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Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Currier & Ives Darktown Prints

JWJ MSS 158



by Beinecke Staff

2015

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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: JWJ MSS 158

CREATOR: Currier & Ives, publisher

TITLE: Currier & Ives Darktown Prints

DATES: 1880-1907

BULK DATES: 1880-1896

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.5 linear feet (4 boxes)

LANGUAGE: Captions in English.

SUMMARY: A collection of caricatures of African Americans published by the firm Currier & Ives as a series of "Darktown" comics. The drawings were made by artists associated with the firm, primarily John Cameron (1828-1906) and Thomas Worth (1834-1917). Also present are restrikes of "Darktown" images published later by Joseph Koehler in New York and S. Lipschitz & Son in London.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.darktown>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.darktown>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Carl Van Vechten, 1965; Gift of Julia Millhiser Gimbel, 1973. Other acquisitions are noted at the folder level.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Currier & Ives Darktown Prints is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Currier & Ives Darktown Prints. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

Currier & Ives

Nathaniel Currier and James Merritt Ives, publishers of popular prints in New York between 1857 and 1907. After the firm disbanded, other publishers, including Joseph Koehler in New York and S. Lipschitz in London, acquired the company's lithographic stones and reprinted the images.

Scope and Contents

A collection of caricatures of African Americans published by the firm Currier & Ives as a series of "Darktown" comics. The drawings were made by artists associated with the firm, primarily John Cameron (1828-1906) and Thomas Worth (1834-1917). Also present are restrikes of "Darktown" images published later by Joseph Koehler in New York and S. Lipschitz & Son in London.

At the folder level, references are provided to the two standard Currier & Ives catalogues: *Currier & Ives: a Catalogue Raisonné* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1983) and *Currier & Ives Prints: an Illustrated Checklist*, by Frederick A. Conningham (New York: Crown Publishers, 1983).

Arrangement

Organized into two series: I. Published by Currier & Ives, 1880-1896. II. Restrikes, 1907.

Collection Contents

Series I: Published by Currier & Ives , 1880-1896

Series I contains lithographs issued by the Currier & Ives firm.

The collection combines two groups of prints donated to the library separately by Carl Van Vechten and Julia Millhiser Gimbel, resulting in several instances of duplicate prints in the folders; these are noted at the folder level. Because the prints were hand colored, there are usually differences in coloring, and even variant title fonts in some cases. The donor's name is generally noted on the verso of each print, with Van Vechten's gifts bearing bookplates.

Arranged in alphabetical order by title. However, companion or sequel prints were paired and foldered together, thus disrupting a strict alphabetical sequence.

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| b. 1, f. 1 | The Aesthetic Craze. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 0059; Conningham 52 | 1882 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | An Affair of Honor – The Critical Moment. Gale 0061; Conningham 53 | 1884 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | An Affair of Honor – A Stray Shot. Gale 0060; Conningham 54 | 1884 |
| b. 1, f. 3 | Asking a Hand. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 0312; Conningham 289 | 1887 |
| b. 1, f. 3 | Getting a Foot. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 2567; Conningham 2364 | 1887 |
| b. 1, f. 4 | A Base Hit. Gale 0415; Conningham 374 | 1882 |
| b. 1, f. 5 | De Boss Rooster. Gale 0692; Conningham 620 | 1882 |
| b. 1, f. 6 | Brer Thuldy's Statue. Liberty Frightenin de World. Gale 0732; Conningham 655 | 1884 |
| b. 1, f. 7 | De Cake Walk. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 0853; Conningham 765 | 1883 |
| b. 1, f. 8 | Cavalry Tactics, by the Darktown Horse Guards. Gale 0961; Conningham 868 | 1887 |
| b. 1, f. 8 | Infantry Maneuvers, by the Darktown Volunteers. Gale 3321; Conningham 3111 | 1887 |

