

# **Guide to the Stanley B. Burns collection of postmortem and memorial photography and ephemera**

**Ms Coll 123**



Katherine Isham

2026

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Medical Historical Library, Cushing/Whitney Medical Library  
Yale University  
333 Cedar St.  
New Haven, CT 06520-8014  
203-737-1192  
203-785-5636  
historical.library@yale.edu  
<http://historical.medicine.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** Ms Coll 123

**TITLE:** Stanley B. Burns collection of postmortem and memorial photography and ephemera

**DATES:** circa 1850-1970

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 33 linear feet (28 boxes + 1 oversize folder + multiple volumes of reference materials)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection includes approximately 1200 items collected by Stanley B. Burns, M.D., documenting funerals, mourning practices, cemeteries, and memorials in the United States and European countries. The collection includes photographs (the majority of material), a painting, metal coffin plates, a leather tombstone salesman case with stereoview cards and a viewer, memorial cards, other ephemera, and reference materials. Types of photographs include Daguerreotypes and other early cased photographs, cartes-de-visite, cabinet cards, stereoviews, albumin prints, gelatin silver prints, and others. Most of the photographs are black and white, many have been hand colored. The painting and several photographs are in original frames.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/med.ms.0123>

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Stanley B. Burns, M.D., 2025, 2026.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The collection is unprocessed and materials are not listed, but access may be requested by contacting the Cushing/Whitney Medical Historical Library at [historical.library@yale.edu](mailto:historical.library@yale.edu).

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## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

Stanley B. Burns collection of postmortem and memorial photography and ephemera. Historical Library, Harvey Cushing / John Hay Whitney Medical Library, Yale University.

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## Content Description

The collection includes approximately 1200 items collected by Stanley B. Burns, M.D., documenting funerals, mourning practices, cemeteries, and memorials in the United States and European countries. The collection includes photographs (the majority of material), a painting, metal coffin plates, a leather tombstone salesman case with stereoview cards and a viewer, memorial cards, other ephemera, and reference materials. Types of photographs include Daguerreotypes and other early cased photographs, cartes-de-visite, cabinet cards, stereoviews, albumin prints, gelatin silver prints, and others. Most of the photographs are black and white, many have been hand colored. The painting and several photographs are in original frames.

The collection was part of the holdings of the Burns Archive ([burnsarchive.com](http://burnsarchive.com)) before being gifted to the Medical Historical Library. Many of the items in the collection have been used in Burns Archive publications and exhibitions, including the three volume *Sleeping Beauty* series.

Published works gifted with the collection will be cataloged individually.

## **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**

Cemetaries  
Coffins  
Death  
Funeral rites and ceremonies  
Memorials  
Mourning customs  
Tombs & sepulchral monuments

### **Genres / Formats**

Cabinet photographs  
Cartes-de-visite (card photographs)  
Daguerreotypes (photographs)  
Memorial cards  
Photographs

### **Acquired From**

Burns, Stanley B.