The photographic collections of the University of Pennsylvania Museum Archives consist of approximately 300,000 items: glass and film negatives, paper-based prints, lantern slides, motion picture films, stereographs, and transparencies, which have been gradually acquired from the time of the Museum's foundation in 1887. The collections comprise field documentation of expeditions throughout the world, photographs produced by the Museum's Photography Studio, and photographs collected by the Museum's curators as reference and educational aids.

The work of professional photographers who visually document people and places related to the Museum's collections and research interests holds particular fascination for both researchers and members of the public. These 19th and 20th century photographers chose subjects that range from the American West to the Near East and Egypt, the Classical lands of the Mediterranean, Central America, and parts of Asia. Many were pioneers who either introduced photography to a specific region or demonstrated an innovative approach to their art. Notable names include

95. "Billy Bowlegs, Seminole."
By Vannerson and Cohn of McClees Studio, Washington, DC, 1858

227. "Marchand de Melons (Melon merchant, Constantinople)."
By Sébä & Joaillier, ca. 1890
Maison Bonfils, William Henry Jackson, Giorgio Sommer, John K. Hillers, Jean Pascal Sébah, Edward S. Curtis, and C.M. Bell. The Archives is particularly noted for its images of Native Americans and the lands of the Ottoman Empire.

Thanks to a grant from the Stockman Family Foundation, the Archives staff has scanned 3,000 19th century albumen prints from its remarkable collection of renowned photographers and catalogued them into a database which may be accessed via the World Wide Web (open http://www.upenn.edu/museum/Collections/archives.html and follow the link to UPM Photographic Collection). Users will find a search engine to locate specific subjects, a browse feature to view general parts of the collection, and virtual galleries highlighting the life and work of the major photographers represented.

The ultimate goal of the Museum Archives is to digitize all its photographic collections; until then, we hope that you will take advantage of the diverse array of images now available online.

Alex Pezzati
Interim Senior Archivist

406 (top left). “Derviche (Dervish).”
By Sébah & Joaillier, ca. 1890

1414 (left). “Groupe de barques à volles au passage du pont (Group of barks sailing through the drawbridge, Cairo).”
By Bonfils, ca. 1890