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| b. 1, f. 9 | The Champion in Danger. Gale 1056; Conningham 963 | 1882 |
| b. 1, f. 9 | The Champion in Luck. Gale 1058; Conningham 964 | 1882 |
| b. 1, f. 10 | The Champions of the Ball Racket. At the close of the Season. Gale 1071; Conningham 987 | 1885 |
| b. 1, f. 11 | A Change of Base. Gale 1094; Conningham 997 | 1883 |
| b. 1, f. 12 | The Coon Club Hunt. "Hot on the Scent." Gale 1369; Conningham 1247 | 1885 |
| b. 1, f. 12 | The Coon Club Hunt. "Taking a Header." Gale 1370; Conningham 1248 | 1885 |
| b. 1, f. 13 | Creating a Sensation. The Bully Boy on a Bicycle. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1424; Conningham 1301 | 1881 |
| b. 1, f. 13 | Spoiling a Sensation. The Bully Boy on a Bull. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 6067; Conningham 5665 | 1881 |
| b. 1, f. 14 | Crossed by "A Milk Train." Gale 1429; Conningham 1309 | 1885 |
| b. 1, f. 14 | Wrecked by a Cow Catcher. Gale 7339; Conningham 6792 | 1885 |
| b. 1, f. 15 | The Darktown Banjo Class – All in Tune. Gale 1497; Conningham 1372 | 1886 |
| b. 1, f. 15 | The Darktown Banjo Class – Off the Key. Gale 1498; Conningham 1373 | 1886 |
| b. 1, f. 16 | The Darktown Bicycle Race – The Start. Gale 1502; Conningham 1377 | 1895 |
| b. 1, f. 16 | The Darktown Bicycle Race – A Sudden Halt. Gale 1501; Conningham 1376 | 1895 |
| b. 1, f. 17 | The Darktown Bowling Club. Watching for a Strike. Gale 1506; Conningham 1381 | 1888 |
| b. 1, f. 17 | The Darktown Bowling Club. Bowled Out. Gale 1505; Conningham 1380 | 1888 |
| b. 1, f. 18 | The Darktown Elopement. Hurry Mr. Jonsing... Gale 1509; Conningham 1385 | 1885 |

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| b. 1, f. 18 | The Darktown Elopement. Skip softly lub... Gale 1510; Conningham 1384 | 1885 |
| b. 2, f. 19 | The Darktown Fire Brigade – The Last Shake. Gale 1521; Conningham 1395 | 1885 |
| b. 2, f. 20 | The Darktown Fire Brigade – Saved! <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1515; Conningham 1391 | 1884 |
| b. 2, f. 21 | The Darktown Fire Brigade – To the Rescue! Gale 1522; Conningham 1396 | 1884 |
| b. 2, f. 22 | The Darktown Fire Brigade – Under Full Steam. Gale 1523; Conningham 1397 | 1887 |
| b. 2, f. 23 | The Darktown Hook and Ladder Corps. Going to the Front. Gale 1527; Conningham 1402 | 1884 |
| b. 2, f. 24 | A Darktown Law Suit – Part Second. Gale 1535; Conningham 1408 | 1887 |
| b. 2, f. 25 | A Darktown Lawn Party. A Bully time. Gale 1532; Conningham 1409 | 1888 |
| b. 2, f. 26 | A Darktown Opera – The Lovers Leap. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1536; Conningham 1411 | 1886 |
| b. 2, f. 26 | A Darktown Opera – The Serenade. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1537; Conningham 1412 | 1886 |
| b. 2, f. 27 | The Darktown Riding Class, – The Trot. Purchased on the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts & Letters Fund. Gale 1542; Conningham 1417 | 1890 |
| b. 2, f. 28 | Darktown Sociables, A "Fancy Dress" Hoodoo. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1545; Conningham 1420 | 1890 |
| b. 2, f. 28 | Darktown Sociables, A "Fancy Dress" Surprise. Gale 1546; Conningham 1421 | 1890 |
| b. 2, f. 29 | Darktown Society, – On Their Feed. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1547; Conningham 1422 | 1890 |
| b. 2, f. 29 | Darktown Society, – On Their Manners. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1548; Conningham 1423 | 1890 |

