city and its environs.

Alumni records in the Amherst College archives have provided what biographical information is known about William Noyes. He was born in Madura, South India, the son of the Reverend Joseph and Anna Noyes. His parents were both missionaries under the auspices of the American Board Commissioners of Foreign Missions working in Ceylon (1849-52) and India (1852-92) until Rev. Noyes's death. Like his father, William Noyes was a graduate of Amherst College (Class of 1884) and the Andover Theological Seminary (1887). Ordained in 1888, he served for seven years as a missionary of Boston's Berkley Temple in Japan (1888-94), and remained there with the ABCFM until 1897.

Returning to the United States, he settled in Chicago and worked with the Associated Charities and the settlement house of the Ethical Culture Society. In 1899, Noyes entered Teacher's College of Columbia University to study manual training and vocational education. He began a second career as a teacher and administrator in that field, taking positions in Columbus, Georgia (1901-02), and Montclair, New Jersey (1902-03), before returning to Teacher's College in 1903 as an instructor in manual training. Noyes rose to Assistant Professor, and taught there until 1916.

Administrative positions followed: from 1916 through 1918 he organized and directed an industrial education program in Duluth, Minnesota, and during World War I, he held a position with the Federal Board for Vocational Education which allowed him work in the rehabilitation of soldiers. In 1921, Noyes moved to Albany and became a rehabilitation agent with the State of New York. His office was in the New York State Education Building, one of the city's most prominent structures and one which he photographed a number of times.

Noyes was the author of several books, including *The Evolution of the Class Struggle* and *Japanese Exercises*, but his primary contribution was to the literature of manual training: *Handiwork in Wood*; *Wood and Forest*; *Design and Construction in Wood*; and *Woodworking Machinery*. In addition, he was a member of a number of educational organizations and clubs, as well as a member of the Pictorial Photographers of America.

Noyes married twice, first to Inez Curl, with whom he had two children, Waldo (born 1892) and Margaret (born 1896). In 1904 he married Anna Gausmann of Leonia, New Jersey; they had one child together, a son Leonard (born 1907).

William Noyes was also an outdoorsman. He was a member of the Adirondack Mountain Club, serving as president of its Albany Chapter for two years. Sadly, it was Noyes's love of nature and mountain climbing that ultimately lead to his death. In July 1928 the Albany region was caught in a heat wave that claimed the lives of a number of

residents. On July 8th, while climbing with Leonard at Indian Ladder in the Helderberg range just southwest of the city, Noyes was overcome with heat prostration and died soon after being admitted to the hospital in Albany.

Scope and Content Note

The William H. Noyes Collection consists of photographic images of Albany and nearby locales. Formats include lantern slides, negatives, paper prints, and printed postal cards, and all are interfiled by subject for ease of arrangement. The images are Pictorialist and painterly in nature, with a soft focus, subtly modulated tones, and prominent use trees as a design element. Most of the subjects are based in Albany and include a number of public buildings and the doorways of private homes in the city and suburbs, as well as a good number of nature scenes in Washington Park. In addition to Albany photographs, the collection features images made in the Adirondack Mountains and at Indian Ladder, and one each of Newburgh, New York, and Noyes's alma mater, Amherst College.

There is no correspondence or other papers to document the collection, the photographer or his work. The Institute's accession records are sketchy, but do acknowledge that thirty-seven "Lantern Slides and Negatives of William Noyes" were given in 1945 by "Miss Anna Noyes" of Leonia, New Jersey. There are, in fact, thirty-seven lantern slides as well as an additional twenty-nine negatives. The AIHA Accession Register assigns 1945.33 as the collection's accession number, but the slides themselves are labeled 1945.31.1-37, a sequence which does not account for the negatives. (The 1945 accession numbers on the slides are reflected in the box and folder list in this finding aid). Once the material entered the Albany Institute's library, it was divided up and distributed by format. Lantern slides and negatives had been housed separately, and the photographic prints (which are apparently not part of the 1945 accession) were found filed by their subjects throughout the Library's main photograph collection. Postcards made from Noyes's images were found in the library's postcard collection. The collection that now makes up PC 7 was drawn together in March 2001.

The actual images undoubtedly date from the period 1921 through 1928 when Noyes was a resident of Albany, but only the lantern slides are thought to have been created by Noyes himself and would therefore date from that time. The negatives, all but one of which are in an 8 x 10 inch format and are acetate copy negatives, were made at an undetermined date. According to information written on their mounts, the photographic prints were made by Clarence White, Jr., a New York photographer. The postcards have no known history, but the images are the same as those of lantern slides, negatives and photographs in this collection, and state on their versos that they are the work of William Noyes. While they are commercially printed halftones, the publisher and date are not given on the cards so their origin remains a mystery.

