

# Picturing America

The Early Years: 1839-1900

# Early America

1492 - 1839

The east coast was the first actual settled area, but exploration and documentation of north America started much earlier.

To start, we will be looking at art made by the people who came from Europe and settled on the east coast. They later explored the interior and west coast of America. Eventually those born here took up the mantle and recorded their visions of the American landscape.

Because there was no photography, they created drawings, paintings and prints of indigenous peoples, American leaders and landscapes.



# Documentation & Illustration

Since photography did not even start until the 1800s, there was no way to document this new land and its officials. Painting was the medium used to memorialize scenery, important persons and momentous events. No schools existed to train artists and so they came from Europe in the beginning.

Early colonial art on the East Coast initially relied on artists from Europe, with **John White** (1540-c. 1593) the earliest example. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, artists primarily painted portraits, and some landscapes in a style based mainly on English painting. In 1585, White had been commissioned to "draw to life" the inhabitants of the New World and their surroundings. Although oil-painting was the preferred medium in Europe, White executed many watercolors and also acted as mapmaker of the new surroundings.



White's patron, Sir Walter Raleigh



Roanoke Settlement by White



Roanoke Indians, watercolor by White



White's map of Roanoke

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, artists primarily painted portraits, and some landscapes in a style based mainly on English painting.

**Benjamin West** (1738 – 1820) was an American-born painter who specialized in history painting, creating such works as the *Treaty of Paris*, and *Benjamin Franklin Drawing Electricity from the Sky*.



Self-Portrait, West



*Benjamin Franklin Drawing Electricity from the Sky*, West



*The Treaty of Penn with the Indians*, West

There were no  
photographs, but  
documentation was  
important.



*The Treaty of Paris* - the English delegation refused to pose and thus it was never finished, by West

**John Trumbull** (1756-1843) chronicled the main characters and moments of the American Revolution.



John Trumbull



*Alexander Hamilton, Trumbull*



*Continental Congress, Trumbull*



*George Washington, Trumbull*

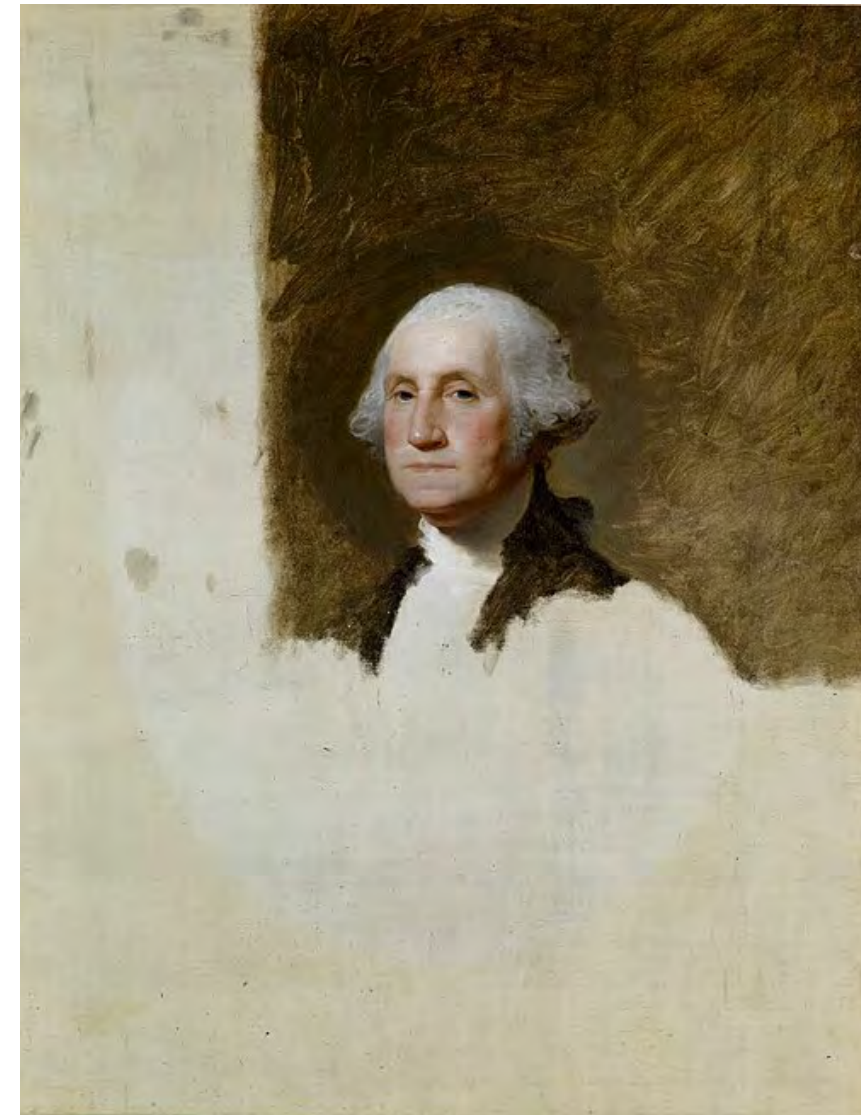


*The Battle of Bunker Hill, Trumbull*

**Gilbert Stuart** (1755-1818) was an American painter born in the Rhode Island Colony who is widely considered one of America's foremost portraitists. Stuart painted Washington in a series of iconic portraits, each of them leading to a demand for copies and keeping him busy and highly paid for years.



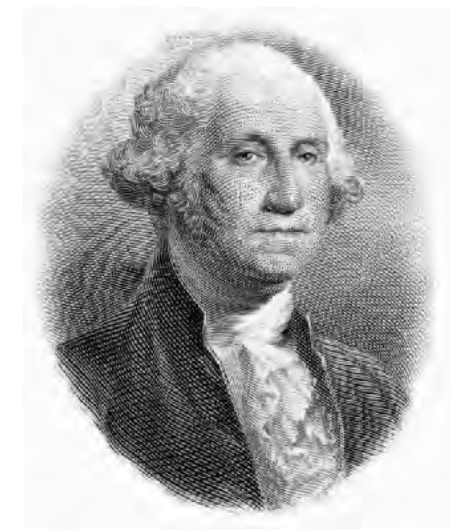
Gilbert Stuart



Stuart made about 100 portraits of George Washington

Portraits took a long time  
and many sittings to  
document leadership

A later engraving was made to  
be put on multiple bank notes.



With America as its own country established, the first glimmerings of landscape painting surfaced, thanks to trained artists, including **Frederic Church**, who came from abroad and who were born in the US and who concentrated mostly on recording the emerging cities, harbors, picturesque places, and native inhabitants of a new world. The unique talents of **John James Audubon** elevated the recording of America's flora and fauna to unprecedented artistic levels.



*Frederic Church*  
1826 – 1900



*Horseshoe Falls, Church*



*Autumn in North America, Church*



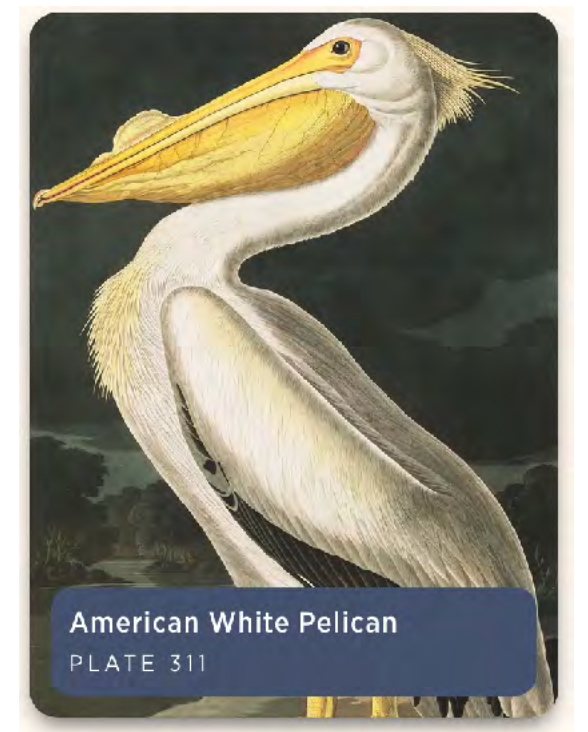
*John James Audubon*  
1785 – 1851



*Snowy Egret, Audubon*



*Yellow Warbler, Audubon*



*American White Pelican, Audubon*

The **Hudson River School** was a mid-19th-century (1825 - 1870) American art movement embodied by a group of landscape painters whose aesthetic vision was influenced by Romanticism. Early on, the paintings typically depicted the Hudson River Valley and the surrounding area, including the Catskill, Adirondack, and White Mountains.

Hudson River School paintings reflect three themes of America in the 19th century: discovery, exploration, and settlement. They also depict the American landscape as a pastoral setting, where human beings and nature coexist peacefully. Hudson River School landscapes are characterized by their realistic, detailed, and sometimes idealized portrayal of nature, often juxtaposing peaceful agriculture and the remaining wilderness which was fast disappearing from the Hudson Valley. Thomas Cole was the father of the Hudson School.



*Self-Portrait, Thomas Cole*



*Catskill Mountains, Cole*



*Connecticut River, Cole*



*Home in the Woods, Cole*



*Distant View of Niagara Falls, Cole*



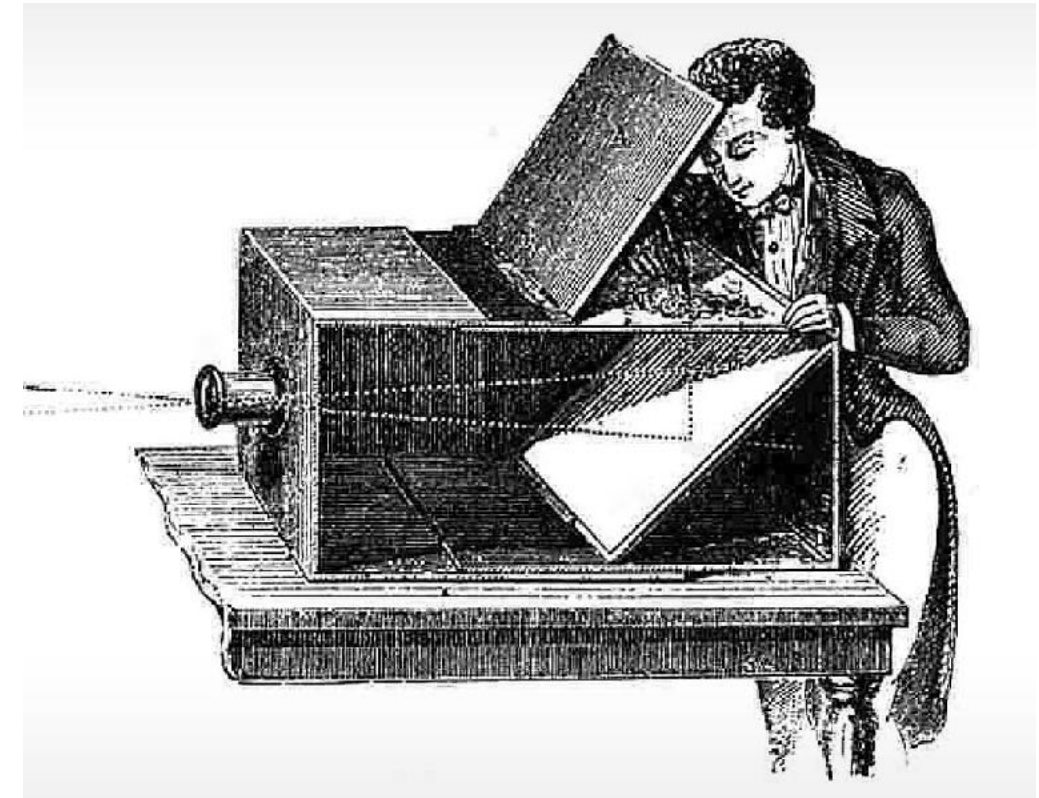
*White Mountains, Cole*

# Photography in America begins in France and Britain

The Early Years: 1839-1900

# Photography in France: Nicéphore Niépce

We know that photography was first invented in France and that Nicéphore Niépce's (1765–1833) *View from the Window at Le Gras* was the first photograph in 1826.



He put a lithographic stone, coated with bitumen, at the back of a camera obscura and obtained for the first time ever a fixed image of a landscape. This required an extremely long exposure time, in broad daylight, for a few days.

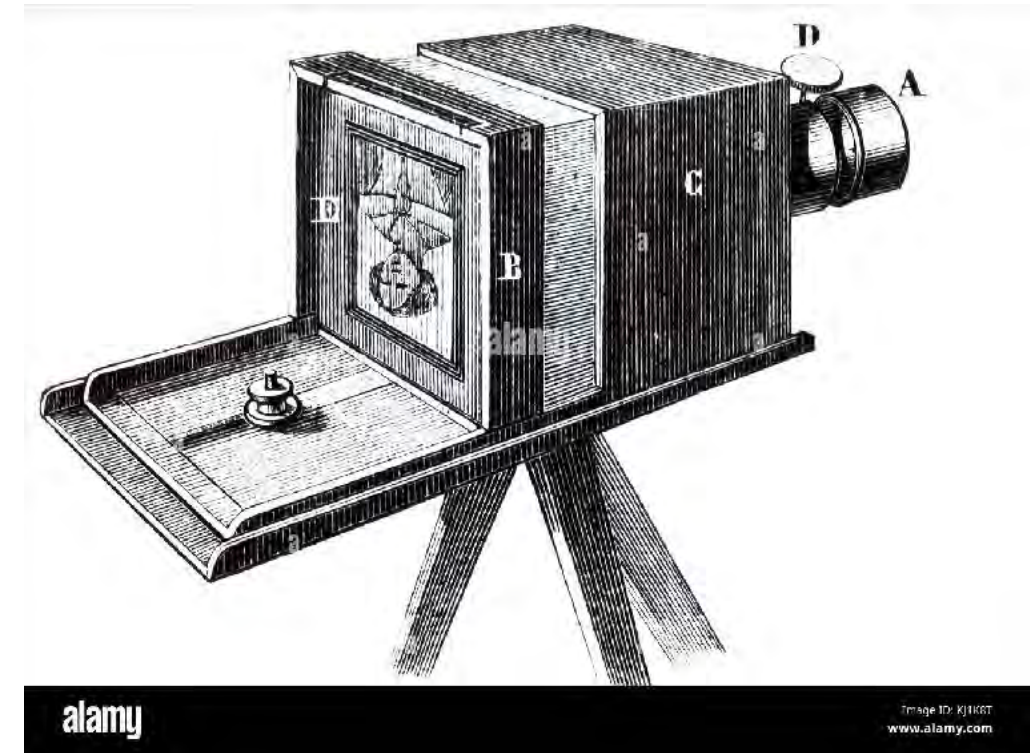


# Photography in France: Louis Daguerre

Louis Daguerre (1787–1851), building upon earlier discoveries, invented the first publicly available and commercially viable photographic process, the daguerreotype, in 1839. “Still Life with Jupiter Tonans” was an early trial, probably taken in 1826.



Daguerre polished a plate to a mirror finish, sensitizing it with iodine/ bromine vapors, exposing it in a camera, developing with mercury fumes, and fixing with salt. Exposure took 3-15 minutes.

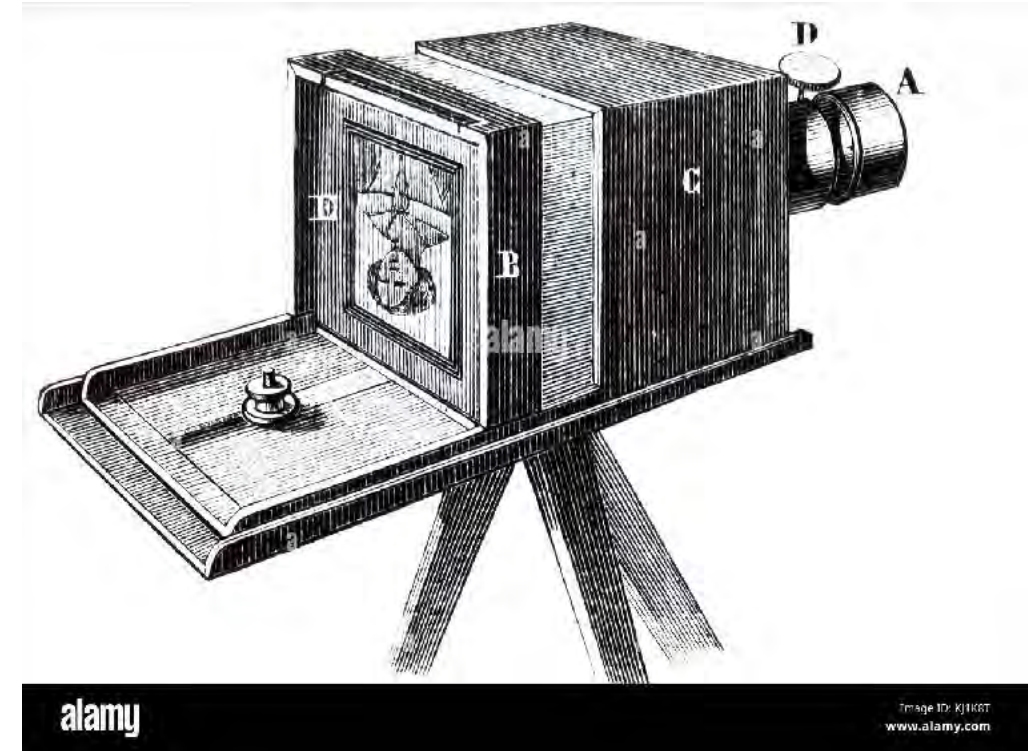


# Photography in France: Louis Daguerre

“Boulevard du Temple” was made in 1837 or 38 and is the first daguerreotypes. Although the image seems to be of a deserted street, it is widely considered to be the first photograph to include an image of a human.



