

WILLIAM LEE RICHARDS COLLECTIONS

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

Repository:	Crandall Public Library. The Folklife Center Glens Falls, NY.
Creator:	William Lee Richards
Title:	William Lee Richards Collections
Dates:	2008 - 2013
Abstract:	The items in this collection represent Mr. Richards' passionate interest in the history of this region, especially the French and Indian War period, and in the history of his family, which has been prominent locally since the early Nineteenth Century.
Quantity:	ca. 5 cf
Identification :	Manuscripts and Archives: Manuscripts, Personal & Family Collections; Maps; Art; Photographs The e-file of this finding aid is located in Archives & Manuscripts: Manuscripts.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Lee Richards, Junior, ("Bill") was born May 1, 1926 to William Lee Richards and Kathryn Moore. The Richards family has been prominent in the Warren and Washington County and Adirondack Region since the early nineteenth century with major interests in timber, lumber, sawmills and related businesses. His grandfather, Frederick Richards, one of the founders of the New York State Historical Association, was a local historian and author of several books of local history, as well as a businessman. William, Senior, was working temporarily in Fargo, North Dakota at the time of his son's birth, but by 1930 the family had returned to Glens Falls. Later they lived for a period in Queens, New York. In 1943, Bill lied about his age to enlist in the United States Marine Corps, serving as a rear gunner over the Pacific during World War II. He was honorably discharged in 1946.

Shortly after his discharge he met Marilyn J. Pratt through mutual friends in Hollywood, CA, and they married in April 1950.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, Bill worked as a metallurgist in the early stages of the missile industry in Los Angeles. Later he and his family moved back to the Glens

Falls/Lake George region and he became an antiques dealer. He later worked in several home-building and management positions.

"Bill loved history and put a great deal of effort into investigating all the different facets of local and regional history. He loved cars and antiques and loved investigating all the old houses in this area and what their histories were. He also built reproduction furniture and was a master gardener. Most of all, he loved to entertain the masses with song and by playing his horn, the trombone. Both Bill and Marilyn played in their own band or on their own for nearly 60 years. He also loved a good conversation with friends and relatives on many of his favorite topics, and had a good sense of humor." (obituary, *Post-Star* of Glens Falls, Dec. 13, 2013).

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE RECORDS

INDEX TERMS

- Topics:**
- Genealogy
 - Lumbering
 - French and Indian War
 - Colonial Roads
 - Artists
 - Coglea Art Academy
 - Warren County (NY) – history
 - Washington County (NY) -- history
- Places:**
- Echo Bay
 - Elizabeth Island
 - Glens Falls, Warren, NY
 - Hawaii (Territory)
 - Lake George, NY
 - Pilot Knob, Fort Ann, Washington, NY
 - Sandy Hill, Washington, NY
 - Warren County (NY)
 - Washington County (NY)
- Important People:**
- Culver Family
 - deTarnowski Family
 - Emerson, Edith 1888 – 1981
 - Lee Family
 - Little Family
 - Oakley, Violet 1874 – 1961
 - Oakley Family
 - Richards Family
 - Richards, Eber 1836 – 1910
 - Richards, Orson 1811 – 1879
 - Richards, Frederick Barnard 1865 – 1958
 - Richards, William L., Sr.
 - Richards, William L. Jr., 1926 – 2013

Form/Genre: Papers, photographs, maps, art works, scrapbooks, manuscripts

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation: William Lee Richards Collections
Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

Accession Information: Items in this collection were donated to the Folklife Center by Mr. William L. Richards over a period of years prior to his death on December 10, 2013.

Processing Information: Arranged and described by Erica Gonyea with assistance from Folklife Volunteers.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

Series 1: MAPS

See Maps database in Folklife Center
Or list here

Shelved in Maps

Series 2: The Green Scrapbook aka Ancestral Scrapbook Compiled by Frederick B. Richards; and Pilot Knob Guest Book 1902 - 1983

Scrapbook Physical description: The scrapbook is 12.5 x 11" with a green cover. The words "Scrap Book" are printing in black letters on the front cover and the spine. The book has blank pages hand-numbered up to 145. Most of the pages have items pasted to them. **Condition:** the front cover became detached at some point, and prior to its donation to the library it had been mended with green tape on the outside and cloth tape on the inner seam. Pages are somewhat yellowed and brittle, and there is foxing on the inner covers.

The title page says (handwritten in capitals):

ANCESTRAL
SCRAP BOOK
COMPILED BY
FREDERICK B. RICHARDS

Guest Book Physical Description: 10 ¼ inches wide x 8 inches high. Black leather cover with “Guests” written in gold. **Condition:** damage to spine. The guest book was started by Mrs. Eber Richards in the summer of 1902, and she continued it until 1910. Subsequent family members continued the tradition until 1983, when William L. Richards, Sr. died. Originally a summer home, at some point the house was converted to year-around use.

Archives & Manuscripts: Personal and Family Collections 1 box

Series 3: PAPERS

Box 1 - Carton

Document Files Index # 1-103: A Precis of each document and its scope and meaning, Oct 1, 2009. “A list of documents in the possession of William L. Richards, a slightly eccentric (!) collector of historical ephemerae mostly concerning the early history of Warren and Washington Counties.”

Two versions: the revised version (Dated Oct 2009, as is the first version) was deposited in the Folklife Center May 5, 2010. It has been re-typed, somewhat revised, and bound in a spiral binding. Copy also in this Finding Aid. Includes history of 1593 Ridge Road, and a folder of canal photos.

