

Picturing America

The Early Years: 1839-1900

Part II

America: A Child's View

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.



America: The Interactive View



Fast forward 70 years and now every 5th grade child has access to an interactive map of the US - click on the state and there is plenty of information about the history, famous people and even video features.



The Emerging Country

Photography's arrival in the United States in 1840 allowed ordinary people to make and own images in a way that had not been previously possible.

Photographers immediately became engaged with the **life of the emerging nation**, the activity of new **urban centers**, and the possibilities of unprecedented access to the **vast western frontier**. From the nineteenth to the twentieth century, photography not only captured the country's changing cultural and physical landscape, but also developed its own language and layers of meaning.

Photographs of individuals, places, and objects become a catalogue of our collective memory and have contributed to the ever-evolving idea of the American character. "Spiritual Frontier" investigates early ideas of a vast, inexhaustible wilderness that symbolized American greatness. "America Inhabited" traces the nation's rapid **industrialization** and **urbanization** through images of **speed, change, progress, immigration**, and **contemporary rural, urban, and suburban landscapes**.

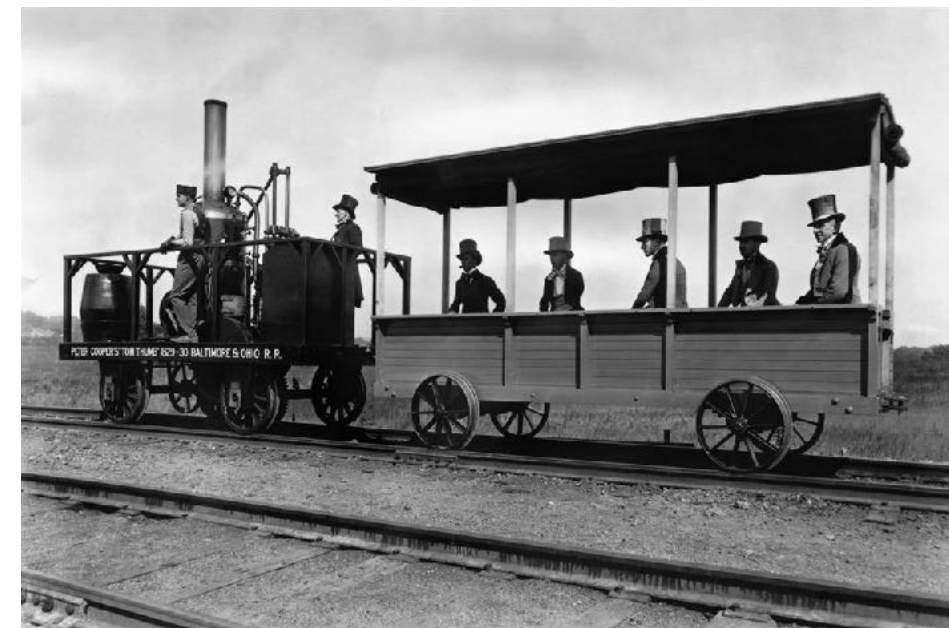
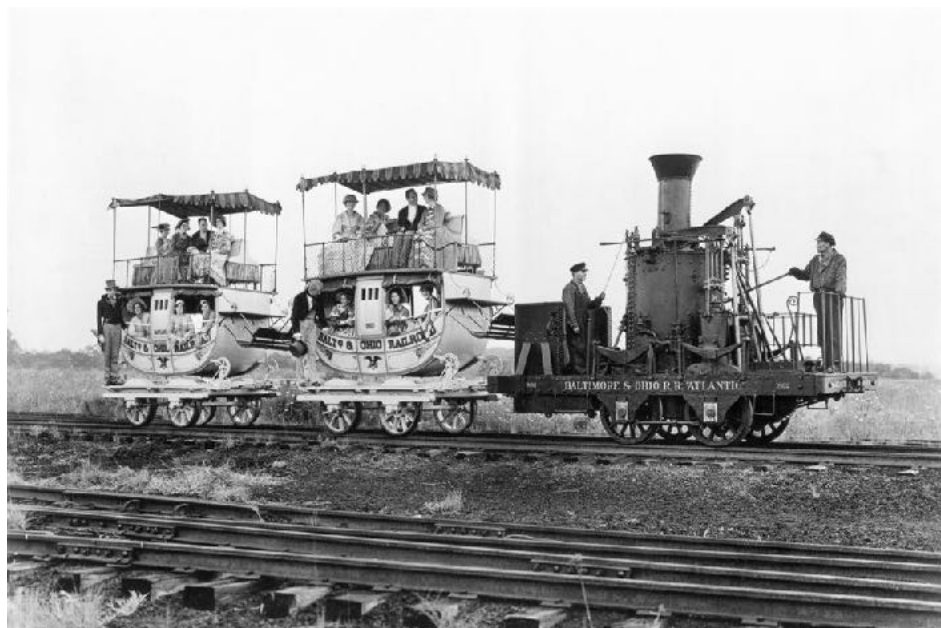


America: The Age of the Industrial Revolution

Photography was born into a changing world, it also functioned as an agent of that change. Like today's digital technology, it launched innovations in nearly every imaginable aspect of modern life, from the way we tried criminals to the way maps were made. It changed how people viewed themselves and others. Time was frozen and history became more tangible.

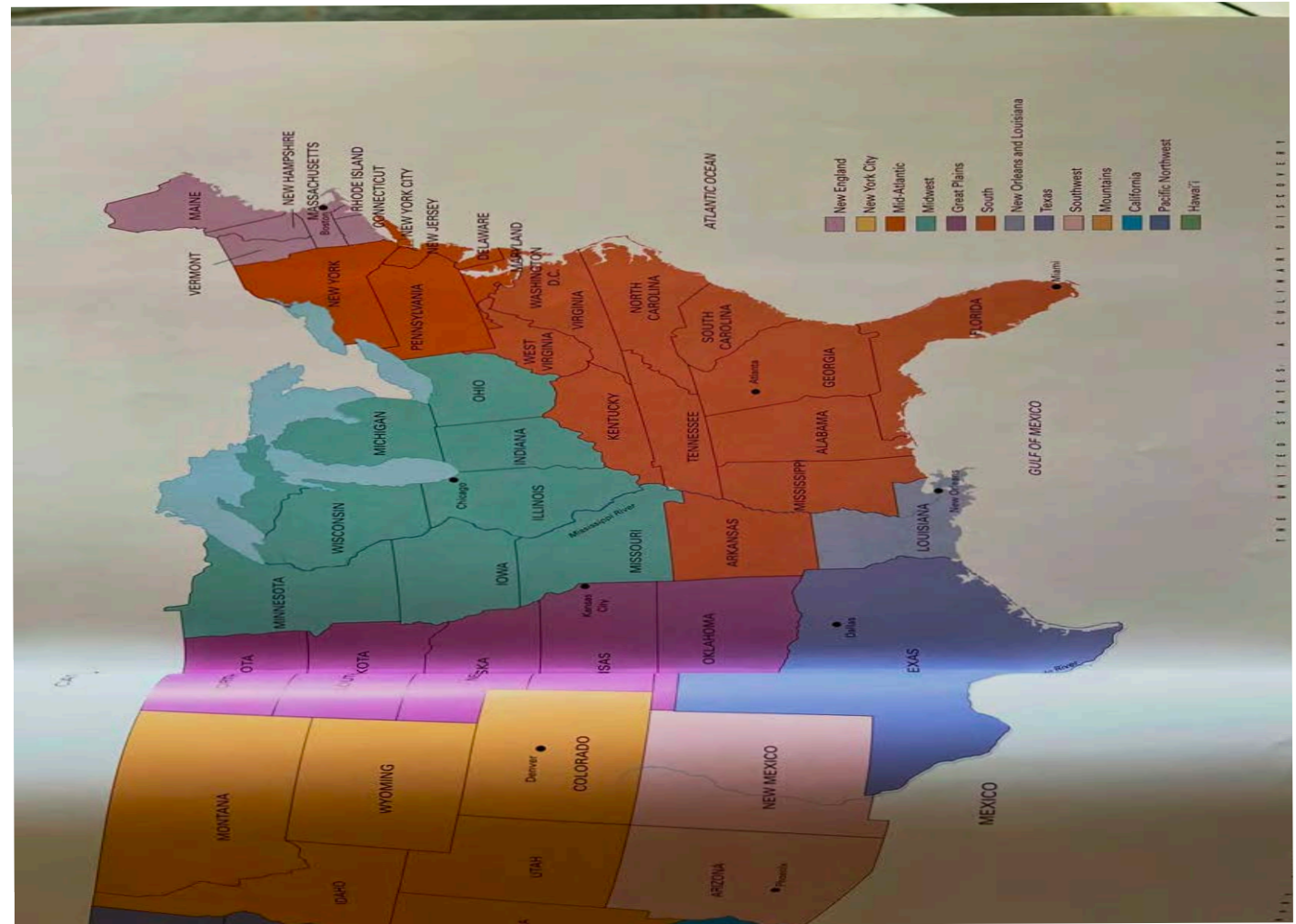
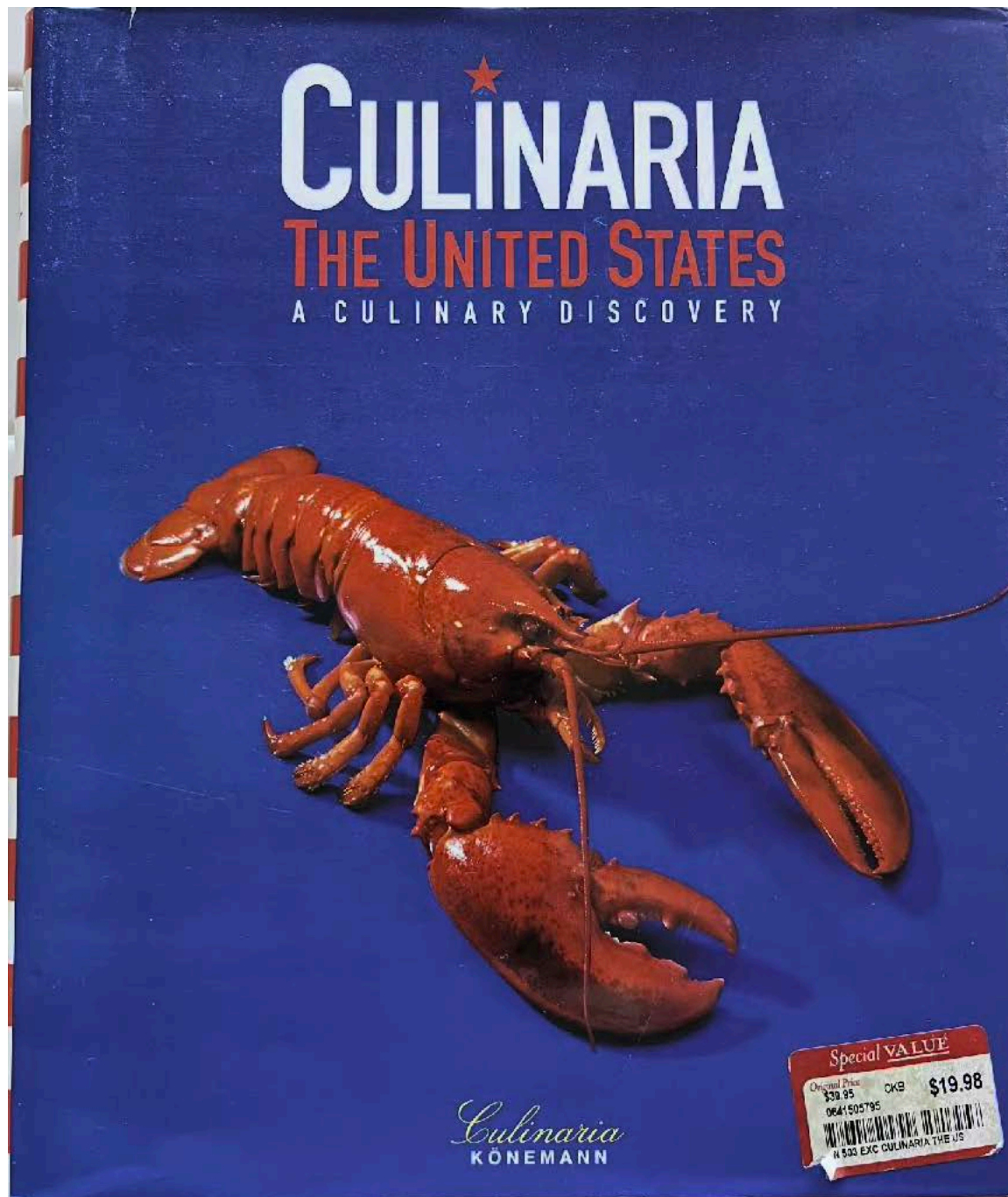
Ultimately, photography serves a patchwork of functions. It is an art form, a record-keeping mechanism, a means of communication and a medium whose usefulness is shared by the many disciplines of both the sciences and the humanities. Photographs have the power to teach as well as to excite the imagination, transporting us across time and space to new horizons.

America was young. It had no past. In place of tradition, Americans sought westward expansion - sea to shining sea. Labor was cheap or enslaved. They built 30,000 miles of railroad and examined every geographic region. And they enshrined these vistas in photographs. Photography was a new form of communication.



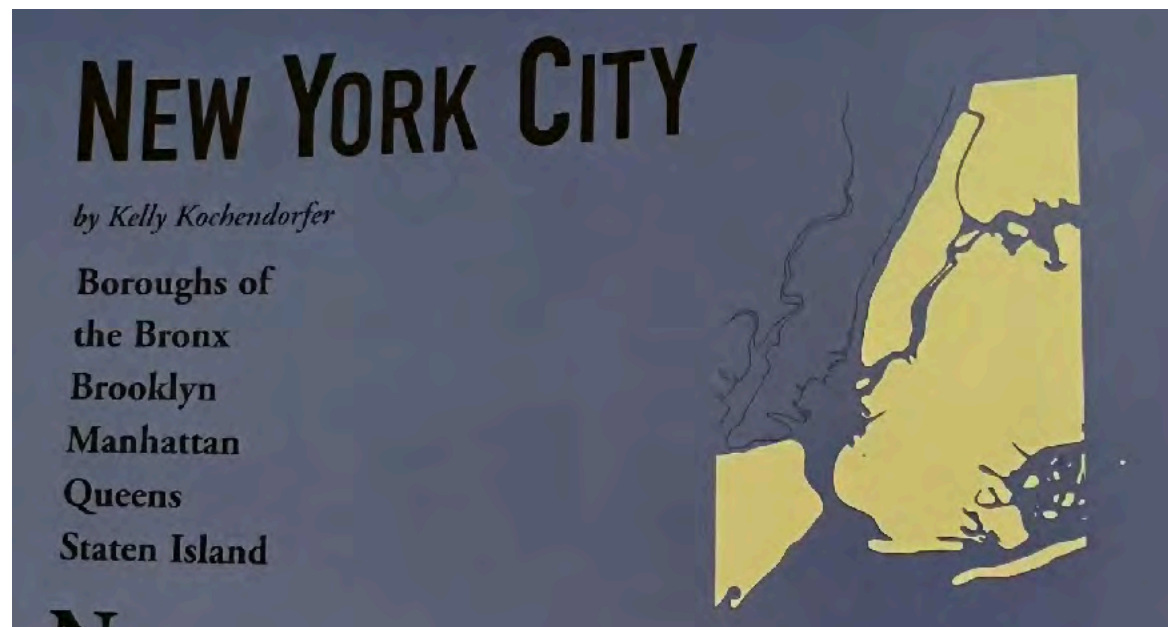
Picturing America

This is what it looks like in food. What does it look like in historical images?



These divisions are made on the culinary traditions of an area, but the various geographies also developed their own distinctive characteristics going from uncharted territory to sacred national parkland; from areas rich in bounty to miles of farmland and port areas developing trade and commerce.

NYC & Surrounding Area



19th-century New York City was a period of rapid transformation (1801–1900), where the city grew from a modest port into a massive, industrialized global metropolis, culminating in the 1898 consolidation of the five boroughs. Key elements included massive immigration, extreme wealth disparities, the rise of Tammany Hall politics, and the development of landmarks like Central Park and skyscrapers.

Key Eras and Moments

- **1839 (The Beginning):** Shortly after the process was announced in Europe, the first daguerreotype in America was taken in NYC, featuring St. Paul's Church.
- **1840s–1850s (Early Documentation):** Early photographers like Samuel F.B. Morse and John W. Draper experimented with city scenes and portraits, with many of the earliest surviving, often anonymous, views focusing on lower Manhattan. Some early landscape photos.
- **1890s (Social Documentation):** Jacob Riis documented the city's tenements, helping to push for reforms. Alice Austin captured the working people of New York City.

19th Century Expansion and Immigration

- **Erie Canal (1825):** Its completion linked the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes, cementing NYC's status as the nation's premier port and commercial hub.
- **Industrialization & Immigration:** The city saw massive population growth, becoming a primary port of entry for European immigrants. NYC was an ethnic melting pot. Between 1860 and 1900, fourteen million immigrants came to the country, providing workers for an array of industries.



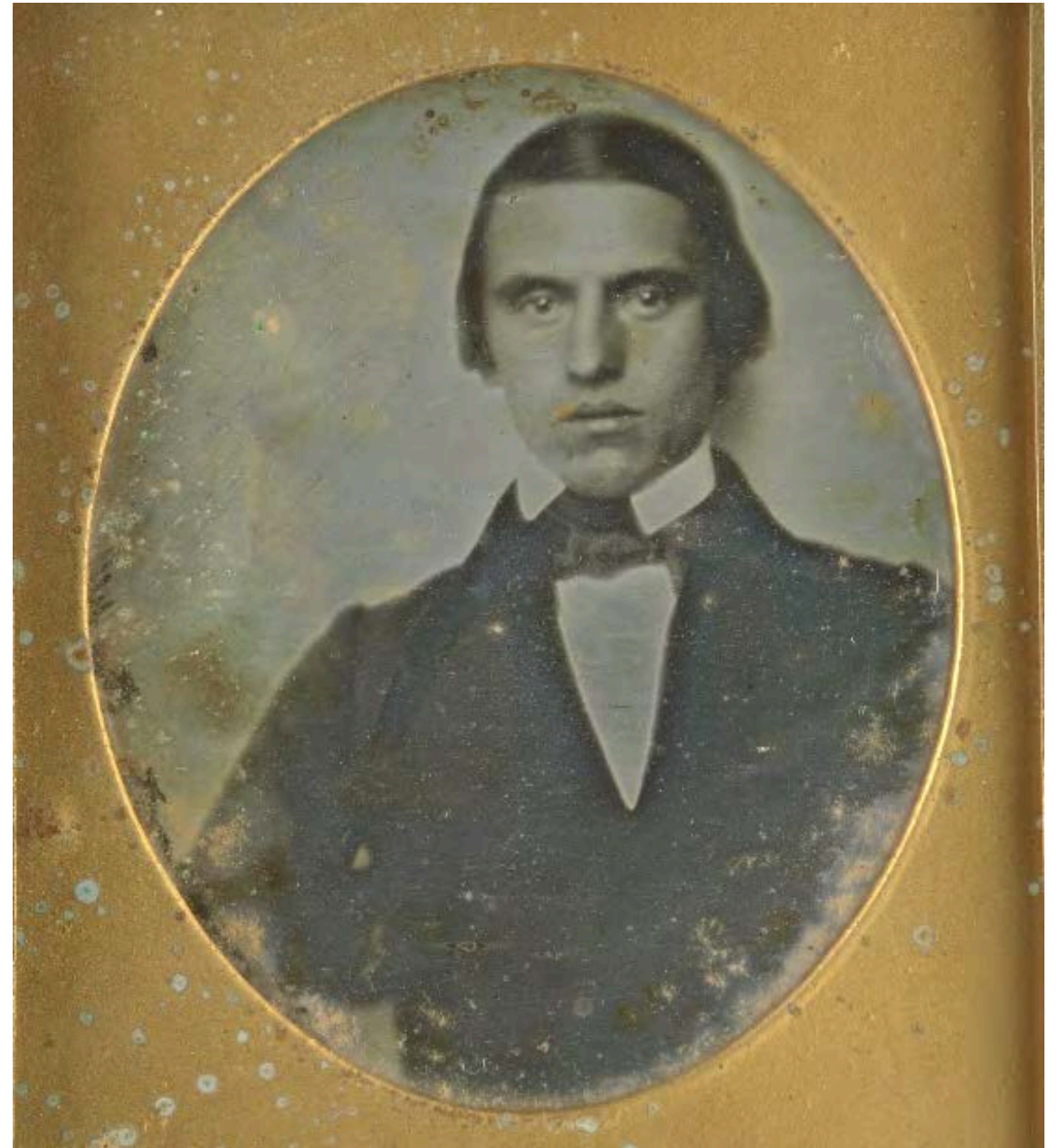
The oldest known photograph of New York: Broadway & Franklin St, circa May 1850.

Photo Studios in the East

In the last session, I talked about photography studios in NYC, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts. It was very popular to have a photograph taken and there were also many photos of important landmarks in the burgeoning cities in eastern states.

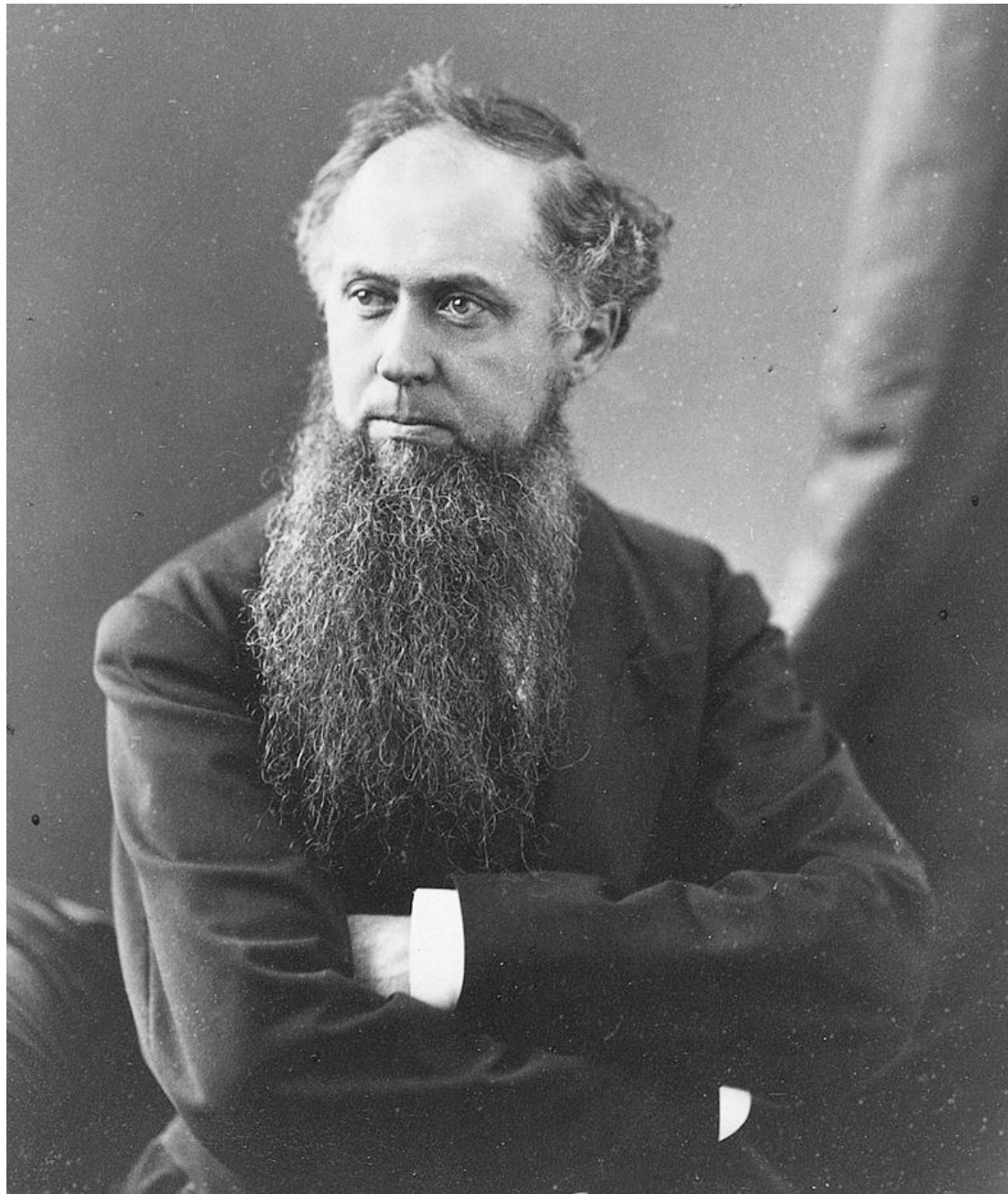


Dorothy Catherine Draper, 1840, sister of photographer John Draper. It might be the oldest known portrait photo of a New Yorker.



Unknown sitter by Samuel Morse, 1844.

New York City Photos



Abraham Bogardus had his own studio 1840 - 1860s in NYC.

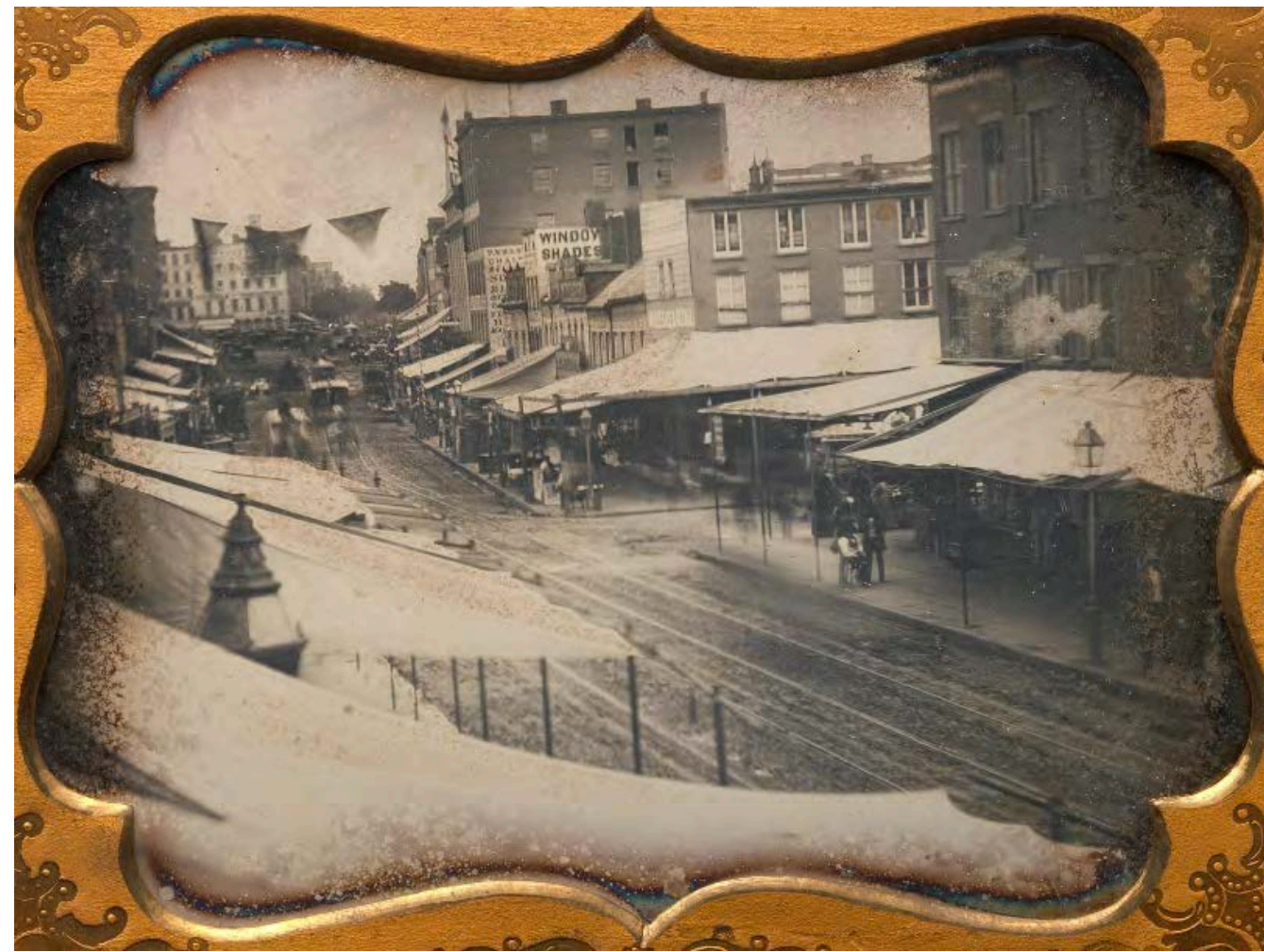


This street scene is a hand-colored ambrotype and one of the earliest photos taken in NYC.

New York City Photos



Unitarian Congregational Church of the Messiah, which once stood on the east side of Broadway at the end of Waverly Place, surrounded by small free-standing houses.



This photo was taken in 1839 or 1840. It captures Chatham Street (now Park Row) northeast of Chatham Square. It shows a commercial, working-class section of the city known for its shops, taverns, and dance halls. (Early "street photography")

New York City Photos



This street at the time was rural farmland. In 1839 it was a house with white fence on Bloomingdale Road, now today's Upper West Side.



City University of New York, between 1836-1894

New York City Photos

As cameras and processes developed, more portrait-type photos were taken outside.



Girl sitting in a goat carriage in Central Park, New York, circa 1870s.



Central Park, New York, circa 1870s.



Two girls sitting in a goat carriage, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York, circa 1870s.

New York City Photos

During the 19th century, New York City solidified its position as America's largest and most dynamic city, growing into a bustling metropolis that attracted influential figures and ambitious entrepreneurs and the richest people in America. Also some interesting characters.



Mrs. Vanderbilt's fancy dress ball, 1883.



PT Barnum leering at a dancer in one of his shows, 1864.

New York City Photos

This era, later dubbed “the Gilded Age,” was characterized by advancements in infrastructure and technology alongside stark social inequalities.



Elevated railroad, Coenties Slip, New York, circa 1870s.



New York elevated railroad, 42nd Street, circa 1870s.



New York elevated railroad, circa 1870s.

New York City Photos

The 19th century became a pivotal time for the shipping industry as businesses invented economical ways to transport cargo and expand passenger travel.

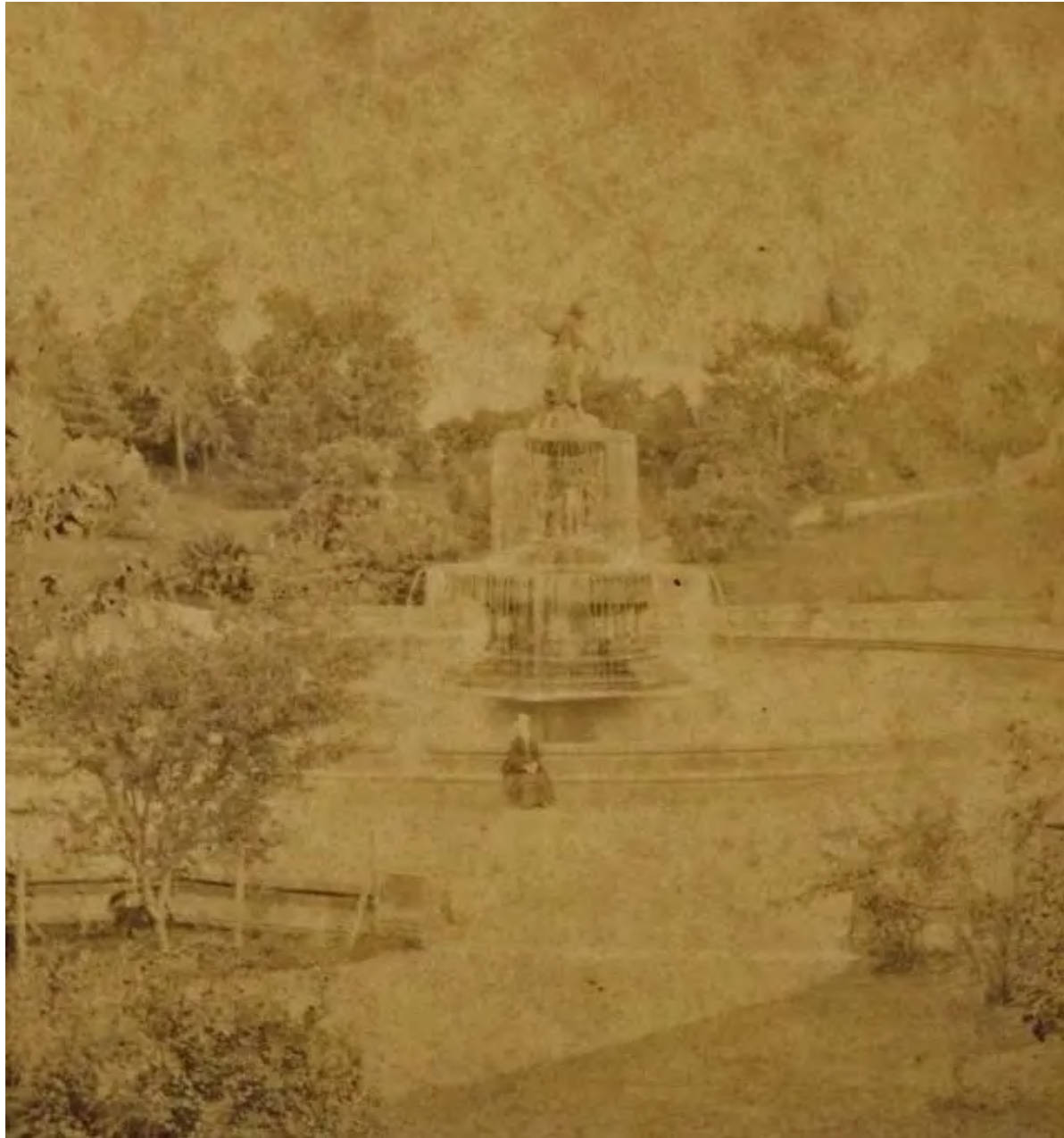


Panorama from Trinity Church, New York, circa 1870s.