Daguerre used an iodized silver plate to capture the image which was then developed with mercury fumes. The earliest photographs of this type required up to 15 minutes to expose the plate but refinements over the next few years reduced this to as short as 20 seconds.



# Photography in Britain: Henry Fox Talbot

Talbot claimed his most famous invention came about because he was bad at drawing and frustrated by his lack of skill.

And so he devised a process of improving the sensitivity of his paper. He had also correctly reasoned that exposure times could be shortened by using a camera with a small image size and a large aperture lens. Consequently, he had made a number of small wooden boxes—two- or three-inch cubes, which he fitted with lenses taken from the eyepieces of telescopes and microscopes. His wife called them “mousetraps”.

He took full advantage of the unusually abundant sunshine and placed pieces of sensitized photogenic drawing paper in miniature cameras set around the grounds to record the silhouette of Lacock Abbey’s roofline and trees. It was through this process that he discovered how to make photographic negatives.

He is credited with inventing the negative/postive paper process, called a **Calotype** (which comes from the Greek words for “beautiful” and “impression”).

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, holds a collection of Talbot’s works. The following are short videos explaining his process:

*Photographic Processes: The Calotype*  
*How was it made? Calotypes*



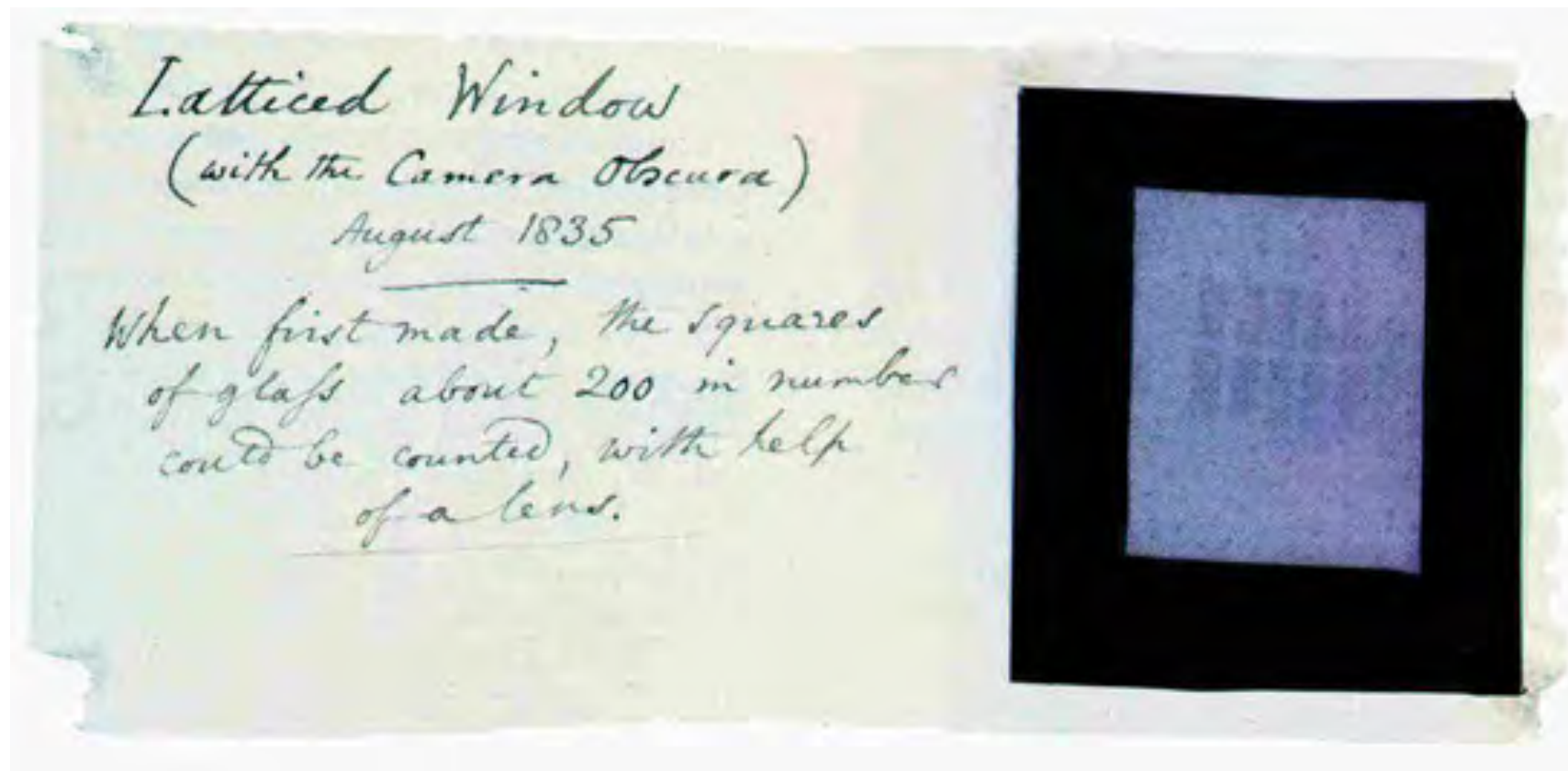
Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877)



Talbot's mousetrap camera

# Photography in England: Henry Fox Talbot

This **Calotype**, sometimes referred to as the 'talbotype', creates a paper-based photographic print using a paper negative. The positive-negative process allows many positive prints to be made of the same image, as the negative can be printed multiple times. The earliest surviving negative is one by Talbot depicting the lattice window inside the South Gallery at Lacock Abbey, made in August 1835 and is housed in the Science Museum, London.

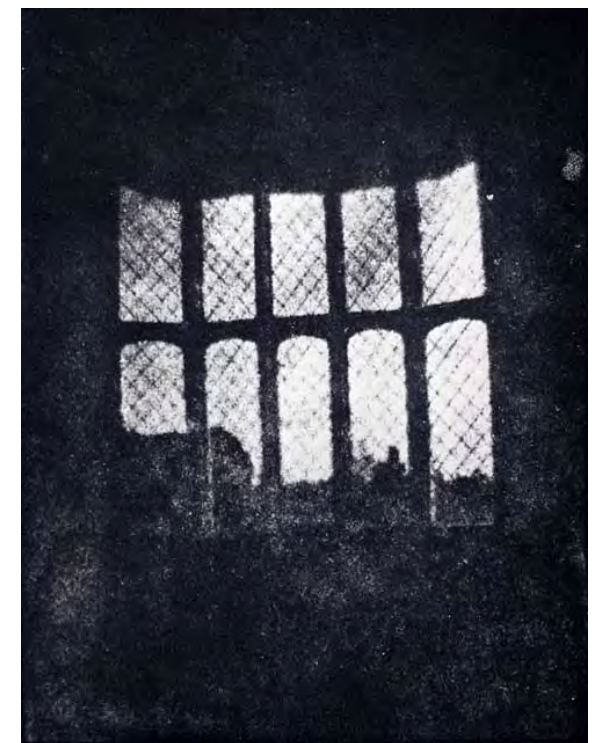


It is too fragile for permanent display, but copies are shown, and it is recognized as the earliest surviving camera negative, showing the windows of Lacock Abbey with reversed tones.

The image above is a negative, meaning the bright window panes appear dark and the window frame appears light. The image on the right is a positive print.



Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877)



National Science and Media Museum, England

# The Pencil of Nature, Henry Fox Talbot, 1844-1846

Talbot's hope for commercial exploitation of his invention lay in the widespread distribution of large editions of photographic prints, the principal advantage of negative-positive process over the daguerreotype.

***Pencil of Nature***, the first commercially-published book illustrated with photographs - a milestone in the art of the book greater than any since Gutenberg's invention of moveable type.

It contained twenty-four plates (landscape, architecture and still life), a brief text for each, and an introduction that described the history and chemical principles of Talbot's invention. The photographs and texts proposed a wide array of applications for the medium that included reproducing rare prints and manuscripts, recording portraits, inventorying possessions, representing architecture, tracing the form of botanical specimens, and making art. The publication, however, was not a commercial success, and as sales declined with each new fascicle, Talbot abandoned the project just before the seventh group of plates was made.

***The New York Public Library has digitized this book.***



"Pencil of Nature"

# Photography in America

## NOTES:

America was barely 50 years old when photography was invented, but by 1853 it was developed to such a degree that it was referred to as “the American process” because American daguerreotypes were considered the best in the world with studios capturing politicians, artists, and citizens.

**Patents** become a nightmare for American photography:

As American photographers began the **Patent** and **Licensing** process, there were only four employees in the government office (and one of them was busy taking photos out his office window). Eventually **Intellectual Property Rights** for images added to the complexity of the laws.

Photography with paper negatives **found little favor in America.**

# How did Americans discover photography?

Photography came to the United States in the fall of 1839, when word arrived from France of Daguerre's marvelous invention. American Samuel F. B. Morse (1791–1872), (of telegraph and Morse code fame) in Paris to promote his telegraph, met with Daguerre and returned to New York to teach the process. Among his pupils is noted photographer Matthew Brady.

A **daguerreotype** is a direct-positive image on a silvered copper plate. Historically, the plate was polished until it had a mirror-like surface, then was treated with light sensitive chemicals. The plate was then fitted into a camera and exposed to the subject. Once exposed, the plate was developed above a box of mercury fumes, and the image was fixed in a bath of hyposulfate of soda. The finished product was then washed and dried. Because the surface remained sensitive, it was placed under a plate of glass and usually put in a case.



[Portrait of a Young Man]  
Artist  
Samuel F. B. Morse  
Date  
1840



[Two Girls in Identical Dresses]  
Artist  
Jeremiah Gurney  
Date  
ca. 1857

## Bemis' Purchase for \$76.

**Samuel A. Bemis** (1793–1881), a Boston dentist and amateur daguerreotypist, bought one of the first cameras ever sold in the United States on April 15, 1840. Fortunately, he and his heirs saved not only the camera but also its receipt. While it is likely too late to return the camera, the receipt is useful as evidence of what is probably the earliest documented sale of an American daguerrean outfit. Thanks to the dentist's pack rat ways, we know that on April 15, 1840, he paid \$76 to François Gouraud, Giroux's agent in the U.S., for a "daguerreotype apparatus," twelve whole plates at \$2 each, and a freight charge of \$1.

The Eastman Museum, Rochester, NY, has one of the first cameras sold in America for \$76. It weighed 13 pounds and produced images 6.5" x 8.5" in size.



Receipt for \$76.



Camera in shipping crate



Assembled Camera

***“Kings Chapel Cemetery”***, Boston.  
Bemis also took this photo from his  
dental office.



***“A New Hampshire Barn”***. Bemis also  
took the first known landscape photos  
in the White Mountains in New  
Hampshire.



# How did Americans discover photography?



In the fall of 1839, **Joseph Saxton** (1799–1873), an employee of the United States Mint, took the first surviving daguerreotype in Philadelphia (Central High School). Saxton reportedly took the photo, barely 2 inches square, from a window at the mint.

He took a cigar box and glass lens to make a very crude, early version of a camera. His friend Robert Cornelius made it into a daguerreotype.



**Robert Cornelius** (1809-1893), a Philadelphia lamp manufacturer, took the first self-portrait - or "***selfie***" - in 1839. It took 15 minutes to expose.

# How did Americans discover photography?



Cornelius' original camera lens. His selfie was taken with an improvised camera obscura and an opera lens.



This daguerreotype shows the view from the window of Cornelius' second-floor studio at 8th and Lodge, Philadelphia.

Working alongside chemist Paul Beck Goddard, Cornelius made significant advancements in reducing exposure times for daguerreotypes. Through the use of bromine, better plates and the implementation of reflectors and blue glass filters to enhance lighting conditions, they managed to decrease the exposure time for daguerreotype portraits to less than a minute.

# The American craze for daguerreotypes (1840–1860s)

A **daguerreotype** is a one-off. There is no paper negative so each photo is an original and cannot be reproduced. Because the camera lens projects the image directly onto a highly reflective plate, it captures the subject exactly how you would see yourself looking into a mirror. Some photographers used a reversing mirror or prism attachment to flip the image back to correct orientation, it was an extra, complex step that was rarely done.



How Do Daguerreotypes Work?

WATCH THE VIDEO

This video is from the Isabella Stewart Gardener Museum, Boston.

[Mirrors with a Memory: Gardener Family Daguerreotypes](#)

## PLATE SIZES

whole plate 6½ x 8½ in.

half plate 4¼ x 5½ in.

quarter plate 3¼ x 4¼ in.

sixth plate 2¾ x 3¼ in.

ninth plate 2½ x 2 in.

# Photography in America: an instant success

Beside photographic studios, businesses got in on the action as well. Profits usually came through supporting items.

They created **specialized cases** for the photos:

- miniature and jeweled cases
- cases with floral and geometric designs
- cases covered with leather, velvet, paper often with delicate embossing



# Photography in America: an instant success

Suppliers were needed for additional case items:

-Glass covers, brass photo mats, velvet covers, embossed leather covers



# Photography in America: an instant success

Suppliers were needed for additional items:

- Elaborate frames



# Photography in America: an instant success

Suppliers were needed for additional items:

- pigments to hand-tint portraits
- painters to apply the colors

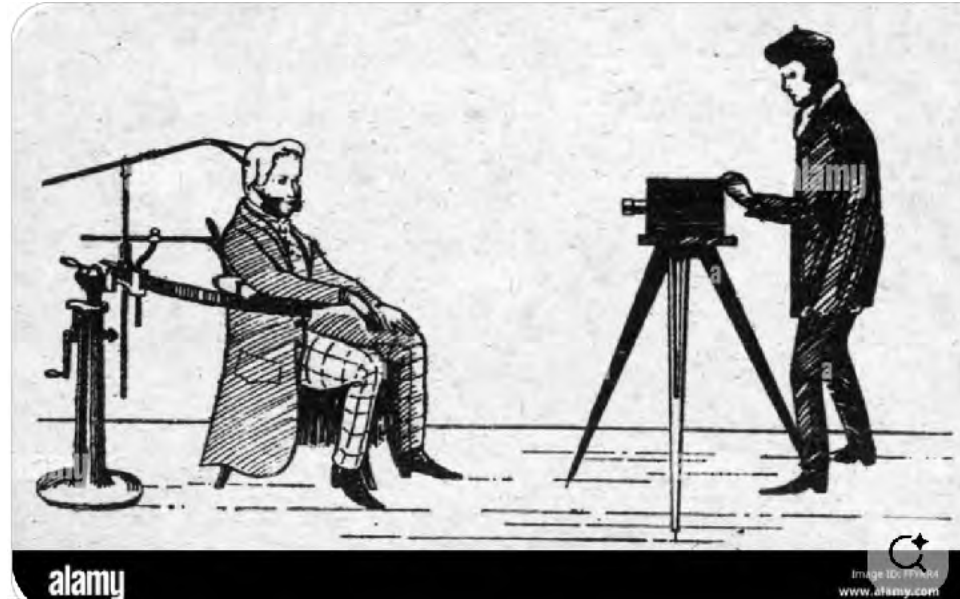
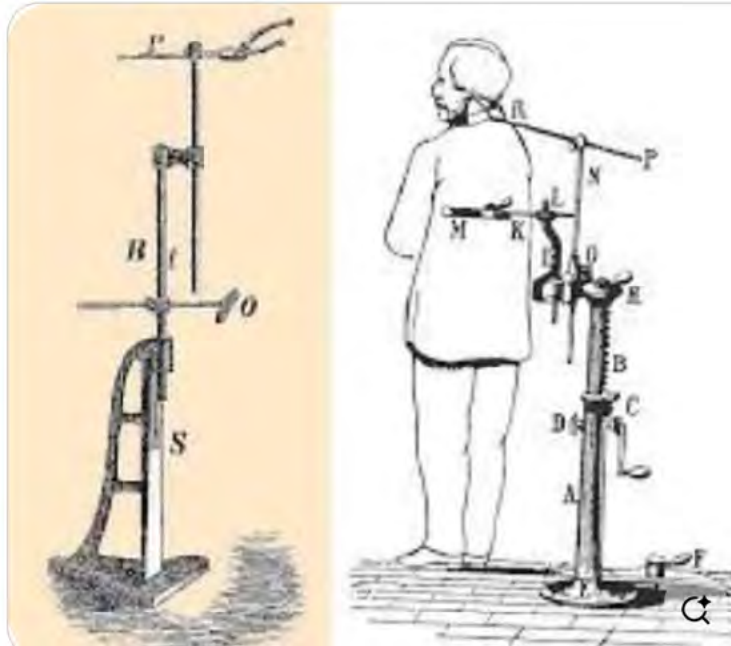


Harvard University, Houghton Library, W163607\_1



# Photography in America: an instant success

-**Physical Aids:** Iron supports, known as "head rests" or "positioning props," were hidden behind the sitter to brace the neck and head.