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| b. 2, f. 30 | Darktown Sports – A Grand Spurt. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1549; Conningham 1424 | 1885 |
| b. 2, f. 30 | Darktown Sports – Winning Easy. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1550; Conningham 1425 | 1885 |
| b. 2, f. 31 | The Darktown Tally Ho, – Straightened Out. Gale 1551; Conningham 1426 | 1889 |
| b. 2, f. 32 | Darktown Tourists – Going Off on Their Blubber. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1553; Conningham 1428 | 1886 |
| b. 2, f. 32 | Darktown Tourists – Coming Back on Their Dig. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1554; Conningham 1429 | 1886 |
| b. 2, f. 33 | A Darktown Tournament, – the First Tilt. Gale 1556; Conningham 1431 | 1890 |
| b. 2, f. 33 | A Darktown Tournament, – Close Quarters. Gale 1555; Conningham 1430 | 1890 |
| b. 2, f. 34 | A Darktown Trial – the Judge’s Charge. Gale 1557; Conningham 1432 | 1887 |
| b. 2, f. 34 | A Darktown Trial – the Verdict. Gale 1558; Conningham 1433 | 1887 |
| b. 2, f. 35 | A Darktown Wedding – the Send Off. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1563; Conningham 1438 | 1892 |
| b. 2, f. 35 | A Darktown Wedding – the Parting Salute. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 1562; Conningham 1437 | 1892 |
| b. 2, f. 36 | The Darktown Yacht Club – Hard up for a Breeze. Gale 1564; Conningham 1439 | 1885 |
| b. 2, f. 36 | The Darktown Yacht Club – On the Winning Tack. Gale 1567; Conningham 1442 | 1885 |
| b. 3, f. 37 | Darktown Yacht Club – Ladies’ Day. In cose I will, Honey. Gale 1565; Conningham 1440 | 1896 |
| b. 3, f. 38 | Draw Poker – Laying for ‘em Sharp. Gale 1759; Conningham 1619 | 1886 |
| b. 3, f. 38 | Draw Poker – Getting ‘em Lively. Gale 1758; Conningham 1617 | 1886 |

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| b. 3, f. 39 | Eating Crow on a Wager. De Fust Brace. Gale 1800; Conningham 1662 | 1883 |
| b. 3, f. 39 | Eating Crow on a Wager. De Last Lap. Gale 1801; Conningham 1663 | 1883 |
| b. 3, f. 40 | A Fair Start. Gale 1970; Conningham 1808 | 1884 |
| b. 3, f. 40 | The Result in Doubt. Gale 5120; Conningham 5120 | 1884 |
| b. 3, f. 41 | A Foul Tip. Gale 2268; Conningham 2090 | 1882 |
| b. 3, f. 42 | Going for a Shine. Gale 2605; Conningham 2399 | 1889 |
| b. 3, f. 42 | Polished Off. Gale 5226; Conningham 4818 | 1889 |
| b. 3, f. 43 | Grand Football Match – Darktown against Blackville. A Scrimmage. Purchased from Whitlock Farm Books on the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts & Letters Fund, 1974. Gale 2698; Conningham 2484 | 1888 |
| b. 3, f. 44 | Great Oyster Eating Match between the Darktown Cormorant and the Blackville Buster. The Start. Gale 2856; Conningham 2636 | 1886 |
| b. 3, f. 44 | Great Oyster Eating Match between the Darktown Cormorant and the Blackville Buster. The Finish. Gale 2855; Conningham 2635 | 1886 |
| b. 3, f. 45 | An Ice Cream Racket – Freezing In. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 3260; Conningham 3023 | 1888-1889 |
| b. 3, f. 45 | An Ice Cream Racket – Thawing Out. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 3261; Conningham 3024 | 1889 |
| b. 3, f. 46 | Initiation Ceremonies of the Darktown Lodge – Part First. Gale 3326; Conningham 3113 | 1887 |
| b. 3, f. 46 | Initiation Ceremonies of the Darktown Lodge – Part Second. Gale 3327; Conningham 3114 | 1887 |
| b. 3, f. 47 | The Last Hit of the Game. A Home Run. Gale 3717; Conningham 3447 | 1886 |

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| b. 3, f. 48 | Lawn Tennis at Darktown. A Scientific Player. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 3738; Conningham 3463 | 1885 |
| b. 3, f. 48 | Lawn Tennis at Darktown. A Scientific Stroke. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 3739; Conningham 3464 | 1885 |
| b. 3, f. 49 | De Lime Kiln Club. A Temperance Racket. Gale 3811; Conningham 3541 | 1883 |
| b. 3, f. 50 | A Line Shot – The Aim. Gale 3821; Conningham 3551 | 1881 |
| b. 3, f. 50 | A Line Shot – The Recoil. Gale 3822; Conningham 3552 | 1881 |
| b. 3, f. 51 | A Literary Debate in the Darktown Club. Settling the Question. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 3830; Conningham 3559 | 1884-1885 |
| b. 3, f. 51 | A Literary Debate in the Darktown Club. The Question Settled. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 3831; Conningham 3558 | 1884-1885 |
| b. 3, f. 52 | A Mule Train on an Up Grade. Gale 4637; Conningham 4268 | 1881 |
| b. 3, f. 52 | A Mule Train on a Down Grade. Gale 4636; Conningham 4267 | 1881 |
| b. 3, f. 53 | An Obdurate Mule, – Going Back on the Parson. Gale 4909; Conningham 4524 | 1890 |
| b. 3, f. 53 | A Penitent Mule, – The Parson on Deck. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 5140; Conningham 4743 | 1890 |
| b. 3, f. 54 | On his Style. Gale 4988; Conningham 4597 | 1886 |
| b. 3, f. 54 | Off his Nut. Gale 4928; Conningham 4540 | 1886 |
| b. 4, f. 55 | Profit and Loss. Gale 5370; Conningham 4951 | 1880 |
| b. 4, f. 56 | Sure of a Bite. Gale 6365; Conningham 5898 | 1881 |
| b. 4, f. 56 | Bustin a Picnic. Gale 0840; Conningham 755 | 1881 |

