

Chester County Historical Society Photograph Collections
225 N. High St., West Chester, PA 19380

The Benjamin M. Walker Collection
Finding Aid

Guide by Kimberly F. Burton, 2005.

Benjamin M. Walker Photograph Collection
DN74 L1989.5.2

Introduction

Biographical Information

Benjamin M. Walker (b. 1883), son of Benjamin S. (1851–1910) and Margaret Mifflin Walker (1857–1925), long time residents of West Chester, was a Philadelphia printer and amateur photographer. Walker married the former Lillian Mercer (b. 1893) circa 1909 and the couple resided in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties.

Overview/Scope and Content

This collection consists of 179 photographs of Benjamin M. Walker, his family [and friends], and various scenes in Chester and nearby Delaware and York counties. The collection primarily depicts people, houses, public buildings and monuments, bridges, and creeks. A small file of early twentieth century commercial and self-made postcards compliments the collection. The photographs are estimated to date from the 1860s to perhaps 1920, with the majority of them dating 1900–1910. It is noteworthy that some of the photos predate the photographer so it must be assumed that Mr. Walker did not produce them, but probably inherited them from older family members.

Files 1–11 are organized geographically (Chester County, Delaware County, York/Media, and unknown locations) and subdivided by subject, such as dwellings, bridges, railroads, etc. Those studying local history, topography, or architecture may find these useful. Files 12–18 are photos of people and are organized by individual, group, or family identity. These, along with file 19 which contains several tombstone images, may be of particular interest to the genealogist. Finally, files 20 and 21 contain [early twentieth century?] postcards, half of which were commercially produced and half of which appear to have been fashioned by Mr. Walker.

About the Collection

The photographer's daughter, Mrs. Stanley L. Smith, donated her father's work to the Chester County Historical Society in May 1989. Processing of the Benjamin M. Walker photograph collection was made possible by a grant from The Institute of Museum & Library Services, a Federal agency established by an Act of Congress in 1996 to improve museum, library, and information services.

To request viewing the collection, write the call number DN74 along with the box and file number(s) of the desired print(s) on a photo collection call slip and a librarian will bring the files to you.

Benjamin M. Walker Photograph Collection
DN74 L1989.5.2

Inventory

Box 1

File 1: Chester County – Construction Sites:

2 mounted silver gelatin prints, construction site of stone structure, [ND]

File 2: Chester County – Dwellings:

1 mounted silver gelatin print, aerial view of residential area, location unknown, [ND]

1 mounted albumen print, scene on West Chester road near Downingtown, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print DOP (Aristo self toning ferrotyped), white house, location unknown, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Oldest House in Downingtown [Downingtown Loghouse], PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, several residences, looking east on King Street towards the Hires Root Beer plant, Malvern, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Jacob Downing house on Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, PA, [circa 1900]

File 3: Chester County – Nature Scenes

1 mounted silver gelatin print, creek scene with boy on bridge, location unknown, [ND]

2 mounted silver gelatin prints, Beaver Creek, Downingtown, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, The Brandywine, Downingtown, [ND]

File 4: Chester County – Public Buildings/Works

1 mounted silver gelatin print, White Horse Hotel, Chester Pike, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Union M E Church, Hinkson's Corner, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Meeting house on Montgomery Pike near Narberth, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, River/boat path, Chester, PA [ND]

Benjamin M. Walker Photograph Collection
DN74 L1989.5.2

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Old Warren Inn, Malvern, PA, [ND]

File 5: Chester County – Railroads and Trolleys:

1 mounted salted paper print, Darby trolley with conductors and passengers, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Media trolley with conductors and passengers, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, unfinished tressel bridge and Kerr's [built 1852] bridge, Downingtown, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, finished tressel bridge and Kerr's bridge, Downingtown, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Railroad Tracks at Bradford Hills, PA, [ND]

2 mounted silver gelatin prints, railroad construction, Downingtown, PA, December 31, 1905

1 mounted silver gelatin print, railroad construction, Gallagherville above Downingtown, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, railroad construction, unknown location, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Suspension Bridge Across Main Line of P.R.R at Whitford, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, bridge over Brandywine at Downingtown, PA, [ND]