# Photography in America: an instant success

-**Posing chairs:** Specialized chairs, sometimes with low backs or arms, allowed for better stability and camera access.

-**Studio Furniture:** Other aids included posing tables, or simply asking the subject to lean on a piece of furniture to keep their body steady.

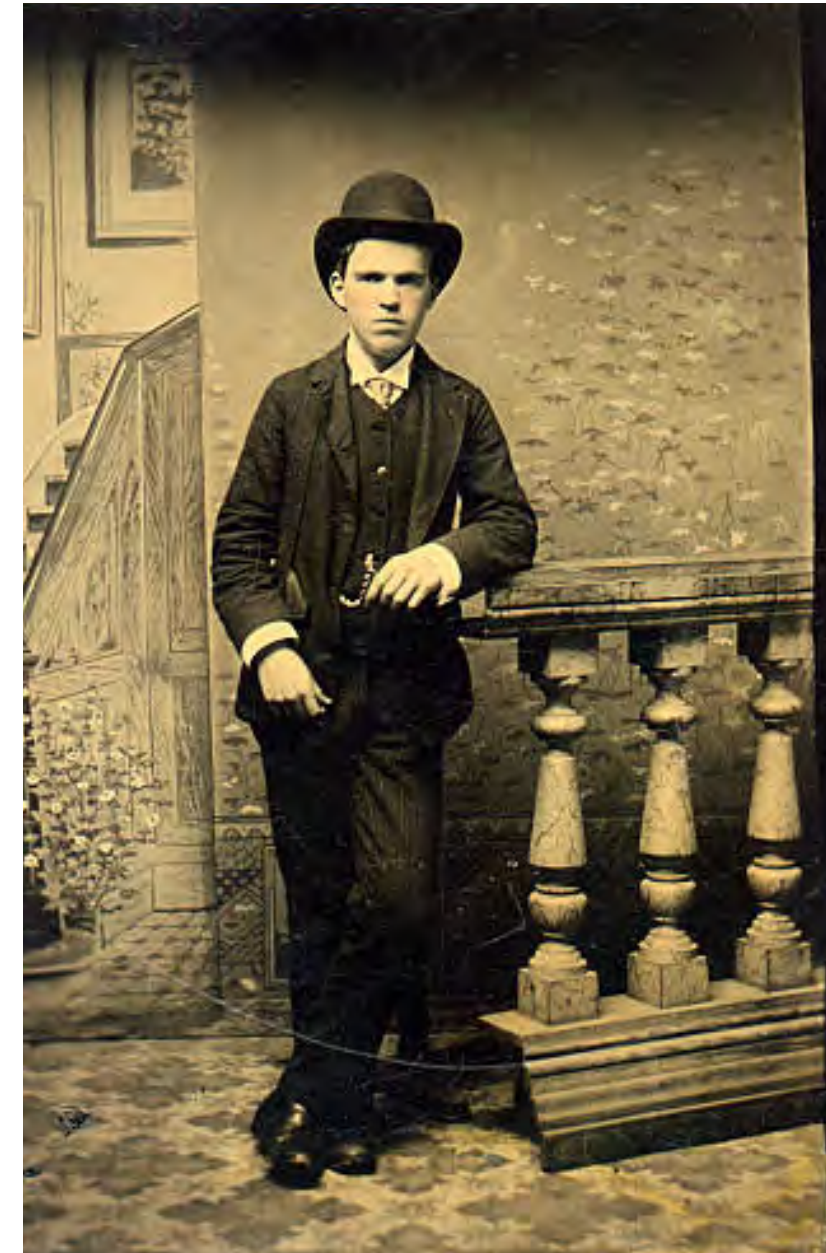


# Photography in America: an instant success

**-Alternative Supports:** For children, parents often held them, or the children were secured to chairs with ribbons or fabric.



# Photography in America: an instant success



- **Props:** - drapery, greenery, tables, ornamental chairs, table linens, painted backdrops, faux garden fences, plaster rocks, books, and flowers and all sorts of furnishings were available to create a luxurious setting.

# Photography in America: an instant success



Painting



Photograph

- **Props:** Another early “improvement” in daguerreotype portraiture was the use of painted backdrops. Based on conventions found in portrait paintings of the time, daguerreotype backdrops could make it appear as if the subject was seated beneath trees along a quiet riverbank or posed beside a window showing a seascape or a local landmark.

# Photography in America: an instant success



- **Props:** A more elaborate method of manipulating the daguerreotype portrait was employed by the Southworth & Hawes studio. This remarkable image shows a man beside a window overlooking the steeple of the Brattle Street Church. Because of the lenses used during this early period of photography, the sitter and the steeple could not have been portrayed together in a single exposure; one or the other would have been blurry and out-of-focus. So Southworth & Hawes must have masked off part of the plate when the portrait was made, then taken a second exposure showing only the window.

# Catering to the Consumer (early advertising & marketing)

- **Costumes and outfits:** Subjects could pose in their own clothing or select dresses, suits, accessories provided

More than any other Philadelphia photographer, Marcus A. Root strove to raise the quality of work and the public's appreciation and recognition of that work as art.

He wrote extensively about the need to create a comfortable environment for sitters, so that those entering a studio "may inhale a spirit which shall illuminate their faces with the expression desired." He recommended filling the lobby with paintings, sculpture, and books so that customers would elevate their thoughts prior to sitting. To reveal the lively nature of a spirited boy, Root provided Persifor with an 18th-century costume, complete with sword and wig.



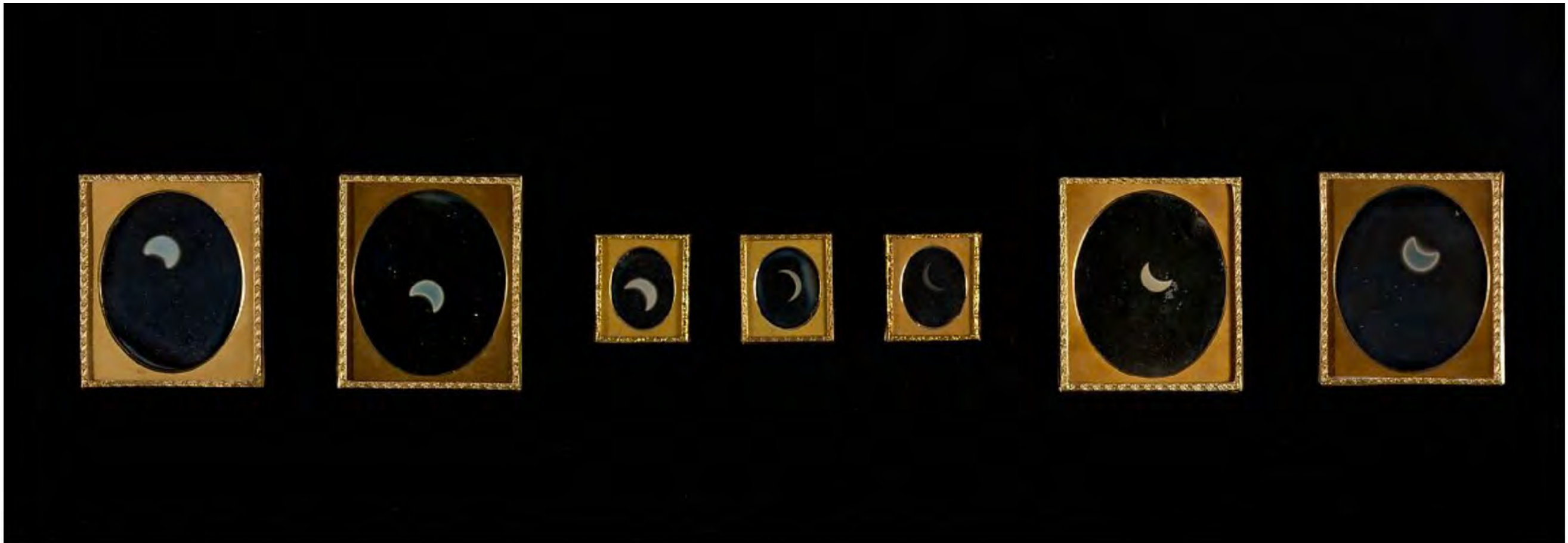
# Catering to the Consumer (early advertising & marketing)

- **Remembering the Deceased:** great care was taken to picture a deceased loved-one as a memory keepsake.



# Photography in America: documentation

On May 26, 1854, the **Langenheim brothers made eight sequential photographs of the first total eclipse of the sun** visible in North America since the invention of photography. Although six other daguerreotypists and one calotypist are known to have documented the event, only these seven daguerreotypes survive. In the northern hemisphere, the moon always shadows the sun from right to left during a solar eclipse; these images therefore seem odd because they are, like all uncorrected daguerreotypes, reversed laterally as in a mirror.



**Eclipse of the Sun**

Multiple artists/makers

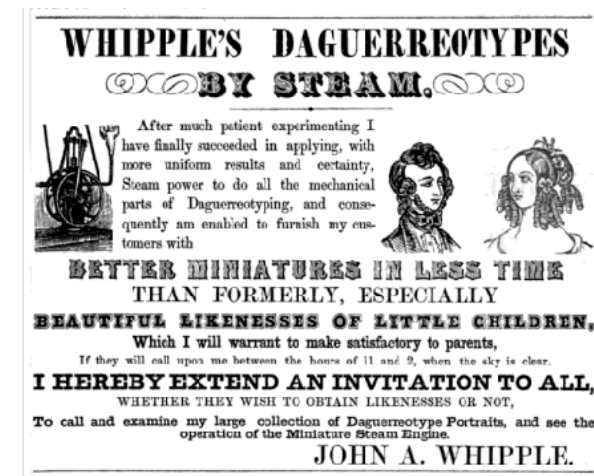
1854

# Photography in America: documentation

**John Adams Whipple** (1822 – 1891) was an American inventor and early photographer. He was the first in the United States to manufacture the chemicals used for daguerreotypes. He pioneered astronomical and night photography. He was a prize-winner for his extraordinary early photographs of the moon and he was the first to produce images of stars other than the sun. used Harvard's Great Refractor telescope to produce images of the moon that are remarkable in their clarity of detail and aesthetic power. This was the largest telescope in the world at that time, and these images of the moon took the prize for technical excellence in photography at the great 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition in London.



*View of the Moon*, by Whipple, February 26, 1852



In the first image ever taken of a star (other than the Sun), John Whipple and William Bond made a 90-second exposure of Vega in 1850.

# Photography in America: documentation

Historic image of an early ether surgery conducted at Massachusetts General Hospital. The daguerreotype was taken by Southworth & Hawes on July 3, 1847.



# Stereoscopic (3-D) Daguerreotypes

“the production of the illusion of depth in a photograph, movie, or other two-dimensional image by the presentation of a slightly different image to each eye, which adds the first of these cues”

There were many daguerreotype examples, but later paper photographs were more easily produced and cost much less.



# The Common Man

Early photographic portraits empowered working-class Americans. "Photographic portraits play a role in people feeling like they could be a citizen," (Rosenheim) "It's a psychological, empowering thing to own your own likeness."

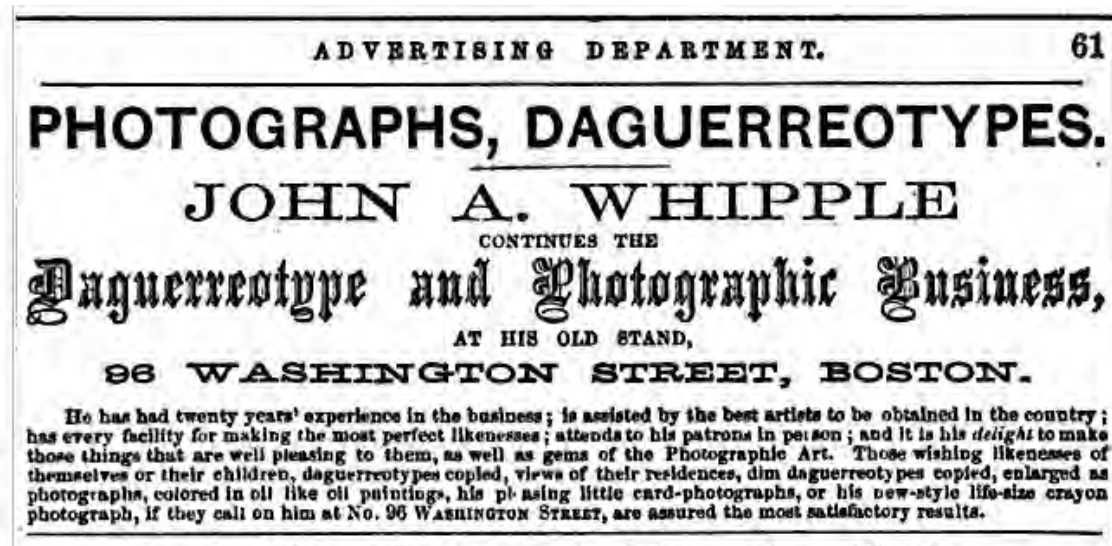


# No definition between the wealthy and the working-class

By 1853 Americans produced 3 million daguerreotypes with portraits becoming commonplace. Daguerreotypes were labeled the "Democratic" Art: Unlike expensive painted portraits, the daguerreotype allowed everyday citizens to afford high-quality, personal images, making it a popular, accessible medium, as Frederick Douglass noted.



# A daguerreotype studio on every corner



Daguerreotype studios popped up all over major eastern seaboard towns.



## Daguerreotypists in Philadelphia: Growth from 1846 to 1856

Using contemporary digital mapping technology (GIS), these maps show the locations of daguerreotypists superimposed on:

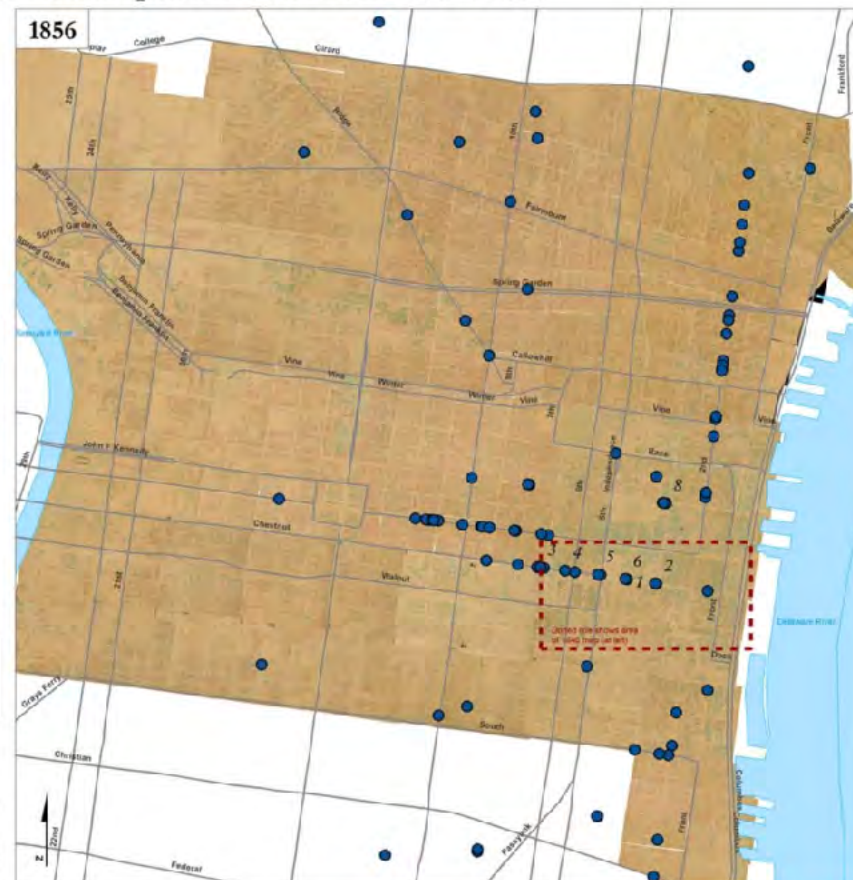
**Maps of the City of Philadelphia**  
by Ernest Hexamer and William Locher, 1858-1861

Digitized version of maps provided courtesy of:

**Map Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia**

Additional assistance provided by:

The Athenaeum of Philadelphia  
Greater Philadelphia Geol History Network  
R&R Computer Solutions



**Selected Prominent Philadelphia Daguerreotypists**  
Number on Maps Name

- 1 Broadbent, Samuel
- 2 Collins, David C.
- 3 Langenheim, William and Frederick
- 4 McClees, James F.
- 5 Richards, Frederick DeBour
- 6 Root, Marcus Aunelius
- 7 Simons, Montgomery P.
- 8 Van Loan, Samuel

● Location of Daguerreotypists  
— Current Major Streets

Digital mapping research  
and analysis provided by  
**cultural ALLIANCE**  
September 2007

Elite daguerreotype studios were outfitted with colorful velvet tapestry, frescoed ceilings, six-light chandeliers, and, of course, impressive daguerreotype portraits of kings and queens, politicians, and even Native American chiefs. They were often situated on top floors (attics) of commercial buildings to maximize natural light through skylights.