Shipping scene, New York City, circa 1870s.

New York City Photos



Bethesda Fountain, Central Park, New York, circa 1870s.



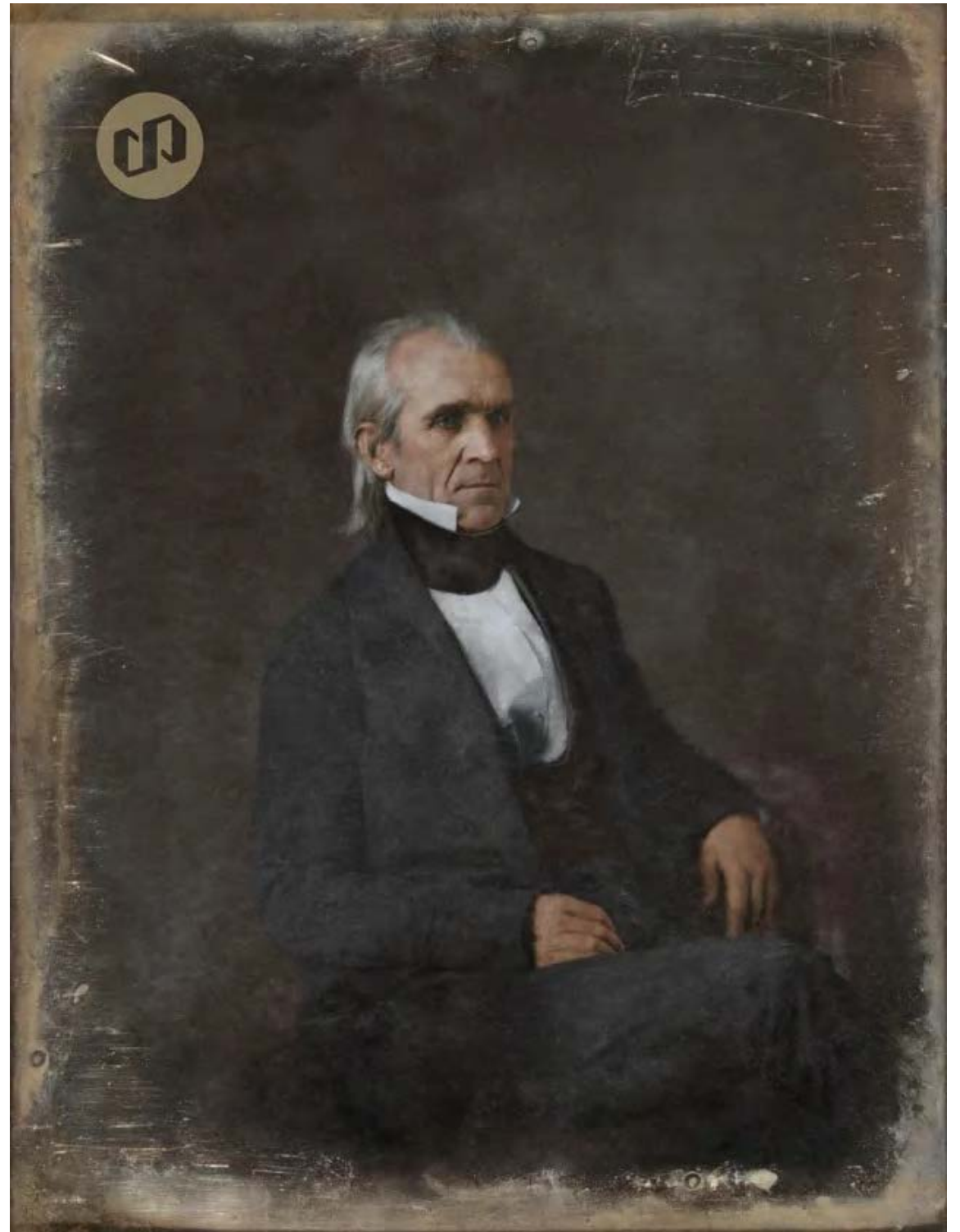
The Mall, Central Park, New York, circa 1870s.

Image is everything

Matthew Brady



Matthew Brady 1822 - 1896 Known as one of the earliest and most famous photographers in American history, he is best known for his scenes of the American Civil War. Brady opened his own studio in New York City in 1844, and went on to photograph U.S. presidents James Polk, John Quincy Adams, Abraham Lincoln, Millard Fillmore, Martin Van Buren, and other public figures.



James K. Polk, the 11th U.S. President, February 14, 1849. Matthew Brady

Image is everything

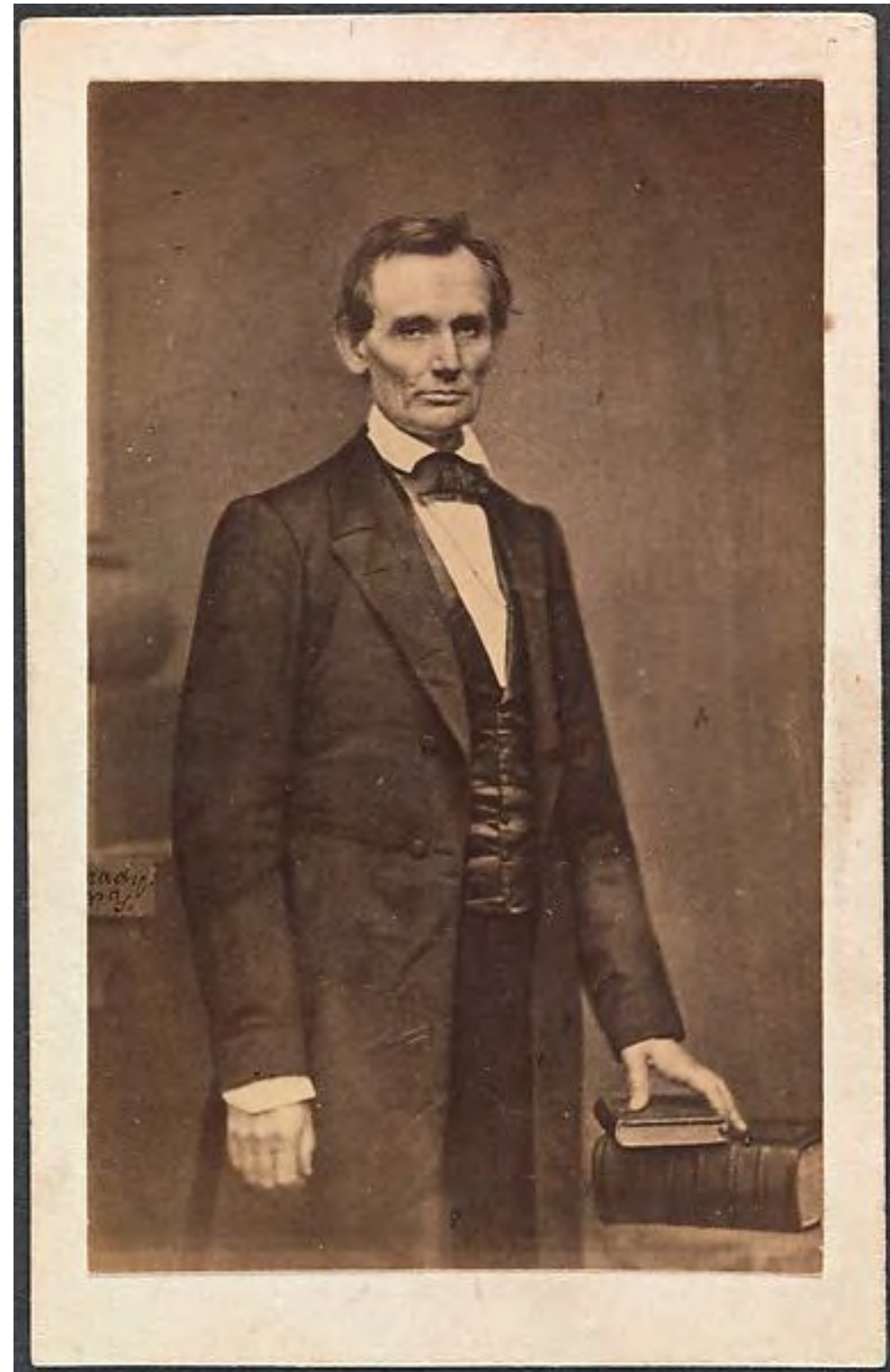
The photographer greeted Lincoln and sized him up. Brady was still able to discern that his new subject presented a daunting challenge. The man who stood before him would not be easy to photograph in Brady's trademark formal style.

Lincoln looked "haggard and careworn" at this point in his life. He was only 51 years old, but he already exhibited "all the marks of protracted suffering." His "loose skin fell in wrinkles, or folds; there was a large mole on his right cheek and an uncommonly prominent Adam's apple on his throat."

Brady had an inspiration. He would not settle for a commonplace head shot; he would move his camera as far away from this homely looking man as possible. He would emphasize, rather than disguise, his subject's most striking physical attribute: his height. Lincoln would be asked, for the first time, to pose before a camera standing up, not sitting down. And then he adjusted everything.

Mathew Brady's Cooper Union portrait transformed a country lawyer into a national icon.

The Photograph that Made Lincoln President

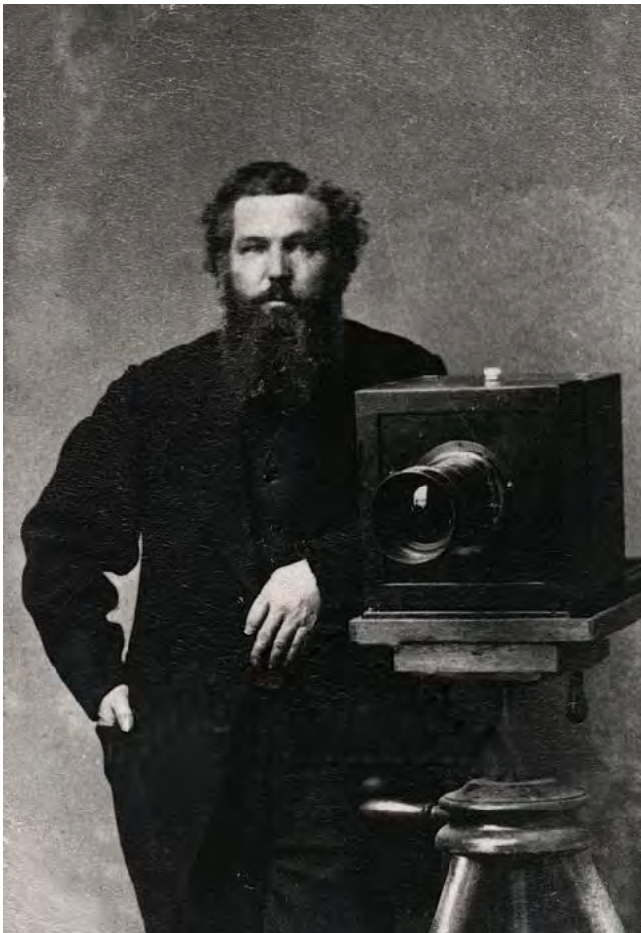


1860: Matthew Brady takes a photographic portrait of Abraham Lincoln in New York.

Image is everything

Documentation of criminal activity

Alexander Gardener



Execution of the Conspirators. Alexander Gardner. July 7, 1865 Albumen silver print from glass negative.



"Abraham Lincoln, November 8, 1863.
Alexander Gardner photograph

Alexander Gardner's intimate involvement in the events following President Lincoln's assassination would have challenged even the most experienced twentieth-century photojournalist. In just short of four months, Gardner documented in hundreds of portraits and views one of the most complex national news stories in American history. The U.S. Secret Service provided Gardner unlimited access to individuals and places unavailable to any other photographer.

Alexander Gardner 1821 – 1882 was a Scottish-American photographer who immigrated to the United States in 1856, where he began to work full-time in that profession. He is best known for his photographs of the American Civil War, US President Abraham Lincoln, and of the conspirators and the execution of the participants in the Lincoln assassination plot.

New York's Five Points Slum (1880s-1900s)

The Five Points neighborhood in Manhattan was infamous for its overcrowding, poverty, and violence; a symbol of how harsh life could be in late 19th-century New York. From kids playing in alleyways to workers grinding through long days, this was a time and place where even getting by was a struggle.



Jacob Riis, Social Documentary Photography



Jacob Riis, 1849 – 1914) was a Danish-American social reformer, journalist, and social documentary photographer. He contributed significantly to the cause of urban reform in the United States of America at the turn of the twentieth century. He is known for using his photographic and journalistic talents to help the impoverished in New York City; those impoverished New Yorkers were the subject of most of his prolific writings and photography.

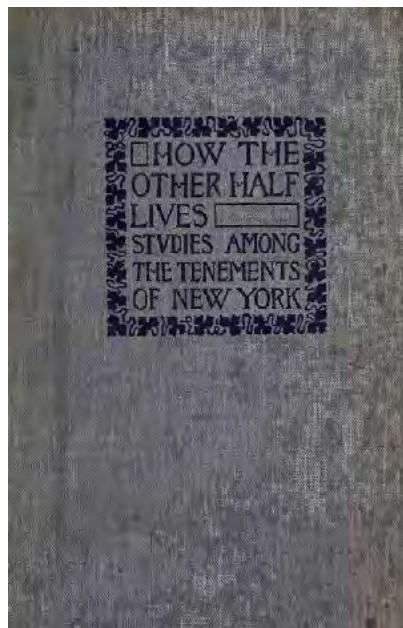
Riis has an amazing background. Trained as a carpenter, he arrived penniless in the US as one of millions of immigrants. Eventually he became a police reporter and then a journalist who exposed the poor living conditions of slum dwellers and child laborers.

He tried sketching the squalor he saw, but eventually discovered cameras, but found them too slow. He discovered how to use a flashlight (then powder that was used in a pistol-like device that fired cartridges) or the beginning of flash photography. He then bought a 4x5 box camera and continued his documentation career.

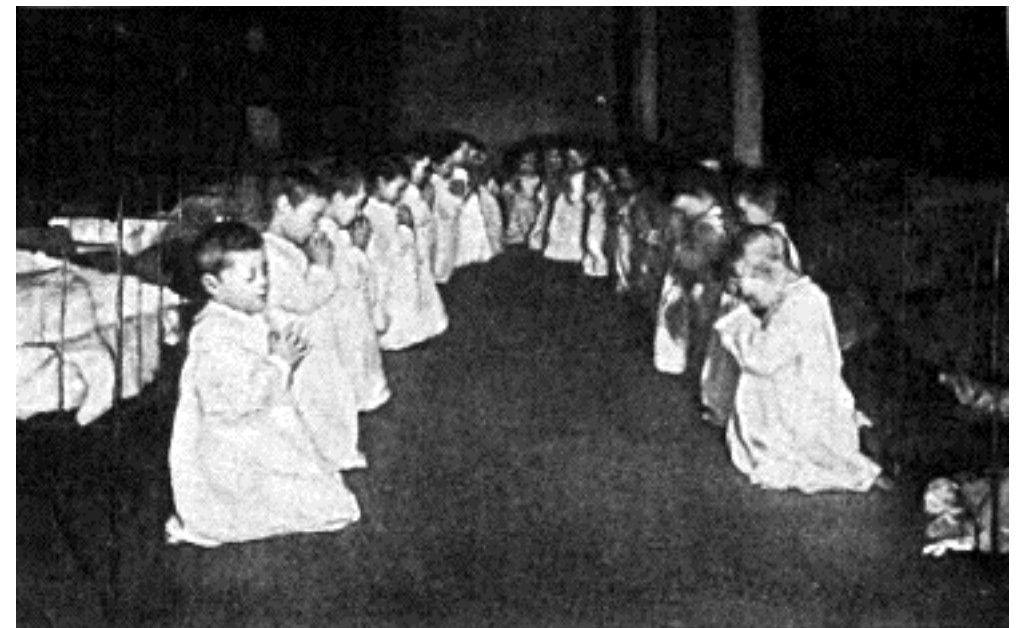
Eventually he wrote a book: *How the Other Half Lives*, subtitled "Studies Among the Tenements of New York", published in 1890. The book used the eighteen line drawings done from his photographs and seventeen reproductions using the halftone method, thus "representing the first extensive use of halftone photographic reproductions in a book".

One of the most famous people who liked Riis' work was Theodore Roosevelt who was president of the Board of Commissioners of the NYC Police Department. As President, Roosevelt enacted many reforms related to his understanding of social welfare problems.

The life of the average city dweller is much different from the posed, affluent resident seen in earlier daguerreotypes.

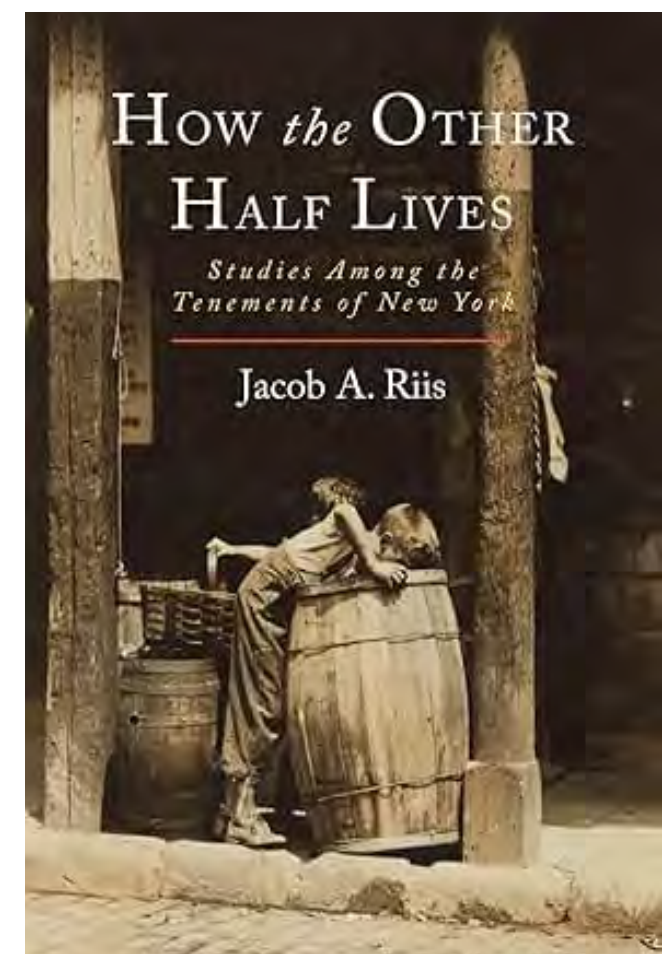
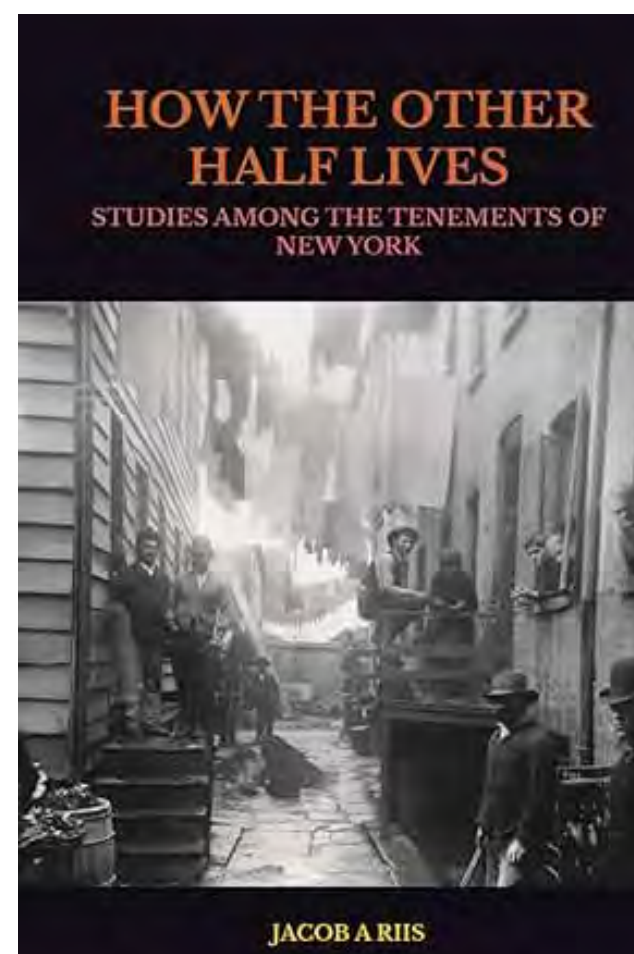
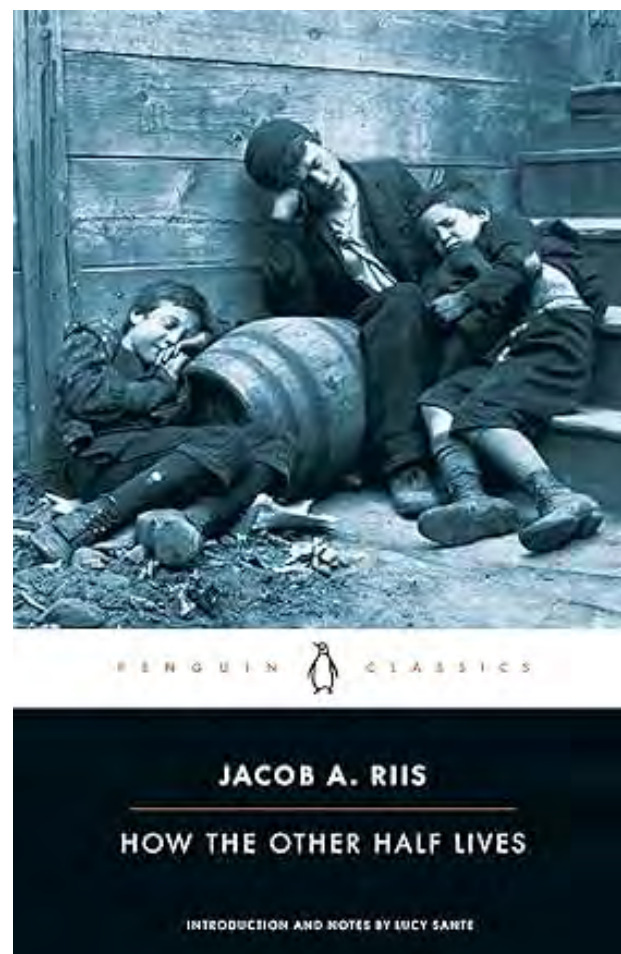
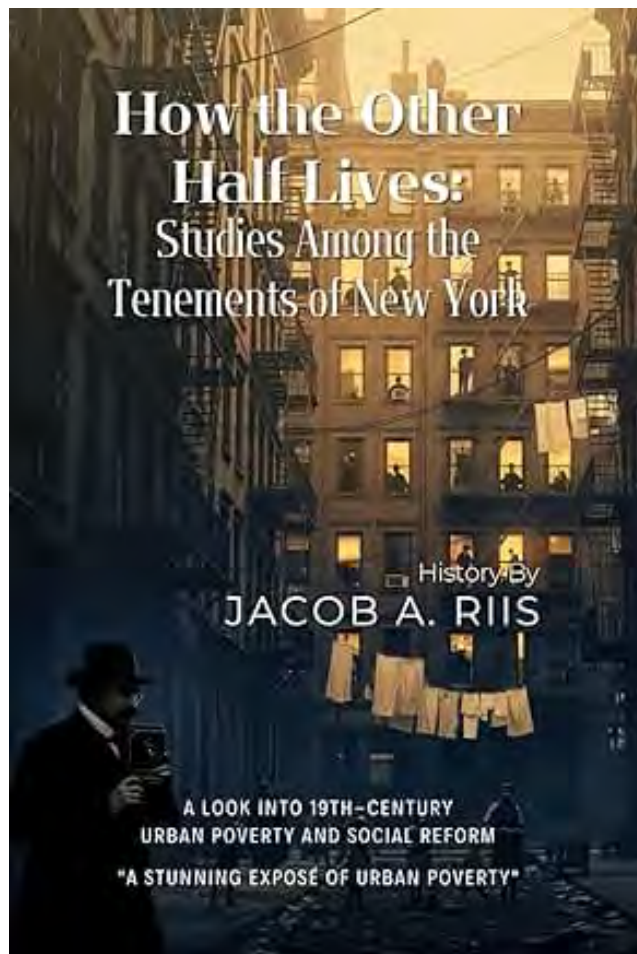
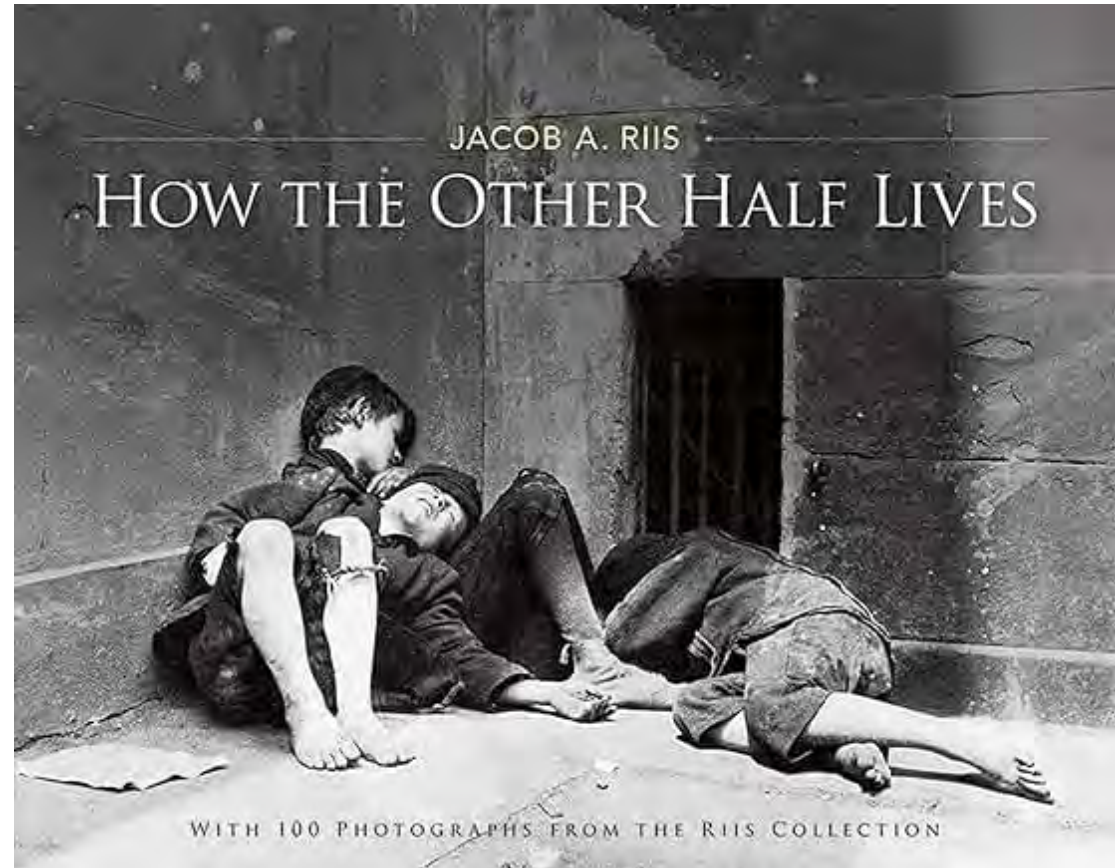


The cover of the 1890 edition



Jacob Riis

Amazon sells 16 different versions of Riis' book



Alice Austin, Social Documentary Photography

Alice Austin was one of America's first female photographers to work outside of the studio. Austen often transported up to 50 pounds of photographic equipment on her bicycle to capture her world.



Austen was a self-taught photographer, and primarily used photographic plates and a camera manufactured by the Scovill Company. She also meticulously recorded information about her photographs, including the glass plate brand, aperture, and exposure time. Austen used a darkroom, likely designed by her uncle, an amateur photographer and chemistry professor at Rutgers University, and produced over 7,000 photographs up through the 1930s.

She is best known for her street photography and her intimate depictions of women's lives and relationships in the Victorian era.

These vintage photographs, taken by photographer Alice Austen, capture the working people of New York City.

They depict employees, postmen, firefighters, policemen, street cleaners, cab drivers, and other trade people whose work kept the city functioning.

She also photographed people forced to make their living on the street, including peddlers and vendors, knife grinders, bootblacks, newsboys, and beggars.

Alice Austin, 1888, b. Staton Island

Alice Austin, Street Photography



Street Sweeper



Organ Grinders



Shoe String Peddler



Rag Carter



Snow Shoveler



Sponge Salesman

The life of the average city dweller is much different from the posed, affluent resident seen in earlier daguerreotypes.



Suspender Salesman

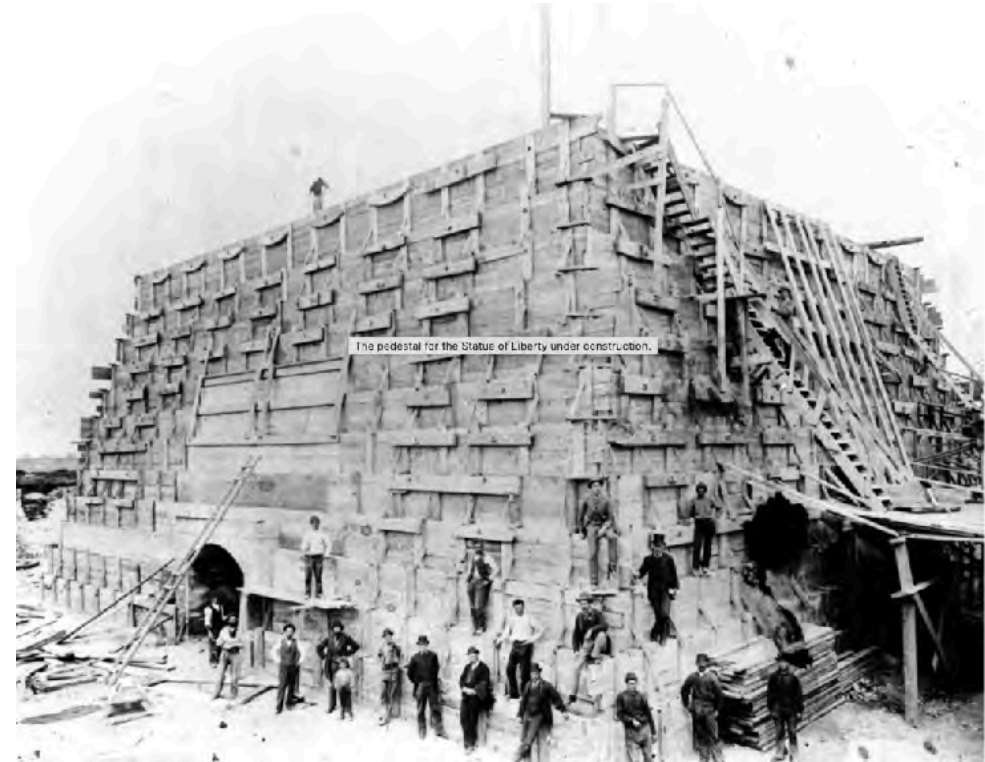


Cab Driver



Newspaper Girl

Statue of Liberty - 1881 - 1886



The assembly of the Statue in Paris which occurred between 1881 and 1884.

On October 28, 1886, the statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World" was officially unveiled.



Ellis Island - 1892 - 1954

Prior to 1890, individual states, rather than the Federal Government, regulated immigration into the United States. The new facility on Ellis Island began receiving immigrants on January 1, 1892. Annie Moore, a teenage girl from Ireland, accompanied by her two younger brothers, made history as the very first immigrant to be processed at Ellis Island. Over the next 62 years, more than 12 million immigrants would arrive in the United States via Ellis Island.

She created over 7000 glass plate negatives.



This is the Atlantic Bay Area housing the US capital and productive farmland.



In the 19th century, the Mid-Atlantic became the nation's premier industrial and commercial hub, overtaking New England in manufacturing and trade. Fueled by the Industrial Revolution, cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore grew rapidly as centers for iron, steel, shipbuilding, and finance, attracting massive waves of European immigrants.



Building The Atlantic and Great Western Railroad

Mid-Atlantic

This was a region that had already borne the brunt of invasive human activity. Unlike the West, which was only beginning to see the spread of industrialization, the American east was so heavily settled by the 1880s that the eastern landscape photographers used the medium to advocate for **conserving** land that was already under threat from commercial and industrial forces.

Most were men who took up photography as a business; they saw it as an opportunity. It was a new technology where you could start a business and make money.



Photographer in his studio, 1894

Photography in the Mid-Atlantic

The mid-Atlantic was one of the first populated areas. It also had some of the first universities and medical schools. Students were offered a formal scientific education in fields such as chemistry and anatomy. These students: doctors, brewers, homemakers, engineers – were leaders in science and technology as formal academic disciplines were established. Archaeology and anthropology studies became important and documentation of field work evolved.

These residents were also interested in photography and established some of the first photo clubs and journals. As professionals in scientific, medical and technical fields they enjoyed their clubs and journals and took their cameras out on trips.

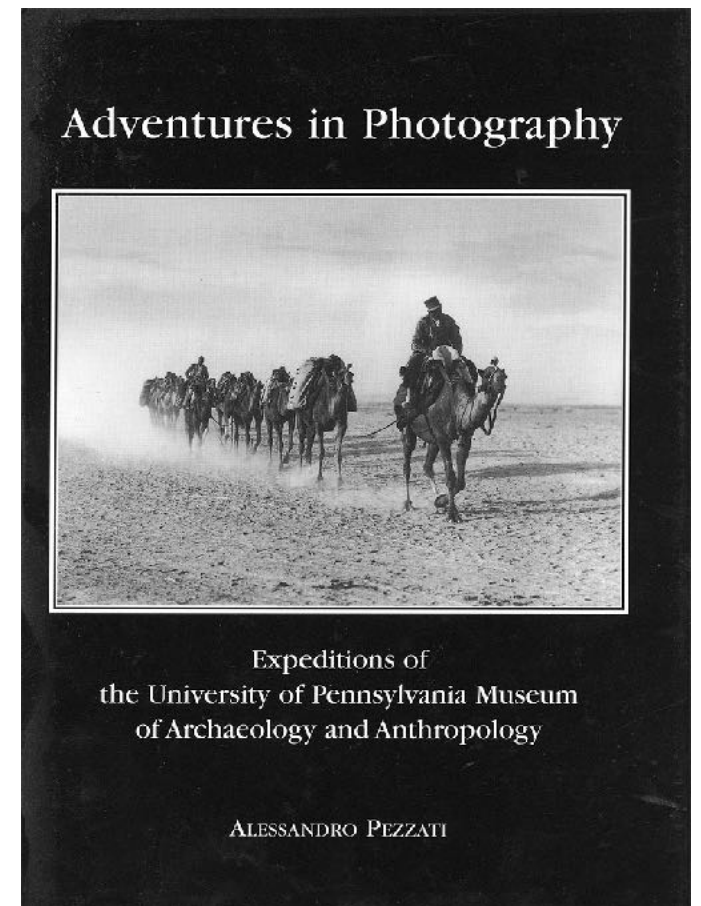
But they also used their cameras in their professions and we often have well-documented experiments and advances in these fields. They saw photography as an art and a science.



