Centennial Photographic Company.

Inventory of a collection of 13 photographs by the Centennial Photographic Co. from the collection of Prof. Charles Frederick Chandler, 1836-1925.

Compiled by Herbert Mitchell.


Nos. 1, 3, 5 & 7, are views of the Exhibition. They are copy prints. In each, the sky is enlivened by vivid cloud formations. To achieve this effect, parts of prints from 2 negatives (one for the view and one for the sky) have been combined and re-photographed to produce the copy print. This was a common practice in the 19th century before it was technically possible to capture both cloud-filled sky and earth successfully on one negative. Nos. 2, 4, 6 & 8, are original prints of the actual cloud studies appearing in nos. 1, 3, 5 & 7, respectively.

The sky studies appear to be moonlit scenes but, in fact, were photographed in broad daylight. The bits of landscape that appear are almost black. The roofs and towers of buildings seen at the bottom of several seem to be those of the Exhibition. In nos. 1, 3 & 5, the transition between the earth and sky is achieved with deceptive skill. Foliage, waving flags, etc. blend with the sky background as if they truly belonged together. In no. 7, however, it is obvious that 2 pictures have been crudely combined. (Information courtesy of Peter Galassi)
Horticultural Hall East Front. negative no., 758.
Copy print.
317 x 406mm.; mount: 559 x 621mm.
In foreground, a fountain by the J.L. Mott Iron Works, N.Y. Frank Leslie's Historical Register of the United States Centennial Exposition..., N.Y., 1877, illustrates a variant version on p. 259. The latter lacks the sculptural groups in the lowest basin.
Note that the faint images of 2 chimneys on the far L. and some trees of the far R. belong in the "Cloud study" no. 2.

Cloud study used as the sky in no. 1, Horticultural Hall,
316 x 409mm.; mount: 558 x 606mm.

Main Building, Western Entrance. also called Industrial Hall.
Negative no., 946.
Copy print.
317 x 405mm.; mount: 550 x 615mm.

Cloud study used as the sky in no. 3, Main Building,
317 x 406mm.; mount: 550 x 615mm.

Memorial Hall (Art Gallery): exterior view,
Copy print.
317 x 406mm.; mount: 589 x 734mm.

Cloud study used as the sky in no. 5, Memorial Hall,
442 x 535mm.; mount: 680 x 754mm.

Detroit Light Guard posed before the Michigan Building. Negative no., 1600.
Copy print.
317 x 406mm.; mount: 550 x 615mm.
Note that the original print showing the view has been cut out along the edges of the trees, building, people, etc. and superimposed upon the cloudy sky. The sharp edges dividing the 2 prints are crudely apparent in this copy print.

Cloud study used as the sky in no. 7, the Michigan Building,
317 x 406mm.; mount: 550 x 614mm.
9. Cloud study with part of a building filling L. half of lower border; an open pavilion is on the roof at the R. end of the building.
316 x 404 mm.; mount: 550 x 615 mm.

10. Cloud study with 2 towers on the horizon at the L.
313 x 405 mm.; mount: 550 x 615 mm.

11. Cloud study: 2 cloud masses with the sun just disappearing behind the left one; fragment of a building at lower L. corner.
414 x 533 mm.; mount: 679 x 754 mm.

Negative no.: 192h.
401 x 317 mm.; mount: 649 x 551 mm.

401 x 313 mm.; mount: 647 x 547 mm.