# Pioneering Studios and Key Figures

- Robert Cornelius (Philadelphia, 1840): Opened one of the first American studios after months of experimentation, charging \$5 for portraits.
- Henry Fitz, Jr. (Baltimore, 1840): Opened Maryland's first studio, utilizing his expertise in optics and telescope-making.
- Langenheim Brothers (Philadelphia, 1841): Located in the Merchants' Exchange building, they were highly successful, producing hundreds of portraits and early, non-reversed daguerreotypes.



# Pioneering Studios and Key Figures

- Southworth & Hawes (Boston): Famous for high-quality, artistic portraits catering to Boston society and famous persons.

This ad emphasizes the studio's talent for photographing dead loved ones, claiming that the photos will appear "so natural as to seem, even to Artists, in a quiet sleep."

Also note the promotion of two ladies onsite ready to help women arrange their attire and choose appropriate colors for the process. This was a formal affair, reserved for important life moments.



**TWO SILVER MEDALS FOR THE BEST PICTURES & PLATES.**

**MESSRS. SOUTHWORTH & HAWES,**  
THE ONLY FIRST PREMIUM

**Daguerreotype**  
**ROOMS,**  
ARE AT 5½ TREMONT ROW,  
BOSTON.

The attention of all persons interested in procuring

**DAGUERRETYPE LIKENESSES**

Of themselves or friends, or copies from Portraits, Miniatures, Paintings, Engravings, or Statuary, is particularly invited to our specimens.

For seven years we have taken copies of every description, *without reversing them*; also from Life when desired.

We have in attendance two Ladies, and Females can have assistance in arranging their dress and drapery, and consult them as to colors most appropriate and harmonious for the Daguerreotype process.

Our arrangements are such that we take miniatures of children and adults instantly, and of **DECEASED** persons, either at our rooms or at private residences. We take great pains to have Miniatures of deceased persons agreeable and satisfactory, and they are often so natural as to seem, even to Artists, in a quiet sleep.

In style of execution and picturesque effect — in boldness of character and beauty of expression — in variety of size and delicacy of lights and shadows, we shall aim at the highest perfection possible.

Photographs painted in the very best manner if required. Cameras which will not reverse pictures, and every variety of Apparatus, Chemicals, and Materials, furnished and warranted.

Assisted by Mrs. & Miss SOUTHWORTH, they will sustain their well-earned reputation. No **CHEAP** work done. Plates **PERFECTLY** polished. They neither use steam, humbug by false pretences, nor wear laurels won by competitors.

An illustration of a sun-like face with a human-like face, holding a palette and brush. It is standing next to a globe and a camera. The sun face has rays emanating from it. The globe is on the right, and the camera is on the left. The sun face is in the center, holding a palette and brush. The globe is on the right, and the camera is on the left. The sun face is in the center, holding a palette and brush. The globe is on the right, and the camera is on the left.

Mack A. Anderson Collection of Post-Mortem Photography  
William L. Clements Library, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

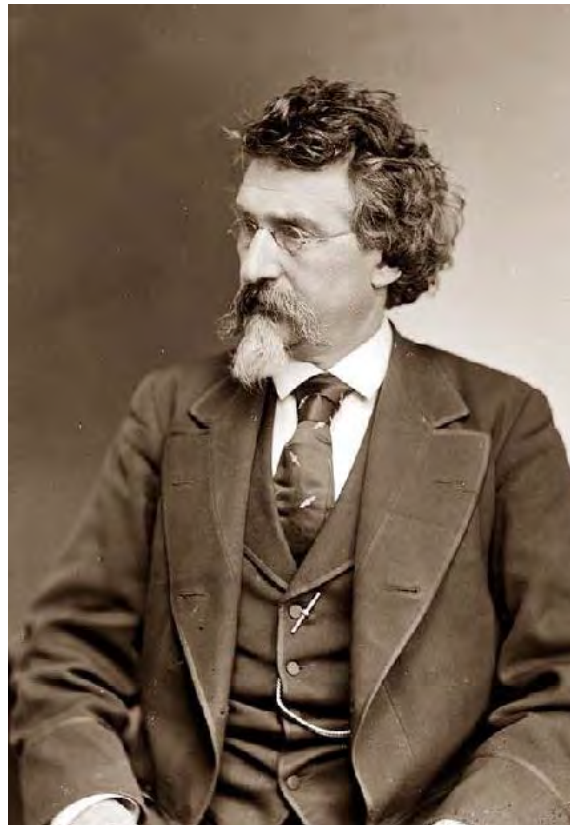
# Pioneering Studios and Key Figures

## BRADY ON BROADWAY

- Mathew Brady (New York, 1844): Opened his renowned gallery, becoming one of the most prominent, capturing famous figures.



Brady Studio, 785 Broadway (at Tenth Street), New York City



Mathew Brady

**A CARD TO THE PUBLIC.**

A new feature in Daguerreotypes has recently been introduced by Brady, at  
**His Old Gallery, No. 205 Broadway, corner of Fulton Street.**

The extent of his establishment enables him to  
**Produce for Fifty Cents and One Dollar,**  
Pictures of a quality Infinitely Superior to the phantoms usually designated Cheap Pictures.  
This is a new feature in first class establishments, and the fame of the Artist is too well known  
to doubt success. The public can now rely on obtaining as good a picture for that price as can  
possibly be put up, and a far better portrait than can be obtained elsewhere at the same rates.

**BRADY'S NEW GALLERY, 359 BROADWAY,**  
Is fitted up with great taste and beauty, and possesses greater facilities for the production of  
**FIRST CLASS PICTURES,**  
Than any similar establishment in this Country. These Galleries form an elegant resort for  
persons of taste, containing as they do, the  
**LARGEST COLLECTION OF DISTINGUISHED PORTRAITS IN AMERICA,**  
PRIZE MEDALS WERE AWARDED TO BRADY  
At the World's Fair, in London, in 1851, and at the Crystal  
Palace, New York, 1853.

**BRADY'S DAGUERREAN GALLERIES,**  
**NOS. 205 & 359 BROADWAY, N.Y.**

# Black Friday Sales!

"If our children and children's children to the third and fourth generations are not in possession of portraits of their ancestors, it will be no fault of the Daguerreotypists of the present day; for verily, they are photographing faces at a rate that promises soon to make every man's house a Daguerrean Gallery."

T. S. Arthur. "The Daguerreotypist," in Sketches of Life and Character. Philadelphia: J. W. Bradley, 1850..



**DAGUERRETYPE PORTRAITS FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S PRESENTS,** at the Philadelphia Daguerreotype Establishment, Rectorian, Third Story, Rooms 20 and 27. —The subscribers continue to take Daguerreotype Portraits of all the different sizes. Family groups of any number of persons and single like persons on the largest scale; also the smaller Portraits for Brooch-pins or Miniature Cases, (either colored or without colors.) They have procured an assortment of Brooch-pins, Miniature Cases and Fancy Mounted Cases, suitable for the above Portraits, which together will answer as a splendid keepsake for the ensuing holidays. New improvements have been added, which enable the subscribers to take Portraits almost instantaneously, and in a style which found acknowledgment at the late exhibitions of the Franklin Institute.

W. & F. LANGENHEIM.

**And they  
can be  
shipped  
through the  
mail!**

# The Daguerreotype Assembly Line

Daguerreotypes varied in price according to size: in 1850 they billed a customer \$33. for a “large” daguerreotype, \$8. for a 1/4 size and \$2.50 each for three small ones. Most galleries charged \$2. for a sixth plate. Soon competition forced prices lower and lower: the public was offered daguerreotypes at 50 cents, at 25 cents, and even at 12.5 cents - made “two at a pop” with double lens camera.

In picture factories division of labor was said to have speeded up the work to a production of 300, 500 and even 1,000 daily. The sitter bought a ticket and was posed by an operator who never left the camera. A plate, already prepared by the polisher and the coater, was brought to him and he passed it on after exposure in its protective shield to the mercurializer who developed it, to the gilder who enriched it, and to the artists who tinted it: fifteen minutes later the customer exchanged this ticket for the finished likeness. Such hastily made portraits were seldom satisfactory; many were left behind by disappointed customer; but prospects streamed up the stairs to the skylight and the cash rolled in.



[Reference](#)

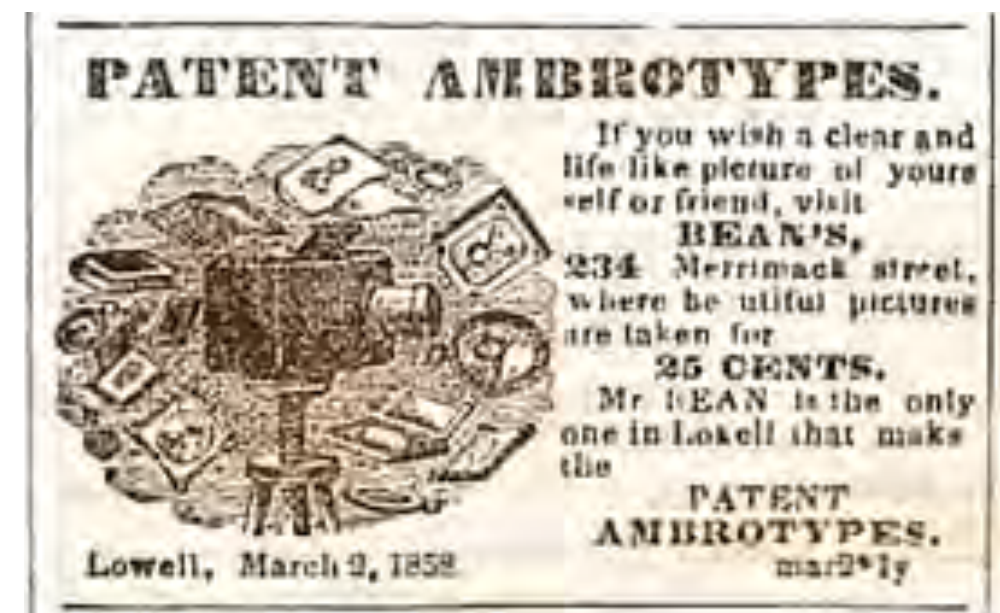
# The Demise of the Daguerreotype

The **daguerreotype**, the first publicly available photographic process (1830s–1850s), was largely superseded in 1854 by faster, less expensive, and more easily viewable photographic techniques. The first replacement was the **Ambrotype** (1854 - 1880s).

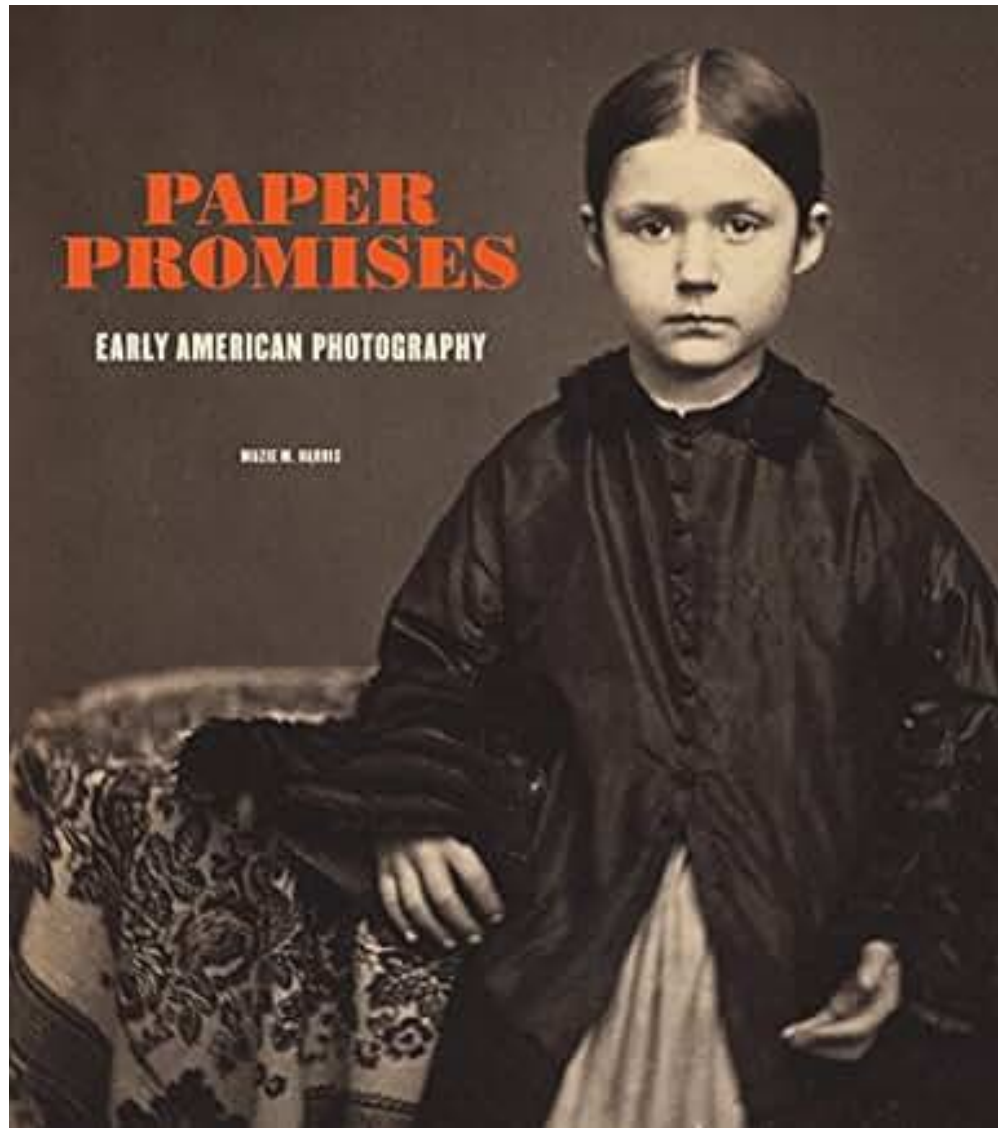
**Daguerreotypes:** used silver-plated copper (metal) **Ambrotype:** Used glass negatives. Circa 1850s-1880s

**Ambrotypes** are thin underexposed negatives on glass. They appear positive by placing a black background behind it which is why it usually found in a case. The layer of silver halides chemically reacts with the light, becoming metallic silver, which gives the image a light gray coloring. If the backing on an ambrotype peels, the image may look "ghostly" or transparent.

**Ambrotypes** were also housed in either ornate cases or frames to provide an attractive product and protect the negative with a cover glass and brass mat. It was also possible to get an ambrotype in color, through hand coloring. However, having an ambrotype hand colored cost extra.



# The Golden Age of Counterfeiting



[Amazon](#)

This volume was published to accompany an exhibition on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center February 27 to May 27, 2018.

As photography was introduced to America, a financial panic caused private banks to take the place of a national banking system. Each state then issued its own paper money. About 3000 banks were distributing banknotes of their own design. Citizens faced thousands of banknotes of various designs, sizes, denominations, colors and values.

The publication of “**Banknote Reports**” tried to warn of counterfeits. Merchants scrutinized banknotes against the descriptions to determine if they were legitimate.

“**Paper Promises**” was originally a derisive phrase used to describe the proliferation of worthless counterfeit paper currency in the US in the mid-nineteenth century. Such counterfeiting was so prevalent that Americans initially shunned negative-positive photographic technologies for fear that they might contribute to the problem - by creating duplicates of fake banknotes. There was no understanding that photo duplication in the early stages was too crude for this process.

# The Golden Age of Counterfeiting



Photography with paper negatives **found little favor in America.**

However, the problem of anxious hearsay is common to the introduction of any new technology with which the public has little firsthand experience. This coupled with technical problems, financial setback, question of usefulness, and bad timing gave rise to rejection.

Americans simply wanted intimate images to be shared with family and friends. It took them a long time to use paper photo duplication for information production and exchange.



# Albumen Prints

**Albumen Prints:** Allowed for paper-based photographs and mass reproduction between 1850 and 1900.

Coating paper with egg whites (i.e. albumen) gave it a glossy, smooth veneer, which suspended light sensitive materials on the paper's surface. No longer embedded in the fibers, the image floated on the paper's surface. After drying, the paper is then made light sensitive by the application of a silver nitrate solution. The image is developed via contact printing, or pressing a negative directly to the paper surface and exposing it to diffused sunlight. After exposure, the paper is submerged in running water to remove excess silver.