Rittenhouse Astronomical Society
Archives, Philadelphia, PA. 1891.



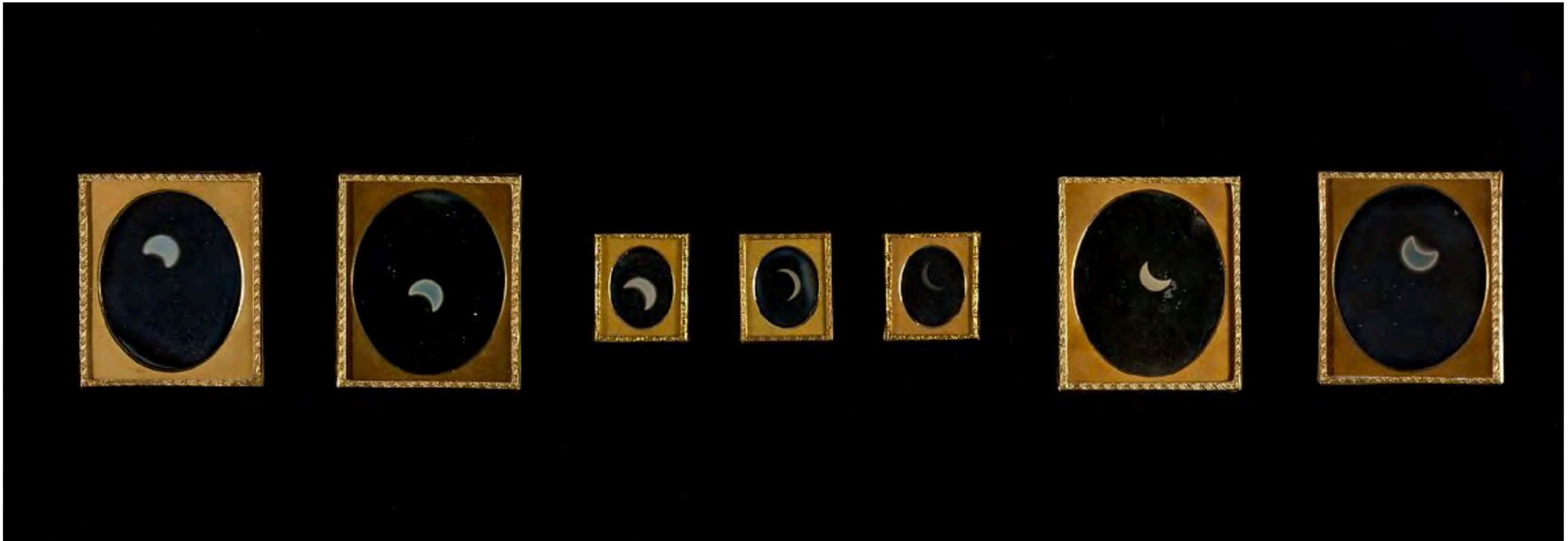
This daguerreotype of chemist Martin Hans Boyé was the first posed photograph used as a book illustration. It was taken in 1843 by Robert Cornelius, who also is credited with taking the first self-portrait.



Photography in America: documentation

Scientific 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, from their Philadelphia studio. 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

Buildings and Aerial Photography



William A. Eddy produced this 1897 view of the Capitol, using nine tandem kites to hoist a camera more than 500 feet above ground. Eddy stayed on the ground and opened the shutter with a string.



"Boston, as the Eagle and the Wild Goose See It" by James Wallace Black This is the first surviving aerial photograph from the hot-air balloon "Queen of the Air" in 1860.

They wished for a drone!

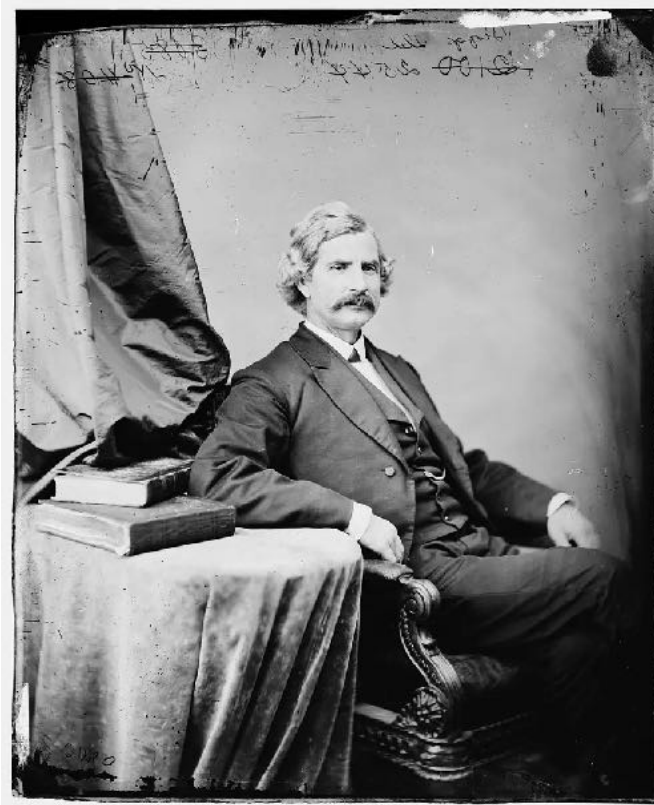


An 1840 daguerreotype is the earliest photograph we have of Market Street in Wilmington, DE.



West Point, Hudson River, 1867

Early Photographs of America's Eastern Treasures



First Photo taken in Delaware: 1860
Benjamin Thomas Biggs was first a member of the Whig Party and later, as a Democrat, became the state's 46th governor.
Photographer Unknown



The Tripoli Monument in Washington, DC, in around 1850.



Photograph of a Market Woman, William Collie, 1841.

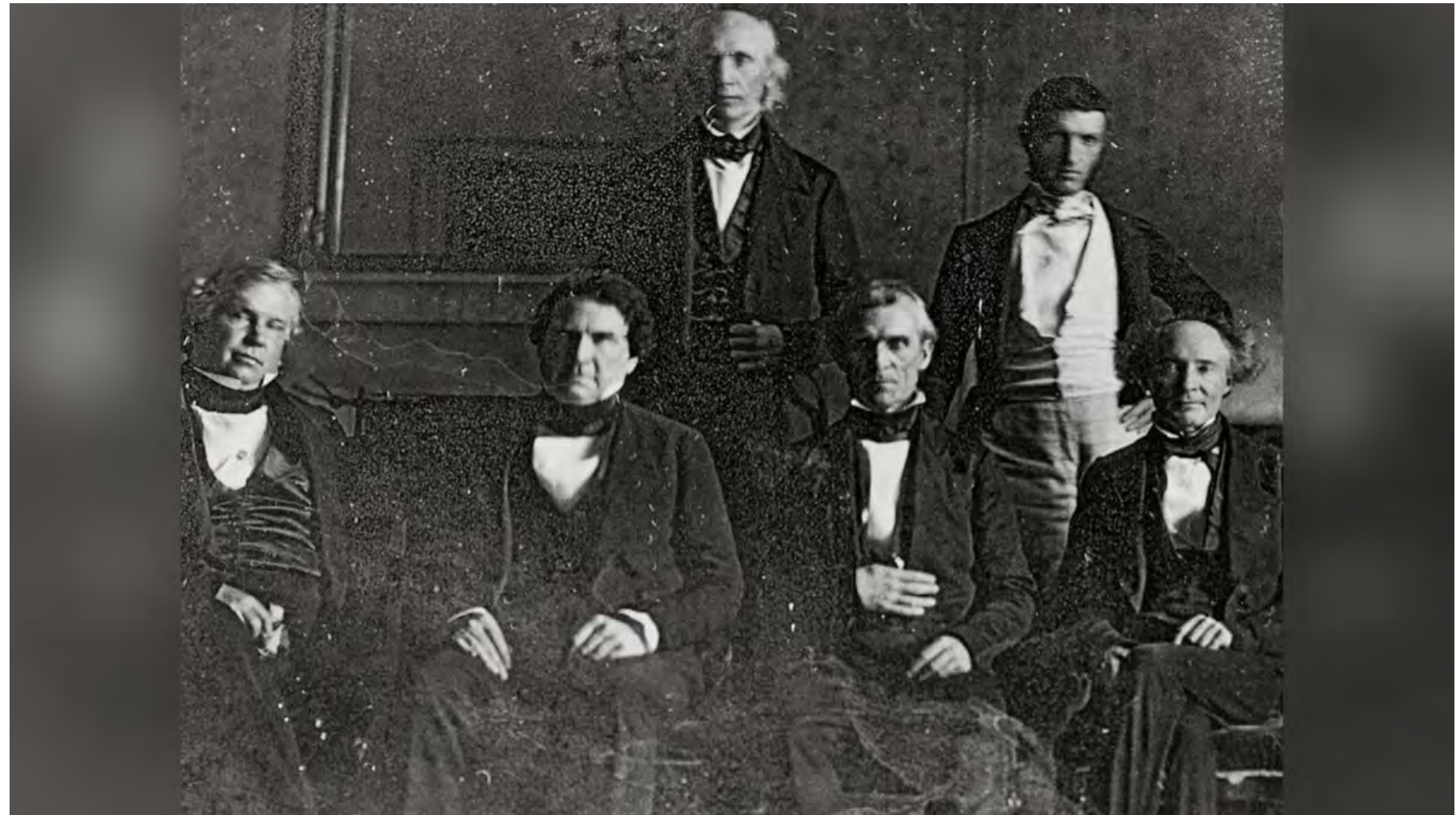
First Photograph of a Sitting President and BRANDING

John Plumbe Jr not only captured the oldest existing photo of a sitting US president, but went on to pioneer the branding practices used by studios to this day.

Several notable early photographers and daguerreotypists trained, worked or honed their skills in Plumbe's galleries.

But by marking all images with the name "Plumbe", the pioneering photographer ensured that the brand he created became more recognizable than the individual photographer.

Historians will remember the president, but Plumbe's 1846 image of James K Polk also captures the rise of photography as a commercial industry. Plumbe wasn't merely documenting a moment in history; he was building a photography brand years before anyone else.



President Polk and his Cabinet, 1846. John Plumbe



John Plumbe, 1809 – 1857

Picturing Washington, DC



US Patent Office, Washington, D.C. Daguerreotype photo by John Plumbe, ca. 1846.

John Plumbe was a Scottish immigrant who eventually was so successful with daguerreotypes that he had franchises in states in the 1840s.



The earliest known photographic image of the U.S. Capitol, taken in 1846.
credit: *Library of Congress; photo by John Plumbe*



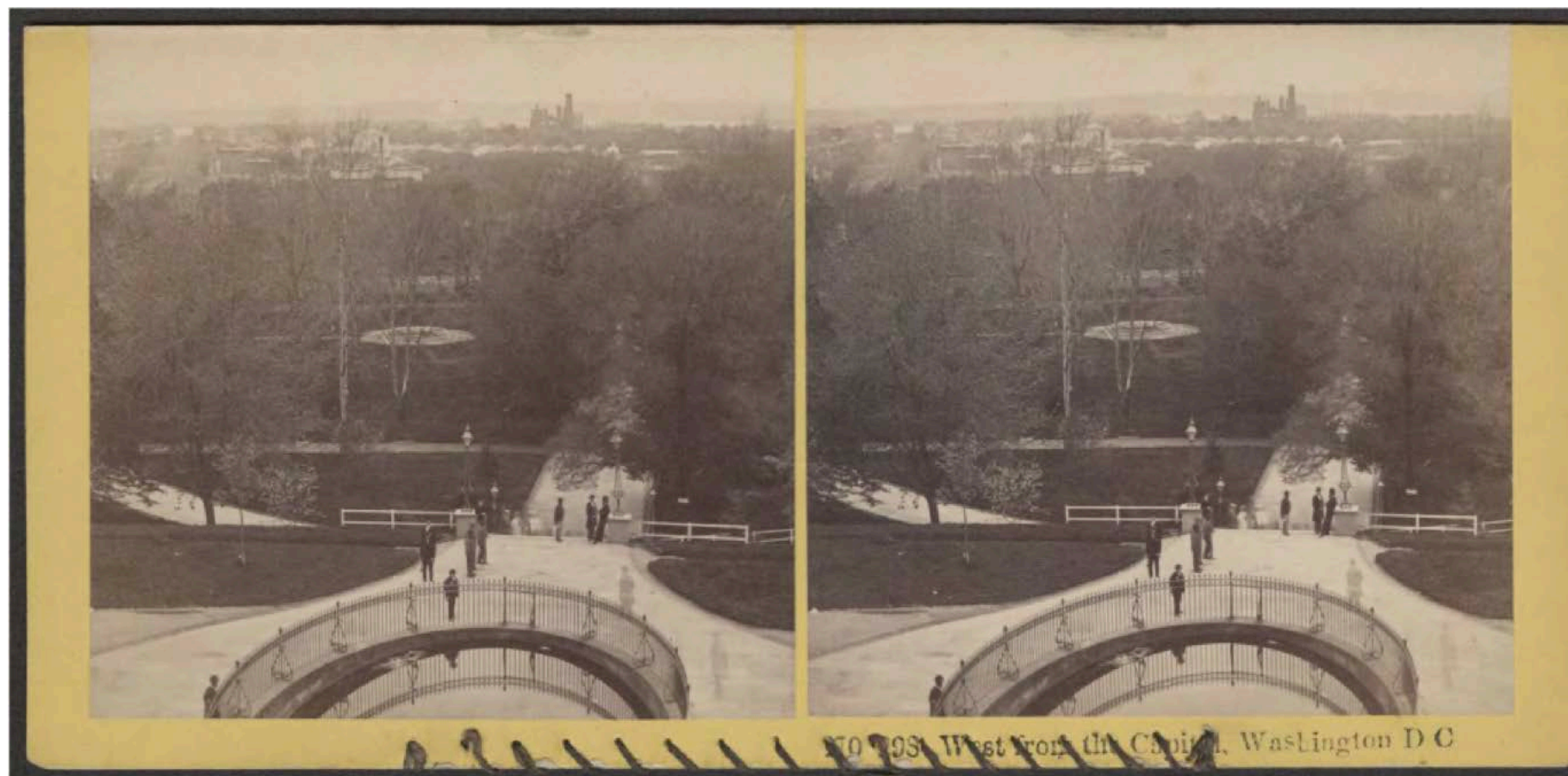
The earliest known photograph of the White House, by John Plumbe, Jr. (1846)
(via White House Historical Association)



Washington Monument as it stood for 25 years.
Photo by Mathew Brady, ca. 1860.



Smithsonian Institution Building or Castle from the northeast. c. 1858



In this ca. 1870 stereoview, taken from the Capitol, the Smithsonian Institution's first building, now known as the Smithsonian Castle, is visible at the top. The stubby Washington Monument, under construction, can be seen faintly to the right of the Smithsonian.



Titian Ramsay Peale, 1799 – 1885

By 1855 he'd found a comfortable post at the United States Patent Office—a job that afforded him enough free time to explore Washington with a camera.

Peale's work provides a valuable early record of life in the nation's capital.

Your tax dollars at work!

This panorama was taken from the Smithsonian Castle



Panorama of Washington, DC, North view, 1863, Titian Ramsay Peale 8 in x 9 1/2 in; 20.32 cm x 24.13 cm

Your tax dollars at work!

The 19th-Century Roots of Instagram

The Amateur Photographic Exchange Club on the Potomac (1861-1863)

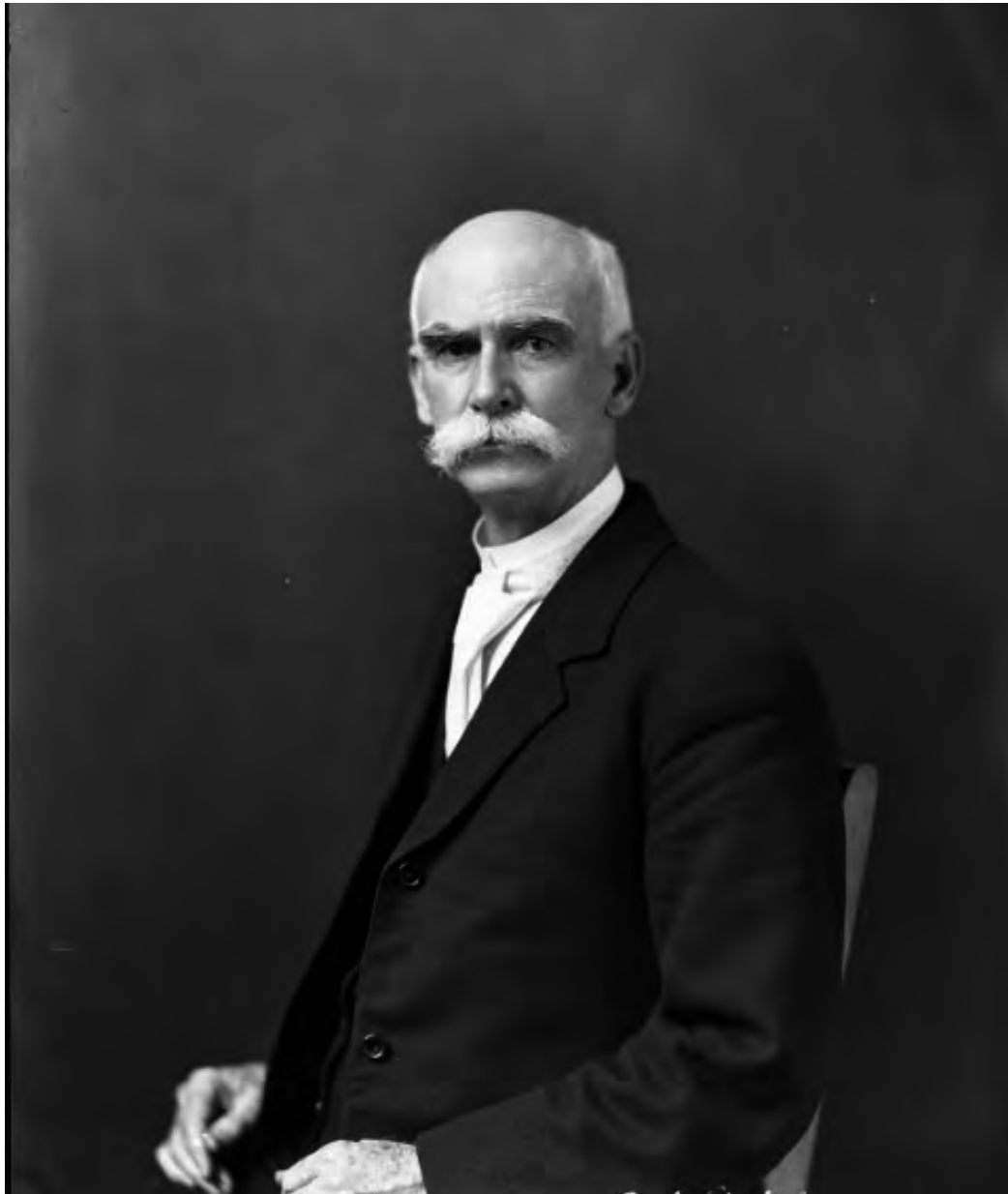


How is this 19th-century amateur photographic collective similar to current social networking sites?

Both are composed of a community of strangers who build relationships and share experiences through the formalized exchange of photographic images.

Photography at the Smithsonian

Both photography's invention and the creation of the Smithsonian Institution - 1846 - occurred in the mid-19th century, amid the worldwide quest for new kinds of knowledge that characterized the Industrial Age.



There is a remarkable figure in the Smithsonian's history that doesn't get much of the spotlight; Thomas W. Smillie. He served as the Smithsonian's first official photographer from 1870 until his death in 1917, and additionally became the Smithsonian's first photography curator in 1896.



While Thomas W. Smillie is known as the Smithsonian's first and chief photographer from 1871 to 1917, it is less known that his first and chief assistant, Miss Louisa Bernie Gallaher, was quite an accomplished photographer herself and is responsible for much of the work produced by the photographic laboratory of the United States National Museum (USNM).

Indian Delegation to DC

The troubled relationship between native and non-native North Americans was well documented by the camera. In the 1850s and 1860s white photographers moved West and welcomed Native Americans into their studios. They rarely paid their subjects, seldom recorded their names or tribes, and often dressed their sitters in studio props, confusing the ethnographic record.

After the end of the Civil War, the locus for most so-called "Indian" photographs moved east to Washington, D.C., where the United States government invited hundreds of Native American delegations for official state visits in an ongoing effort to seek peace, negotiate treaties, and acquire tribal land. Delegation photography was a routine part of any state visit, and many portrait studios profited from the business.

While native leaders saw these visits as nation-to-nation conversations, U.S. officials used these meetings to demonstrate America's wealth and military power.



Charles Bell, North American Indian delegations in DC

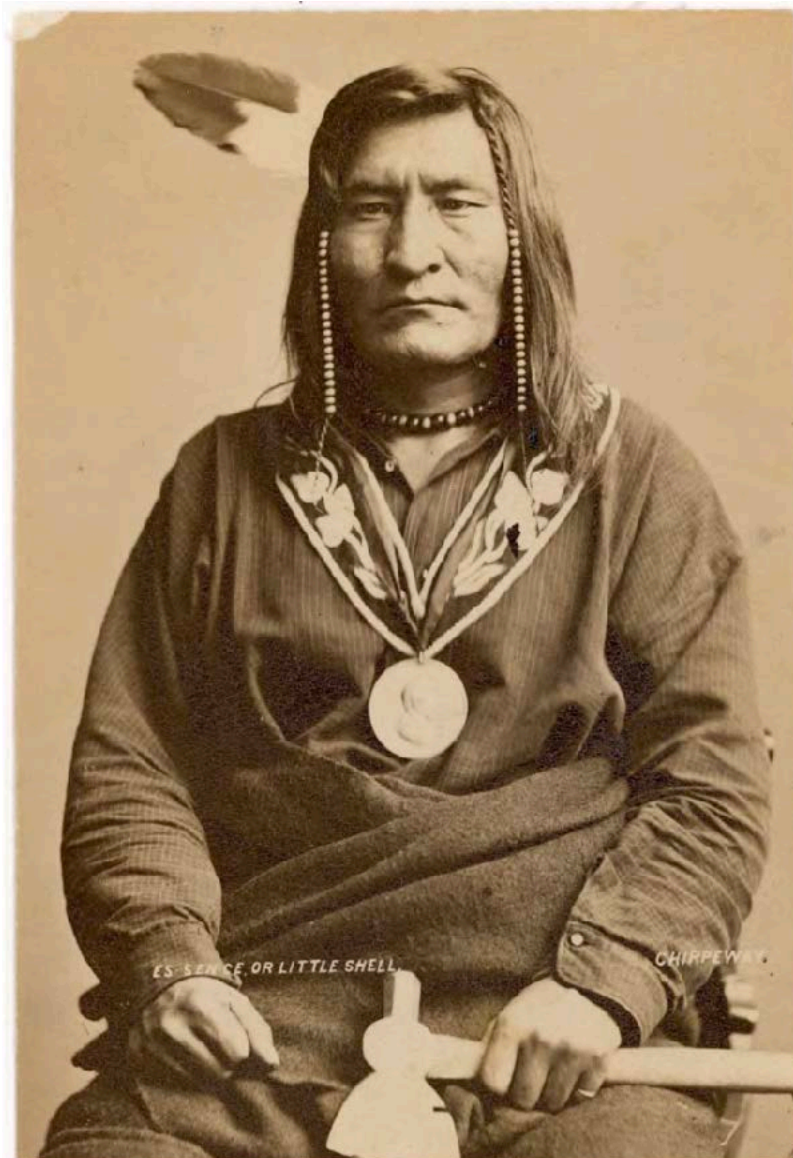
Setting the Record Straight

In the 1850s, tribal treaty delegates visiting Washington, D.C., inspired the first Secretary of the Smithsonian to establish the institution's first photograph collection. Originally conceived as a photographic record of ethnic types, the now-vast collection consists of thousands of delegation portraits. But scholars of today, both at the National Museum of the American Indian and from the depicted tribes, see the subjects as individuals, as prominent Americans. With the help of Native scholars, the Museum Archives is working to collect proper identification and background information for the tribal leaders pictured in the photographs.

[Reference](#)



Diné members of an 1874 delegation to Washington, D.C. From left: Ganado Mucho, Tiene-Su-Se, and Mariana. Photo by Charles Milton Bell. National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center (P0-1289)



Es-Sence or Little Shell (Pembina Chippewa), delegation portrait possibly made in 1874, Washington, D.C. Photo by Charles Milton Bell. National Museum Of The American Indian Archive Center (P15872)



Light Beard or Barbas Huero, probably a member of an 1874 Diné delegation to Washington, D.C. Photo by Charles Milton Bell. National Museum Of The American Indian Archive Center (P15804)

Japanese Delegation to DC

The U.S. and Japan signed a Treaty of Amity and Commerce in July 1858, and in February 1860 three samurai ambassadors and their entourage of 74 took a U.S. Navy frigate across the Pacific en route to Washington, where they would exchange the treaty's instruments of ratification with the U.S. State Department.



“What a Woman Can Do With a Camera”



Frances Benjamin Jackson



Self-Portrait with bicycle



Self-Portrait in her studio

Frances Benjamin Jackson (1864-1952) was photojournalist whose career lasted for almost half a century. She is most known for her portraits, images of southern architecture, and various photographic series featuring African Americans and Native Americans. She came from a privileged DC background and was given her first camera by George Eastman, a family friend. She received training in photography and dark-room techniques from Thomas Smillie, director of photography at the Smithsonian.

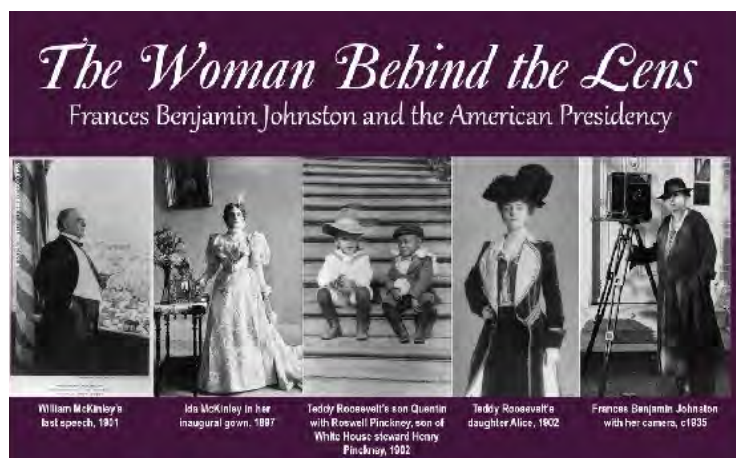
She opened her own studio in DC and was the only woman photographer in the city. Because of her connections, she photographed Susan B. Anthony, Mark Twain, Booker T. Washington, Alice Roosevelt's wedding portrait, she was appointed as official White House photographer for the Harrison, Cleveland, McKinley, TR Roosevelt and Taft administrations. She was also an architectural photographer.



George Washington Carver



Alice Roosevelt



White House Photographer



Hampton University students, 1899, #1



Hampton University students, 1899, #2

Thomas Eakins



Thomas Eakins, 1884 - 1916



The Gross Clinic, 1875

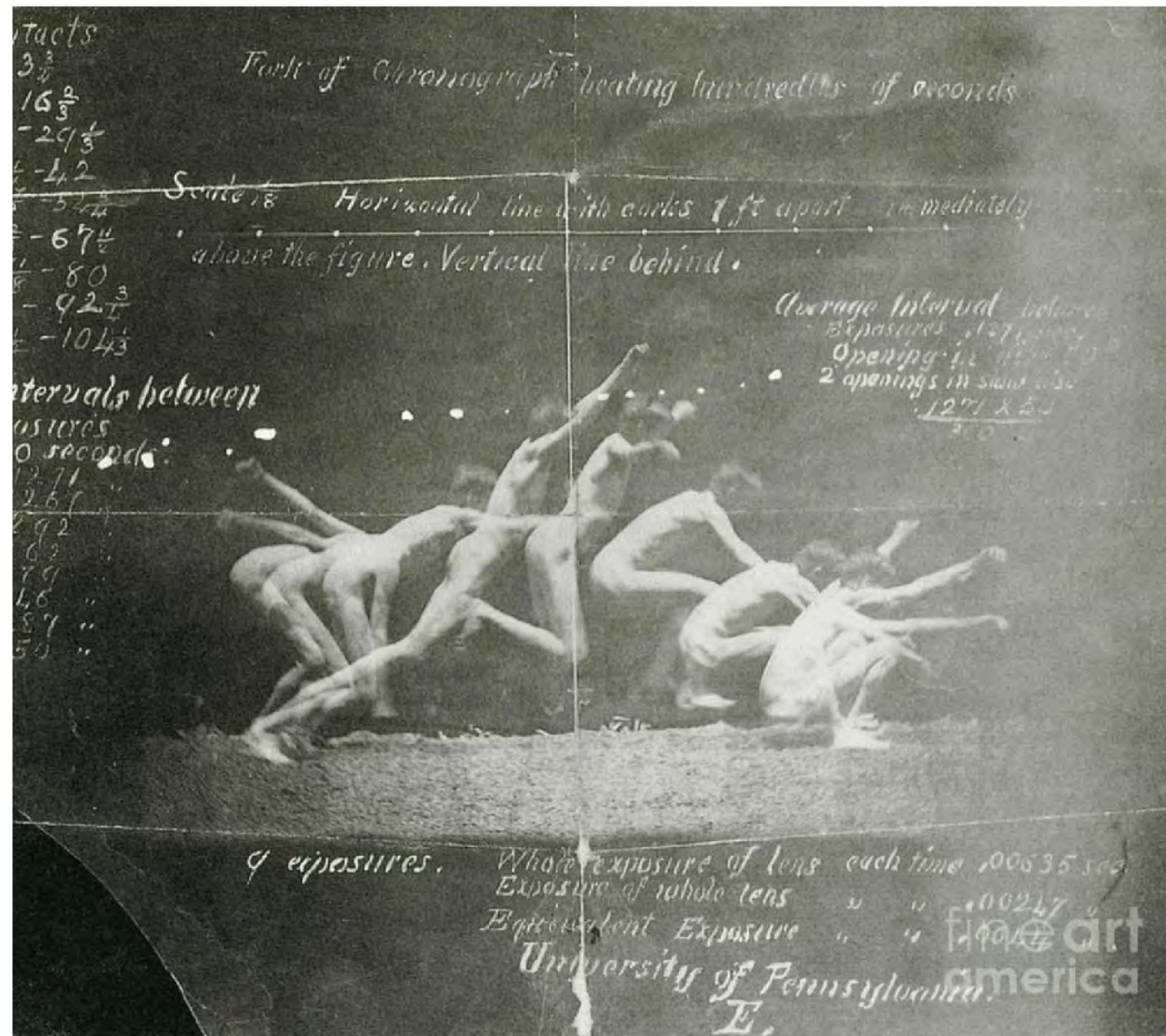
Thomas Eakins was a painter who carried the tradition of 19th-century American Realism - unembellished depiction of nature or of contemporary life. Realism rejects imaginative idealization in favor of a close observation of outward appearances - He painted mainly portraits of his friends and scenes of outdoor sports. The work generally acknowledged as his masterpiece— *The Gross Clinic* (1875), which depicts a surgical operation—was received with distaste by his contemporaries because of its frank and unsentimental nature.

However, Eakins was also a photographer who felt the camera was a teaching device comparable to anatomical drawing, a tool the modern artist should use to train the eye to see what was truly before it.

At first his photographs were likely quick studies of pose and gesture; later, perhaps during the process of editing and cropping the negatives, and then making enlarged platinum prints, he saw the photographs as discrete works of art on paper, at their best on equal status with his watercolors. He taught at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts where anatomical studies were the basis of drawing classes.



Thomas Eakins, Motion Studies



Attracted to the scientific aspects of photography, Eakins recorded human locomotion and anatomy in his motion studies. He worked alongside Eadweard Muybridge at the University of Pennsylvania in 1884 and 1885, experimenting with the mechanisms and processes to capture movement. By exposing multiple images on a single plate, Eakins recorded the elapsed time and velocity of his moving subjects. While most of the artist's motion studies were never published, he demonstrated his pride in this experiment by showing a photograph similar to this one at the exhibition of the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, held at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1886.

Painting and Photography: An Intersection

The Hudson River School was America's first true artistic fraternity. Its name was coined to identify a group of New York City-based landscape painters that emerged about 1850 whose aesthetic vision was influenced by Romanticism: an idealistic, pastoral setting where human beings and nature coexisted peacefully. It reflected the themes of America in the 19th century: discover, exploration, and settlement. Subject matter was usually the Hudson River Valley, Catskills, Adirondacks and the White Mountains.



Distant View of Niagara Falls Thomas Cole in 1830

Landscape Painting and Photography



While Mountains, Cole



View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm—The Oxbow

Thomas Cole
1836



Approaching Thunder Storm

Martin Johnson Heade
1859



Stage Fort across Gloucester Harbor

Fitz Henry Lane (formerly Fitz Hugh Lane)
1862



Eaton's Neck, Long Island

John Frederick Kensett
1872



Newburyport Meadows

Martin Johnson Heade
ca. 1876–81

Landscape Painting and Photography

Photography was only in its infancy and daguerreotypes were subject to long exposures and were only black and white, unless colorized. The images were very small and paintings were very large.