File 6: Delaware County – Miscellaneous

1 mounted silver gelatin print, stone quarry near Prospect Park, [ND]

File 7: Media/York – Nature Scenes

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin M. Walker at Sycamore Mills near Media, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, creek near Media, PA, [ND]

2 mounted silver gelatin prints, Ridley Creek near Media, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Ridley Creek near Moylan, PA, [ND]

Benjamin M. Walker Photograph Collection
DN74 L1989.5.2

1 mounted silver gelatin print, creek and abandoned shack near Media, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Burlington Island Park, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Chester Creek, Eddystone, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Cordorus Creek, York, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Crum Creek, near Media, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Pond near Media, PA, [ND]

Box 2

File 8: Media/York – Public Buildings, Monuments, and transportation

2 mounted silver gelatin prints, Soldier's Monument, Media, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, monument, Allentown, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, High School and Penn Park, York, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Media Ledger building, town unknown, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Springfield Water Works, near Media, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, "Idlewild" [Building], Media, PA, Sunday Nov. 9, 1902

1 mounted silver gelatin print, [Courthouse?] building, location unknown, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, trolley car on snowy tracks, Palmer's Corner, near Media, PA, [ND]

File 9: Unknown Locations – Bridges

2 silver gelatin prints, unidentified bridges, [ND]

7 mounted silver gelatin prints, unidentified bridges, [ND]

File 10: Unknown Locations/Owners – Buildings

1 silver gelatin print, unidentified residences, [ND]

7 mounted silver gelatin prints, unidentified residences, [ND]

Benjamin M. Walker Photograph Collection
DN74 L1989.5.2

1 mounted platino type print, unknown building, [ND]

File 11: Unknown Locations – Nature Scenes

5 silver gelatin prints, unidentified creeks, [ND]

3 silver gelatin prints, unidentified mountains, [ND]

6 mounted silver gelatin prints, unidentified creeks, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, unidentified snowy rural road, [ND]

1 silver gelatin print, grazing cow, [ND]

4 mounted silver gelatin prints, cattle, [ND]

Box 3

File 12: Miscellaneous People – Families

1 albumen print, The Goodman Farm near Mill Creek, Huntington County, PA, [ND]

6 mounted silver gelatin prints; all unidentified families, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print; Snyder's House, Media, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Copelands, Downingtown, PA, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Roy Goodman, Margaret Mifflin Walker, and others, Altoona, PA, [ND]

1 tintype print; unidentified family, [ND]

File 13: Miscellaneous People – Groups

1 mounted silver gelatin print, two male workers, [ND]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, three young boys and toy boat, [ND]

1 albumen print, girl and boy posing at water tunnel, [ND]

1 silver gelatin print, four boys and two girls in canoes, [ND]

Benjamin M. Walker Photograph Collection
DN74 L1989.5.2

- 1 silver gelatin print, two women, a man, and a box camera, [ND]
- 1 silver gelatin print, two boys in a rowboat, [ND]
- 1 albumen print, two preschool aged boys in sailor suits, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, two men in a field, [ND]
- 2 mounted silver gelatin prints, two women and a man sitting at the foot of a tree, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, two women and a man posing on a hill in the woods, [ND]
- 1 silver gelatin print, schoolteacher with jr. high aged students, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, two boys and a dog at a swimming hole, [ND]
- 1 silver gelatin print, three women, a boy, and a dog on a flower-picking excursion, [ND]
- 1 silver gelatin print, elderly couple in cemetery, [ND]
- 1 platino type print, “Bill and [T]im” posing by a large tree, [Maryland?], [ND]

File 14: Miscellaneous People – Individuals

- 6 silver gelatin prints: 2 babies, two men, one woman next to a train, and one man next to a car; all unidentified, [ND]
- 5 mounted silver gelatin prints: 2 younger women, 1 elderly woman holding a cat, 1 young girl, and one young boy with a dog; all unidentified, [ND]

File 15: Miscellaneous People – Portraits

- 1 silver gelatin print card, unknown man with mustache, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, unidentified schoolboy, [ND]
- 1 silver gelatin print, unidentified schoolboy, [ND]
- 1 salted paper print, unidentified woman, circa 1860
- 1 salted paper print, unidentified woman, photo taken by S.D. Wilson, Philadelphia, circa 1860
- 1 salted paper print, unidentified older couple, circa 1860