Most photographers sensitized their own papers because it was cheaper, but a small industry of factory-prepared papers was on the rise.

This made it possible for photographers to mass-produce high-quality, inexpensive photographs. The stage was set for one of the most extraordinary periods of photographic history—the age of the **carte de visite**.



# Albumen Prints

**Albumen Prints:** Allowed for paper-based photographs and mass reproduction between 1850 and 1900.

Albumen prints were usually pasted on cardboard backings. Some had actual mats and others had faux mats created as part of the photo.



# Carte de Visite

The **carte de visite** (**visiting card and later a cabinet card**) was made using a contact print—by placing the negative in contact with the albumen paper under glass and exposing the sandwiched materials to a light source. No enlarger was required. It was made on thin paper glued onto a thicker paper card. They were small, 4.5" x 2.5" - (like a calling card or business card) (think the New York society of Edith Wharton) mass-produced portraits popular from the late 1850s through the 1870s, patented by Frenchman André Adolphe Disdéri in 1854.

He developed a camera capable of exposing eight photographs on one 8" x 10" inch negative, enabling photographers to produce hundreds, instead of dozens, of images each day. These prints were used as calling cards, trading items, and to display in albums, making portraiture affordable for the middle class.

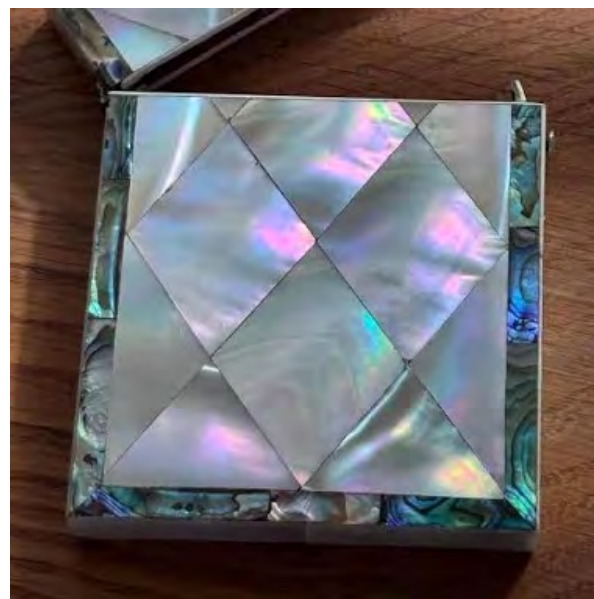


The most famous is of Queen Victoria, 1887



# Carte de Visite

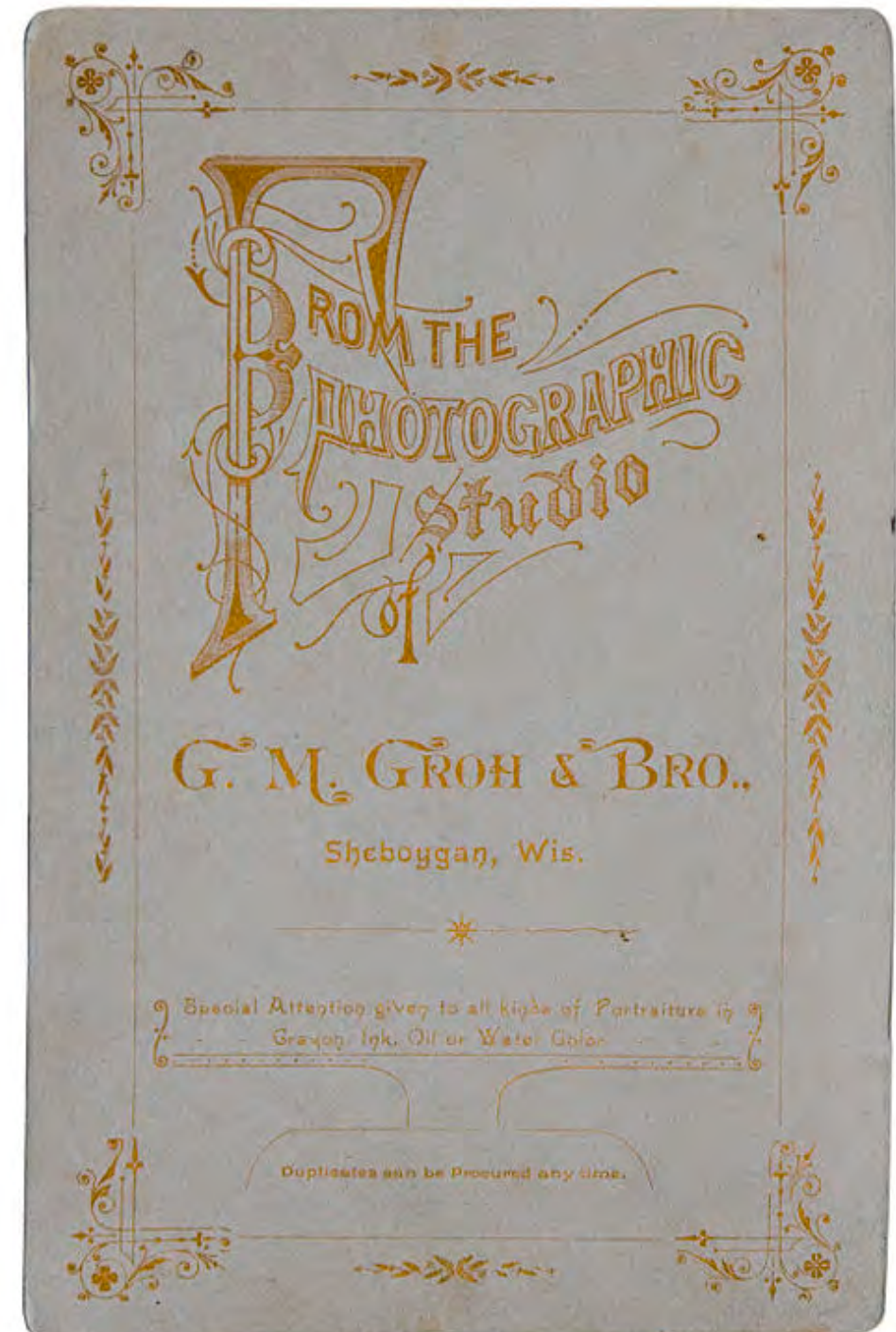
**Carte de visite** mania led to a stream of inventions specially adapted for viewing and storage of the photographs. The parlor activity of examining cartes generated demand for viewing boxes, rotating display stands, elaborate frames and albums, scopes with flip-up magnifiers, and devices like Robinson's Patented Photographicon, in which cartes are displayed on a tape controlled by turning spindles.



# Cabinet Card

The **carte de visite** was displaced by the larger **cabinet card** in the second half of the 1860s. Both were most often albumen prints, the primary difference being the cabinet card was larger ((4.25" by 6.5" inches) and usually included extensive logos and information on the reverse side of the card to advertise the photographer's services. However, later into its popularity, other types of papers began to replace the albumen process. Despite the similarity, the cabinet card format was initially used for landscape views before it was adopted for portraiture.

The cabinet card ushered in the temporary disuse of the photographic album which had come into existence commercially with the *carte de visite*. The cabinet card was large enough to be easily viewed from across the room when typically displayed on a cabinet, which is probably why they became known as such in the vernacular.



# Seeing Ghosts: A Brief Look at the Curious Business of Spirit Photography

## PHOTOGRAPHY REFLECTED TRUTH

Spirit photography began in the mid-19th century, gaining in popularity after the massive losses of the Civil War. Some studio photographers began offering their services as mediums of sorts for bereaved portrait-sitters, their cameras purportedly capturing the spirited images of loved ones hovering nearby or embracing the living. Many were convinced these photographic manifestations were real (including, famously, Mary Todd Lincoln), but there were skeptics. Spirit photographer William Mumler (1832-1884), for example, was sued for fraud in 1869. He was acquitted due to lack of evidence when it could not be demonstrated precisely how he created his ghostly images.



*William H. Mumler (American, 1832-1884); [Three "spirits" with a photograph on a table propped against a vase with flowers], 1862-1875, Albumen silver print; 9.5 x 5.6 cm (3 3/4 x 2 3/16 in.)*



*William H. Mumler (American, 1832-1884); Mrs. Tinkham, 1862-1875, Albumen silver print; 9.5 x 5.7 cm (3 3/4 x 2 1/4 in.); The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.*

If we imagine the perspective of a Victorian-era viewer and consider the novelty of the medium, it is easy to understand why spirit photographs may have been convincing—and harder to characterize their buyers as gullible, easy marks. There is a near-universal desire to communicate with people from whom we are separated, and this idea appealed especially to those who were vulnerable or grieving.

# Abraham Lincoln is Watching Over You

## PHOTOGRAPHY REFLECTED TRUTH

Spirit photographers could also exploit how, by the late 19th century, people associated photography with veracity in some contexts and the unexplained in others.



Mary Todd Lincoln (1818-1882) (untitled spirit photograph with Abraham Lincoln's shadow).  
Albumen print. Carte-de-visite. Boston, MA, 1870s

# Tintype

**Tintype** (1860s–1900) (Ferrotypes): Used thin metal plates. (There was no tin)

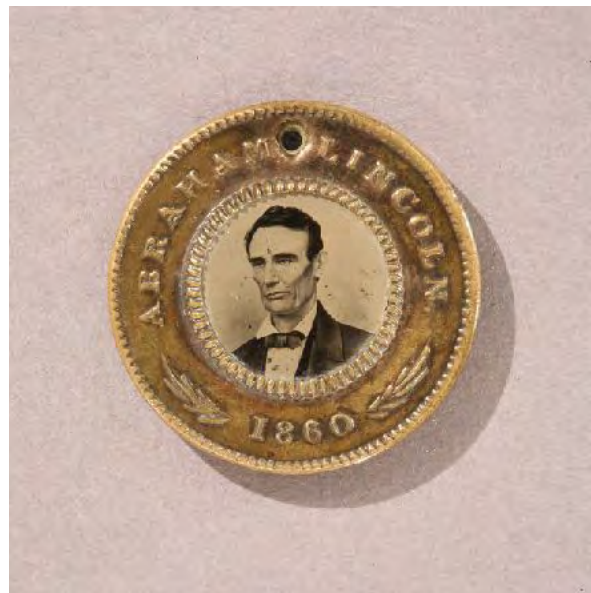
A very underexposed negative image was produced on a thin iron plate. It was blackened by painting, lacquering or enamelling, and coated with a collodion (wet) photographic emulsion. The dark background gave the resulting image the appearance of a positive. Ferrotypes did not need mounting in a case to produce a positive image, although they were often put on cardboard backings or under mats. They were inexpensive to produce, offering an affordable alternative to painted portraits. Often they were hand painted by women using oils, watercolors, and dry pigments.

Tintypes changed the America of the late 19th century. With photographs easy to produce and relatively inexpensive, it quickly became a widespread phenomenon to have one's picture taken.



# Tintype

## Tintypes



Making of a Tintype by George Eastman House. Process Historian Mark Osterman demonstrates the making of a Civil War-era tintype.

Deutsches Geschäft.

**4 TIN TYPES**  
**THIS SIZE, FOR 25 CENTS**

—AT—  
**CARL J. HOHENSTEIN,**  
**Photograph & Tin Type Gallery,**

No. 640 BROADWAY,  
Corner Gerry Street.  
908 & 910 FULTON STREET,  
Cor. Washington Ave.

**BROOKLYN.**

These are the Largest ever made for the money. They are twice as large as you can get anywhere else for the same price. No extra charge for taking in Masquerade or other Costumes.

*Costume and Club Pictures a Specialty.*

One Dozen Card Photographs for 50 Cents.

Good Pictures Guaranteed in any Weather.

All Photographs made by the Instantaneous Process.

Be sure to call early in the day so as to avoid waiting, as there is generally a rush in the afternoon.

One large Picture for framing given free with a Dozen Imperial Photographs.

Gallery on Ground Floor, open every day, Sundays and Holidays included.



# Wet-Plate Process

**Collodion** (a viscous solution) **Wet-Plate Process:** Photographic prints from 1885 to the 1930s

Collodion printing-out paper included a baryta layer that was a milestone in the evolution of photographic materials. "Baryta" refers to a combination of barium and strontium sulfates that brightens images by scattering light back through the silver image layer. The baryta layer also prevents impurities from the paper fibers from contaminating the silver layer. With this addition to the paper support, prints were smoother, whiter, and glossier than those made on albumen-coated paper, which soon fell from favor. Many different companies offered pre-coated printing-out papers, including Kodak and Ilford.

The increasing use of the "wet-plate" negative process gave photographers a way to make glass negatives from which they could print a theoretically unlimited number of positive prints on paper. This process made it more profitable for photographers to venture far from home to make a photographic image. From a single negative, a cameraman could make a great many prints to sell to the general public.