Crawford Notch and Hotel, White Mountains, New Hampshire, 1840-1842.
Daguerreotype. Dr. Samuel Bemis.



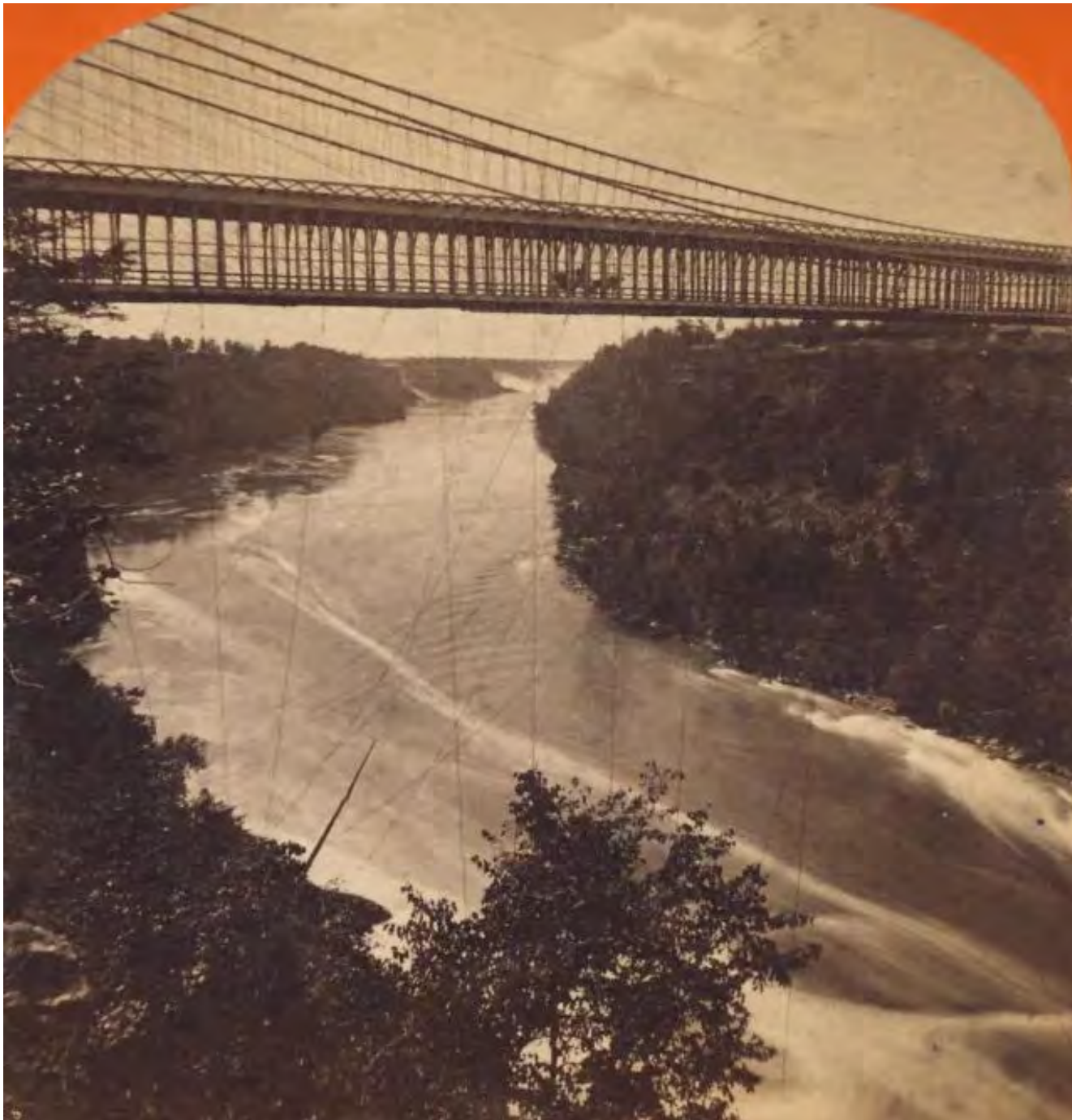
View within Crawford Notch, New Hampshire, Dr. Samuel Bemis, 1840



A New Hampshire Barn, Dr. Samuel Bemis, 1840

Landscape Painting and Photography

The first photographs were portraits or small family groups. Urban locations and later landscapes became popular. Documentation was usually the goal.



Niagara Suspension Bridge, circa 1870s.



Taughannock Falls, 210 feet high, eight miles from Ithaca, New York, circa 1870s.

Landscape Painting and Photography



New York: A peaceful glen on the Hudson River, 1858: 1870? The scene was shot by William England and later colorized.

Landscape Painting and Photography



John Moran

John Moran (February 1831 – February 19, 1902) was a pioneering American photographer and artist. Moran was a prominent landscape, architectural, astronomical and expedition photographer whose career began in the Philadelphia area during the 1860s.

In the 1850s, Moran was a pioneer in advancing photography as a medium of artistic expression.



Niagara Falls was a popular scene



NIAGARA, Frederic Edwin Church, 1857, overall: 40" × 90 1/2", National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

(Church's *Iceberg* painting is at the DMA.)



Hugh Lee Pattinson (an amateur photographer and British citizen on a business trip) **American Falls**, 1840 daguerreotype taken from the Canadian side and inverted. This is a 20-minute exposure and is a "whole plate" size: 6" x 7". It is housed in the University of Newcastle, England.

Early images of Niagara

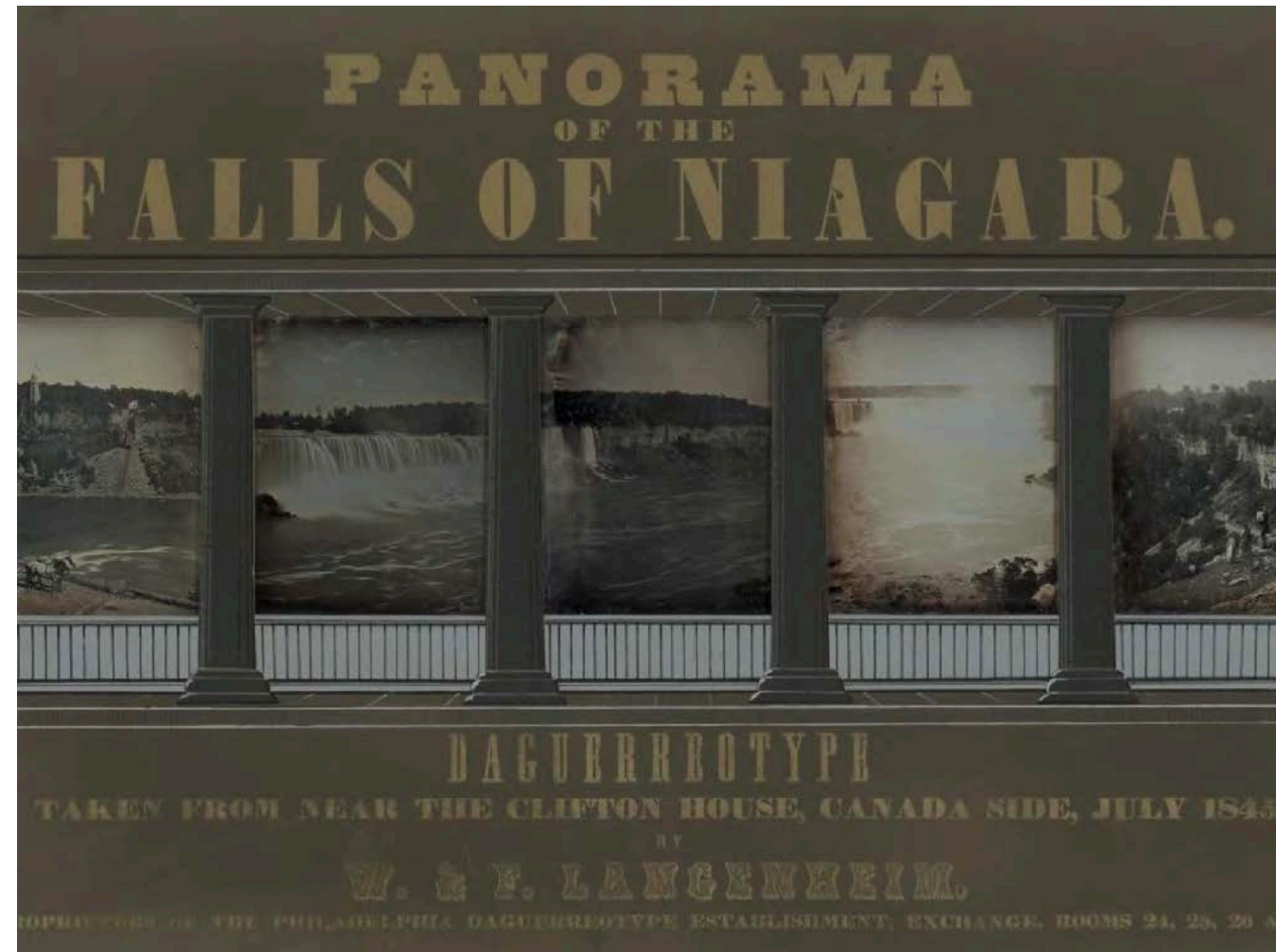
Niagara Falls was a popular scene

Tourism

Wealthy Americans had always gone to Europe for travel or education.
Now they were beginning to visit their own backyard.



Niagara Falls, 1886, albumen print. George Barker.



Panorama of the Falls of Niagara, 1845, five daguerreotypes.
Frederick Langenheim & William Langenheim

Antics at Niagara Falls



October 24th 1901

Annie Taylor was the first person to conquer the falls in a barrel. After climbing inside her airtight wooden barrel, the air pressure was compressed to 30 p.s.i. with a bicycle pump.

Though bruised and battered Annie made it, she expected fame and fortune. Annie died in poverty.

Bellini making the "Conchone Leap" from his rope into Niagara River, New York, 1873.

Daredevils of Niagara Falls

Visiting Niagara Falls in the early 19th century

Before and After



Image from the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Not to be reproduced without permission.

Boston Fire of 1872

The popularity of stereoscopic city views meant that in the aftermath of the Great Boston Fire of 9-10, November 1872, photographers were able to create before and after photographs of the destruction caused by the fire.

Old South Church [Washington St].
Boston, Mass.



Image from the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Not to be reproduced without permission.

Because city scenes were already popular for stereoviews, photographers often had "before" images of Boston buildings in their archives, allowing them to pair these with new "after" photographs of the charred rubble.

Before and After



Boston Fire of 1872

The popularity of stereoscopic city views meant that in the aftermath of the Great Boston Fire of 9-10 November 1872, photographers were able to create before and after photographs of the destruction caused by the fire.

Pearl Street. Boston, Mass.



Social Unrest - Photojournalism



This extraordinary daguerreotype, taken in front of the Girard Bank, shows Philadelphia militia organized to reestablish order in the wake of the anti-Catholic riots during summer of 1844.

Early photographers depicted the coast, forests, mountains, valleys and varied terrain.



In the 19th century, New England transformed from a rural, agrarian society into the industrial, intellectual, and abolitionist heart of America. Driven by water power, the region pioneered the factory system (textiles, machinery) and saw massive urban growth, railroads, and immigration, alongside a cultural renaissance and the rise of tourism



This man from Maine who served in the Revolutionary War and reportedly lived into his 100s was photographed in 1852. He may be the earliest-born person to have ever been photographed.

New England

The Pilgrims landed here in 1620 and the museums hold many drawings and paintings showing early life in the area.



This 1847 daguerreotype was taken from the base of Mt. Wantastiquet , Vermont looking toward Brattleboro.
Thomas Easterly (1809-1882)

Chansonetta Stanley Emmons



Chansonetta Stanley Emmons (1858-1937)

Emmons began her career as a painter and art teacher, but found her true calling in 1897 with the burgeoning artform of photography. Using the glass dry plate technology invented by her brothers, twins Freelan (FO) and Frank (FE) Stanley, Emmons documented the lives of people in the rural and agricultural regions of New England.



Daughter Dorothy Emmons, 1899



Daughter Dorothy Emmons, 1899



In comparison to today's candid digital snapshots, photography in the glass plate era required extensive staging and patience. Chansonetta set her subjects in domestic interiors and agricultural landscapes, posing them in performative scenes reminiscent of 17th century paintings. Often described as recalling a bygone era, Chansonetta's photographs did indeed stage antiques from the past, but also documented typical rural life in Maine complete with old and new elements between 1898 to 1930, during a time of rapid change.



Uncle Tristram at the well, Kingfield, ca. 1900, Emmons

Photography in America: Medical Documentation



Medical Documentation

An image of surgery makes a momentary appearance on the reflective surface of this 1847 daguerreotype. The scene takes place at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. An anesthetist leans on the patient's bed. The patient is surrounded by doctors, including Dr. John C. Warren, who commissioned this photographic memento. Warren directs his gaze towards the camera in the gallery, where an audience of onlookers may also have been seated.



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

****Note that daguerreotypes are taken in reverse

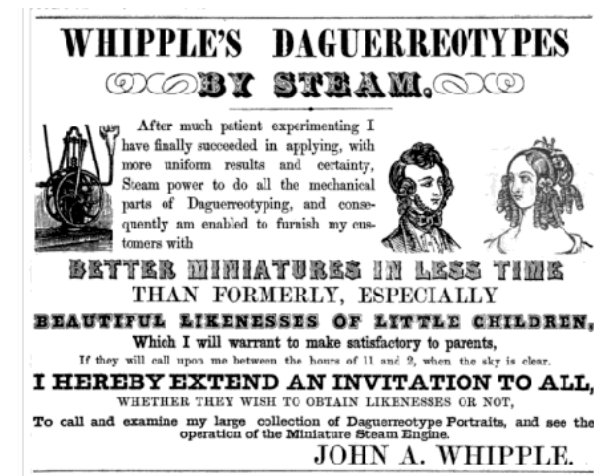
Because the camera lens projects the image directly onto a highly reflective plate, it captures the subject exactly how you would see yourself looking into a mirror. Some photographers used a reversing mirror or prism attachment to flip the image back to correct orientation, it was an extra, complex step that was rarely done.

Photography in America: Scientific 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 using 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.^[4]



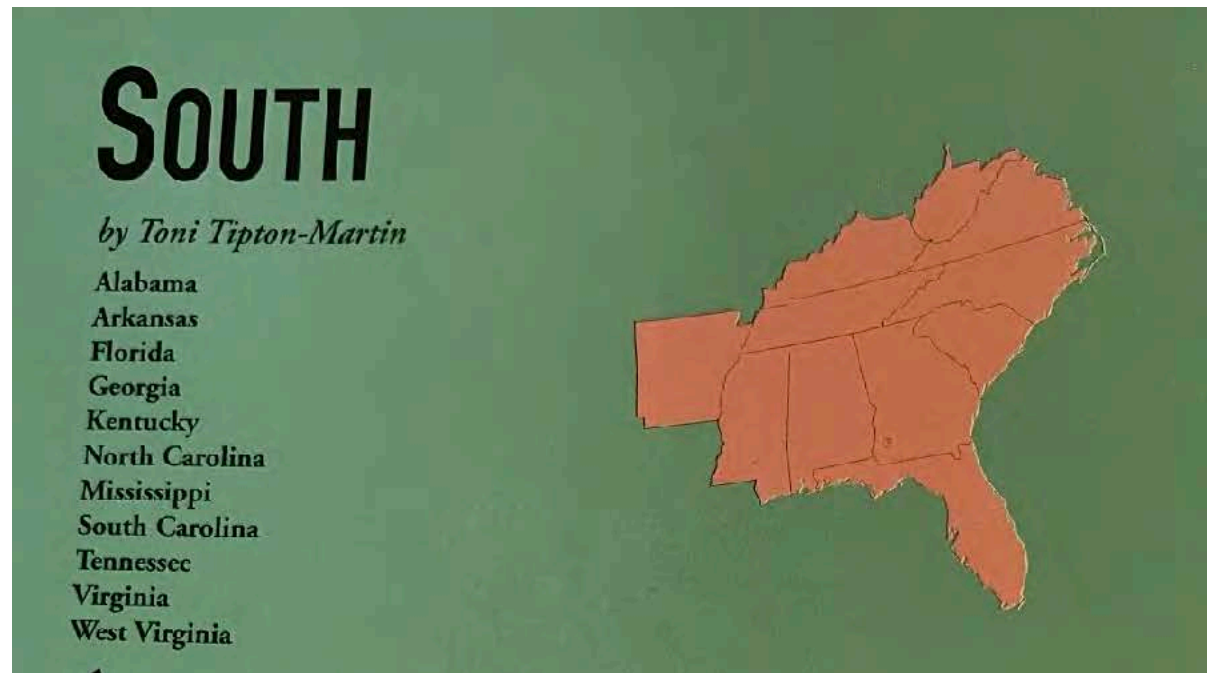
View of the Moon, by Whipple, February 26, 1852



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.

Images in a divided world

Fish, seafood, game and vegetables, cotton & tobacco plantations



The American South in the 19th century was characterized by a rural, agricultural economy heavily reliant on slavery, producing cotton as its primary cash crop. It was deeply stratified, with a small elite of wealthy planters leading a society that clashed with the industrializing North over states' rights, leading to secession and the Civil War.

Two events changed the course of American history: Slavery & the Civil War

Art is always a register of the historical era in which it was made. It expresses, consciously or not, the concerns, prejudices, and assumptions of its cultural moment. In an era when cultural assumptions were at loggerheads, images can reveal, sometimes in stark relief, the clash of ideas and ideologies.

Photographs are powerful tools to sway opinions by leveraging emotional appeal (pathos), authority (ethos), and truth bias, often making them more persuasive than text alone.

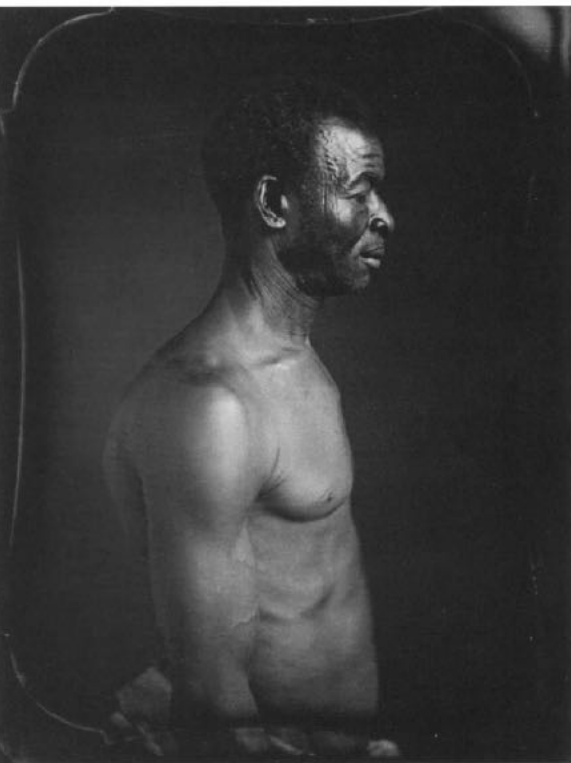
In the antebellum south, paper photography allowed for the reproduction of multiple prints from a single negative. These photos more easily disseminated than one-of-a-kind daguerreotypes, allowing governments and influential groups to circulate specific, often **curated**, narratives to the public.

Every photograph carries a point of view

When we consider images of slavery, we are usually looking at either images that sought to rally sympathy for enslaved people and motivate political advocacy for change, or we are looking at imagery that softened the brutal reality of slavery to make it appear as a beneficial institution for all.

This was a very dark time in American history and one that has yet to be resolved.

Does photography reflect truth?



Paper photography was deployed to sway the opinions of a nation in one way or other.

The Southern Economy built on slave labor



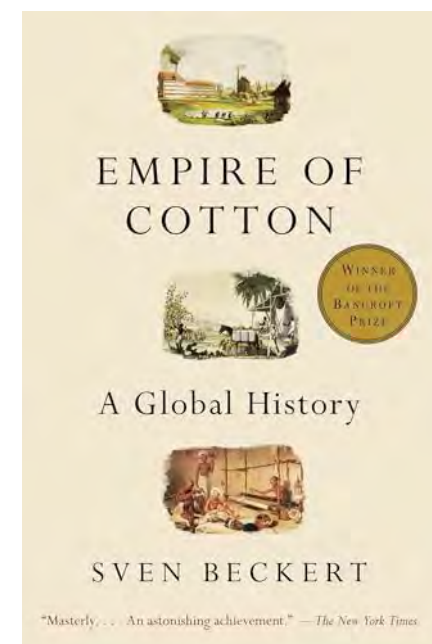
Getty Archives



Harriet Tubman

The slave economy had been very good to American prosperity. By the start of the war, the South was producing 75 percent of the world's cotton and creating more millionaires per capita in the Mississippi River valley than anywhere in the nation. Enslaved workers represented Southern planters' most significant investment—and the bulk of their wealth.

Southerners used a mix of economic, religious, and social arguments to justify slavery. They claimed that slavery was essential for their agricultural economy, especially with cash crops like cotton. Additionally, they invoked biblical passages to argue that slavery was morally acceptable. Socially, they promoted paternalism, suggesting that slaveholders provided care and protection for enslaved individuals.



The Civil War 1861-1865

Wartime photojournalism

The Civil War was the first American war to be well documented through photography. Photographers were quick to seize the commercial, historical, and artistic opportunities presented by the war. Mathew Brady invested heavily in equipment to send teams of photographers to army camps and battlefields. The wet-plate collodion process, already complex and time-consuming in a studio setting, proved to be even more difficult in the field, but still thousands of photographs were taken.

In his studio portraits, Brady celebrated America's military and political heroes. On the battlefield, he and his assistants, including Alexander Gardner, Timothy O'Sullivan, and George Barnard, witnessed and documented the darker realities of war.

Public exhibitions of the photographs in the galleries of Brady and his competitors brought home the war's horrors in an unprecedented way. Gardner recognized the power of his images when he wrote about one of them, "It shows the blank horror and reality of war, in opposition to its pageantry, here are the dreadful details! Let them aid in preventing such another calamity falling upon the nation."

Millions of soldiers served in this bloodiest conflict in American history. More than 600,000 men died, more than in all other American wars combined. A staggering number of these soldiers had their photographs taken, many sitting before the lens for the first time. Some posed in uniform for studio portraits before leaving home. Hundreds of thousands had their pictures taken in the field by thousands of small-town and itinerant photographers who followed the armies. Families back home treasured these portraits, many of which proved to be the last image of a soldier lost in the war.



The American Civil War (1861 – 65) became one of the first photographically documented mass conflicts. Easily circulated, direct and unflinchingly literal, the photograph established new ways of understanding what it meant to be at war, particularly with one's fellow citizens, all on native soil. For the first time Americans saw violence on a national level, relatively close to real time.

"You cannot tell how soon it may be too late." Mathew Brady

During the Civil War (1861 C.E. to 1865 C.E.), the tintype was useful as a method to record the soldiers passing through on either side. When families were informed of their son's passing, the army was now able to mail the family a tintype of their late son.

Documenting a War

"You cannot tell how soon it may be too late."

At first, the effect of the Civil War on Brady's business was a brisk increase in sales of *cartes de visite* to departing soldiers. Brady marketed to parents the idea of capturing their young soldiers' images before they might be lost to war by running an ad in the *New-York Daily Tribune* that warned, "You cannot tell how soon it may be too late." However, he was soon taken with the idea of documenting the war itself. He applied for permission to have his photographers travel to the battle sites, using a mobile studio and darkroom which enabled thousands of vivid battlefield photographs to bring home the reality of war to the public.

Brady studied under Samuel Morse and was a famous NYC portrait photographer who documented the Civil War.



Matthew Brady

In October 1862, Brady opened an exhibition of photographs from the war in his NYC gallery. Many images in this presentation were graphic photographs of corpses, a presentation new to America. This was the first time that many Americans saw the realities of war in photographs, as distinct from previous artists' impressions.

However, it must be noted that Brady took very few photographs himself, as he was going blind, but his "corps" of photographers took them. Occasionally their names were obscured.

Library of Congress



Brady's traveling studio

Documenting a War

O'Sullivan was a civilian photographer attached to the Army Core of Engineers. He apprenticed under Brady.

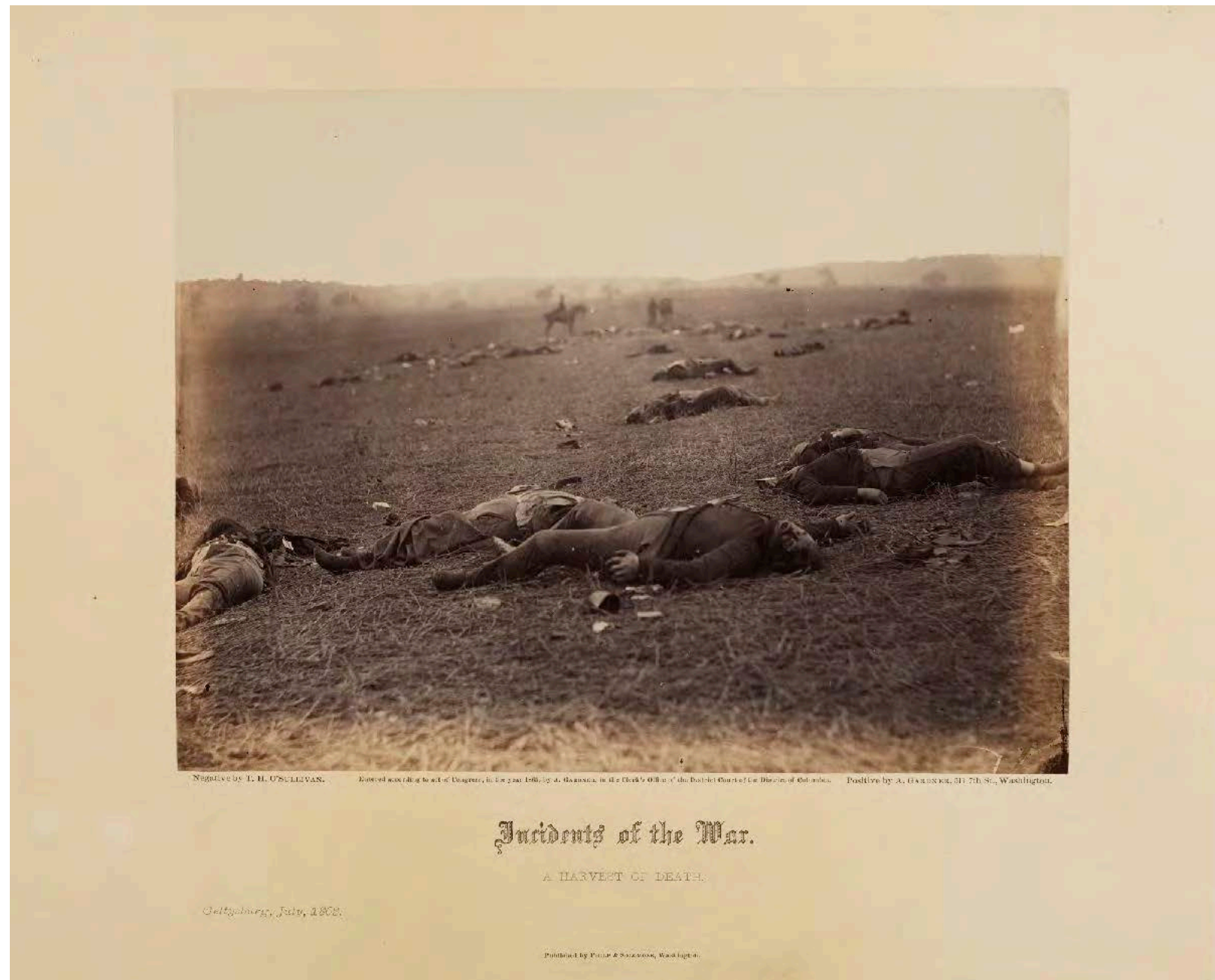


Timothy O'Sullivan

During the course of the American Civil War (1861–1865), more than 3,000 individual photographers made war-related images.

They photographed every phase of the war: battlefields, ruins, officers, men, artillery, corpses, ships, railroads. There were over 7000 negatives when peace was declared; the majority of them are now preserved in the National Archives and Library of Congress.

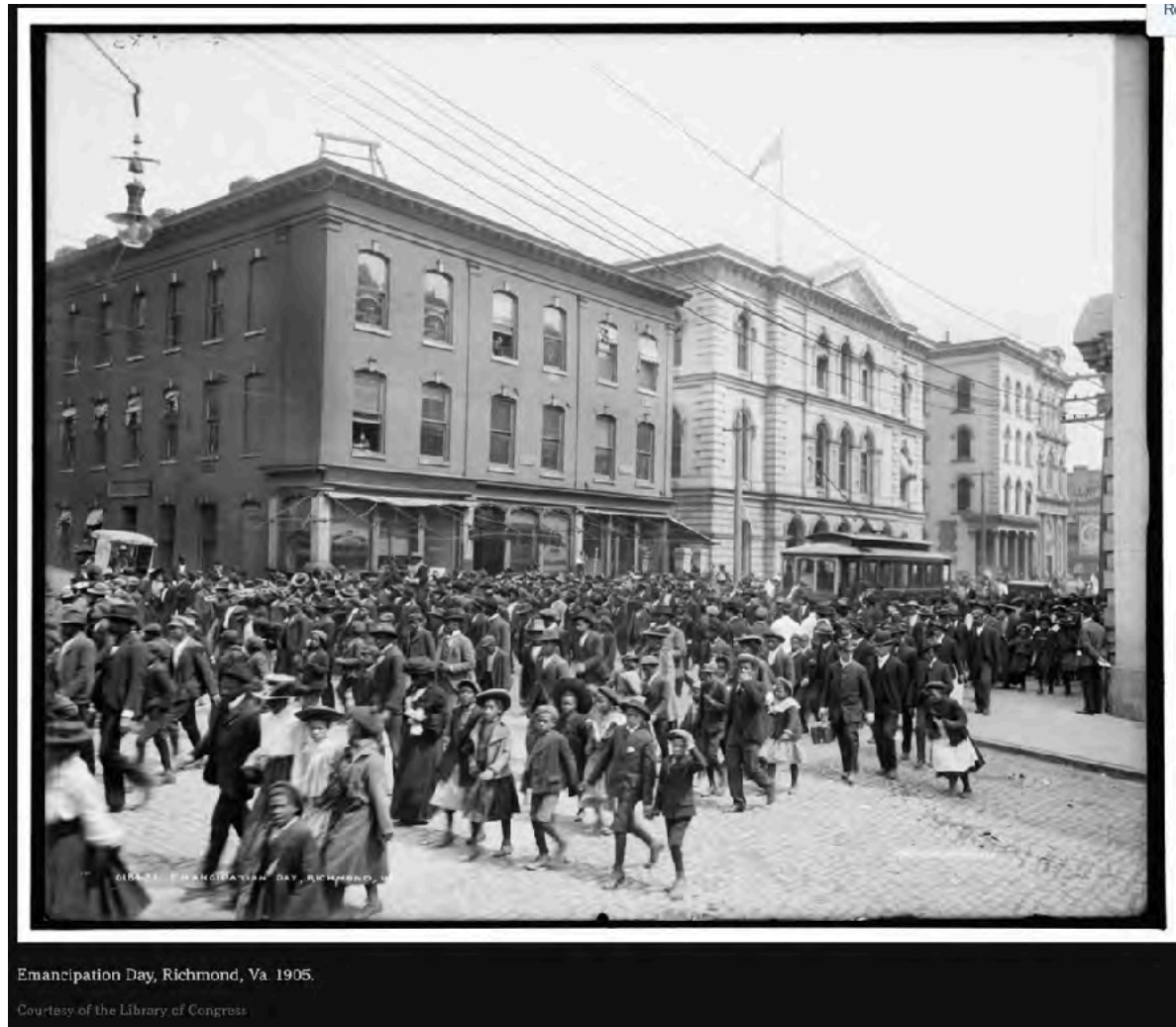
By the early 1860s, the camera had already become a powerful weapon of propaganda, particularly in wartime. Lincoln appreciated the part it had played in bringing him success in his presidential campaign, and both sides exploited the art of photography in the War between the States. Many photographers followed armies, among them Matthew Brady and Timothy O'Sullivan who took classic studies of carnage at Gettysburg.