Benjamin M. Walker Photograph Collection
DN74 L1989.5.2

Box 4

File 16: Walker, Benjamin M. and Lillian Mercer-

- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Lillian Mercer Walker and unidentified woman, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Lillian Mercer Walker on the beach, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Lillian Mercer Walker and unidentified girl, [ND]
- 1 mounted albumen print, Benjamin M. Walker and Lillian Mercer Walker, Morton Ca., Jul. 6, 1902
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin M. Walker in a boat, Corderus Creek in York, PA, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin M. Walker with unidentified man, boy, young girl, and black dog, with Croquet equipment, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin M. Walker with two unidentified men, boy, young girl, and two dogs, with Croquet equipment, [ND]
- 1 albumen print, Benjamin M. Walker with two unidentified men alongside a creek, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin M. Walker with unidentified man and two boys, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin M. Walker on boulders, [ND]

File 17: Walker Family

- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin M. Walker with wife Lillian Mercer, along with unidentified woman, young girl, and two men, [ND]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print DOP, Lillian Mercer Walker, Margaret Mifflin Walker, along with an unidentified man, a boy, and two girls, circa 1920
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin S., Margaret Mifflin-, and Benjamin M. Walker, along with two unidentified women and two men, [1900–1910] [Attention: This is a MOLDY print. Do not remove from sealed envelope. See attached photocopy.]
- 1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin M., Benjamin S., and Margaret Mifflin Walker, [1900–1910]

Benjamin M. Walker Photograph Collection
DN74 L1989.5.2

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin S. and Margaret Mifflin Walker, along with two unidentified men, two women, and a young girl, [1900–1910]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin S. and Margaret Mifflin Walker, along with an unidentified man, woman, young girl, and young boy, [1900–1910]

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin S., Margaret Mifflin, and Benjamin M. Walker, circa 1900

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Benjamin S. and Margaret Mifflin Walker, along with two unidentified women and two men, circa 1900

1 silver gelatin print, Margaret Mifflin Walker along with four unidentified women, 4 men, and a baby, circa 1920

File 18: Walker, Margaret Mifflin-

1 cartes-de-visite, photo by Rhoads Photographer, Philadelphia, circa 1880

2 mounted silver gelatin portraits, Margaret Mifflin Walker, circa 1910

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Margaret Mifflin Walker with 3 unidentified women, a young girl, and a cat, circa 1910

File 19: Tombstones

1 silver gelatin print, Ethel M. Truax, 1880–1906

1 mounted silver gelatin print, J. [Winfield?] Walker, died Feb. 4, 1901

1 mounted silver gelatin print, Anne G. Tutton, 1856–1903

File 20: Postcards – Amateur produced

2 silver gelatin print cards, bridges, locations unknown, [ND]

1 silver gelatin print card, residential house (wealthy), location unknown, [ND]

1 silver gelatin print card, residential house (shack), location unknown, [ND]

1 silver gelatin print card, town view, location unknown, [ND]

Benjamin M. Walker Photograph Collection
DN74 L1989.5.2

4 silver gelatin print cards, rural view, locations unknown, [ND]

1 silver gelatin print card, one room school house, location unknown, [ND]

1 silver gelatin print card, railroad tracks, location unknown, [ND]

File 21: Postcards – Commercially produced:

1 Easter postcard to Miss Lillian Mercer from Uncle John, Apr. 10, 1909

1 Birthday postcard to Daughter Lillie from Dad, [ND]

1 Christmas postcard to Mrs. Walker from Gertrude Roberts, [ND]

1 postcard featuring St. Agnes Catholic Church, school, and parish house in West Chester, to Miss Walker from Ray, [ND]

3 comical postcards made by De Witt C. Wheeler, copyright 1907

1 comical postcard produced by Bamforth & Co. Publishers, series 1238, [ND]

1 comical postcard entitled “Maybe,” to Miss Lillian Mercer from L., Sept. 25, 1908

1 comical postcard entitled “Perhaps, in Answer to ‘Maybe,’” [ND]