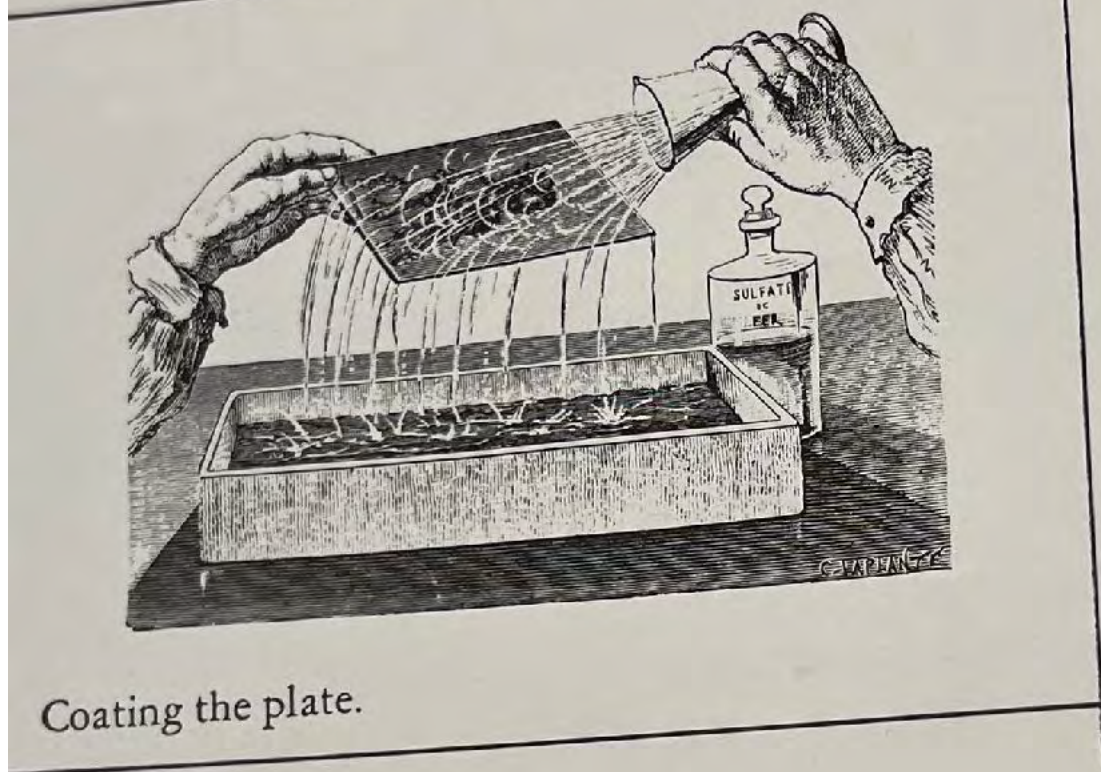
Historical Photographic Processes

The Historic New Orleans Collection

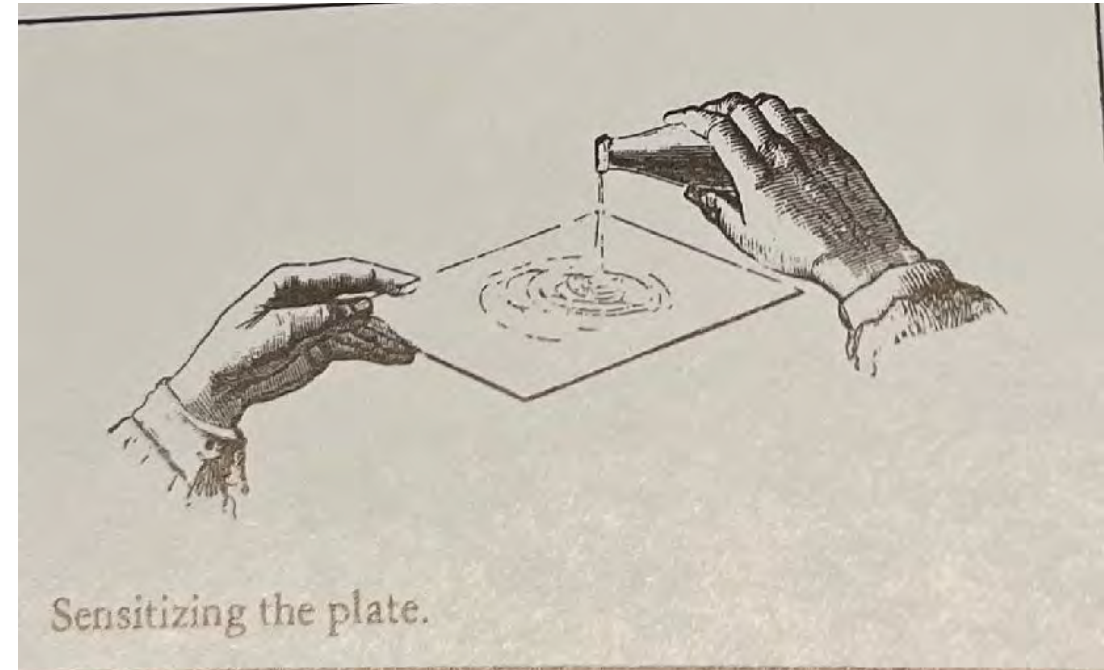
# Wet-Plate Process



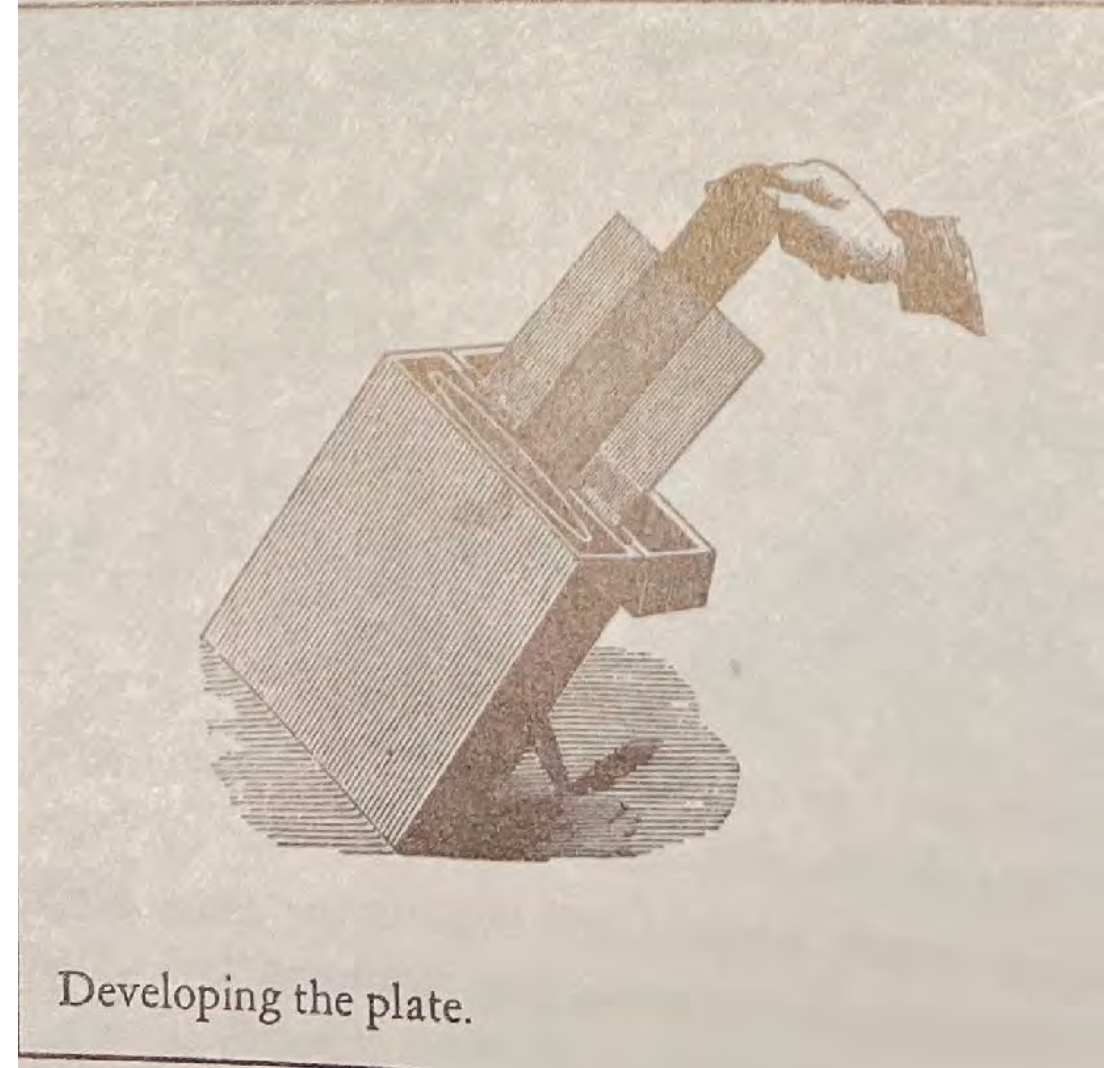
Polishing the plate.



Coating the plate.



Sensitizing the plate.



Developing the plate.

# Gelatin Silver (Dry Plate) Process

**Gelatin Silver Developing Out Paper Process:** Photographic prints from 1885 to the 1930s

It was the first photographic process that submerged exposed paper into chemicals, rather than using light, as the chief agent in developing an image. Due to its stability and ease of use, developing-out paper became the photographic process of choice by 1895 and dominated the twentieth century in terms of amateur and professional black-and-white photographic prints.

Papers were typically manufactured and purchased, rather than made by hand, and came in a variety of choices based on tonal and surface characteristics. Because these papers were much more light sensitive than any other paper of the time, photographers had to adjust their practices to the increased sensitivity.



**9 Types of Photographs**

**The Historic New Orleans Collection**

# Photographers Advertise

Unlike the complicated, precise preparation processes of the daguerreotype, the tintype and ambrotype used a faster, safer preparation process, but the tintype was significantly cheaper. Now, from placing the pre-prepared plate in the camera to handing the final image off to the customer, the photographer only needed minutes.

Instead of “brick and mortar” photographers from the days of the daguerreotype, the tintype’s simple processes led to more and more “itinerant” photographers who had portable dark rooms, going to people’s homes to photograph them, rather than having people come to their studio. This easy access made the photographs less formal and more authentic, as people felt comfortable expressing themselves.

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WASHVILLE, FEB. 14, 1857.

**PHOTOGRAPHY.**

I am now prepared to execute, in the best style of the art,  
**AMBROTYPES, PHOTOGRAPHS,**  
OR  
**DAGUERREOTYPES,**  
at my rooms, over Houghton & Lough miller's drug store.

Those wishing miniatures, please call and examine specimens.

The Ambrotype I have recently introduced, and succeed far beyond my most sanguine expectations. They are surely a great improvement over the Daguerreotype, both in beauty of appearance and facility of execution.

Bring on your children—they can be taken before they can have time to move. Satisfaction in all cases guaranteed or no charge. J. W. HOUGHTON.  
Winchester, Aug. 16. '56-tf.

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**WILSON'S**  
**Photograph Rooms,**  
143 BROUGHTON STREET.

—O—  
**WILSON'S**  
**Ferrottype Rooms,**  
21 BULL STREET.  
Savannah, - Georgia.

**FRAMES, FITTINGS**  
**and CASES,**  
Always on hand.  
mar 21-3m

# The Photographer Comes to You

Happily, not all early family photographs were taken inside conventional studios. Sitters were frequently photographed in the open air or in temporary, makeshift studios. Portraits were taken in the street, at the fairground, at the seaside, at local beauty spots and in the parks and commons where town dwellers went for relaxation and entertainment on Sundays and holidays. Itinerant photographers who worked these venues would set up shop for the day, the week or longer, depending on situation and circumstance.



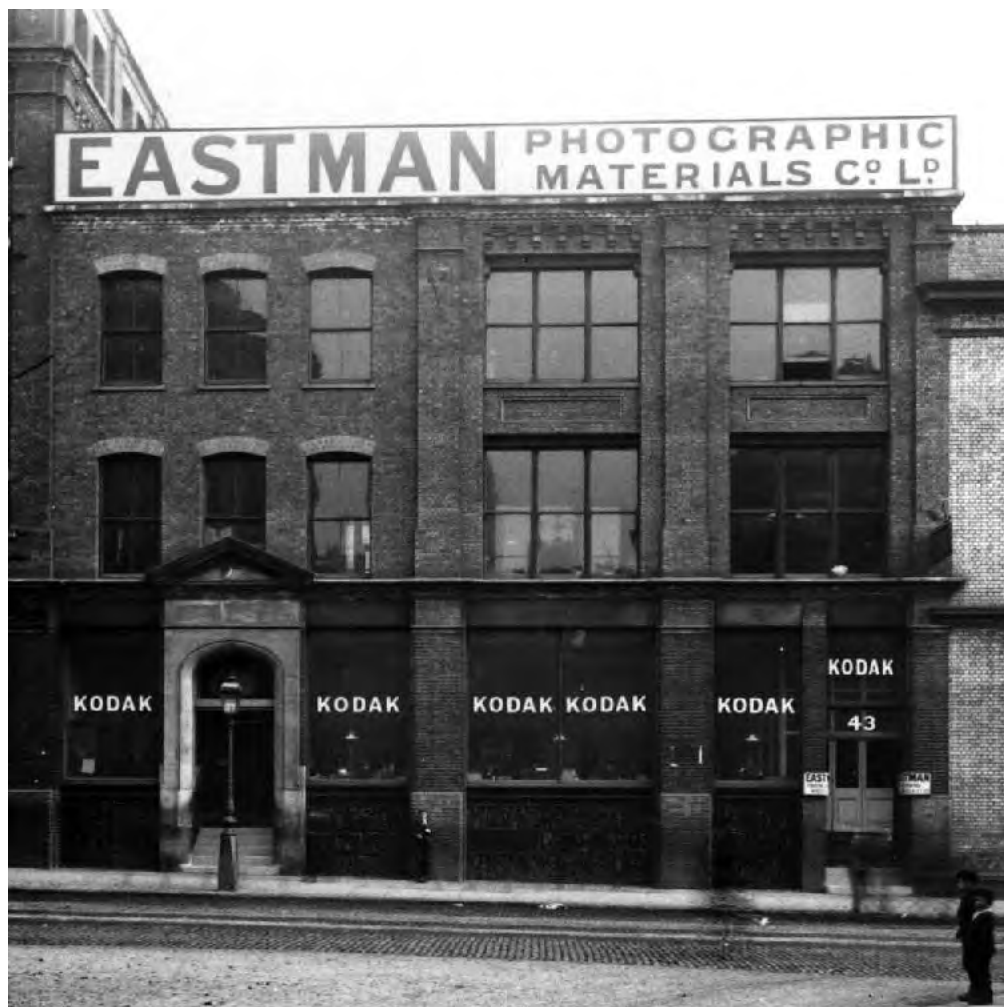
# The Photographer Comes to You



Anything to Get the Shot: Itinerant Photographers

# The Kodak Advantage - 1888

Finally, in the late 19th century, film photography comes around, and with it the Eastman Kodak Company (Kodak). Eliminating the need for heavy and often fragile glass or metal plates, the invention of film made cameras much easier to use: they were lighter and smaller, ideal for ordinary people wishing to use them as an addition to everyday life. The Kodak ad above emphasizes cameras only “weighing 2 or 3 pounds.” And a continuous stream of imagery even over a hundred years ago. Once we got photographs, all we wanted was more.



**FILM PHOTOGRAPHY.**

THE NEW METHOD OF MAKING PHOTOGRAPHS  
ON THE CONTINUOUS WEB.



OUR recently perfected system of FILM PHOTOGRAPHY enables any one to take photographs without the impedimenta heretofore necessary. No Glass! No Double Holders! No Changing of Plates! Weight of Apparatus Minimized! One of our Roll-Holders, loaded with a spool of Negative Paper, and weighing 2 or 3 pounds, attached to the camera, will make 24 or 48 negatives, simply by turning a key; replacing glass plates and apparatus weighing twenty-five pounds.

**INDORSED BY ALL THE LEADING AUTHORITIES:**

"Delighted with Roll-Holder: shall use it exclusively for all my landscape work—shall teach its management to all my students."  
W. H. PICKERING, Prof. Chemistry, Mass. Institute Technology.

"Send me Roll-Holder. Have such good luck with paper that I have given up glass plates. Seem surer of success with paper."  
MAURICE PERKINS, Prof. Chemistry, Union College.

"The impossible is attained: your Improved Negative Paper solves the problem."  
GEO. G. ROCKWOOD, 17 Union Square, New-York.

"Truly our day of deliverance has come."  
W. H. JACKSON, late Photographer Hayden Survey.

In use by the U. S. Lighthouse Board, the U. S. Fish Commission, U. S. Coast Survey, the Canadian and British Governments, and photographers and amateurs generally. *First Medals wherever exhibited.*

A revolution in photography which is of importance to every one who has made, or would like to make, photographs from nature. Circulars free. Address

**THE EASTMAN DRY PLATE AND FILM CO. 910 State Street, Rochester, N. Y.**  
Sole manufacturers of Eastman's Permanent Bromide Paper for positive printing. Prints by lamp-light. No toning. Simple, easy, certain. Send for circulars.

# People's Photography

Dry plate process was a water-shed moment for photographers. New cameras cut the chains to the darkroom, dispensed with the need for a tripod, and proved that all you needed to create magic was a cheap little wooden box. It placed the power of photography in the hands of anyone who could press a button!

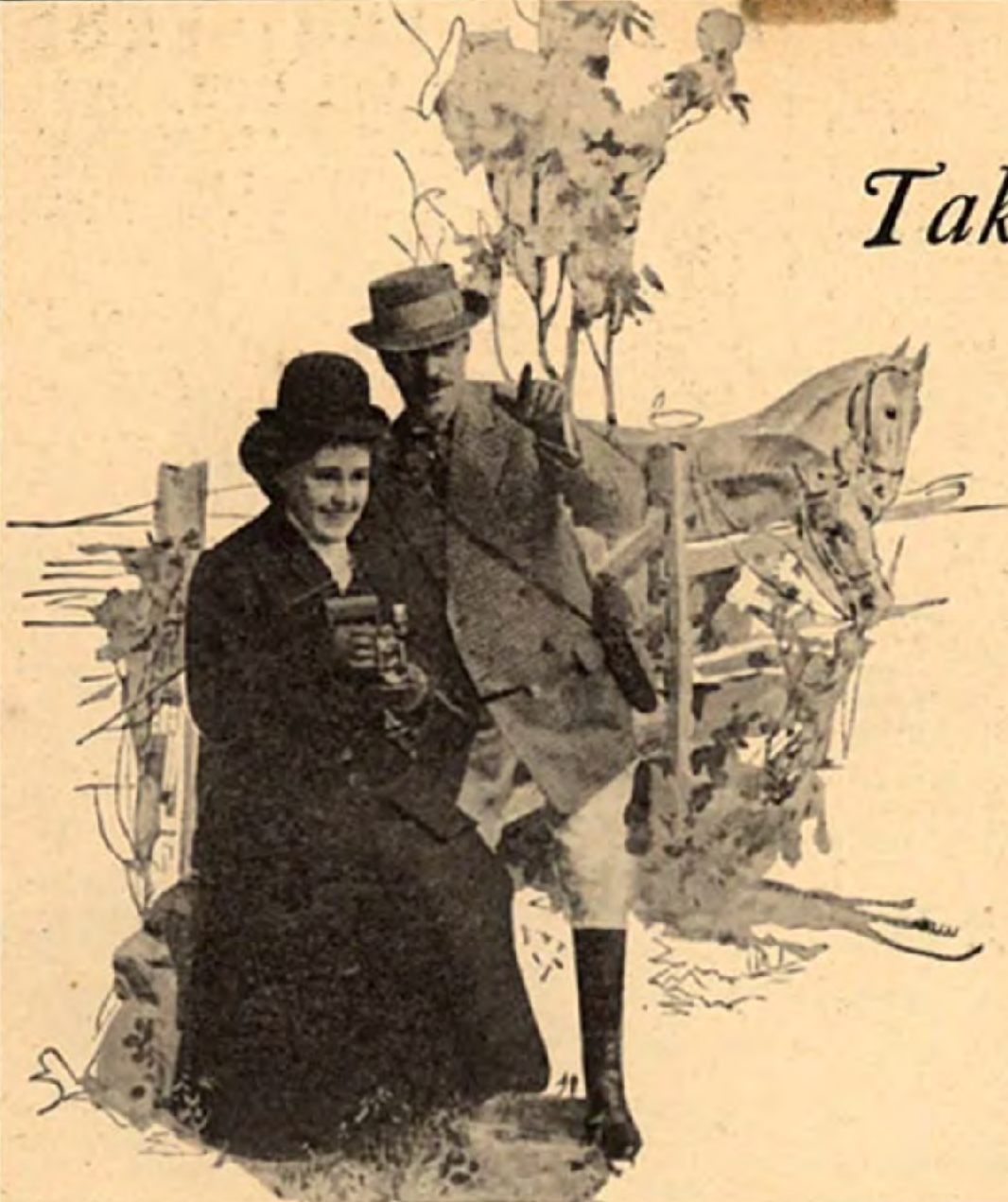
In 1888 the original Kodak sold for \$25 loaded with a 100-exposure roll of film and included a leather carrying case. It produced circular images 2 5/8" in diameter. After finishing the roll, the consumer mailed the camera back to the factory with \$10. to have the prints made. The camera, loaded with a fresh roll of film was returned with the negatives and mounted prints. Kodak advertisements from 1888 also state that any amateur could "finish his own pictures" and spare rolls of film were sold for \$2.