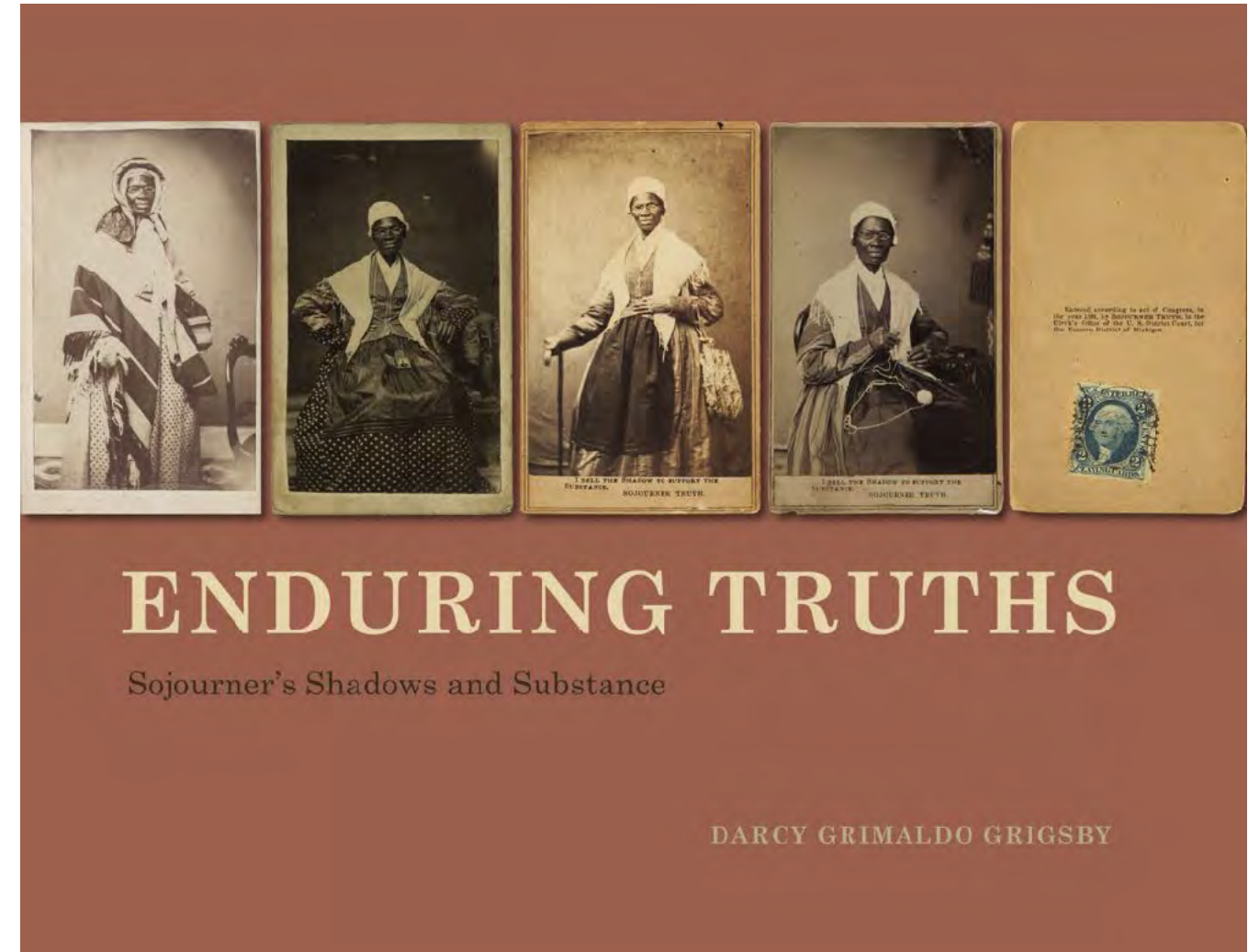
Incidents of War, O'Sullivan

Photography during the Civil War

Emancipation



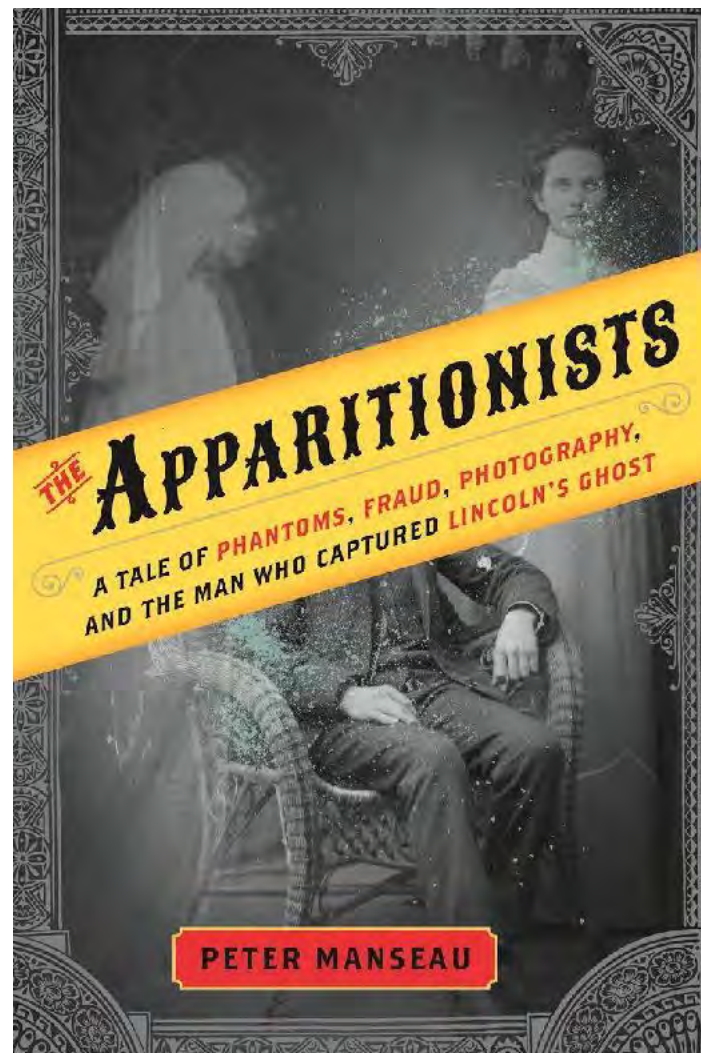
Images of Emancipation



Sojourner Truth, Photography, and the Fight Against Slavery

Lost in the War

Photography as Manipulation: truth, perception and the magic of the lens



[The Apparitionists](#)

In the death-strewn wake of the Civil War, one man seized America's imagination. A "spirit photographer," William Mumler, took portrait photographs that featured the ghostly presence of lost loved ones alongside his living subjects. At a time when artists like Mathew Brady were remaking American culture with their cameras, Mumler was a sensation: the affluent and influential came calling, including Mary Todd Lincoln.

Peter Manseau brilliantly captures a nation wracked with grief and hungry for proof of the existence of ghosts and for contact with their dead husbands and sons. It took a circuslike trial of Mumler on fraud charges, starring P. T. Barnum for the prosecution, to expose a fault line of doubt and manipulation. And even then, the judge's stunning verdict suggested no one would ever solve the mystery of how Mumler did it. This forgotten puzzle offers a vivid snapshot of America at a crossroads in its history, a nation in thrall to new technology while grasping desperately for something to believe in.



Mary Todd Lincoln and Abraham Lincoln

[The Haunted Lens](#)

[The Man Who Photographed Ghosts](#)

[Meet Mr. Mumler, Smithsonian Magazine](#)

Early Photo Manipulation



"Beheading" by F.M. Hotchkiss, circa 1880-1900



In this manipulated image from the first decade of the 20th century, a man pushes a wheelbarrow containing a head



The North American Post Card Co. (publisher), 1908

Mid-Atlantic

This is the land of milk and grain and rich farms.



In the 19th century, the Midwestern United States transformed from a rugged frontier into the nation's agricultural heartland and a burgeoning industrial powerhouse. Defined by rapid settlement, the expansion of railroads, and the forced displacement of Indigenous societies, the region developed a unique blend of small-farmer rural life and industrial urban centers.



Courtesy The Indiana Album, Inc

Photographers enhancing crayon enlargement portraits, circa 1895. This process uses an enlarged photograph embellished with pastels, colored pencils or India ink.



Courtesy The Indiana Album, Inc.

The Knightstown, Ind., fairgrounds circa 1880. On the left the "Parlor Photograph Tent" proclaims "Conover the Old Reliable" as its proprietor, while the tent on the right is advertised as "The Bon-Ton Picture Gallery."



Wisconsin: 1871, Abraham C Martin and family

Barnard & Astronomy, Ohio



[Portrait of E.E. Barnard, circa 1866]
Photograph of a young E. E. Barnard, most likely taken when he was working as an apprentice at the so-called "Jupiter" telescope, tracking the motions of the sun.



[Portrait of E.E. Barnard, circa 1900]

Barnard, grew from a life of poverty to become a well-known astronomer. He made a name for himself in Nashville by discovering nearly a dozen comets. He studied at Vanderbilt University, where he obtained a degree at the age of 30 and earned a teaching post at the observatory. Barnard also discovered-visually- a fifth moon of Jupiter, Almathea. He also discovered the second closest star to Earth, now called Barnard's star.



Jupiter Camera, Nashville, TN, 1866

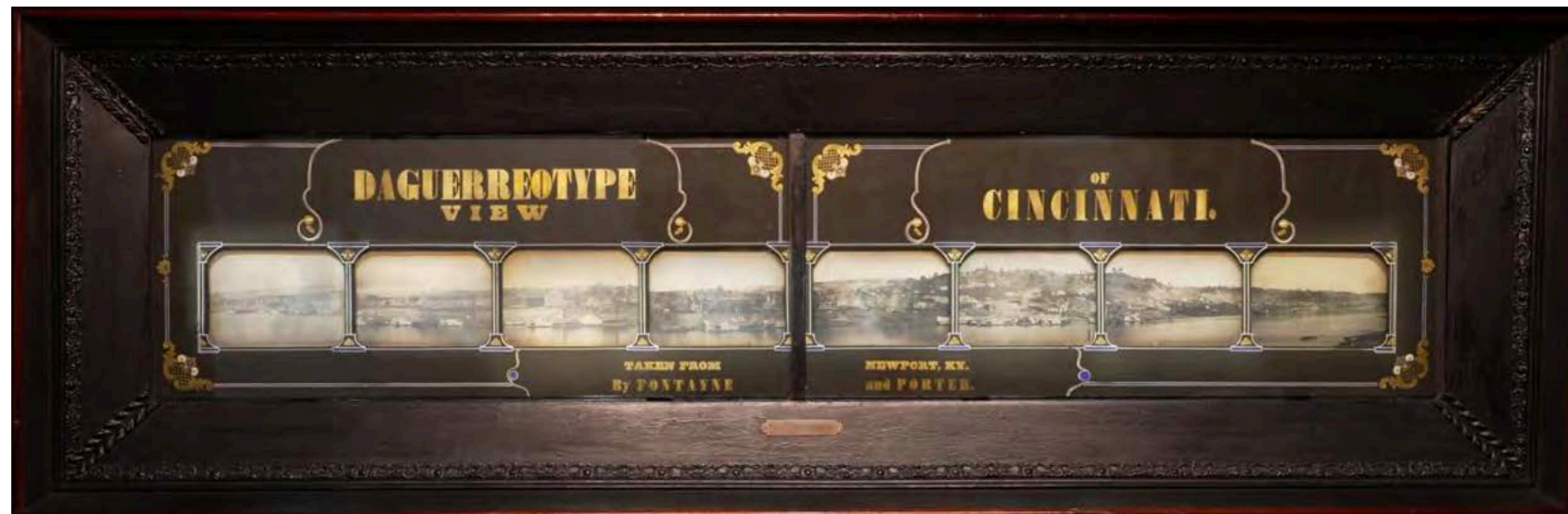
Edward Emerson Barnard (1857-1923) worked in John H. Van Stavoren's Nashville photography studio as a nine-year-old. He had to keep this solar camera, designed to make life-sized enlargements on silvered paper from negatives, directed on the sun to avoid setting fire to nearby buildings. This meant spending hours awake on the roof in all weather. The poor quality of the paper, which was difficult to obtain in Nashville during early Reconstruction, required the immense lens to produce an intense solar beam.

[Reference](#)

Cincinnati, Ohio

Cincinnati was the 6th largest city in the US in 1848

Many call this panorama the “Mona Lisa” of daguerreotypes



Daguerreotype View of Cincinnati, eight-plate panorama, 1848, Fontayne & Porter, Cincinnati Public Library.

On September 24, 1848 Englishman Charles Fontayne and Newport Ky native William Southgate Porter set their camera on the shores of the Ohio very near today's Newport Aquarium.



“Capturing Life” (1839-1869) combines rare images, interviews and music for a compelling look at the first three decades of Greater Cincinnati’s remarkable photographic history.

Cincinnati, Ohio



Dr. John Locke, 1792-1856

Dr. Locke was a medical doctor, chemist, botanist, geologist, professor, author, illustrator and inventor. Locke was also the first person to create and display a photograph in the United States when he exhibited his experimental “photogenic drawings” in the bookstore of Alexander Flash on 3rd Street in Cincinnati in the spring of 1839. Dr. Locke also gave the region’s first lecture on the daguerreotype process in May of 1840.



**Artist's rendering: Dr. John Locke displays “photogenic drawings” at the bookstore of Alexander Flash, Cincinnati, in the spring of 1839.
Artist: Thomas Miller, Atomic Art, 2024, Voyager Media Group, Inc.**

“Photogenic drawings” are “calotypes” - an early photographic process that used paper coated with silver iodide to create a negative image from which multiple positive prints could be reproduced.

[Reference](#)



Charles Waldack, 1831-1882

Waldack was an internationally-recognized photographer who is best known as the first to photograph a cave system in America in 1866. A series of over forty images from his cave photography expedition stunned the world when published in the stereographic card series, *Magnesium Light Views in Mammoth Cave*. Waldack operated a successful photographic studio in Cincinnati from about 1857 to 1882. He was also an innovator, mentor and author who made major contributions to early photography in America.



"Out for the Last Time," stereograph No. 6, single side, 1866, *Magnesium Light Views in Mammoth Cave*, Charles Waldack, Library of Congress. Waldack is in the middle between Procter and O'Shaughnessey.

Cincinnati, Ohio

The American Magnesium Company sold him tapers hung in reflectors to light the passages.



"Deserted Chamber," stereograph No. 7, 1866, *Magnesium Light Views in Mammoth Cave*, Charles Waldack, Library of Congress.

This is prairie land

GREAT PLAINS

by Judith Fertig

**Kansas
Nebraska
North Dakota
Oklahoma
South Dakota**



In the 19th century, the Great Plains was a vast, semi-arid, and treeless grassland stretching from the Rocky Mountains to the Missouri River. Known early as the "Great American Desert," it was characterized by immense open spaces, severe weather, and diverse wildlife. The region served as a hunting ground for tribes like the Sioux and Comanche before transforming into a center for ranching and homestead farming.



North Dakota: 1874, Custer's Black Hills Expedition

Great Plains



Oklahoma: 1889, land rush in Oklahoma Territory



Constructing waste sewers for the Omaha, NE stockyards, 1887

Western United States

Moving westward in US history depends on the year - originally it meant anything west of the Appalachians. Eventually by the late 19th century, following massive westward expansion, the frontier shifted and encompassed the American West spanning the **Great Plains**, the **Rocky Mountains**, and the **Pacific Coast**.



California Gold Rush



As the Western United States was being surveyed, colonized and developed concurrent with the invention of photography many skilled commercial, professional and artistic photographers were documenting railroad construction, cowboy life, mining scenes, architectural views of cities and settlements, portraits of outlaws, lawmen, and frontiersman, natural wonders of the landscape and views of Indians and Indian life.

[The Golden Age of Western Photography
Section One - 1858 -1875](#)

[The Golden Age of Western Photography
Section Two - 1875-1920](#)

Cherokee Nation Trail of Tears

1830-1850

Although a great deal of American history happened before 1829, this was the first year that actual photographs were taken. And one of the first events on the US history timeline is the *Five Civilized Tribes Trail of Tears*. Indians were forcibly moved from Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia to west of the Mississippi in Oklahoma.



The Oklahoma Land Rush

The Oklahoma Land Rush (1889–1893)

In a drastic shift in policy, the U.S. government began passing legislation to open up sizable, resource-rich portions of this Indian Territory to non-Native American settlement. This culminated in a series of chaotic, explosive land runs.



The Great Land Rush Begins



Woman on
her claim



With the train in the background, waggors rush from the start line.

"The funniest of all the starters was the engine with its ten carloads of men. From our stand fifty feet directly in front of it I was contemplating it as the chief absurdity of the race when the rush began. The engine tooted incessantly and labored hard, but of course she could not get under way with anything like the quickness of the horses..." (Seth Humphrey, participant)

Solomon D. Butcher

Settling the Great Plains



Nebraska photographer Solomon D. Butcher produced, over the course of nearly forty years, a record of the settlement of the Great Plains that is both unique and remarkable. Born in 1856 in what was to become the state of West Virginia after the Civil War, Butcher came with his family to the plains of Nebraska in 1880.

1886 Butcher was struck with an idea that was inspired. Realizing that the period of settlement would soon be over, he set out to create a photographic history of pioneer life. Between 1886 and 1912 Butcher generated a collection of more than 3,000 photographs.

Though he died in 1927 believing himself a total failure, Solomon D. Butcher's work has survived to become the most important chronicle of the saga of homesteading in America.

For nearly forty years the photographs of Solomon D. Butcher (1856-1927) have been used to tell the story of settlement on the Great Plains, including Ken Burns' and Stephen Ives' epic television production, "The West." In 1998 the Nebraska State Historical Society received an award from the Library of Congress and Ameritech to digitize the entire glass plate portion of the Butcher collection. This collection is now available [online](#).



Solomon D. Butcher, Great Plains Photos





Solomon D. Butcher, Great Plains Photos



Immigrants at Sates P.O.

George Trager and the Lakota Tribe

Little is known about the photographer George E. Trager, and the information that does exist focuses on the brief period of time that he resided in Chadron, Nebraska. Trager first photographed the Lakota Indians in South Dakota, but later returned after the Battle of Wounded Knee. He photographed Chief Big Foot as he lay dead in the snow.

Within ten days of the massacre, Trager and fellow photographer Ford amassed what local newspapers called the "finest and rarest collection of war dresses, ghost shirts, trinkets... now on earth," and sold them for profit.



Chief Big Foot



Photo of Lakota Indian Chief Young Man Afraid of his Horses posing in front of tipis.



Leaders of the Hostile Indians at Pine Ridge Agency, S.D. During the Late Sioux War

Wild Expansion in the US

Gorges, mountains, peaks



Tales of beauty in the West quickly reached the East coast. Untamed wilderness, freedom and danger attracted photographers. The Civil War had put a hold on exploration, but US Geological Surveys needed photographers on the teams to document these travels and many who joined were former war photographers.

Many of these precious images were destroyed in transit, but those that did make it back helped to create a sense of national identity and pride and the first national parks were designated in 1862 and 1872.

In the 19th century, the Mountain States transitioned from a rugged, forbidding frontier to a resource-driven territory. Dominated by the Rocky Mountains, this area served as both a barrier and a destination for westward expansion, defined by the fur trade, mining booms, and railroad construction.



Colorado: 1893, mining teams and wagons in Idaho Springs



An 1853 daguerreotype by Solomon Nunes Carvalho, is the oldest known photograph taken in Colorado. The image is a view of a Cheyenne village at Big Timbers with four large tipis standing at the edge of a wooded area, and two figures. [Reference](#)

Painting and Photography: An Intersection

Once again, we come to an intersection - painters sent back canvases that illustrated the beauty of the Western states.

Iconic Painters of the Early West (19th - Early 20th Century)

- Frederic Remington (1861–1909): Often regarded as the premier artist of the Old West, he focused on cavalry, cowboys, and action scenes.
- Charles Marion Russell (1864–1926): Known as the "cowboy artist," he produced nearly 2,000 paintings and sculptures of Montana ranch life and Native American culture.
- Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902): Known for sweeping, romanticized, and luminous landscapes of the Rocky Mountains and the West.
- George Catlin (1796–1872): Famed for his extensive portraits of Native American life, traveling extensively up the Missouri River to document tribes.
- Karl Bodmer (1809–1893): A Swiss artist whose meticulous, detailed renderings of Native Americans and landscapes are recognized as highly accurate.
- Alfred Jacob Miller (1810–1874): Commissioned to paint scenes of the 1837 fur trappers' rendezvous, his work is known for its intimate look at early Western life.



The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak, 1863, Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902)



Rocky Mountain Rendezvous, 1834

The artists who gave us our vision of the American West

Geophotography



Timothy O'Sullivan

We met Timothy O'Sullivan earlier as a war photographer. But he was also attached to the US Geological Survey, as a pioneer in "geophotography" - meaning "to realistically record objects, features, and processes of geological significance". His job was to photograph the West to attract settlers.



Shoshone 1867-72



Native American (Paiute) men, women and children posing under a tree near Cottonwood Springs (Washoe County), Nevada. Taken in 1875.

The homeland of the Shoshoni covered large tracts of the Great Basin--portions of Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, and Utah. O'Sullivan photographed in their territory in 1867-69. Many of the men in the photograph are wearing U. S. Army hats and shirts, paraphernalia probably acquired through barter at the Army's trading posts.

When O'Sullivan made the picture, the delicate ecology of the Shoshoni's food sources (buffalo, small game, roots, berries, and grass seed) had been virtually destroyed over the preceding thirty years by the heedless practices of emigrant white settlers. The resulting degradation and the marauding, murderous retaliation of the Shoshoni and associated tribes became known as the "Indian question," which the U.S. government attempted to resolve through legislation, the establishment of reservations, and, on occasion, slaughter.

As an exploratory visitor rather than an exploitative settler, O'Sullivan met little hostility from Native Americans.

Photographers (and copyright)



Mount of the Holy Cross in Colorado, 1869,
William Henry Jackson



French Gulch, Colorado, Aug. 23, 1862,
photographer unknown



John K. Hillers at work with his negatives.
In camp, Aquarius Plateau, Utah Territory.
Hillers was a photographer with the John
Wesley Powell Geological Survey. By
Hillers, ca. 1872

The 1867 King Survey

- Known as the "U.S. Geological Exploration of the Fortieth Parallel"
- Led by Clarence King (later the first Director of the USGS)
- Photographers: **Timothy O'Sullivan** and **C. E. Watkins**.

The 1867 Hayden Survey

- Known as the "U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories"
- Led by Ferdinand Vandeveer Hayden
- Photographer: **William Henry Jackson**.

The 1872 Wheeler Survey

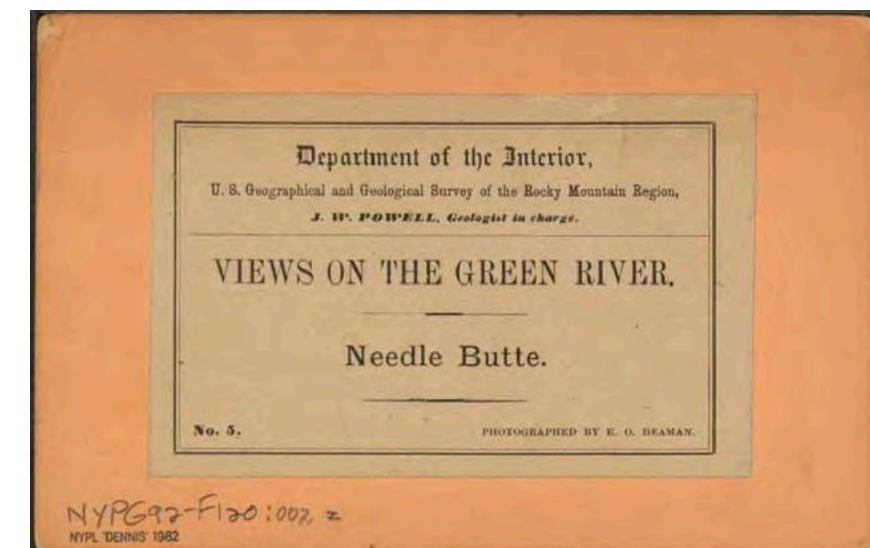
- Known as the "U.S. Geographical Surveys West of the One Hundredth Meridian"
- Led by George Montague Wheeler
- Photographer: **Timothy O'Sullivan** (who was also part of the King Survey).

The 1869 Powell Survey

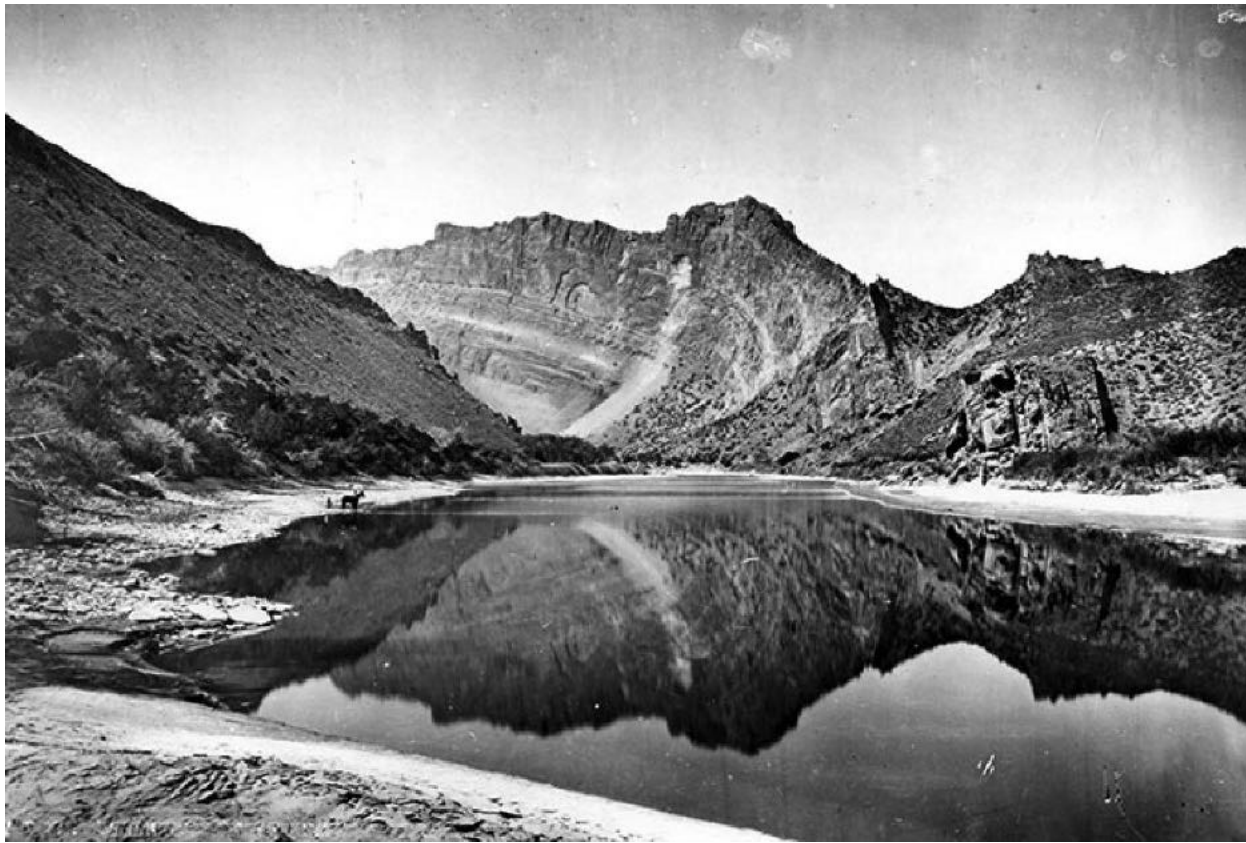
- Known as the "U.S. Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region"
- Led by John Wesley Powell (later the second Director of the USGS)
- Photographers: **J. K. Hillers** and **E. O. Beaman**
- [Reference](#)

It was common practice in the 19th century
to purchase the negatives of other
photographers and publish them under
one's own **copyright**.

A Survey Report



William Henry Jackson



Flaming Gorge on the Green River, near the mouth of Henry's Fork, WY-UT, 1870.
William Henry Jackson.



On expedition to survey Yellowstone in WY



William Henry Jackson

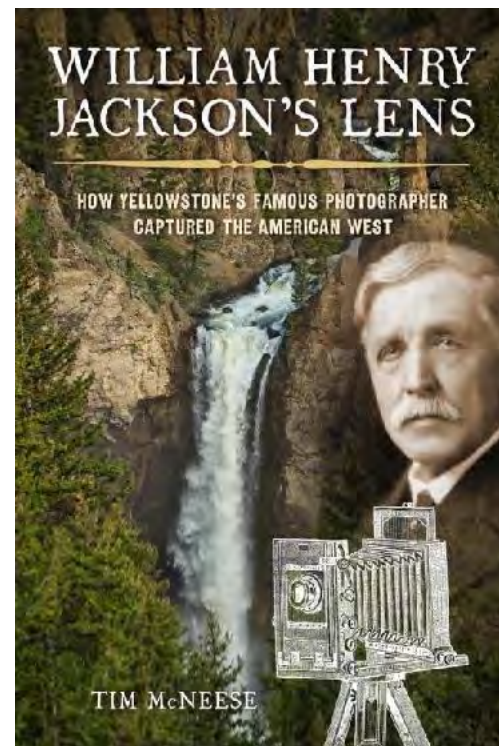
As young man William Henry Jackson (1843-1942) learned the photo trade by working in local studios in NY. He fought in the Civil War and documented an infantryman's life in the Union army by sketching battles, soldiers, and terrain - these drawings are preserved at the Scotts Bluff National Monument Visitor Center, Nebraska.

Later he traveled the west documenting the landscapes of Utah, Wyoming, Montana and Colorado opened by the new railroad as part of the US Geological and Geographic Survey of the territories. He used "mammoth-plate" glass negatives, which took an hour to prepare, expose, develop and dry.

His Yellowstone photos helped establish the National Park in 1842. The largest collection of his photos are at the Getty Museum.



Old Faithful



Jackson's Lens

William Henry Jackson

It took two men to mount William Henry Jackson's 'mammoth' view camera on a tripod. The 17" x 22" glass plates, and plate holders, can be seen on the other side of his pack animal. In the image on the right, Jackson is seen kneeling next to his smaller 11" x 14" camera. He also used an 8" x 10" camera.

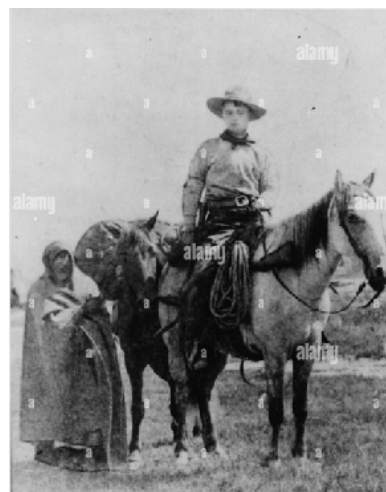
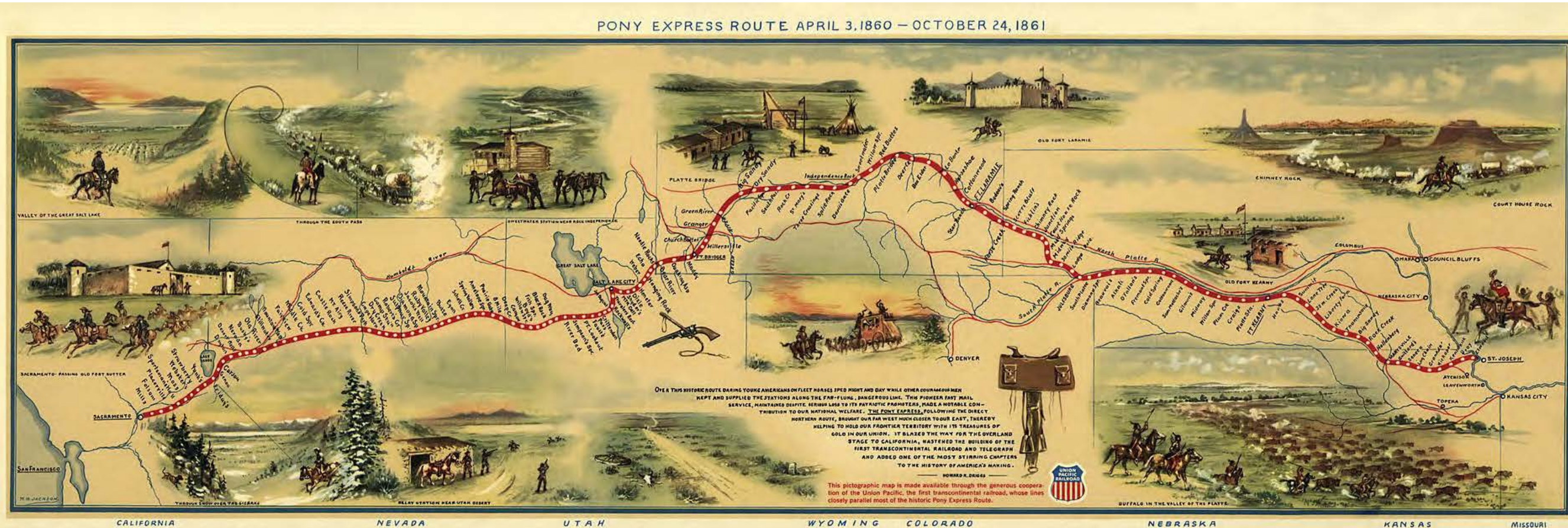


Photo of a 1872 Hayden Survey Camp in 1872 taken by William Henry Jackson. Photo courtesy of NPS

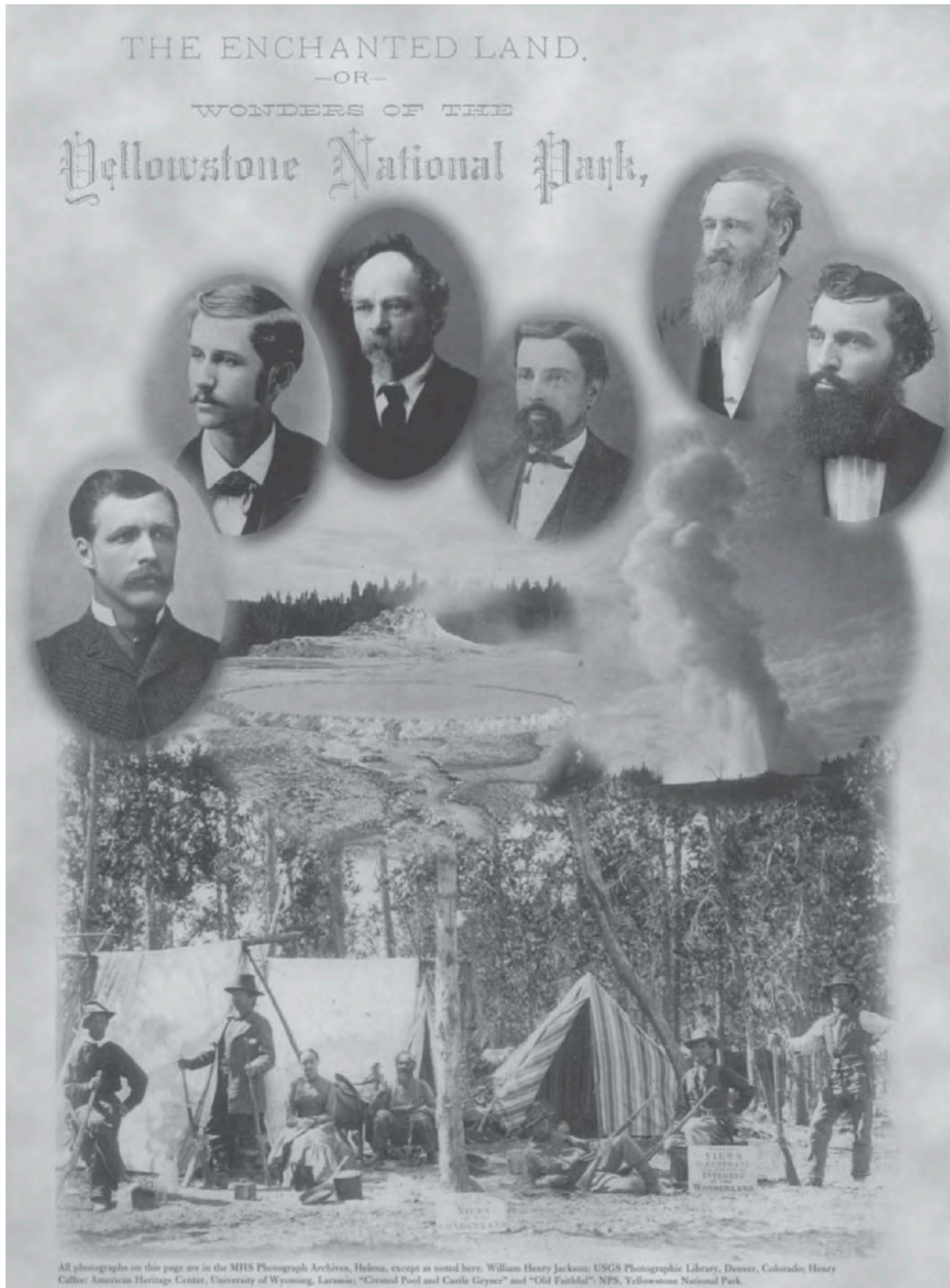
William Henry Jackson

Jackson was also a painter and illustrator and created this map of the Pony Express

The 1,966-mile trail stretched from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, passing through Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada operating between 1860 - 1861, but went out of business as the telegraph was invented.



