

# **Francis H. Schell drawings**

21

**Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Sarah  
Leu through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden  
Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.**

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Last updated on March 25, 2015.

Philadelphia History Museum

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Philadelphia History Museum
<b>Creator</b>	Schell, Francis H., 1834-1909
<b>Title</b>	Francis H. Schell drawings
<b>Call number</b>	21
<b>Date</b>	circa 1850-1905
<b>Extent</b>	3.67 linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>Francis H. Schell (1834-1909) was an artist, illustrator, and lithographer who worked out of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and New York, New York. Many of Schell's works illustrating scenes from Civil War battles and camps were printed in <i>Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper</i> from 1861 to 1865. Schell's work also appeared in <i>The Century Magazine</i>. The Francis H. Schell drawings, circa 1850-1905, consist primarily of original artwork with some prints and writings, all of which reflect Schell's career as an artist and illustrator. The collection mostly depicts the artist's interpretation of Civil War scenes and individuals, but other events and subject matter is also portrayed.</p>

## Biography/History

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Francis H. Schell (1834-1909) was an artist, illustrator, and lithographer who worked out of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and New York, New York. Many of Schell's works illustrating scenes from Civil War battles and camps were printed in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* from 1861 to 1865. Schell's work also appeared in *The Century Magazine*.

Schell's Civil War work began in 1861, when he was sent to Baltimore, Maryland after riots there in April to cover the subsequent Federal occupation of the city. Next, he proceeded to North Carolina, covering the Union's campaign. After that, Schell was reassigned to General George McClellan's Army of the Potomac. Seeing the bloody confrontation at Antietam Creek caused a change in Schell's artistic outlook and focus. Where previously he drew details and minor events that would be meaningful to soldiers, Schell's later works depicted more brutal elements of army life in a frank, unidealized way. Schell was also interested in showing the lives of "contraband," formerly enslaved African Americans who traveled with the Union Army or stayed in Union Army camps. Schell became a well-known artist for his wartime works, 211 of which were published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. After the Civil War ended, Schell was named art director of *Leslie's*, and continued in that capacity until he formed a lithography business that lasted for 30 years with Thomas Hogan as his partner. Schell's works were also published in *Century* magazine, *Beyond the Mississippi* (Hartford, 1869) and *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (The Century Company, 1884-1887).

### Bibliography:

Gallagher, Sheila and Boston College. "Francis H. Schell (1834-1909)." 2007. Accessed October 23, 2014. <http://idesweb.bc.edu/becker/artists/fhschell>.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists primarily of original artwork with some prints and writings, all of which reflect Schell's career as an artist and illustrator. The original artwork is mostly drawings, paintings, and sketches done in pencil, ink, gouache, or a mix of these media. Lithographs, prints, watercolors, and at least one photograph are also present. Other materials in the collection include a sketchbook, pages from magazines and newspapers with illustrations, and a few notes, letters, and writings by Schell, some of which recount his experience in the Civil War.

The collection mostly depicts the artist's interpretation of Civil War scenes and individuals (including some African Americans during the Civil War), but other events are also portrayed including the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 and the Spanish American War in 1898. Beach and

maritime scenes, landscapes, railroads and trains, baseball games, people (figure sketches and portraits of individuals as well as groups), and other subjects are also depicted in the collection.

An item level inventory is available on-site. The Philadelphia History Museum might own objects associated with this collection.

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## **Administrative Information**

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Philadelphia History Museum

Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Sarah Leu through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.

### **Sponsor**

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

### **Access Restrictions**

Contact Philadelphia History Museum for information about accessing this collection.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition Note**

Large portions of the collection were donated by Stephen Nagy (accession 44.32) or purchased in 1959 (accession 59.18.4). Smaller donations were received from Edgar R. McCorkle (accession 49.34.2) and other sources.

### **Processing Information Note**

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact Philadelphia History Museum directly for more information.

## Controlled Access Headings

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### Geographic Name(s)

- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- New Jersey
- New York (N.Y.)
- North Carolina
- Philadelphia (Pa.)

### Personal Name(s)

- Schell, Francis H., 1834-1909

### Subject(s)

- Artists
- Illustrators
- Lithographers
- Magazine illustration
- Magazine illustration--19th century
- New Bern, Battle of, New Bern, N.C., 1862
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--African Americans
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Art and the war