

Guide to the Stanley B. Burns, MD, 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
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CALL NUMBER: Ms Coll 123

TITLE: Stanley B. Burns, MD, 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, MD, documenting funerals, mourning practices, cemetaries, 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>

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Stanley B. Burns, MD, in honor of his daughter Elizabeth A. Burns, Creative Director of the Burns Archive, 2025, 2026.

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.

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.

Preferred Citation

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

Content Description

The collection includes approximately 1200 items collected by Stanley B. Burns, MD, 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) 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.