Photographers and the Early Promotion of Yellowstone



All photographs on this page are in the MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, except as noted here. William Henry Jackson: USGS Photographic Library, Denver, Colorado; Henry Clifton: American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie; "Crested Pool and Castle Geyser" and "Old Faithful": NPS, Yellowstone National Park.



A survey led by Hayden took place in 1872 – the team is pictured here in Firehole Basin. The United States Congress were in awe of the materials captured by these explorers, from detailed reports to breathtaking photography and artworks. President Ulysses S Grant signed the Yellowstone National Park Protection Act on March 1, 1872, and Yellowstone became the USA's first national park. [REFERENCE](#)



In Yellowstone's early decades, it was administered and safeguarded by the US army, who kept this role until 1918. The entrance to the park is photographed here in 1897. [REFERENCE](#)

J.K. Hillers



John K. Hillers 1843-1925

John K. Hillers (1843-1925) immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1852. He spent almost twenty years photographing Native Americans and the landscape of the Indian Territories, California, the Southwest, and the Southeast, largely for the Bureau of American Ethnology and the United States Geological Survey. He began work on the Survey as a boatman on John Wesley Powell's second expedition down the Colorado River in 1871. He soon became the assistant, and then the main photographer (1872) for the expedition. From 1879 to 1900, Hiller's served as the first staff photographer of Powell's Bureau of Ethnology, and in 1881 he took pictures for the United States Geological Survey. He portrayed the Indians with dignity and compassion. He created 23,000 photographs of the land and Indians.



Colorado River. Grand Canyon, 1872. The famous armchair boat in the canyon.



Eagle Plume by John K Hillers circa 1880



Green River. Ashley Falls, looking up, 1871



Green River, Wyoming, Canyon of Lodore. Just within the "Cats", looking down, 1871.

The 1869 Powell Survey

- Known as the "U.S. Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region"
- Led by John Wesley Powell (later the second Director of the USGS)
- Photographers: **J. K. Hillers** and **E. O. Beaman**

Utah

Charles William Carter



Charles William Carter
1832 - 1918



Building of the Mormon Temple

Carter took some of the earliest known images along the route of the transcontinental railroad. Carter was active in Utah, documenting the growth of Salt Lake City (including the construction of the Mormon Salt Lake City Temple).



Mormon Emigrant Train, Echo Canyon, 1870



Charles William Carter

Carter was also known for documenting indigenous peoples.

The photos here are held at the Amon Carter Museum, Ft. Worth, TX.



Charlie, 1868



Group Portrait of Three Men, 1863-69



Group Portrait of Three Men, 1863-69



Delegation to Brigham Young, 1868



Little Soldier, 1869

Railroads in America

Outline sketch map of the United States west of the Mississippi River designed to show the relationship of the proposed railroad routes. First edition of the map appears in U.S. War Department, Report of the Secretary...Communicating the Several Pacific Railroad Explorations (Washington, 1855).



Railroads in America

After the Civil War, America turned westward with the approaching completion of the transcontinental railroad. An army of railroad engineers, surveyors, and photographers participated in the effort to join the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific railroads, finally linking the east and west coasts.



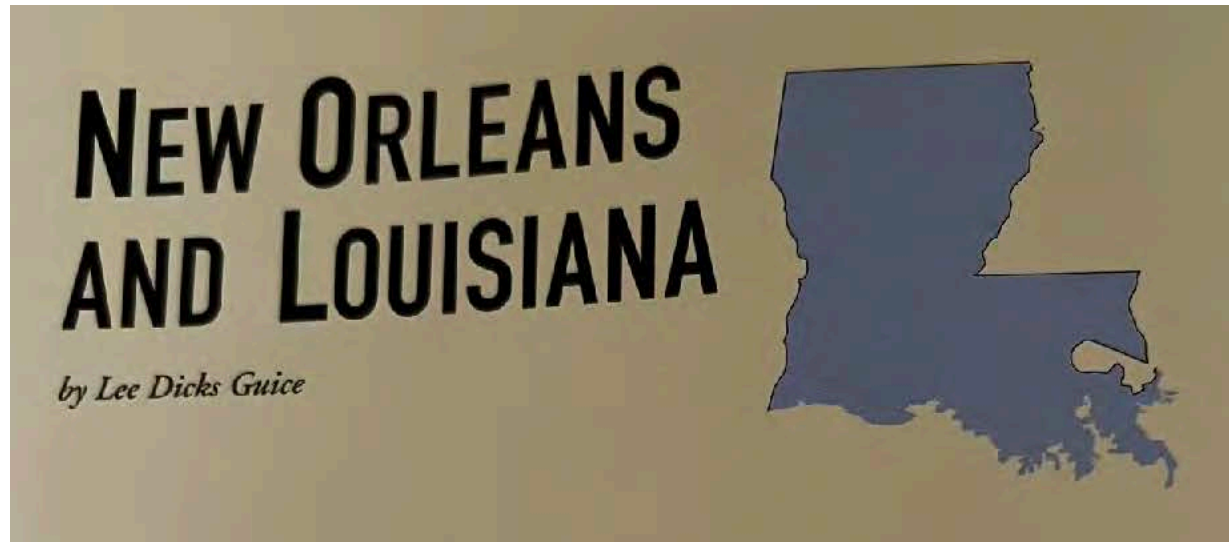
Photographer Andrew J. Russell began his career as an artist. As a commissioned officer in the Union Army during the Civil War, he initially worked painting a recruitment diorama and was soon assigned to a special duty post as photographer for the U.S. Military Railroad Construction Corps.



The "joining of the rails" (often called the "Wedding of the Rails") refers to the historic completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad in the United States. On May 10, 1869, the Union Pacific built westward from Omaha, NE and Central Pacific built eastward from Sacramento, CA met at Promontory Summit in the Utah Territory, connecting the East and West coasts and revolutionizing cross-country travel.

The joined tracks covered 1,776 miles across mountains and deserts. The monumental task relied heavily on the labor of 15,000 workers, with the Central Pacific's difficult western route primarily built by thousands of Chinese immigrants.

New Orleans & Louisiana



Louisiana in the 19th century was defined by rapid transformation following the 1803 Purchase, evolving from a French-Spanish colonial outpost into a wealthy, diverse, and deeply conflicted American state. It was characterized by an agricultural boom in cotton and sugar, a strong Creole culture, massive forced migration of enslaved people, and significant population growth, leading to statehood in 1812.



Louisiana: 1860s, Louisiana School for the Deaf

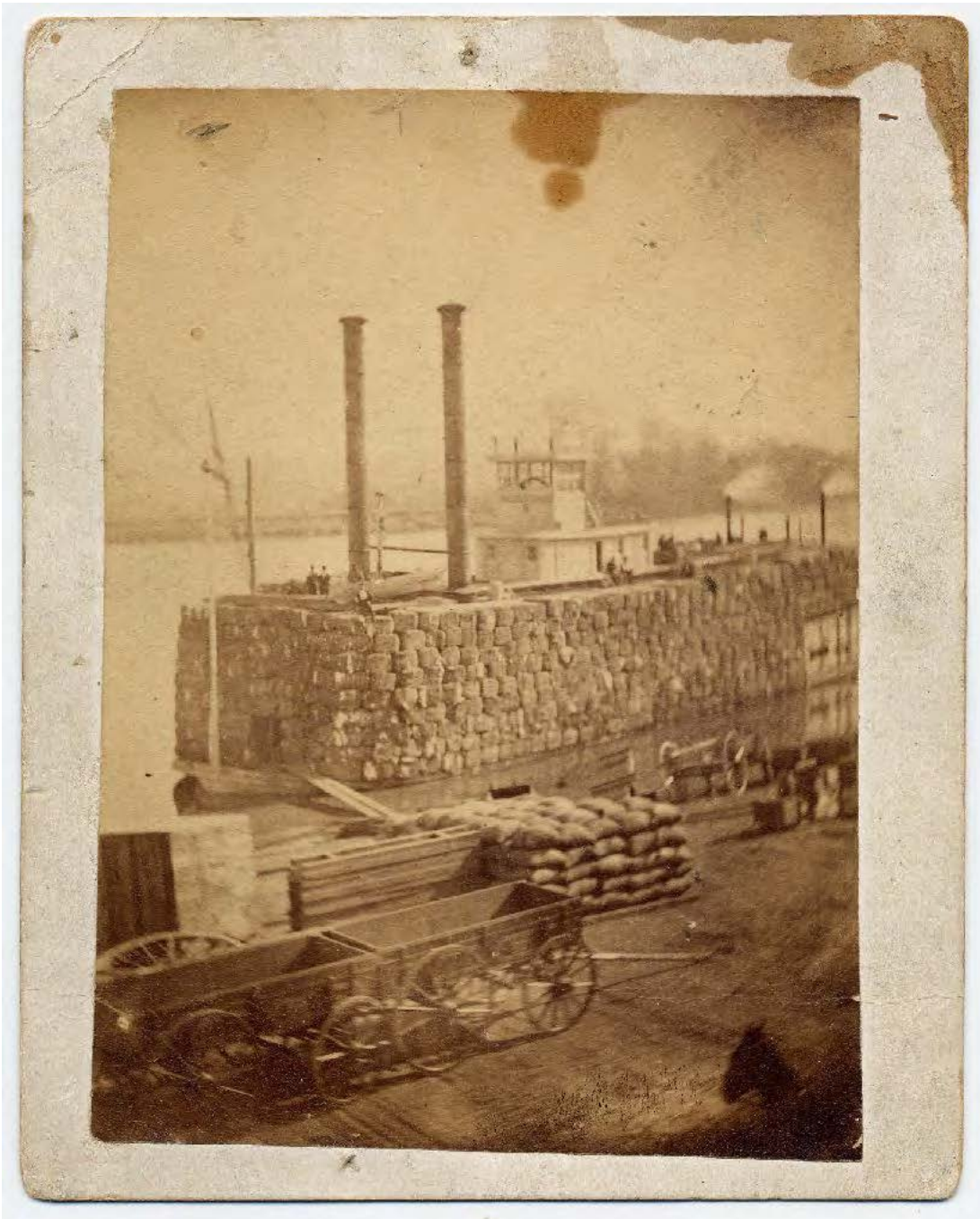


Jackson Square and the French Quarter as seen from the east bank across the levee near Bienville St. on the riverfront.



Jackson Square as seen from river

King Cotton



Port of New Orleans, Cotton Bales

Lewis Hines (1874–1940) best known for the documentary images of child labor practices that he produced under the aegis of the National Child Labor Committee from 1911 to 1916.



Group of workers in Lane Cotton Mill, New Orleans, showing the youngest workers, and typical of conditions in New Orleans.

Jules Lion



Jules Lion (1810-1866)

Jules Lion (c. 1806–1866) was a photographer, lithographer, and pastel painter born in Paris, who exhibited at the Paris Salon. before emigrating to the United States in 1837. He eventually opened the first daguerreotype studio in New Orleans in 1840, one year after the invention of the process. (Lion was of mixed parentage and listed as a "Free Man of Color," in city directories, civic and legal documents and newspapers. This was interesting because of the slavery issue, emancipation and discrimination.) On March 14, 1840, the *New Orleans Bee* published a notice about an exhibition of Lion's daguerreotypes at the St. Charles Museum, the first documented photography exhibition in Louisiana.

Very few of his daguerreotypes still exist, but he was also know for his lithographs of New Orleans and various famous people.



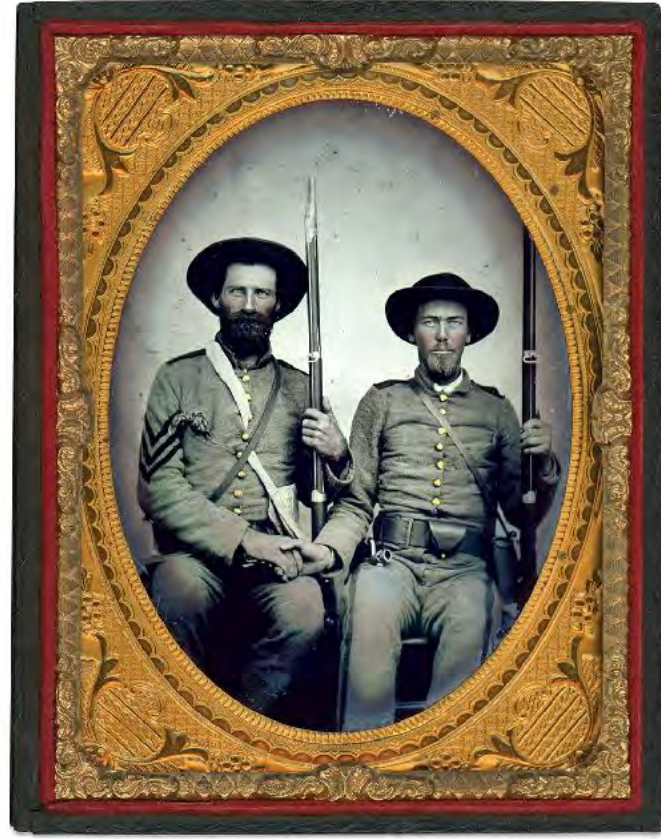
Daguerreotype of a Young Woman
– attributed to Jules Lion

Confederate Soldiers

During the Civil War Louisiana seceded from the Union and much of photography centered around making keepsake photos of soldiers fighting for the Confederate cause.

MI **MILITARY IMAGES DIGITAL**
Showcase. Interpret. Preserve.

From the collection of
Paul Reeder

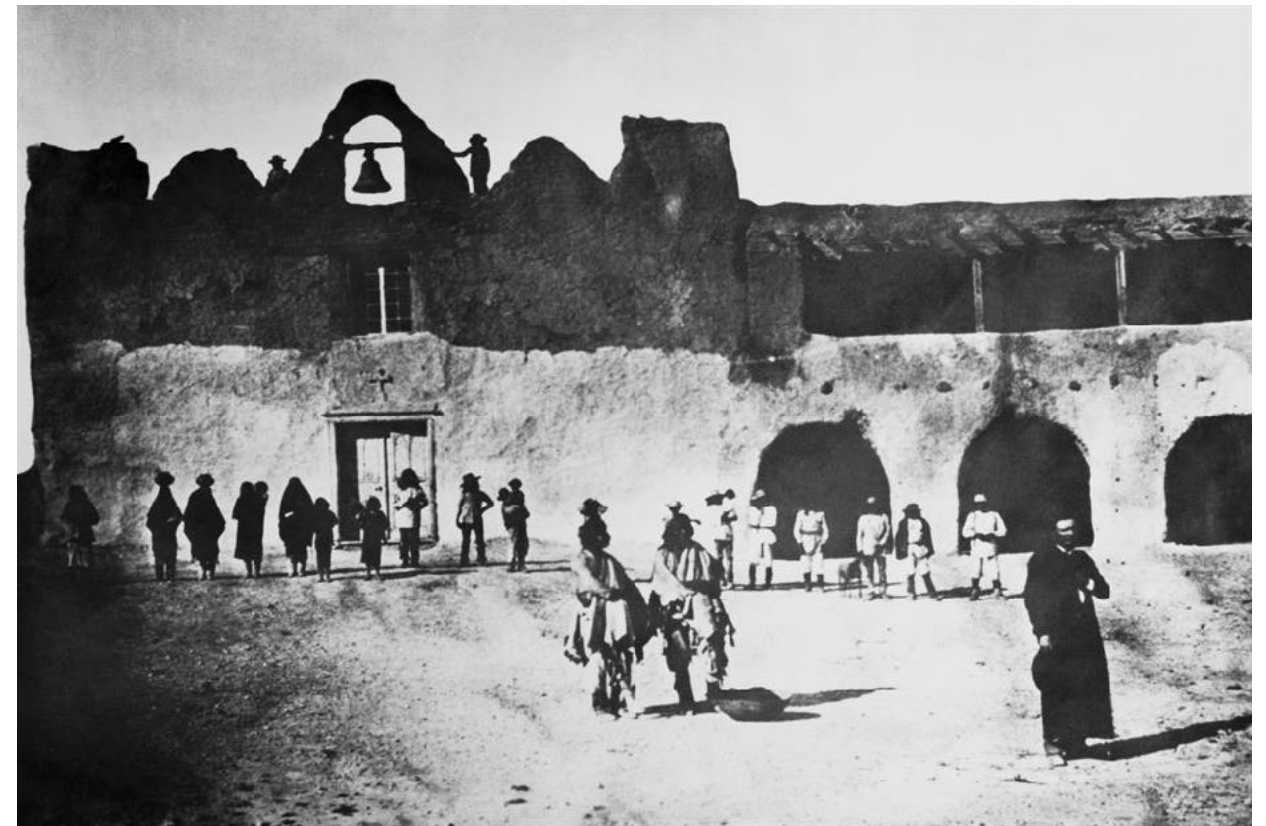


Texas

Vast spaces and diverse terrain



In the 19th century, Texas transformed from a Mexican province into an independent republic (1836) and then a U.S. state (1845), characterized by rapid expansion, slavery-driven cotton cultivation, and booming cattle ranching. The landscape was dominated by rural, agricultural, and frontier life, later heavily developed by railroads which spurred city growth, particularly after 1870.



Texas: 1860s, Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo



Texas State Capitol, H.B. Hillyer, 1881



Cowboys on Horseback with Cattle, unknown, 1882

The Cowhand and the Cowboy

Historians now estimate that between 20 to 25% of cowboys in the American West were African American.

After the Civil War ended in 1865 many African Americans migrated to the West or became free people in the West.

The term cowboy has interesting origins. Originally, White cowboys were called cowhands, and African Americans were referred to as cowboys.





Texas in Focus: Early Photographs from the State Archives

LENS ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER



LAWRENCE T. JONES III

Forewords by Russell L. Martin III & Roy Flukinger

Lawrence T. Jones III showcases some of the most interesting and historically important glimpses of Texas history included among the five thousand photographs in the collection that bears his name at the DeGolyer Library of Southern Methodist University. One of the nation's most comprehensive and valuable Texas-related photography collections, the Lawrence T. Jones III Collection documents all aspects of Texas photography from the years 1846–1945, including rare examples of the various techniques practiced from its earliest days in the state: daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes, and paper print photographs in various formats.

The selections in the book feature cartes de visite, cabinet cards, oversized photographs, stereographs, and more. The subjects of the photos include Confederate and Union soldiers and officers in the Civil War; Mexicans, including ranking military officials from the Mexican Revolution; and a wide spectrum of Texan citizens, including African American, Native American, Hispanic, and Caucasian women, men, and children.

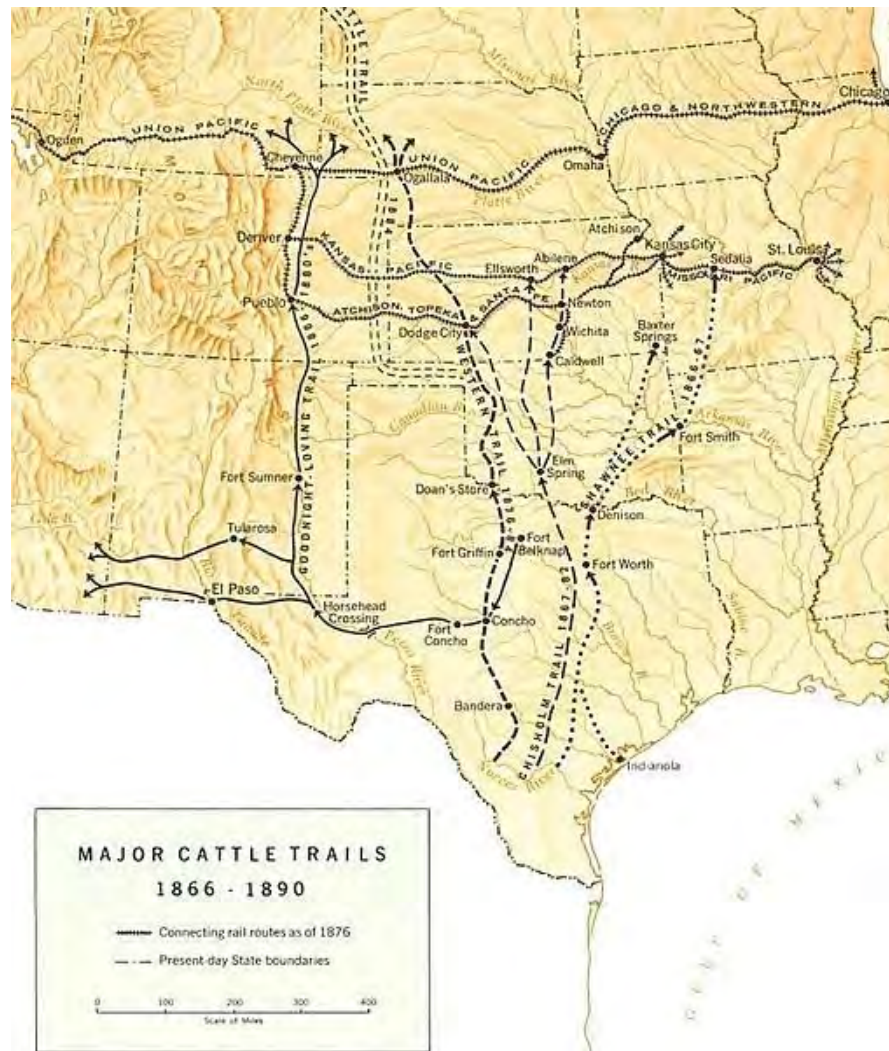


[Interview with L Jones](#)

The History Of Early Texas
Photography (From
1840s-1900)

(30 minute interview with
the author)

Cattle-Trailing



Cattle Trailing. Cattle trailing was the principal method of getting cattle to market in the late nineteenth century. It provided Texans with a practical, economical means of marketing surplus livestock. It also achieved mythological stature as an aspect of the American frontier. The heyday was from about 1866 to 1890. Texas drives during the nineteenth century usually featured mounted riders tending decidedly wilder beasts, usually longhorn cattle. They drove the cattle to neighboring states as well as the railheads in Kansas City.



Wyoming Trail Herd, 1880's



Making Pies on the Mess Wagon

Chisholm Trail

The **Chisholm Trail** was a stock trail and wagon route used in the post-Civil War era to drive cattle overland from ranches in Southern Texas across the Red River into Indian Territory, and northward to rail stops in Kansas. The trail consisted of a pathway established by Black Beaver in 1861 and a wagon road established by Jesse Chisholm around 1864.



1873 Map of Chisholm Trail with Subsidiary Trails in Texas



Cattle Trail, 1867



The Texas Cowboy Kitchen blends distinctive culinary recipes with a narrative of life on the Chisholm Trail and Erwin E. Smith's award-winning black-and-white cowboy photography, housed at the Amon Carter Museum in Ft. Worth. He started taking cowboy photos in 1900.

Arizona and New Mexico

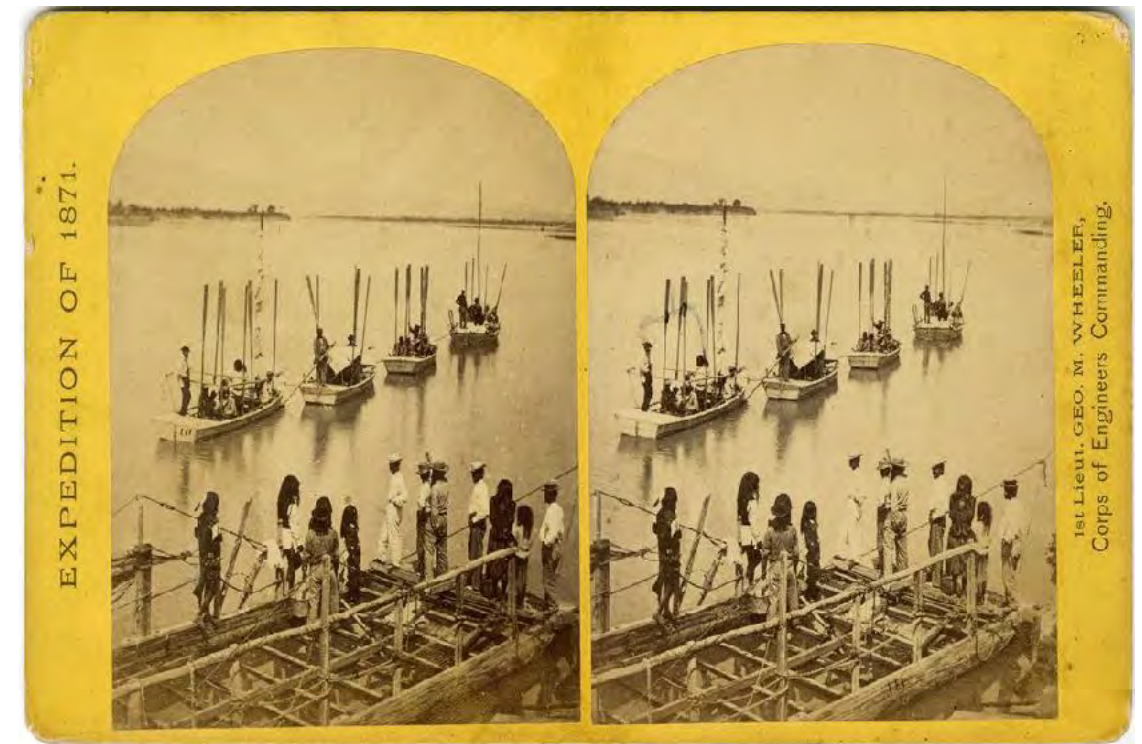
Deserts, plateaus, rugged mountains, arid,
well-developed society of native tribes



In the 19th century, the region encompassing modern-day Arizona and New Mexico was a remote, sparsely populated, and culturally diverse frontier, transitioning from Spanish and Mexican rule to United States territory. It was characterized by vast, arid landscapes, significant indigenous resistance, violent mining boomtowns, and the gradual arrival of railroads that transformed the economy from isolation to cattle, copper, and cotton production



Photographer: Unknown Place: Santa Fe, New Mexico Date: Unknown



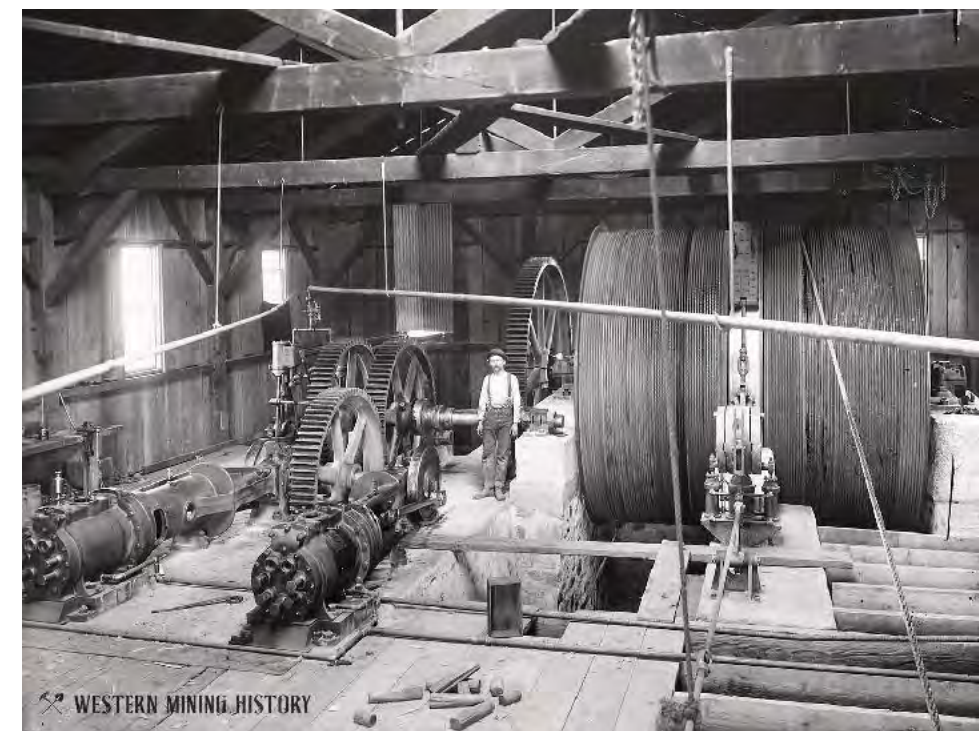
This stereoscopic image by prestigious 19th-century photographer Timothy H O'Sullivan captures people gathered for a boat expedition led by Lieutenant George Wheeler. The survey team departed from Fort Mojave, a military post on the eastern bank of the Colorado River, to chart territory along the Colorado River, traveling through the Grand Canyon up to the mouth of Diamond Creek. O'Sullivan joined the expedition, which covered 260 miles in 31 days, to document the landscapes and new discoveries.



John K. Hillers. Taos Pueblo, New Mexico, ca. 1880

Compared to other Western states, the number of historical Arizona images is relatively small. For reasons that may include the frontier lifestyle and rough conditions, itinerant nature of much of their business, or other factors, few of Arizona's pioneer photographers left much information about their own lives and experiences.

As a frontier territory many images of Arizona document the individuals, scenes and events of life in the forts and military outposts and wild mining towns mostly documented by itinerant photographers or photographers attached to US Survey operations. Many produced images of the Native Americans, cacti, Grand Canyon, and budding mineral wealth in the last frontier of the 19th century.



Mining Industry photos



Exploration of the Grand Canyon





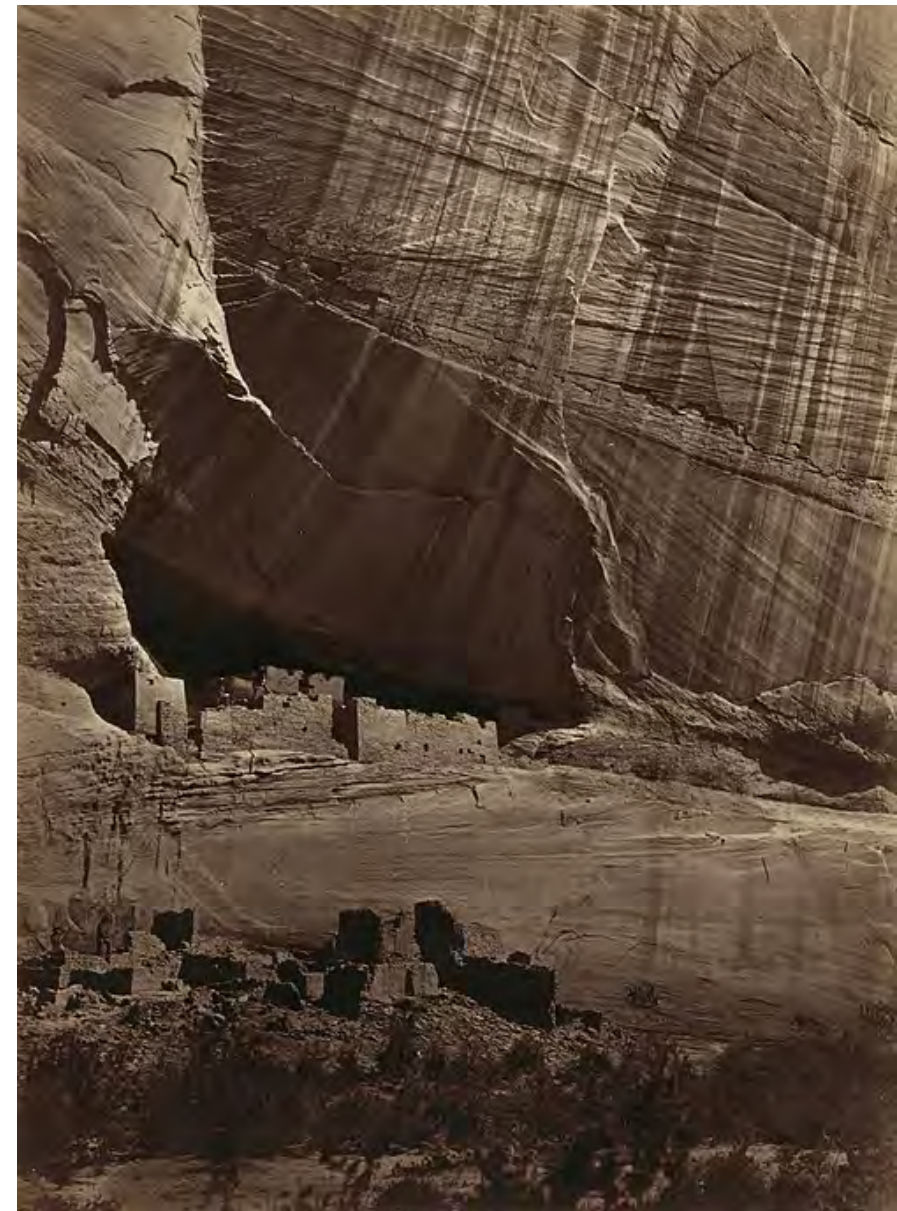
Timothy O'Sullivan, 1871-1874

Timothy O'Sullivan

O'Sullivan first worked as a photographer during the Civil War. From 1871 to 1874, he went to the southwestern United States as a photographer attached to the Wheeler Geological Survey. His job was to photograph the West to attract settlers. O'Sullivan's pictures were among the first to record the prehistoric ruins, Navajo weavers, and pueblo villages of the Southwest.