Both the lantern slides and photographic prints have pencil inscriptions written on

them in what is presumed to be Anna Noyes's hand. In the case of the slides, she has provided either titles or descriptions (although one is incorrectly identified as being Dr. Hun's doorway but is in fact the very distinctive doorway of the Hoy house still standing on State Street). Her inscriptions on several of the photographs' mounts are "Print by Clarence H. White 2d" in the lower left corner, and "William Noyes per A.G.N." in the lower right. How these prints came to be made by White (1907-78) is a matter of speculation.

White's father was the noted Pictorialist photographer Clarence H. White (1871-1925) who Noyes undoubtedly knew during the thirteen years that both men were at Teacher's College -- White moved to New York in 1906 and taught art photography at Columbia from 1907 to 1925. In addition, White was a founder of the Pictorialist Photographers of America, of which Noyes was a member, and served as its president from 1917 to 1921.

Clarence H. White also operated a photography school in New York from 1914 until his death on July 8, 1925, after which his wife, Jane, became director. The White's third son, Clarence White, Jr., taught at the school from 1927 until it closed in 1942, in addition to holding an administrative post and serving as its last director. Records for the Clarence H. White School of Photography, now held by the Princeton University Art Museum, reveal that a Margaret Noyes was a student there from 1934 to 1936. Presuming that she is William Noyes's daughter, it would be possible that she might have arranged to have her father's negatives printed by Clarence White Jr. during that period. Anna Noyes might also have known White and commissioned the work from him directly. At any rate, based on the circumstantial evidence outlined above the prints have been assigned a circa 1935 date which falls between Noyes's death date of 1928 and the arrival of the negatives at AIHA in 1945.

The William H. Noyes Collection is arranged in three series: Series I. Albany Buildings; Series II. Albany Parks, Landscapes and Cityscapes; and Series III. Scenes Outside of Albany. In all three series, the images appear in one or more of the four formats described above: lantern slides, photographs, negatives and postal cards. When only a negative appears for an image, a positive paper print has been made from a scan of the negative and is housed in the folder with the negative.

Series I. Albany Buildings, consists of images containing notable Albany facades and a smaller group of more intimate images of house doorways. Among the prominent buildings which found their way into Noyes's viewfinder are a cluster of neighboring structures, the Albany Academy building, the Court of Appeals, and the New York State Education Building, all located along the eastern end of Washington Avenue in downtown Albany. Nearly all of the images are of buildings in the surrounding area, including houses on State Street, Washington Avenue, and Western Avenue. One notable doorway photographed by Noyes was the entrance to the Hun house (lantern slide, Box 1, folder 26). The unique curved door and fanlight had been saved from its original location, the John Meads house at 99 Columbia Street (built 1829-30), and incorporated into the Hun's colonial revival home at 149 Washington Avenue (no longer extant). The entranceway is now in the Albany Institute's collection of architectural elements. Noyes also made images of two buildings at the State College for Teachers (now the State University of New York at Albany's downtown

campus) on Western Avenue.

In the Pictorialist tradition, the buildings included in Noyes's photographs are not meant to be documentary records of the structures, but are in most cases evocative artistic statements in which the elements and patterns of nature such as trees, shadows and sunlight play as prominent a part as the buildings.

One photograph of the tower of the Albany Academy building was made from a window of 13 Elk Street, the distinguished former home of the J.V.L. Pruyn family which had become rental apartments when Noyes lived there from his arrival in Albany until 1924. His other residences in the city included 152 State Street (1924-26), 12 South Hawk Street (1926-27), 333 Madison Avenue (1927-28), and 390 Madison Avenue (1928).

Series II. Albany Parks, Landscapes and Cityscapes includes a number of panoramic views of the Albany area and several tree studies made in the city's Washington Park. Two of the cityscapes were made from the roof of Noyes's apartment house at 390 Madison Avenue, while four images were made on or close to the Hudson River. As in the first series, the photographs are impressionistic, composed shots that in some cases echo the work of Photo-Secessionists and fellow Pictorialists with which Noyes was certainly familiar.

Series III. Scenes Outside of Albany holds a small group of eight miscellaneous images made hours from Albany (Amherst, MA, the Adirondacks, and Newburgh, NY), or just outside the city (Kenwood and Altamont), as well as in two unknown locations. The Altamont slide is of Indian Ladder, the escarpment on which Noyes was hiking on the last day of his life,

The William H. Noyes Collection was arranged and processed by Sandra Markham in March 2001.

Box Folder

Series I. Albany Buildings

Arranged alphabetically by building.

Albany Academy

Front door and staircase

1	1	Lantern slide (1945.31.35)	ca. 1925
		Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. See: Box 3, folder 76	ca. 1935
	2	Postcards (2)	ca. 1935
		Seen through the park	
		Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. See: Box 3, folder 77	ca. 1935
		Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. See: Box 3, folder 78	ca. 1935
	3	Postcard	ca. 1935
		Tower seen through window at 13 Elk Street	
	4	Lantern slide (1945.31.16)	ca. 1922
	5	Copy negative	n.d.
	6	Postcards (3)	ca. 1935
	7	Albany Evening Journal Building, lantern slide (1945.31.24)	ca. 1925
		City Hall	
	8	Main entrance seen from park, lantern slide (1945.31.32)	ca. 1925

Box Folder

Series I. Albany Buildings, cont.