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| b. 4, f. 57 | A Swell Smoker – Getting the Short End. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 6400; Conningham 5932 | 1888 |
| b. 4, f. 57 | A Swell Smoker – Giving Long Odds. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 6401; Conningham 5933 | 1888 |
| b. 4, f. 58 | A Team Fast to the Pole. Gale 6348; Conningham 5971 | 1883 |
| b. 4, f. 59 | Tobogganing on Darktown Hill, – Getting a Hist. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 6547; Conningham 6083 | 1890 |
| b. 4, f. 59 | Tobogganing on Darktown Hill, – An Untimely Move. <i>2 copies</i> Gale 6546; Conningham 6084 | 1890 |
| b. 4, f. 60 | De Tug ob War! Gale 6730; Conningham 6246 | 1883 |
| b. 4, f. 60 | Done Gone Busted! Gale 1737; Conningham 1604 | 1883 |
| b. 4, f. 61 | Two to Go! Gale 6761; Conningham 6272 | 1882 |
| b. 4, f. 61 | Got 'em Both! Gale 2658; Conningham 2453 | 1882 |
| b. 4, f. 62 | Won by a Foot. Gale 7305; Conningham 6758 | 1883 |
| b. 4, f. 63 | "Wound Up." <i>2 copies</i> Gale 7337; Conningham 6783 | 1884 |
| b. 4, f. 63 | "Run Down." <i>2 copies</i> Gale 5696; Conningham 5256 | 1884 |

Series II: Restrikes, 1907

Series II contains eight prints issued by two firms that had acquired Currier & Ives lithographic stones after the company had closed operations. Joseph Koehler in New York published a numbered "Currier & Ives" series, while Lipschitz in London did not credit Currier & Ives.

Organized into two subseries: Published by Joseph Koehler, New York, and Published by S. Lipschitz, London.

Published by Joseph Koehler, New York

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| b. 4, f. 64 | The Darktown Fire Brigade – Investigating a Smoke. Currier & Ives Series No. 13; restrike of Gale 1514, Conningham 1389 | circa 1907 |
| b. 4, f. 64 | The Darktown Fire Brigade – A Prize Squirt. Currier & Ives Series No. 3; restrike of Gale 1512, Conningham 1386 | circa 1907 |
| b. 4, f. 64 | The Darktown Fire Brigade – Slightly Demoralized. Currier & Ives No. No. 12; restrike of Gale 1517, Conningham 1392 | circa 1907 |
| b. 4, f. 64 | The Darktown Fire Brigade – Taking a Rest. Currier & Ives Series No. 14; restrike of Gale 1518, Conningham 1390 | circa 1907 |

Published by S. Lipschitz, London

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| b. 4, f. 65 | "Breaking In." A Black Imp-osition. Restrike of Gale 0729, Conningham 652 | undated |
| b. 4, f. 65 | "Breaking Out." A Lively Scrimmage. Restrike of Gale 0730, Conningham 653 | undated |
| b. 4, f. 66 | "De Fust Blood." Restrike of Gale 2390, Conningham 2207 | undated |
| b. 4, f. 66 | "De Fust Knock-down!" Restrike of Gale 2391, Conningham 2208 | undated |

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

African Americans -- Caricatures and cartoons

Genres / Formats

Caricatures -- United States -- 19th century
Lithographs -- United States -- 19th century
Satires (Visual works) -- United States -- 19th century

Names

Cameron, John, approximately 1828-
Gimbel, Julia Milhiser, 1902-1983 -- Ownership
Van Vechten, Carl, 1880-1964 -- Ownership
Worth, Thomas, 1834-1917

Corporate Body

Currier & Ives

Contributors

Currier & Ives, publisher
Cameron, John, approximately 1828-, artist
Worth, Thomas, 1834-1917, artist

Acquired From

Gimbel, Julia Millhiser, 1902-1983
Van Vechten, Carl, 1880-1964