

## F.V. Hayden, W.H. Jackson, & the Albertypes

Following the Civil War, the United States government retained geologist Ferdinand Vandeveer Hayden (1829—1887) to lead several expeditions in the West, resulting in the *United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, 1871—1877*.

Photographer William Henry Jackson (1843—1942) accompanied the Hayden Surveys to explore and document the region that includes present-day northwest Wyoming. It was the survey of 1871 that produced Jackson's photographs of the spectacular landscapes and geologic wonders of Yellowstone—and ultimately led to the establishment of America's first national park.

Jackson returned from the West with a marvelous set of glass plate negatives and produced a limited number of albums of beautiful mounted photographs. (An example of one of these rare albums is held in the McCracken Research Library at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.) At that time, however, there was no established method to publish photographs of such high quality to the general public. Named after Joseph Albert (1825—1886), an Austrian photographer, Albertypes, prints that are produced from a gelatin-coated glass plate, seemed to offer the answer. The technique was complex and expensive, but the result was a finely detailed image with subtle gray tones.

Edward Bierstadt (1824—1906), brother of the western artist Albert Bierstadt (1830—1902), created superb Albertypes in his New York studio using Jackson's original negatives. By this method, the prints were capable of mass-production to Americans, and in Hayden's plan, would promote the park's unique attractions. A publishing project in several volumes was in the works when, disastrously, a fire at the Bierstadt studio in 1875 destroyed the Jackson/Bierstadt Albertypes, along with Jackson's glass plate negatives and contact prints.

Only a handful of the Jackson Albertypes are still in existence.