City Hall, cont.

Seen from steps of the Capitol, spring

[1]	9	Copy negative	n.d.
		Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. See: Box 3, folder 79	ca. 1935
	10	Postcard	ca. 1935
		Seen from the steps of the Capitol, winter	
	11	Copy negative	n.d.
	12	Postcard	ca. 1935
	13	Seen through the arch at the Capitol, lantern slide (1945.31.12)	ca. 1925

Corning, Parker, house in Glenmont

	14	Entrance, summer, copy negative	n.d.
	15	Entrance, winter, lantern slide (1945.31.19)	ca. 1925
	16	Entrance, winter, copy negatives (2)	n.d.

Court of Appeals, State of New York

Front façade, summer

		Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. See: Box 3, folder 80	ca. 1935
		Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. See: Box 3, folder 81	ca. 1935

Box Folder

Series I. Albany Buildings, cont.

Court of Appeals, State of New York, cont.

Front facade with automobile

[1]	17	Lantern slide (1945.31.34)	ca. 1925
	18	Copy negative	n.d.
	19	Postcards (3)	ca. 1935
	20	Front façade, with City Hall, lantern slide (1945.31.11)	ca. 1925
	21	Front façade, winter, lantern slide (1945.31.36)	ca. 1925

Harmanus Bleecker Library

	22	Lantern slide (1945.31.37)	ca. 1925
	23	Copy negative	n.d.
	24	Postcard	ca. 1935
	25	Hoy house doorway, 309 State Street, lantern slide (1945.31.29)	ca. 1925
	26	Hun house doorway, 149 Washington Avenue, lantern slide (1945.31.30)	ca. 1925

McKinney house doorway, 76 Western Avenue

		Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. See: Box 3, folder 82	ca. 1935
	27	Copy negative	n.d.

Box Folder

Series I. Albany Buildings, cont.

Schuyler Mansion

[1]	39	Copy negative	n.d.
	40	Postcards (2)	ca. 1935

State College for Teachers

	41	Western Avenue entrance to Draper Hall, lantern slide (1945.31.28)	ca. 1925
	42	West (main) entrance to Hawley Library from Draper Hall, lantern slide (1945.31.31)	ca. 1925
	43	Telephone Building, lantern slide (1945.31.10)	ca. 1925

University Club doorway, State Street

	44	Lantern slide (1945.31.14)	ca. 1925
	45	Copy negative	n.d.
	46	Postcard	ca. 1935
	47	Wendell Street, lantern slide (1945.31.8)	ca. 1925

Box Folder

Series II. Albany Parks, Landscapes and Cityscapes

Arranged in alphabetical order by subject or location.

Albany Basin, Hudson River

2	48	Lantern slide (1945.31.5)	ca. 1925
	49	Copy negative	n.d.
	50	Albany skyline from Rensselaer, lantern slide (1945.31.25)	ca. 1925
	51	Albany skyline from Rensselaer (Delaware and Hudson Building), lantern slide (1945.31.9)	ca. 1925
	52	Arrival in Albany (steam engine), lantern slide (1945.31.33)	ca. 1925

Birch and Pawtonia – White and Black

	53	Lantern slide (1945.31.23)	ca. 1925
	54	Copy negative	n.d.

Capitol from roof of 390 Madison Avenue

	55	Spring, copy negative (3 x 4 in. safety film)	ca. 1925
	56	Summer, copy negative	n.d.

Winter

		Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. See: Box 3, folder 85	ca. 1935
	57	Copy negative	n.d.

Box Folder

From Series I. Albany Buildings

Albany Academy

3 76 Front door and staircase, photograph printed
by Clarence White, Jr. ca. 1935

Seen through the park

77 Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. ca. 1935

78 Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. ca. 1935

City Hall

79 Seen from steps of the Capitol, spring,
photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. ca. 1935

Court of Appeals, State of New York

Front façade, summer

80 Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. ca. 1935

81 Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. ca. 1935

82 McKinney, Lawrence, house doorway,
76 Western Avenue, photograph printed
by Clarence White, Jr. ca. 1935

New York State Education Building

83 Façade from corner of State and South Swan,
Photograph printed by Clarence White, Jr. ca. 1935

84 Main entrance, photograph printed by Clarence
White, Jr. ca. 1935

Box Folder

From Series II. Albany Parks, Landscapes and Cityscapes

Capitol from roof of 390 Madison Avenue

[3] 85 Winter, photograph printed by Clarence
White, Jr. ca. 1935

Rooftops from 390 Madison Avenue

86 Winter, photograph printed by Clarence
White, Jr. ca. 1935