Folders # 1- 103

Box 2 - Document box – research files

Partial folder list:

5. Folder: Fort in Chester
6. Folder: British Parliamentary System (1-2)
7. Folder: 1772: Charlotte County (3-2)
8. Folder: John Taylor (4-2)
9. Folder: Jay’s Treaty (5-2)
10. Folder: Senatorial Dist 5 Formation (7-2)
11. Folder: Washington County: Leg Defines 1778 (8-2)
12. Folder Council of Appointment (9-2)

Box 3 – Document box- research files

William L. Richards’ research files on John Thurman of Warren County

Boxes 1,2,3 in Archives & Manuscripts: Manuscripts

Box 4 – Document Box

Richards Family Papers

Archives & Manuscripts: Personal and Family Collections

Series 4: PHOTOPGRAPHS

One document box (#1), one small box (#2); unprocessed. **Shelved in Photographs.**

Series 5: ART

INDEX TERMS

Topics: Bridges
Waterfalls

Places: Hudson (River)
Glens Falls, Warren, NY
Hudson Falls, Washington, NY

Important People: Jacques-Gerard Milbert (artist) 1766 – 1840
William Henry Bartlett (artist) 1809 – 1854
John Bradshaw Crandell (artist) 1896 – 1966
William Guy Wall (artist) 1792 – 1864
Jim E. Palmer (artist) 1921 – 2008
William Lee Richards (collector) 1926 - 2013

Form/Genre: Realia ; two dimensional graphic

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation: William Lee Richards Art Collection
Folklife Center
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

Accession Information: Donated to the Folklife Center by William Lee Richards

Processing Information: Arranged and described by Erica Wolfe Burke and Pamela Reed, October 2017

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT(S)

#1 The print is a copy of a design by Jacques-Gerard Milbert (1766 – 1840 Paris, France). Milbert explored North America from 1825 to 1835. In the set of lithographs Picturesque Itinerary of the Hudson River, this is #23, entitled “Saw Mill at the Village of Glensns.”

The Richards print is 13.5" w x 9" h. The print is in color. It is mounted on foam-core and double matted.

#2 The colored print is a copy of a design for an engraving by William Henry Bartlett of the Glens Falls "Free Bridge". Bridging the Years: Glens Falls NY 1763 – 1978, p. 25: "W.H. Bartlett, English artist and author journeyed to America four times between 1836 and 1852. He made drawings for the steel engravings which illustrate the 2 volumes of N.P. Willis' American Scenery, published in 1840. . . .This plate "Bridge of Glens Falls" is in Volume 2."

The "Free Bridge" stood from 1833 to 1842. Bartlett must have done his drawing of it between 1836 and 1840.

The oil painting "The Bridge at Glens 1792," by John Bradshaw Crandell (1896 – 1966), which hangs in the Folklife Center, appears to be derived from Bartlett's original design.

The Richards print in 13.5" w x 8.5" h. Mounted and matted same as #1.

#3 The colored print is a copy of a design by William Guy Wall of the Glens Falls toll bridge that stood from 1803 to 1833. Bridging the Years: Glens Falls NY 1763 – 1978, p. 24: "William Guy Wall, a Dublin artist, made watercolors from which were engraved the 20 aquatints known as the Hudson River Portfolio, published in New York about 1823. Glens Falls is plate 6. Similar views were painted by French artist Jacques-Gerard Milbert and by Alvan Fisher, an American artist." Milbert's similar drawing is lithograph # 22 in Picturesque Itinerary of the Hudson River.

The Richards print is 13.5" w x 8.75" h. Mounted and matted same as #1.

#4 This colored print has no identifying marks or date, but likely the original was done in the 1800s, as were the other three prints. The design is a landscape with a steep hill on the right, trees and rocks in the foreground, and a person coming up hill in the center. There is a river with falls in the background, along with several wooden structures (mills?) along or across the river.

The print is 13 3/8" w x 6.5" h. Mounted and matted as above.

#5 This small print of Baker's Falls entitled "The Falls in the Hudson River at Hudson Falls NY circa 1757" is signed by Jim E. Palmer (1921 – 2008). Palmer was a past president of the Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council.

The print is 6.5" w x 3.75" w.

#6 This is an original watercolor titled "Dead Chicken Gulch" signed by [E superimposed on L] which could be E.L. or L.E. There is no other information except that it was matted by the above Jim E. Palmer, 11-11-1990.

The image shows a dirt road heading off into the distance with a rail fence on the left side of the road. In the left center of the picture is a two-part structure built into a hill side. The upper part has a tall stone foundation with a wooden upper story. The roof is vertical boards and it peaks in the center. There is a ventilation structure at the peak of the roof. The lower part backs up to the base of the other part. It has a roof with a ridge-line, a line of high unglazed windows and a door opening facing the road. Again,

the roof is made from vertical boards. A driveway branches off of the road and appears to run up the hill behind the building, leading, perhaps, to a door into the upper part. At the extreme right of the picture, a small part of a picket fence is visible, suggesting there might be a house facing across the road to the visible structure. The purpose of this structure is, at this point, unknown.

The painting measures 11 3/8" w x 8 1/8" h. It is double matted and framed in an inexpensive gold-colored wooden frame.

Shelved in Art & Artifacts: Art

Related material:

The Folklife Center has papers, maps and other collections donated by William Lee Richards, as well as copies of his books William Little Lee: The Justinian of Hawaii, and Orson Richards: the Lumber King of the Hudson, books and papers of Frederick Richards, and Memories of Early Sandy Hill by Orson Richards.