El Morro National Monument, 1873



Canyon de Chelly National Monument, 1873



Mojave Indian Stereograph, 1871

[Amazing 19th Century Photographs of the American West by Timothy O'Sullivan](#)

Newhall - 119-121 California

Gold rush, Chinese,



In the 19th century, California transformed from a sparsely populated Mexican frontier into a bustling U.S. state, driven by the explosive 1848 Gold Rush, the 1850 statehood as a free state, and the 1869 transcontinental railroad. It was a period defined by rapid, often chaotic growth, diverse immigration, major cultural clashes, and the rapid development of agriculture.



1894: Driving through a giant sequoia tree



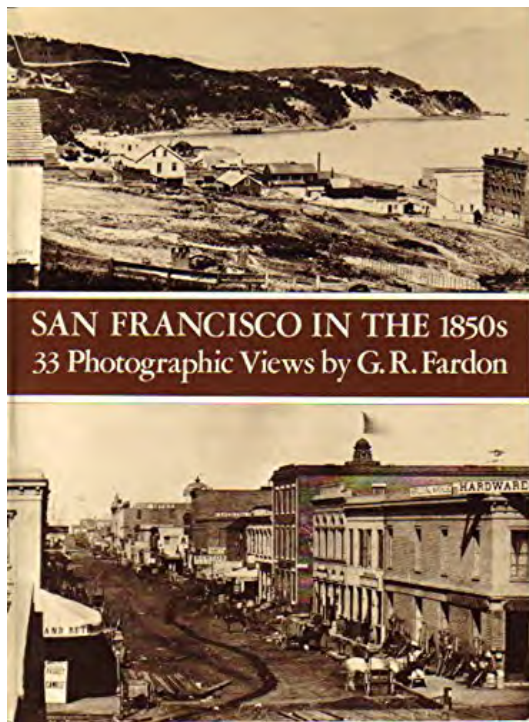
California: 1852, Gold Rush miners



c.1868: Alcatraz Island



George Fardon, 1807-1886



San Francisco in the 1850s

George Fardon



Fardon is perhaps best acclaimed for his San Francisco Album, *Photographs of the Most Beautiful Views and Public Buildings of San Francisco*, which he published in 1856. This book made Fardon the first person in America and, possibly, in the whole world, to publish a collection of photographs of a metropolitan area, and is considered to be of enormous historical value.



Arnold Genthe



Arnold Genthe was a German-American photographer, best known for his photographs of Northern California, San Francisco's Chinatown, the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, and his portraits of noted people, from politicians and socialites to literary figures and entertainment celebrities.

Arnold Genthe 1869-1942

But his process of emphasis and omission proved highly problematic. While Genthe claimed insider status, his contact extended to tourist hot spots and he often hid to capture suspicious residents with his "candid camera." He intentionally mislabeled certain images to make their content more palatable to his white patrons.

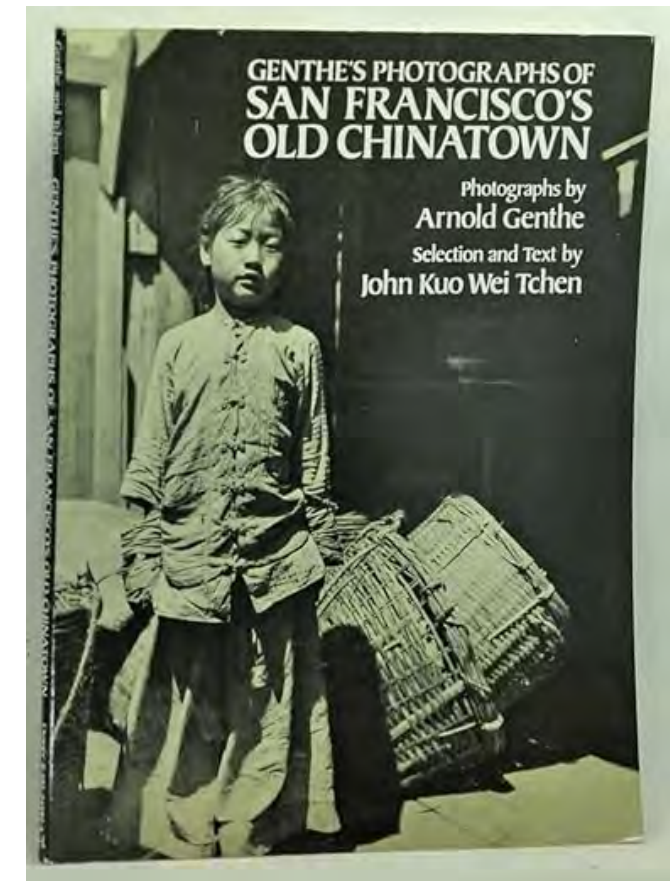


Genthe's CROPPED VERSION



"Self-portrait with Camera in Chinatown" by Arnold Genthe

Commentary by Elizabeth Xiong | July 6, 2021



Arnold Guthrie's Chinatown



The New Toy, Arnold Genthe

Arnold Genthe, San Francisco Earthquake



Arnold Genthe. *Looking Down Sacramento Street, San Francisco.* April 18, 1906



San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906

Charles Leander Weed
American, 1824-1903

Charles Leander Weed

In 1859, Weed embarked on a significant journey across the western United States, armed with his camera and a vision to document the changing landscapes and cultures of the region. His photographs, often utilizing albumen prints and stereographs, are considered among the earliest and most comprehensive records of the American West during this transformative period.

Throughout his career, Weed's work was widely acclaimed for its artistic merit (he trained as a portrait and landscape painter) and historical significance (he was probably the first to see Yosemite). His images, which highlighted the juxtaposition of nature and civilization, continue to inspire and resonate today. Charles Leander Weed's legacy as a pioneering figure in American photography remains enduring, reflecting his commitment to capturing the essence of the American West. He was one of the first photographers to use a Mammoth Camera.



Yosemite Valley from the Mariposa Trail. 1864

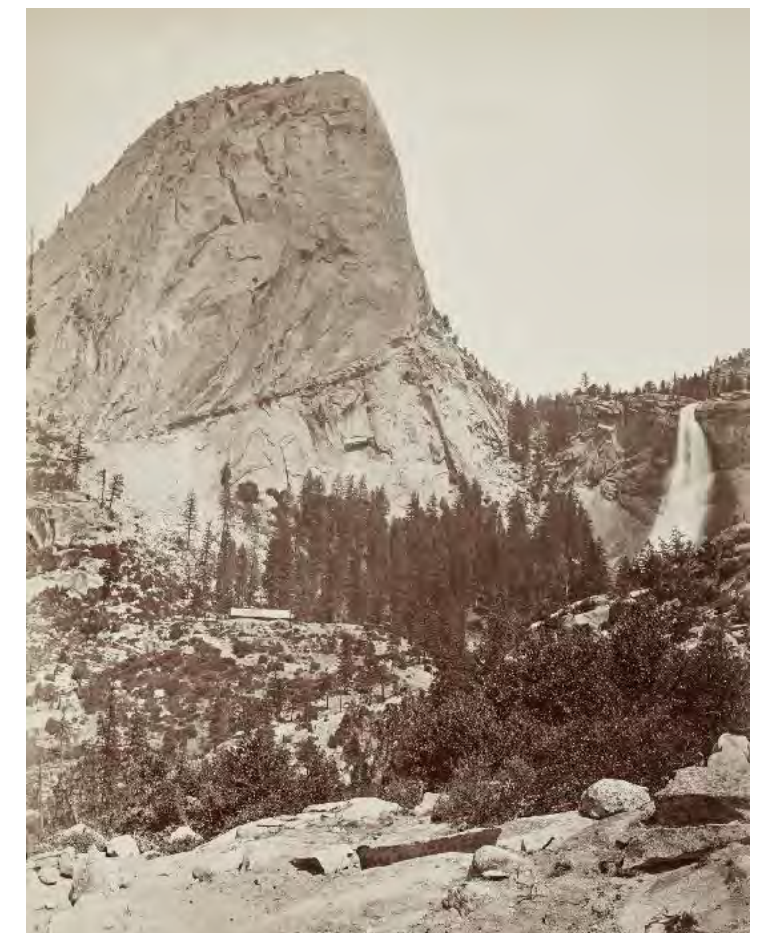
PHOTOGRAPHY.



C. L. WEED,
Would announce to the citizens of Red Bluff and vicinity that he has fitted up rooms in the Old Luna House, where he is prepared to supply those wishing them, with all the latest styles of Photographs.
Late improvements enable him to operate without regard to the weather.
Red Bluff, November 12, 1870.



Mirror Lake and Reflections, Yosemite Valley, 1864

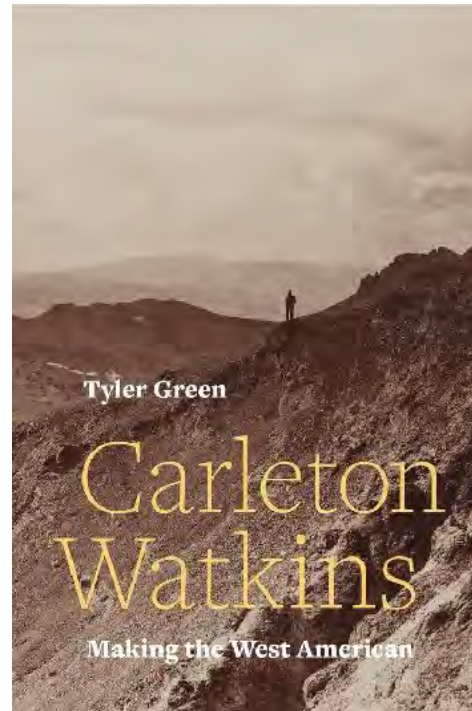


Mount Broderick, Nevada Fall, Yosemite, Mammoth-plate albumen print, printed c. 1861, 21 3/4 x 15 3/8 in.

C.E. Watkins



Carleton Watkins 1829–1916



C. Watkins: Making the American West

Carleton Watkins and his profound impact on shaping America's perception of the West, linking it to national identity and policy during the Civil War era. He was more than a documentarian; his images of Yosemite and other landscapes were crucial to the development of American business, science, and the national park concept, influencing everything from government policy to cultural unionism.

The 1867 King Survey

- Known as the "U.S. Geological Exploration of the Fortieth Parallel"
- Led by Clarence King (later the first Director of the USGS)
- Photographers: **Timothy O'Sullivan** (who was also part of the Wheeler Survey) and **C. E. Watkins**.



Property speculation - a new kind of evidence

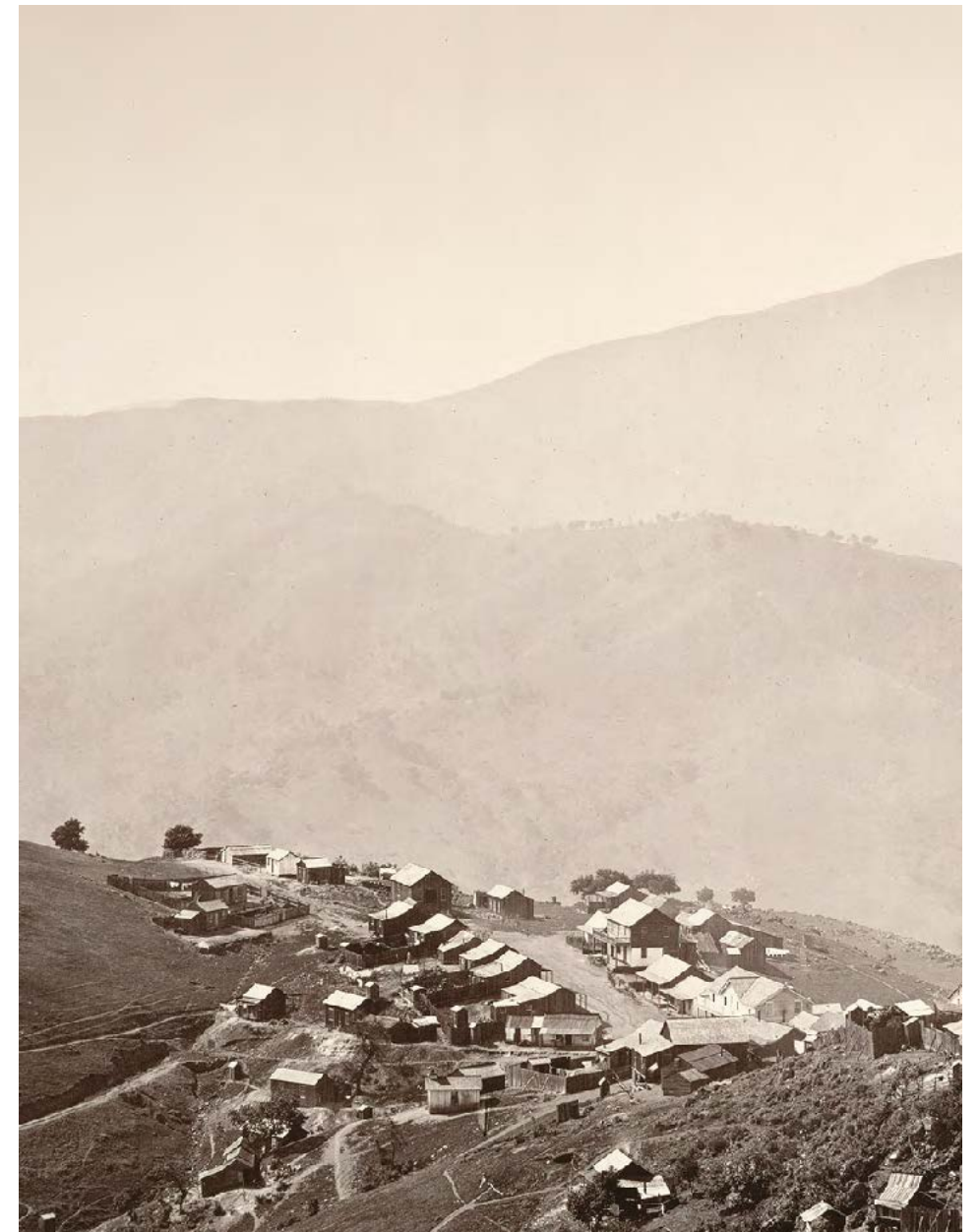
Photographs were not just descriptive; they not only showed the likeness of a loved one or a famous person. They not only documented an event or pictured something important. They also served to show “proof” or to “sway an opinion” or to “settle disputes”.

In a California courtroom in 1858, the San Francisco photographer, Carleton Watkins stood before a judge to talk about a photography. The photo was to establish the location of a particular oak tree (US v. Fossat) in the boundaries of New Almaden, a quicksilver mine near San Jose.

IT WAS THE VERY FIRST TIME THAT A PHOTOGRAPH WAS USED FOR EVIDENCE IN A COURT OF LAW.



Carleton Watkins, Sierra del Enicno [Two-Part Panorama of Guadalupe Quicksilver Mine, Santa Clara County, California], 1858, Collection of the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington.



Detail from Carleton E. Watkins, *The Town on the Hill, New Almaden*, 1863 (plate [13](#)).

Mammoth Views

Daguerreotypes of the Wild West were too small to do justice to the vast views. At this time, prints had to be the same size as a negative. So in 1861 C.E. Watkins commissioned a cabinet-maker to create a camera that could take 18x22in glass negatives. **Carleton and other photographers of the time wanted to compete with painters and see their work treated as Art, hence their desire to produce large photographs from which multiple copies could be made.**

Not only was the camera large, but Watkins needed a back up (like all good photographers), and as developing of the negatives was carried out *in situ*, he also had to carry with him chemicals, glass plates, a tent for a darkroom and various other equipment wherever he travelled. And so, in 1861, he set off with a dozen mules on his first trip to Yosemite. There, he took 30 mammoth plate and 100 stereograph views of the famous valley and rock formations. The skill needed to coat one of those plates evenly with wet collodion was considerable. Watkins prints of Yosemite amazed the public, and other photographers, including Henry Jackson, vied to compete.

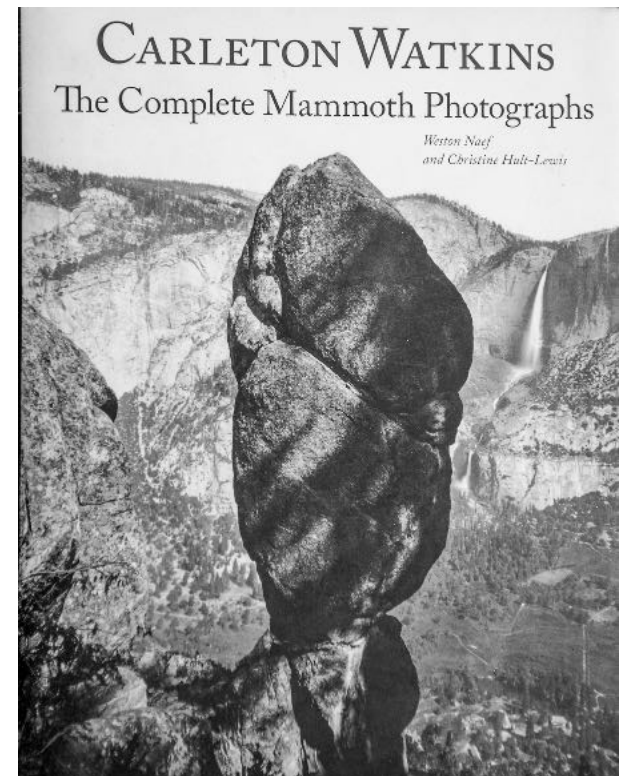
REFERENCE

These photographs were the first views of Yosemite that many in the East of the United States had ever seen and were instrumental in convincing then president Abraham Lincoln to sign the 1864 bill that declared the valley inviolable, thus paving the way for the National Parks system.

In 1900 a Mammoth camera was built that could take a vast picture 8x4.5ft. in size.

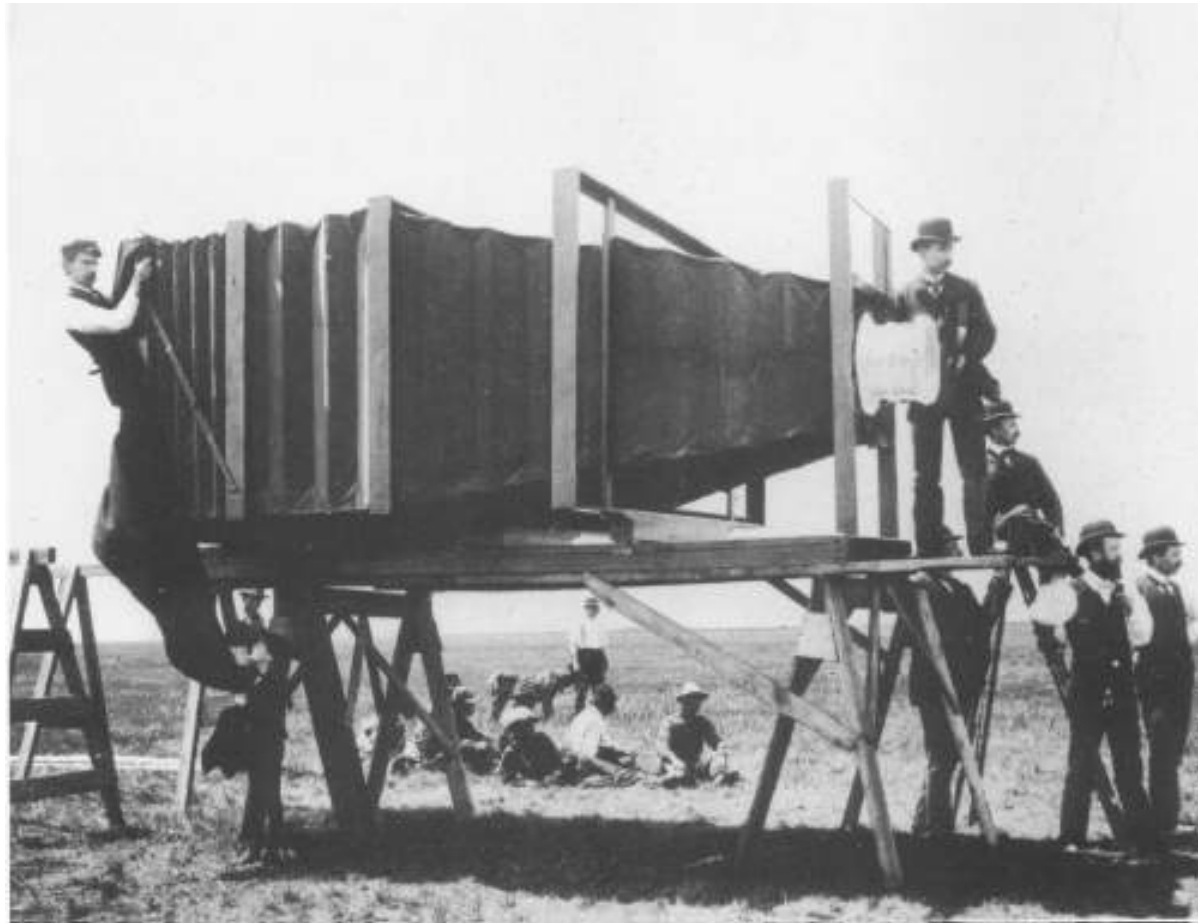


Watkins' Mammoth Camera at the Getty Museum



Carleton Watkins: The Complete Mammoth Photographs

George R. Lawrence and the Mammoth Camera



Lawrence stands beside the lens with a giant lens cap under this left arm and a watch in his right hand making the exposure. The roller curtain operator stands at the rear and all attention is concentrated on the train. It weighed 900 lbs. and held an 8'x4.5' photo plate.

The question arises as to why the Chicago & Alton Railway should have spent a reported \$5000 to construct a camera to make only one exceptionally large plate entitled *The Largest Photograph ion the World of the Handsomest train in the World*.

Impressing the public, or advertising, seems to have been the chief motivation for the project. It appears that competition between railways in the United States at that time was intense.

A second major reason for making the photograph was the desire to participate in the Paris Exposition of 1900. Rather than ship the entire train to France, the Chicago & Alton Railway decided that the cost of making the huge photograph would be more economical, but the results would be spectacular nevertheless.

[Reference #1](#) [Reference #2](#)



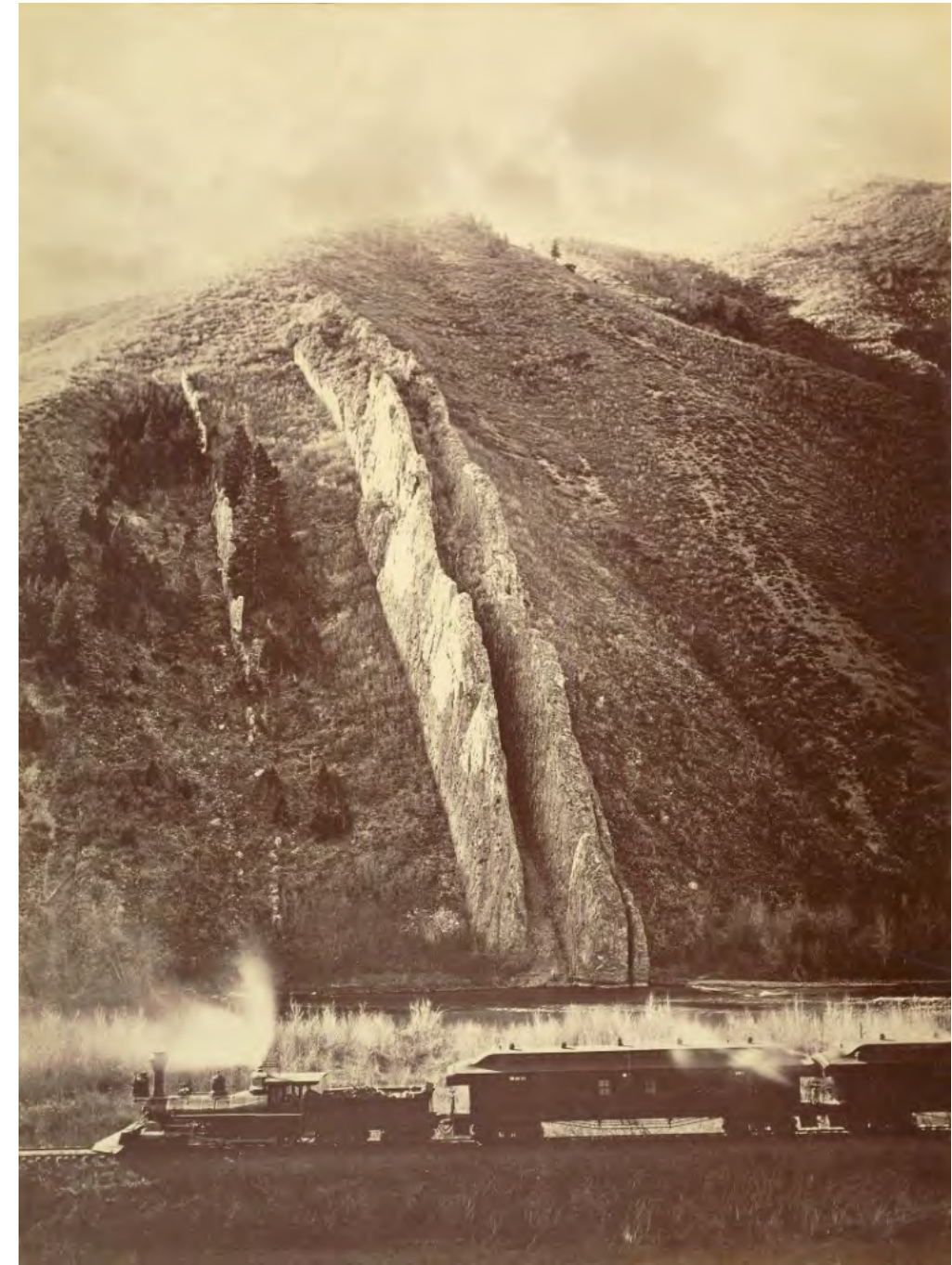
Painters and Photographers

In the winter of 1873–74 Carleton Watkins traveled to Utah with the landscape painter William Keith. On this expedition his photographic wagon rode "piggyback" on a specially designed car on the Union Pacific Railroad. A newspaper reporter described the trip: "The chartered two railroad cars...one of which contained the horses, wagon, hay, and feed, while the other was supplied with all the appointments requisite for domestic life." Along the way, Watkins photographed geological formations, among them Witches Rock. [REFERENCE](#)



Yosemite Valley, 1875, William Keith

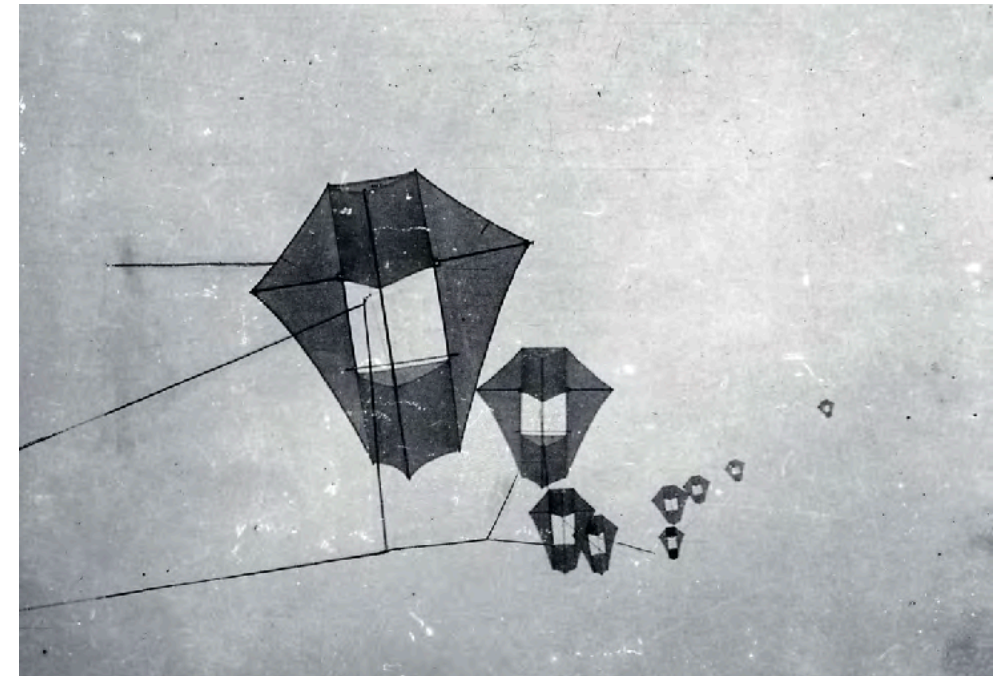
William Keith
1838-1911



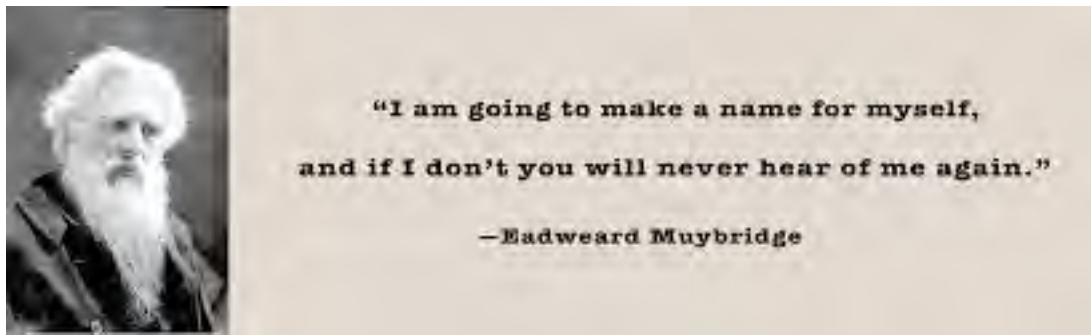
The Devil's Slide, Utah, 1873–1874, Carleton Watkins

Camera on Kites, 1906

Lawrence stabilized his bulky camera with three fifteen-foot-long bamboo poles attached to its sides (these had to be cropped off or retouched out of the corners of his pictures); from each of these a 120-foot silk cord was hung, and these joined together to support a three-pound weight that helped prevent the camera from swaying in the wind. The camera had a nineteen-inch focal length, and the impressive depth of field was achieved by having the camera's shutter taper from half an inch at the bottom to four inches at the top, so that when the lens swung through its 160-degree arc the murkier distance was exposed for eight times as long as the brighter foreground.



San Francisco in ruins after the fire of 1906. The panoramic photo by Lawrence was taken from his "Captive Airship" 2,000 feet above San Francisco Bay.



Eadweard Muybridge, 1830 – 1904

Born in England, at the age of 20 he emigrated to the US as a bookseller, first to NYC and then to San Francisco where he took up professional photography. In 1868, he exhibited large photographs of Yosemite Valley, and began selling popular stereographs of his work. He also sold original landscape photography by Carleton Watkins as well as photographic copies of paintings. Because copyright law was so young, he may have actually copied other photographs as his own.

It is documented that Muybridge heavily edited and modified his photos, inserting clouds or the moon, even adding volcanos to his pictures for artistic effects.



Photo of Vernal Fall at Yosemite, Eadweard Muybridge, 1872



Volcan Quetzaltenango—Guatemala, Eadweard Muybridge,

Eadweard Muybridge

Muybridge was very good at re-inventing himself. In 1877 he started doing “series” photos. Sometimes he documented the “history” of a subject - such as the construction of a building. Other times he did panoramas. But his most significant contribution was to photographing movement: *“We are going to find out everything that photography can teach us about animal movement.”*

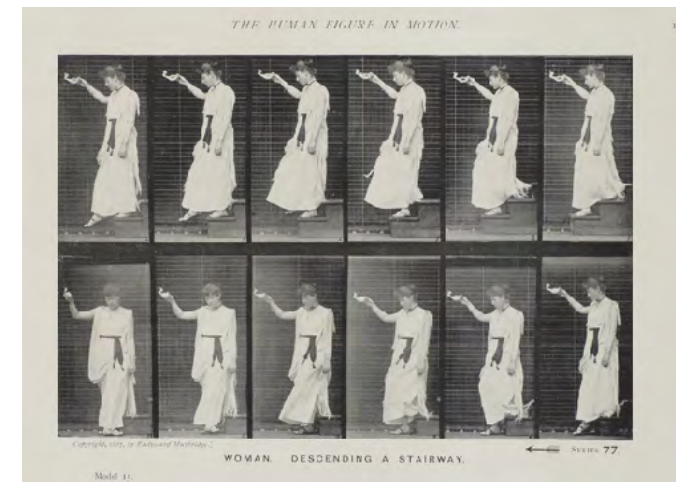
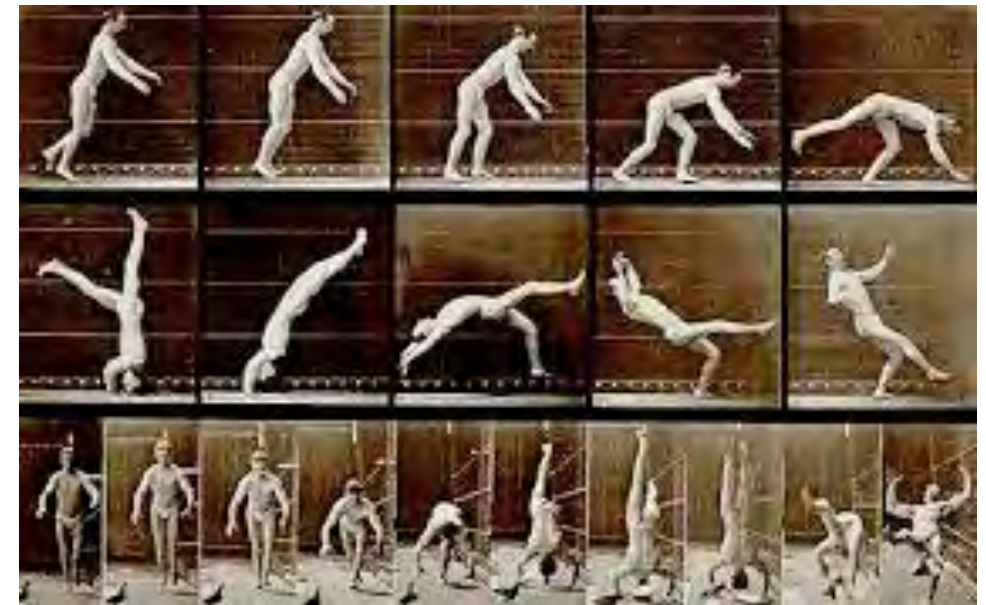
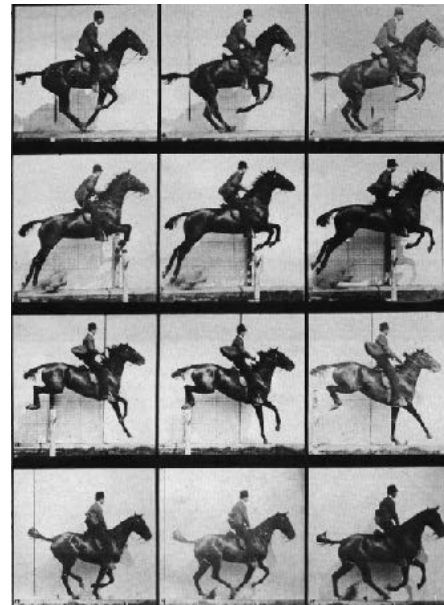
After years of research and thousands of photographs, Muybridge published his results in an 11-volume book, *Animal Locomotion* (1887). As he wrote, the book’s 781 plates “comprise more than 20,000 figures of men, women, and children, animals and birds, all actively engaged in walking, galloping, flying, working, playing, fighting, dancing, or other actions incidental to every-day life.”