Pull a string at the top and push a button on the side. Two V-shaped lines on top are intended to aid aiming the camera at the subject. The key winds the film.



*Beach photographer, about 1890*

# People's Photography



*Take a*  
**KODAK**  
*with you*

'Twill double the pleasure of every outing, and give twice the pleasure afterward.

And anybody can make good pictures by the Kodak system. No dark-room — no bother. Every step is simple.

**Kodaks, \$5.00 to \$100.00**

**EASTMAN KODAK CO.**  
Rochester, N. Y.  
*Catalog free at the dealers or by mail*      *The Kodak City*



**LET THE CHILDREN KODAK**

*THERE'S PLEASURE AND INSTRUCTION,—THERE'S EDUCATION IN TAKING THE PICTURES, THERE'S A CONSTANTLY GROWING CHARM IN THE PICTURES THEMSELVES.*

Any girl or boy can readily take pictures with a Kodak or Brownie Camera and with a Brownie Developing Box or a Kodak Film Tank can develop the negatives perfectly. And with Velox paper the merest beginner can quickly learn to make highly satisfactory prints. From start to finish every step is easily understood and mastered. There is no dark-room for any part of the work and photography is by no means an expensive hobby.

KODAKS, \$5.00 to \$100.00. BROWNIES (they work like Kodaks), \$1.00 to \$12.00.  
KODAK FILM TANKS, \$2.50 to \$7.50. BROWNIE DEVELOPING BOXES, \$1.00.

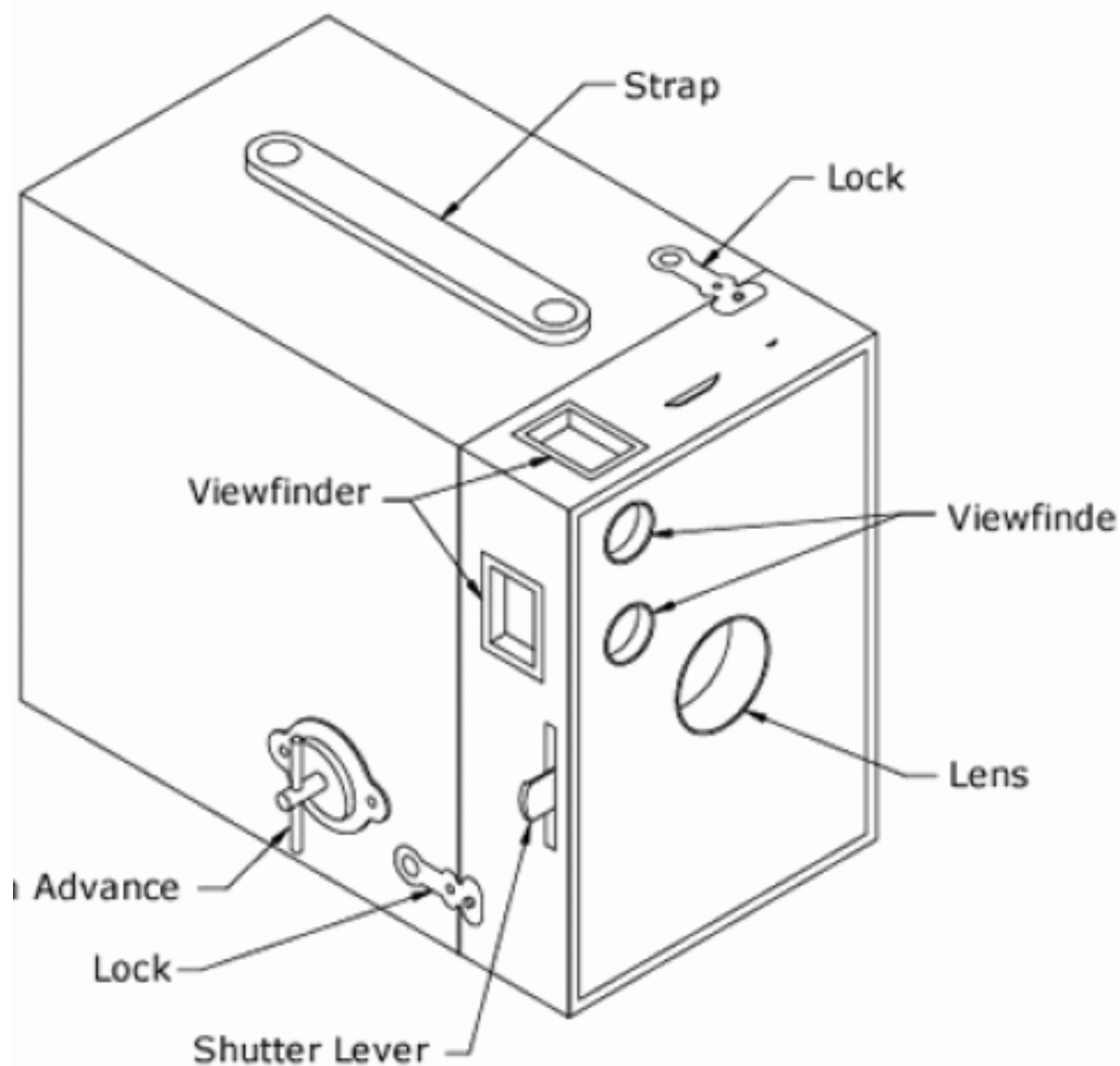
**EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY,**  
368 State Street, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Catalogue of Kodaks and Brownies free at the dealers or by mail.

# The Brownie Box Camera

The Kodak "Brownie" camera made its debut in 1900 and sold for one dollar. One hundred thousand of them were purchased during the first year alone. The Brownie helped to put photography into the hands of amateurs and allowed the middle class to take their own "snapshots" as well.

The name "Brownie" was chosen primarily because of the popularity of a children's book of cartoons of the same name, and partly because the camera was initially manufactured for Eastman by Frank Brownell of Rochester, New York.



# The Demise of Kodak

(remember the demise of the Daguerreotype?)

## The Rise and Fall of Kodak: How an Industry Giant Missed the Digital Revolution

Throughout the 20th Century, Kodak held a dominant position in the film and photographic market. Its iconic slogan, “Kodak Moments,” captured the emotional value of photography as it continued to produce high-quality products. These, coupled with effective marketing campaigns, solidified the brand’s reputation even more.

The growth of this new digital technology and its rapidly rising popularity posed a threat to Kodak’s film-based business model. Unfortunately, the company did not see it this way. Instead, they dismissed it and viewed digital cameras as only a niche that would not have any impact on its core market.

While doing this, Kodak was slowly being overtaken by its competitors, who embraced digital technology with open arms. Sony, Canon, and Nikon were the first brands to capitalize on the growing market for digital cameras. As sales of film products fell hard and fast, the profits took a nose dive. This forced the company to lay off thousands of employees. And, in 2012, Kodak filed for bankruptcy, marking the end of an era for the once-mighty photography giant.



# Space and time will never be the same

Photography transformed American life (and life around the world): it brought the distant near. With photographs, Americans could become familiar with far-off places. Because photography allowed a glimpse of the past in new and utterly novel ways, it altered the perception of familiar places and things. Suddenly, one could move away from home but preserve a photograph of a birthplace, study the likeness of a dead relative, or see what a parent had looked like as a child. Photography let Americans feel a more immediate connection to people and places removed by geographical distance and time. **Photography reflected truth.**

The daguerreotype was the primary photographic medium until the Civil War era - 1861-1865. Portraits were the primary subject, with landscape and scenery appearing rarely.



*St. Anthony Falls, Minneapolis, MN*



[Landscape, Pride's Crossing]

Samuel Masury

ca. 1856

## Interesting subjects and poses



*Niagra Falls, NY*



**Niagara Falls**

Possibly by Silas A. Holmes

ca. 1855

## Interesting subjects and poses



**[Boston from a Hot-Air Balloon]**

James Wallace Black

1860s Think drone photography of today



**Objects and still life**

Photography is filled with stories of everyday people



[Hutchinson Family Singers]

Unknown

1845



**Studios advertised  
by adding their  
logos and info on the  
photo card**

# Photography Clubs in the 1800s

Regardless of whether your involvement with photography is as a casual snapshotter or as a serious practitioner of the art, one of the best ways to get more pleasure from photography, and enlarge your horizons in this field, is by joining a camera club or a photographic association of some kind.

**The Photographic Society of Philadelphia (PSoP) 1860** is recognized as the oldest, continuously active photographic society in the United States. While officially chartered in 1862, the society originated from informal meetings that began in 1860.

**Boston Camera Club (1881)**: Founded as the Boston Society of Amateur Photographers, it is recognized as one of the oldest continuously active, amateur-focused clubs.

**Society of Amateur Photographers of New York (1884)**: Formed to advance photography free from commercial interests, later becoming the Camera Club of New York.

**Cleveland Photographic Society (1887)**: A long-standing, continuously operating club.

**Hoboken Camera Club (1889)**: Established early, reflecting the rise of amateur photography in the 1880s.

**Oregon Camera Club (1895)** :An early, prominent club in the Pacific Northwest.

**Portland Camera Club (1899)**: One of the oldest continuously operating clubs in the U.S..

# Photography Clubs in the 1800s: Field Trip Time!



*Spencer on gelatin plate of his own make.*

*glt*



*My boat trip to Burlington June 1877*



*J.M. Wood Cumberland trip 1881*



*J.M. Wood*

# Photography in America: Images for the common man

1850 - *Daguerrian Photography Journal*, 3 volumes

1852 - 1870 *Humphrey's Journal*, 3 volumes

1851 - organized conventions and calls for a national organization for Daguerrotype. Publication of the ***Photographic and Fine-Art Journal***.



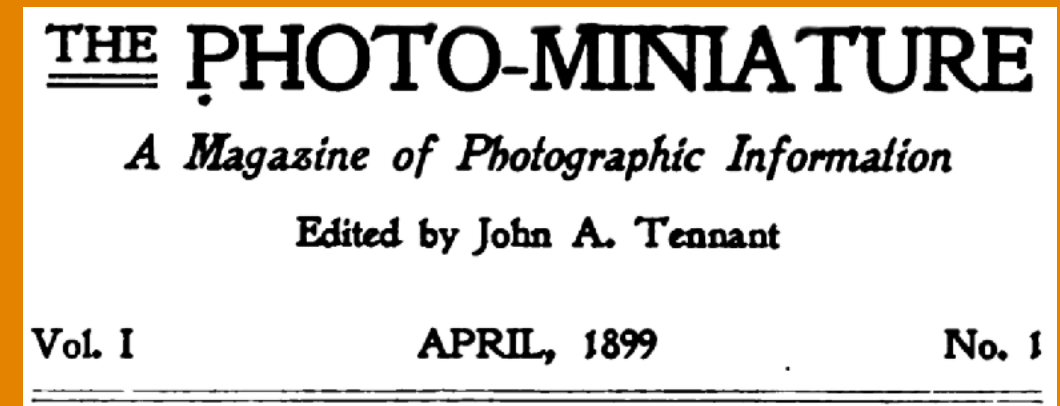
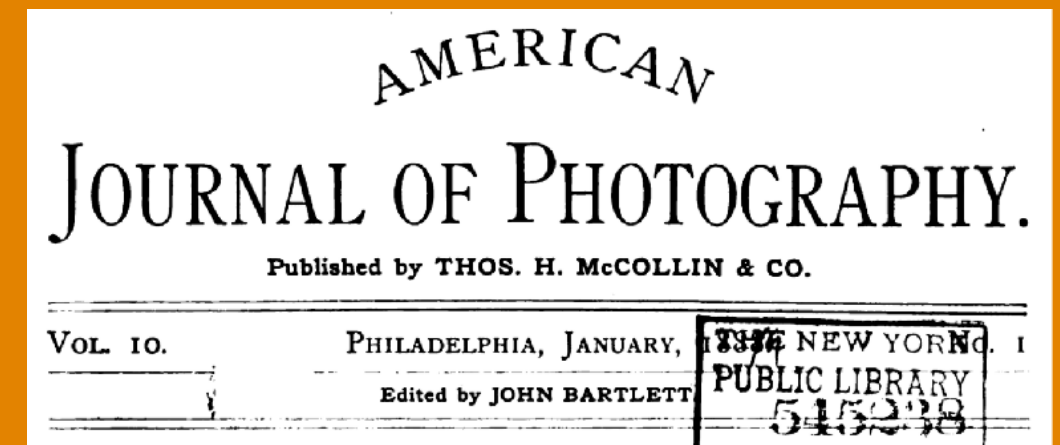
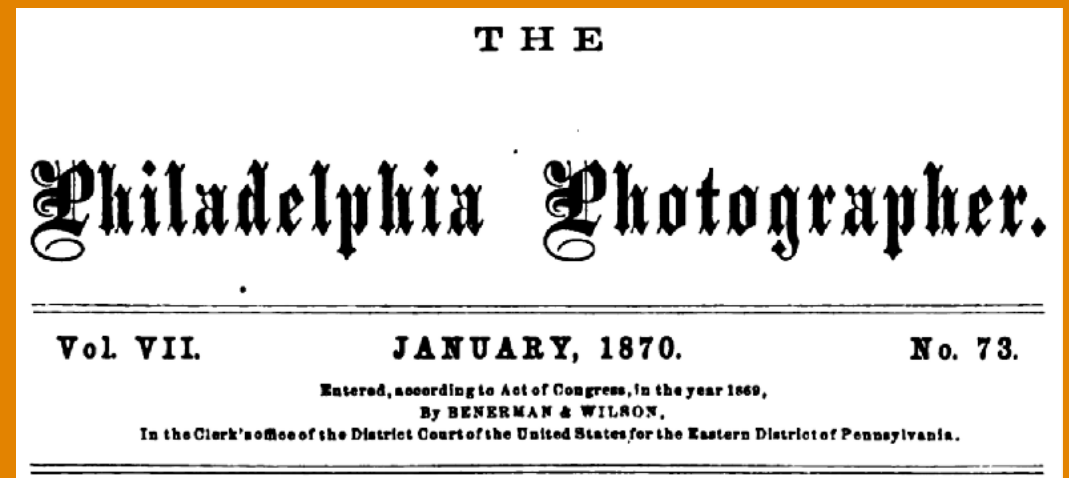
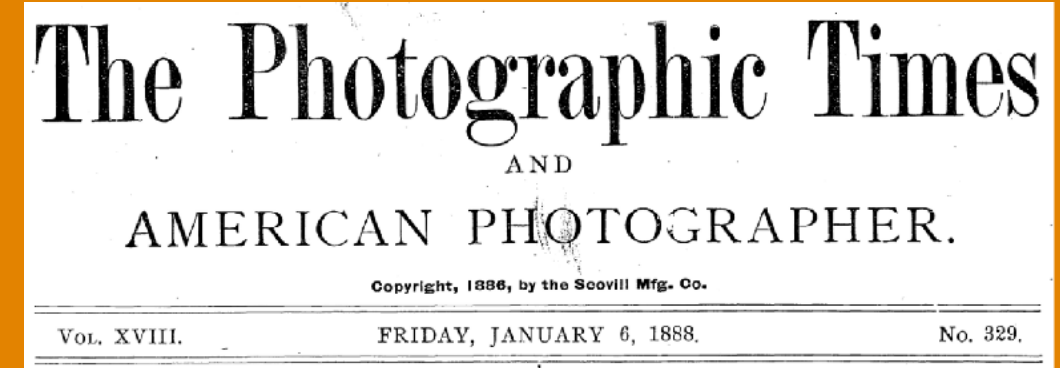
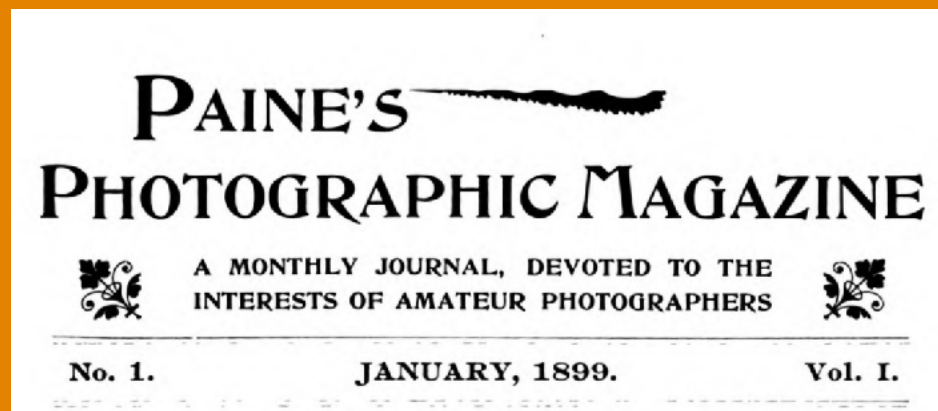
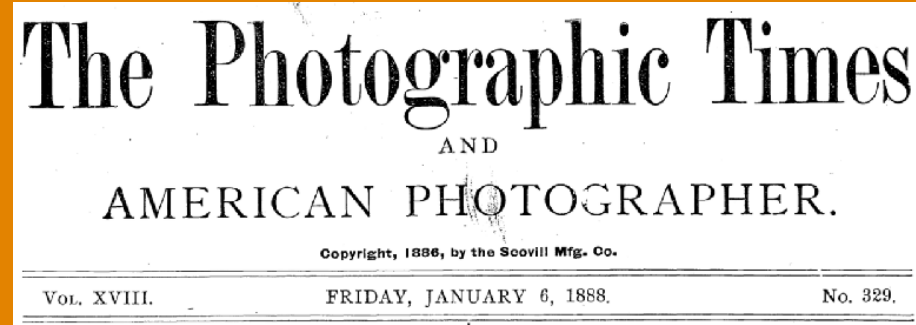
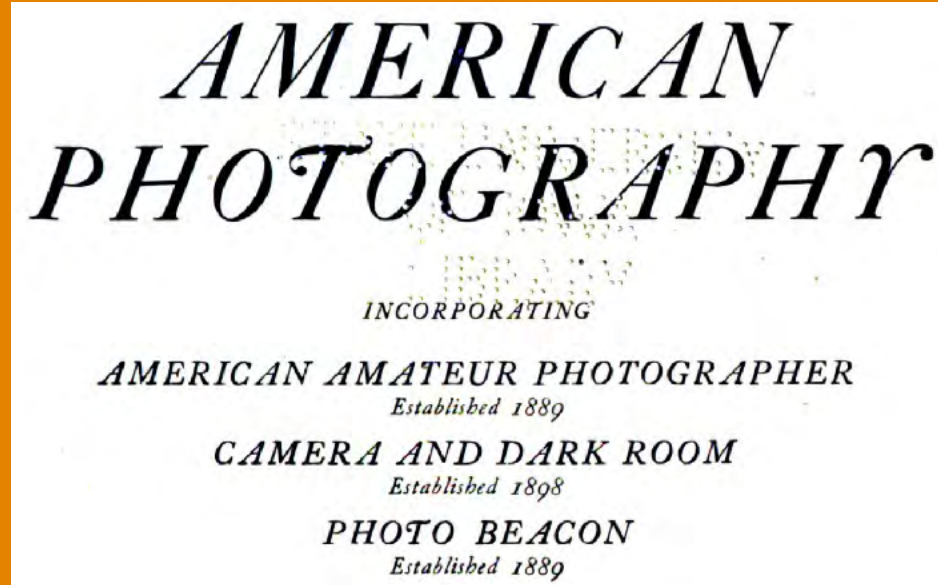
6 volumes, digitized by the US Patent Office.