One of a series of Muybridge photos documenting the construction of the San Francisco Mint.

Eadweard Muybridge - The man who stopped time

He's best remembered now for his motion-study photography and technological leaps in camera speed that laid the foundations for film and made him the father of motion pictures. It was an early stop-action project in this realm that found him a patron in Leland Stanford, aforementioned railroad magnate, governor of California, and founder of Stanford University. Stanford commissioned Muybridge to photograph his horse in order to prove a theory: that when a horse was trotting, there was a point at which all four hooves were simultaneously off the ground. Muybridge was able to take a previously impossible photo that proved Stanford was indeed correct.



Mapping Places



1877 Panorama: A 360-degree view taken from the tower of the unfinished Nob Hill mansion of railroad tycoon Mark Hopkins. It was produced as a set of 11 albumen photographs mounted on cards.

There are only about 10 copies of this pano and they are at various museums and institutions.



1878 Panorama: A later, more detailed 360-degree panorama, often cited as a 13-part work (or sometimes more), also taken from the Mark Hopkins mansion. This version was 17-feet long and was presented to the wife of Leland Stanford, governor.

Muybridge likely took the panorama over the course of a single day in 1878, lugging more than a dozen two-foot tall glass plates onto the roof of Mark Hopkins' mansion atop of Nob Hill.



Pacific Northwest and Alaska

Northwest Indians, rain, mountains, seacoast

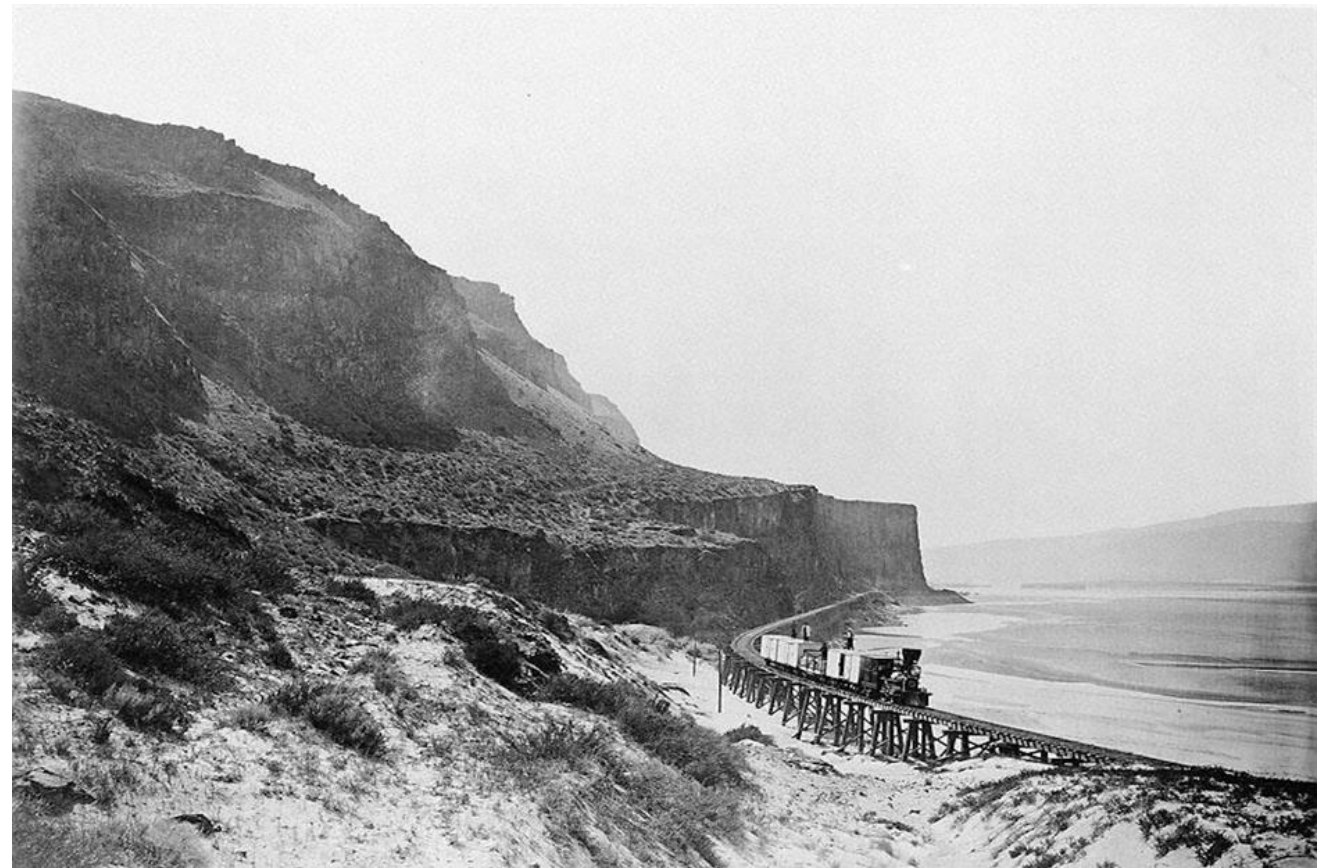


In the 19th century, the Pacific Northwest transformed from a remote, indigenous-dominated wilderness rich in resources into a rapidly developing, colonized territory. It was defined by the fur trade, the Oregon Trail migration, territorial disputes between the U.S. and Britain, intense indigenous population declines, and the rapid expansion of railroads, logging, and fishing industries.

In the 19th century, Alaska transitioned from a remote Russian fur-trading outpost, dominated by the Russian-American Company and Orthodox missions, to a U.S. territory ("Seward's Folly") transformed by the late-century gold rushes. It was characterized by indigenous dominance, harsh environments, coastal, industrial-scale resource exploitation (sea otters, seals, fishing), and sparse, mainly coastal, non-native settlement.



Alaska: 1868, Fort Tongass



Oregon: 1867, steam train by the Columbia River

Alaska

Muybridge in Sitka (1868): Famed photographer Eadweard Muybridge traveled to Southeast Alaska, capturing iconic 1868 landscape and cultural photographs of Tlingit people in Fort Tongass and Sitka

[Reference](#)



Steamer Queen at Haines Mission, Alaska en route to the Klondike

Alaska Gold Rush (1890s):

Starting in the 1870s, prospectors trickled into the Yukon in search of gold. By 1896, around 1,500 prospectors panned for gold along the Yukon River basin.

The idea of striking it rich led over 100,000 people from all walks of life to abandon their homes and embark on an extended, life-threatening journey across treacherous, icy valleys and harrowing rocky terrain. These amazing photos were taken by American photographer B. L. Singley that documented life of people during the Alaska Gold Rush around 1896-97.



Starting for the Gold Fields on Norway Sleds, Haines, Alaska

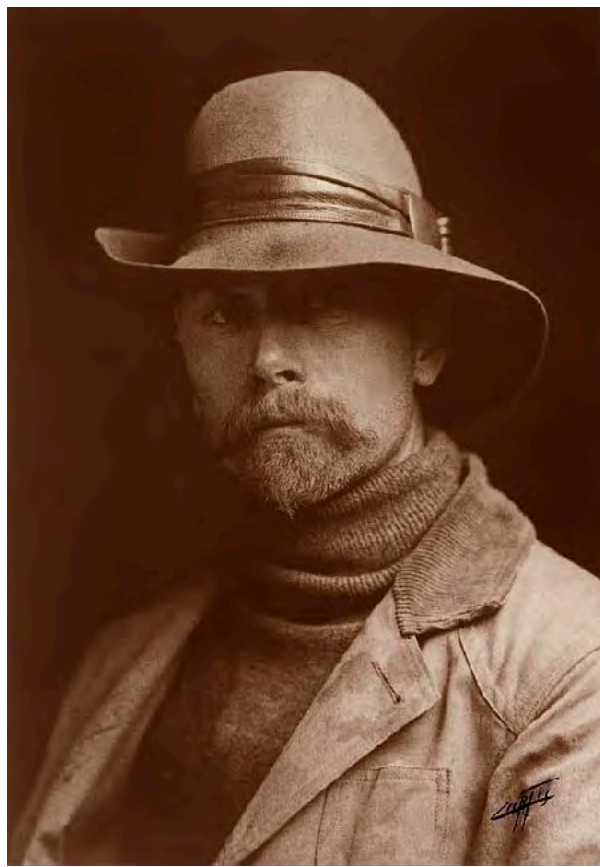


Gold Miners at Work, Alaska



Prospecting for Gold in Alaska

Visions of the First Americans



Edward Sheriff Curtis, 1868-1952

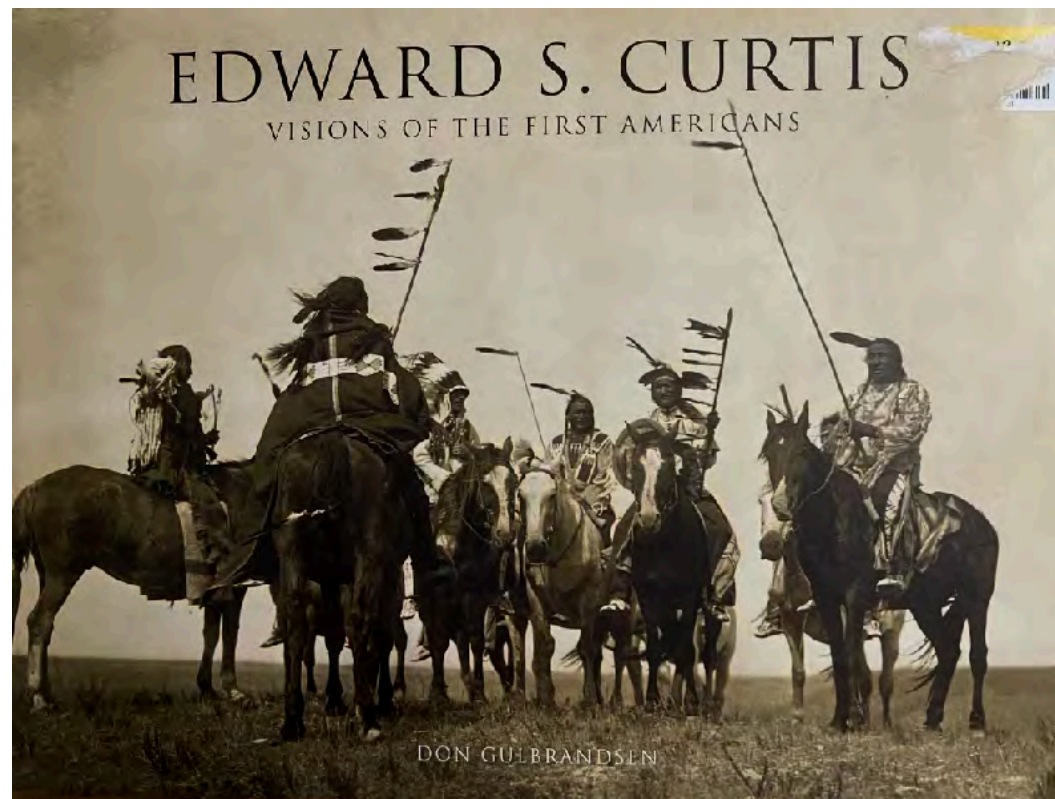
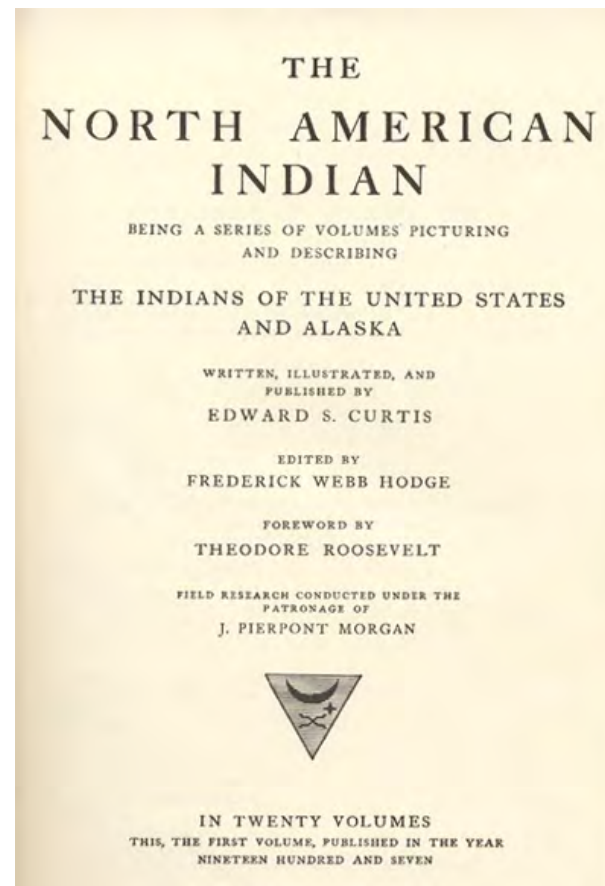
Edward S. Curtis: Native American Photography

Curtis is another important early photographer because his work focused on capturing the images of Native Americans. After receiving his education as an apprentice to a photographer in Minnesota, Curtis moved to and operated out of Seattle in the 1880s.

This experience allowed Curtis to capture thousands of photographs of Native Americans supported by the financier and banker, J.P. Morgan. This extensive project had other components like recording and documenting the Native American languages, as well as music, history, food, and other parts of culture. This project remains an important part of the history of the indigenous people in the Americas.



Kikisoblu (Princess Angeline) of the Duwamish, the eldest daughter of Chief of Seattle, Edward S. Curtis, 1896.



[Book](#)

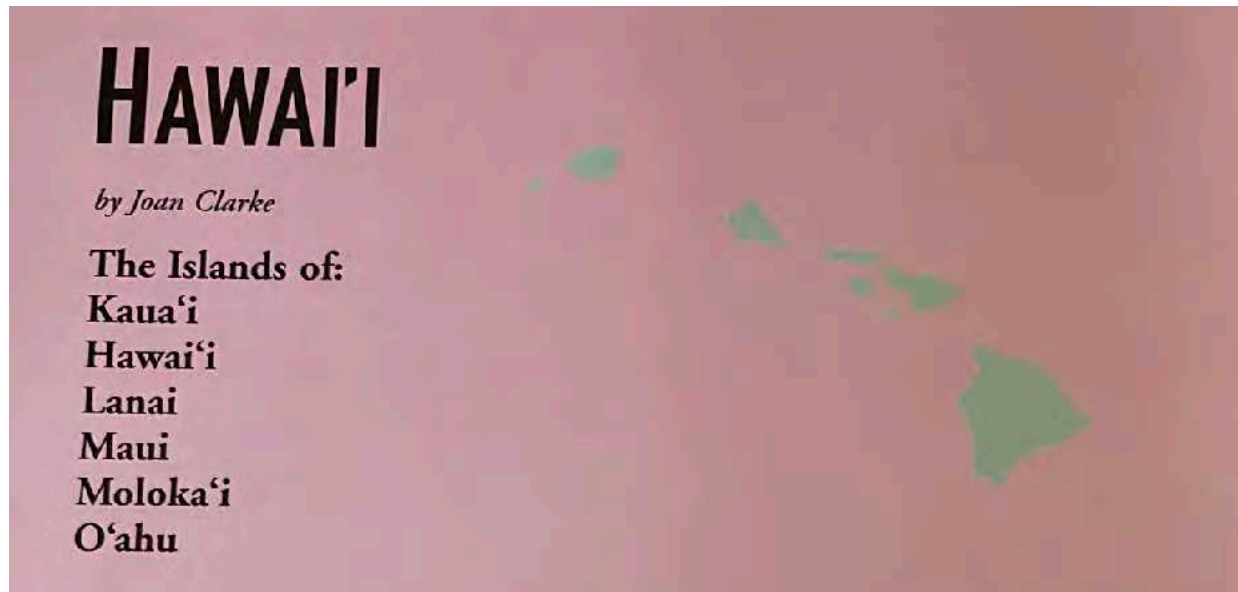
Curtis lived in Seattle but photographed Indians in many areas.

The book has 20 chapters and shows Curtis's recognizable style, saturated with sepia, is immediately recognizable. He captures not only the striking faces of his subjects, but also a glimpse into the lifestyle of each Native American tribe he photographed. These images paint a picture, known to us now only as a historical memory.

[Reference](#)

Hawaii

Mountains, ash from volcanos, seaside



In the 19th century, Hawaii transformed from a sovereign, isolated kingdom into a US-aligned, sugar-driven, multi-ethnic territory. Dominated by American missionary influence and plantation economies, native Hawaiians saw their population decline sharply to foreign disease while losing political control to American settlers, culminating in the 1893 overthrow of the monarchy and 1898 annexation.



Merchant street looking toward Waikiki, circa 1885.



Hawaii: 1870s, Father Damien's leper's church



Benjamin Tucker (American Whaler), Honolulu Harbor, 1857



First Hawaiian captured with a Daguerrotype:
Timoteo Ha'alilio, royal secretary
and first diplomat of the Kingdom of Hawaii.



Queen Liliuokalani and Relatives, circa 1890



Kamehameha dynasty, was the reigning royal family of
the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1853



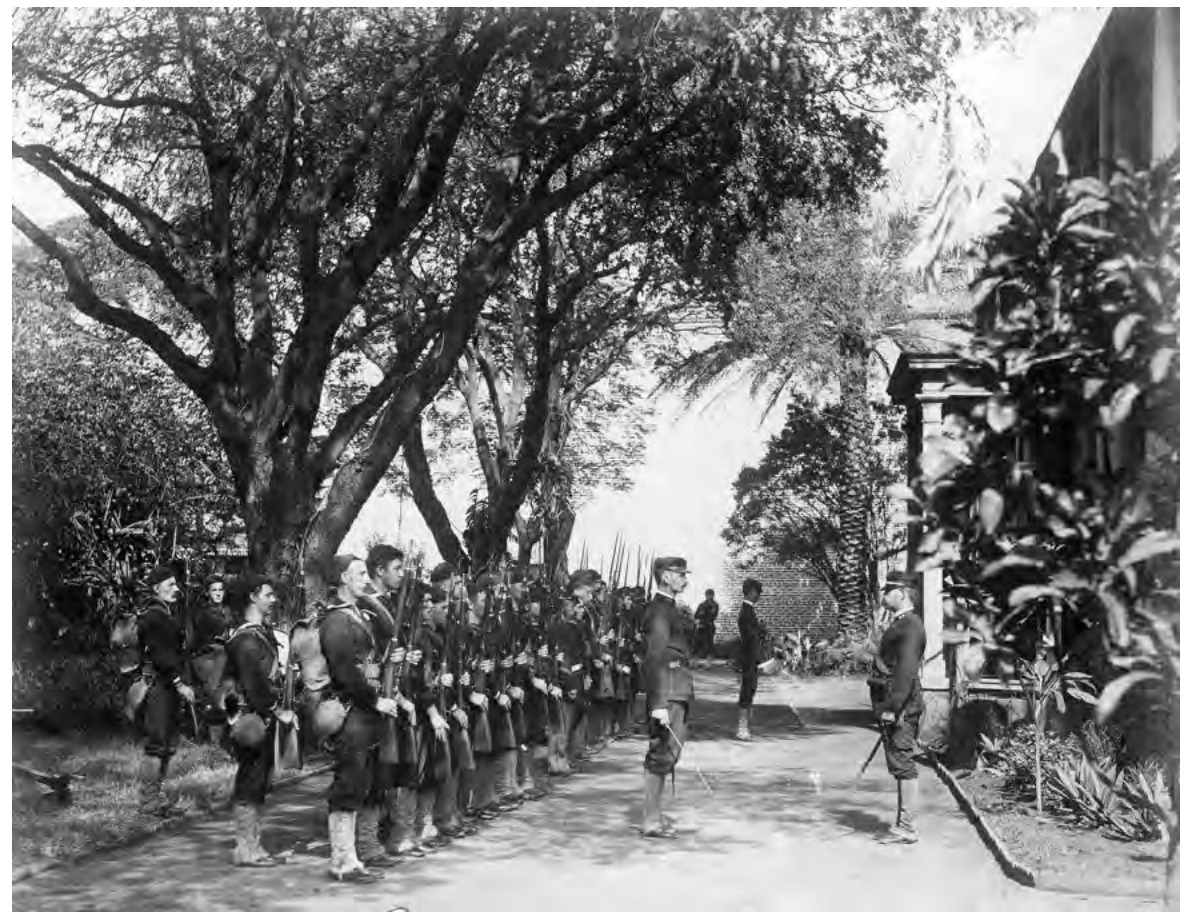
King Kamehameha IV, mid-1850s.



Queen Liliuokalani, the last sovereign of the
Kalakaua dynasty that ruled the Hawaiian
kingdom, 1891



USS Boston, 1893



The USS Boston's landing force on duty at the Arlington Hotel, Honolulu, at the time of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, January 1893.



Annexation of Hawaii



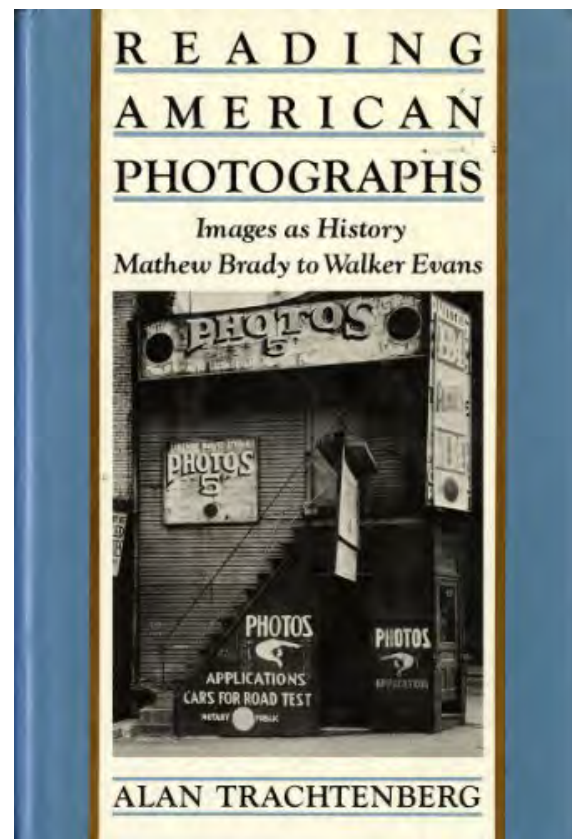
References

[American Archives Month: 9 Types of Photographs
Nebraska State Historical Society](#)

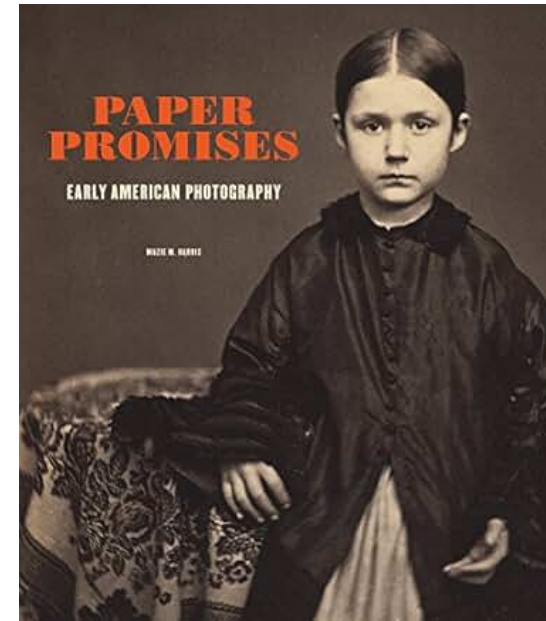
[The Historic New Orleans Collection:
Daguerreotype to Digital](#)

[Harvard's History of Photography Timeline](#)

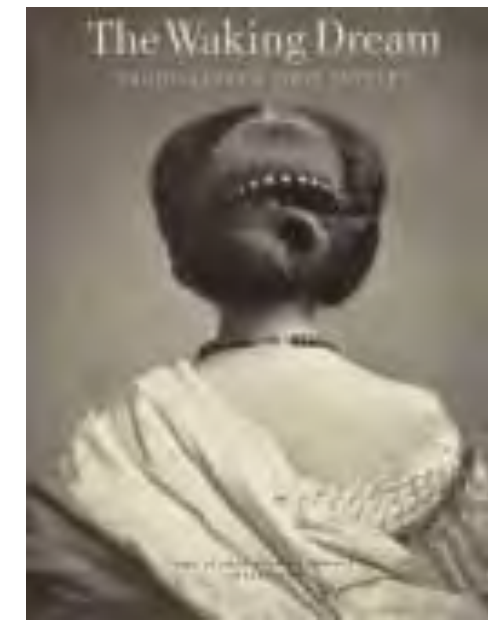
[These are some of earliest photos taken in
every US state](#)



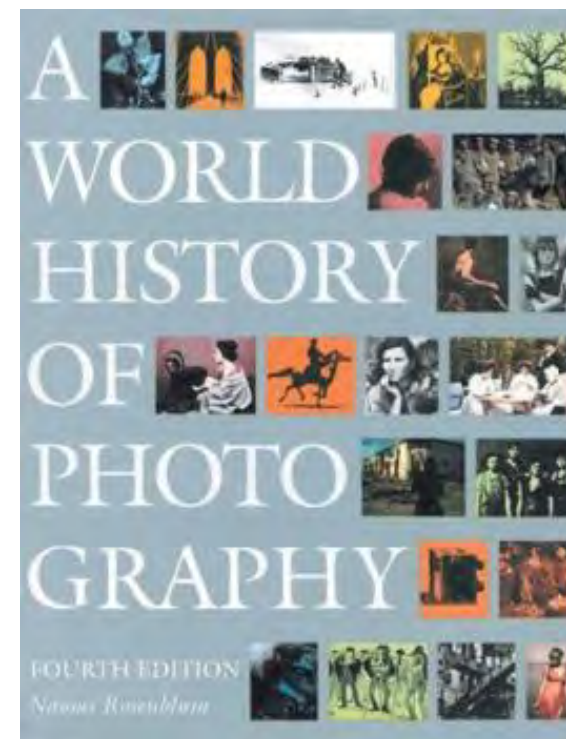
[Reading American Photographs:
Images As History, Mathew Brady
to Walker Evans](#)



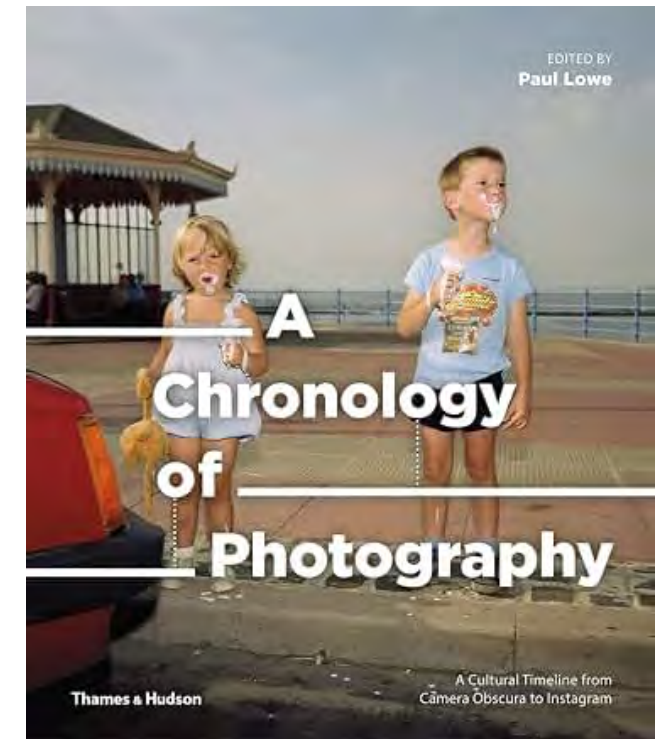
[Amazon](#)



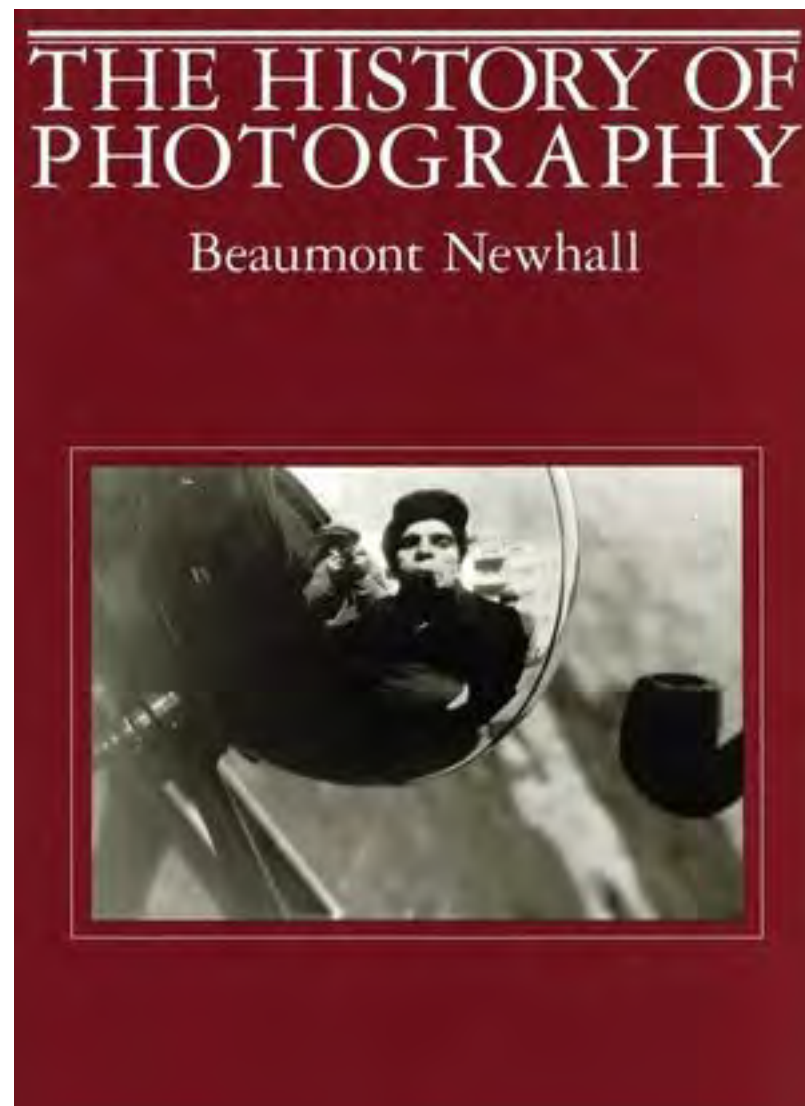
[Amazon](#)



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The History of Photography

History of Photography

Discover the founders and early workers in photography. Explore the history of photography. (The course does not address the emergence of digital technology.)

Instructors: Geoff Blackwell

History of Photography Course Graduates

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This course is for those who have the time each week to complete a lesson. This course, much like a college course, includes written work as well as photographic assignments.

Enroll in this course

History of Photography Course Graduates

ABOUT THE COURSE:

In this course you will discover who were the founders and the early workers in photography. The course explores how and why photography, which is both an art and a science, has become so inextricably entwined with the human narrative exerting influence in our world of communications, culture, entertainment, news and advertising. This course focus is on the early history of photography and does not address the emergence of digital technology.

All students are required to purchase the textbook by Beaumont Newhall, "The History of Photography". This 300-page work was first published in 1937 and is a great resource about every stage of the evolution of photography. The revised (1982) edition is a classic text that provides an important framework for the course. While this text is filled with historic images depicting the very beginnings of photography, supported by helpful scholarly work, it only provides a basic introductory chapter for each topic. The student is expected to widen their research by investigating other publications, books and of course the Internet. With the exception of week one, (essay only) each lesson is made up of an essay and an image assignment. Students are expected to complete each assignment within 14 days of issue by the instructor.

Required

The student must purchase the course text before enrolling in the course. Used copies, in good condition, can usually be purchased from Amazon, Abe Books or similar outlets.

Newhall, Beaumont. The History of Photography: from 1839 to the present. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1982.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 82-81430

You may find earlier publications.

This course will take about 4 months to complete. The instructor reserves the right to suspend a participant if the required essays and images are not completed in a timely manner.

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

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