*The Photographic Art Journal* (edited by H.H. Snelling) ran for **7 volumes** from 1851 to 1854. It was then expanded and retitled to *The Photographic and Fine Art Journal*, which published an additional **5 volumes** between 1855 and 1860, bringing the total run to **12 volumes**

WITH the advance of this beautiful art there appears to be a progressively increasing desire to produce more artistic results; and numerous manipulatory improvements have recently been introduced, many of them with the most decided advantage. It is thought desirable therefore, to devote a short space to the description and consideration of such of these as are the most important.

# Photography Publications in the 1800s

## **Listing of Historic Photography Magazines with Links to Scanned Issues**



# Photography in America: Images for the common man

1851 - 1st **World's Fair**, Crystal Palace in London... Americans hadn't invented the daguerreotype, but in the twelve years since it had been introduced to their shores they had improved upon it to such a degree that it was referred to as "the American process."



1853 - Exhibition of the **Industry of All Nations** was New York's answer to the 1851 Great Exhibition in London.

Visitors saw a variety of daguerreotypes and salt prints. Mathew Brady won a bronze medal for his photos. The fair displayed equipment, cameras and specialized lenses.

Promoters used photography to document the event, creating over a hundred photographs of the location and exhibits.

# The Backstory



Studio Photographer at Work. Salted paper print from glass negative, circa 1855

The history of photography has a variety of photographers, equipment and techniques. In researching this history there are variations in who, when, and how photography evolved and subtle claims as to “when” photos might have been taken and “surviving” photo dates. The surviving American photos are included in museum collections throughout the US.

Despite subtle variations in dates and attributions, photography in the US, the photographers, including a slew of amateurs and “unknown makers,” were literally taking the medium into their own hands and exploring the possibilities of a new form of expression, a new way of seeing and a new way of sharing.

Once photography came to America, its popularity exploded. People flocked to photographers to have their picture taken. In the early stages, photography was an incredibly complicated, labor-intensive process that required many moving parts and specific conditions. Initially, printed photographs were expensive and low-quality, attainable only by the wealthy few, but as technology improved, photography became more accessible to the general public.

**US Census: 1850: 938 professional photographers**

**US Census: 1890: 20,040 professional photographers**

# Galleries and Museums with Photography on Exhibit

Venture out to these galleries and museums to enjoy photographic art and be inspired

## Photography's First Century:

### Masterworks from the Bibliothèque nationale de France

on exhibit at Kimbell Art Museum October 4, 2026 - January 17, 2027

The Kimbell's first-ever exhibition celebrating the art of photography will trace the history of the medium's first century of exploration and discovery, from the rise of the Daguerreotype and the calotype in the 1840s to the age of modernism between the World Wars.

The Bibliothèque nationale de France—the country's great national library—holds one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of photographs in the world.

This exhibition is organized by the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Kimbell Art Museum in collaboration with Manifesto Expo and in conjunction with France's celebration of the bicentennial of the invention of photography.

**Kimbell Art Museum**  
3333 Camp Bowie Boulevard  
Fort Worth, Texas 76107  
817-332-8451

**Monday Closed**  
T, W, Th, S 10am - 5pm  
F 12pm - 8pm  
Sunday noon to 5pm

View more about  
this Exhibit

Kimbell Art Museum

## From Sea to Shining Sea:

### Celebrating Photographs of the Vast Arena that is America

on exhibit at PDNB Gallery June 13 - August 15, 2026

Photography is the best medium for such an exhibition that illustrates our country's culture and landscape in this 250th year of our country's Declaration of Independence. PDNB Gallery is excited to explore this visual expression of America selecting special works by artists in their stable and its archives. Each work of art captures America in a visceral way made possible with the magic of photography, invented in 1826. The following are highlights from the exhibition.

Approximately 35 works of art will be included in this group exhibition. Selections include Edward Curtis, Alfred Steiglitz, Jack Ridley, Walter Rosenblum, Al Satterwhite, Neal Slavin, Bill Owens, Earle Hudnall, and Chris Verene.

**PDNB**  
PHOTOGRAPHS DO NOT BEND GALLERY

**PDNB**  
Wells Fargo Bank Building  
101 S. Locust St., Ste B07  
Denton, TX 76201  
214.969.1852  
info@pdnbgallery.com

View more about  
this Exhibit

**Monday Closed**  
T thru S 11am - 5pm

The Modern

[www.themodern.org/](http://www.themodern.org/)

Craighead Green

[www.craigheadgreen.com/](http://www.craigheadgreen.com/)

Dallas Museum of Art

<https://www.dma.org/>

Talley Dunn Gallery

[talleydunn.com](http://talleydunn.com/)

Amon Carter Museum of American Art

[www.cartermuseum.org](http://www.cartermuseum.org/)

## Beneath the Surface:

### Mining and American Photography

on exhibit at Amon Carter Museum of American Art February 14–May 9, 2027

Dependent on precious metals from its inception, photography has always been intertwined with the natural resources that are fundamental to modern industrialized life. Beneath the Surface: Mining and American Photography is the first exhibition to exclusively examine how photographers from the mid-19th century to today have powerfully captured the effects of resource extraction on the land and communities of the United States. Featuring approximately 150 photographs that span 185 years, this exhibition focuses on the subterranean removal of the minerals and fossil fuels that power this country's economy and industry. Together, these works demonstrate how photographers have drawn on changing technology and unique visual strategies to rise to the challenge of picturing these colossal industries.



**Amon Carter Museum of American Art**  
3501 Camp Bowie Blvd.  
Fort Worth, TX 76107  
817.738.1933

View more about  
this exhibit

**Location is open: Sunday noon–5 p.m.**  
M – Closed  
T, W, F, S 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

## Divination: Beverly Buchanan & Dionne Lee

on exhibit September 4, 2026 - February 14, 2027

Divination: Beverly Buchanan & Dionne Lee foregrounds Beverly Buchanan and Dionne Lee's explorations of the myths, majesty, and dispossessions embedded in the American landscape. The exhibition is the second in a series organized by Senior Curator Rebecca Matalon to bring together artists across generations as a way to open up new interpretations of their work. The show follows the 2021 exhibition Wild Life: Elizabeth Murray & Jessi Reaves, which similarly presented an exchange between intergenerational artists. Divination pairs materials from the late Buchanan's archives, including photographs, journals, writing, and ephemera, with a selection of videos, photographs, and sculptures by the Columbus-based Lee. While Buchanan (1940–2015) and Lee (b. 1988, New York City)

**Contemporary  
Arts Museum  
Houston**

5216 Montrose Boulevard  
Houston, Texas 77006  
713.284.8250 | [info@camh.org](mailto:info@camh.org)

View more about  
this Exhibit

**CAM is open:**  
Thursday - Saturday 11 - 6

# References

The most comprehensive list of photographic methods used in America is found on the Historic New Orleans Collection website: <https://hnoc.org/>



VIRTUAL EXHIBITION

## FROM DAGUERRETYPE TO DIGITAL

A look at over 20 different photographic processes and techniques represented in HNOC's holdings, from the daguerreotype to the digital prints of today.

[https://hnoc.org/virtual-exhibitions/from\\_daguerreotype\\_to\\_digital](https://hnoc.org/virtual-exhibitions/from_daguerreotype_to_digital)

The selection covers the full extent of the medium's history, from the daguerreotype—which came to New Orleans in 1840, barely six months after its introduction in France—to the digital prints of today.

Daguerreotype Process: 1840s - 1860s

Printing Out Paper Processes:

Salted Paper: 1840 - 1860s

Albumen: 1850s - 1900

Albumen Cartes-de-Visites

Albumen Stereographs

Collodion Printing-out Paper: 1885 - 1910

Gelatin Printing-out Paper: 1885 - 1910

Matte Collodion Printing-out Paper 1895 - 1910

Cyanotype Process: 1842 - today

American Ivorytype Process: 1850s - 1860s

Wet Plate Process

Ambrotype 1854 - 1880s

Tintype 1860s - 1900

Carbon Process

Carbon Process 1860s - 1930s

Glass Positives 1880s - 1930s

Lantern Slides 1850s - 1930s

Opalotype Process 1830s - 1930s

Protons Process Process 1880s - 1930s

Platinum Process 1880s - 1930s

Gelatin Silver Developing-Out Paper Process 1890 – today

Autochrome Process (1907 – 1930s)

Chromogenic Processes (1930s – today)

Chromogenic Type-C Prints from a Film Negative

Chromogenic Type-C Prints from a Digital File

Cibachrome/Ilfochrome Process (1963 – 2011)

Dye Diffusion Transfer Process (1948 – 2005)

Wash-Off Relief Process as Practiced by

Clarence John Laughlin (ca. 1940)

Dye Transfer Process (1946 - 1993)

Bromoil and Bromoil Transfer Processes 1907 – 1930s

Inkjet/Giclée Print Process late 1900s – today

# References



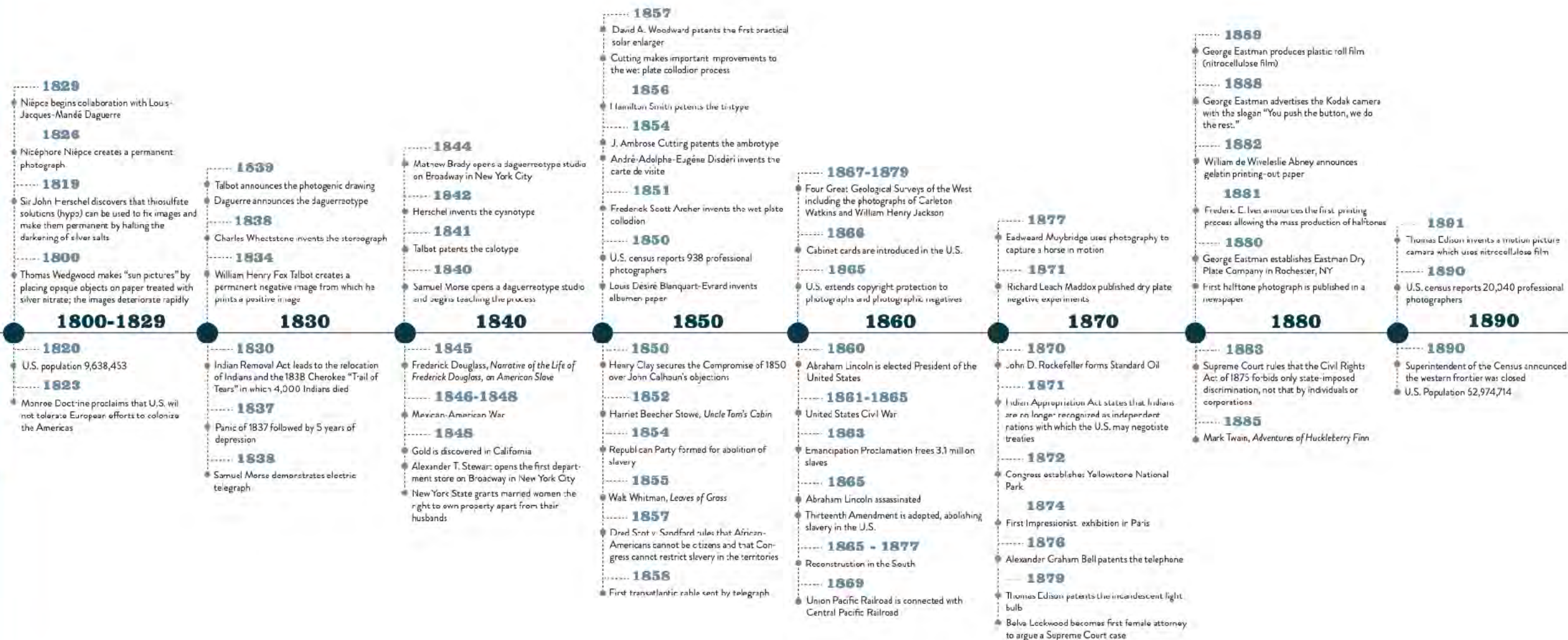
<https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/DawnsEarlyLight/exhibition/daguerretalbot/index.html>

## Exhibition Themes

- **Daguerre & Talbot**
- Photographic Processes
- The Daguerreotype Revolution
- The Dawn of Mass Production
- Celebrity Culture
- Mathew Brady
- A War Exposed
- Abraham Lincoln & Modern Politics
- The Rise of Mass Media
- The World in Three Dimensions
- A World Getting Smaller
- The West
- Hand Colored Photography
- Moving Pictures
- Photography as Art, Painting as Impression
- Towards Modern Photography
- Timeline

## Exhibition Information

- Gallery Information
- Exhibition Credits



# References

[PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE 19th CENTURY:  
A Process Identification Guide](#)

[Photographs of America's Eastern  
Treasures Finally Have Their Moment in  
the Limelight: Smithsonian Magazine](#)

[A Long Arc: Photography and the  
American South since 1845](#)

[A Long Arc: Photography and the  
American South since 1845: Video](#)

[The New Art: American Photography,  
1839-1910](#)

[History of Photography: PBS](#)

[Photographs of the World's Fair Chicago,  
1894, digitized by the Smithsonian Library](#)

*Shadows & light*

KEITH DOTSON'S OFFICIAL FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY BLOG

Interesting factoids and photo history

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**Visual Beginnings: A Look Into The Met's  
'The New Art: American Photography,  
1839-1910'**

An exploration of the Metropolitan  
Museum of Art's new exhibit on early  
photography. July 5, 2025

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**Study the Secrets of Early American  
Photography at This New Exhibition:**

**"The New Art: American Photography,  
1839-1910" at the Metropolitan Museum  
of Art**

## A Sneak Peak: Picturing America: the Sequel September 26, 2026

# A Child's View of America

As a child, my favorite class was geography. Our textbooks had a map of America with icons for food, industry and land features. I studied this map everyday and wanted to visit all the places and try all the foods. I was mesmerized by all the faraway destinations and made up my own stories about them.

They are no longer mysteries - I have traveled and enjoy trying new foods. Now I am curious about how early artists and photographers pictured this new, enchanting land. There are truths to be learned about this land - some beautiful and some which bear witness to our terrible mistakes. But the images exist and tell us about ourselves.



Thank-you very much!