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Captured Images **The Daguerreian Years in Rochester** **1840 to 1860**

by Joseph R. Struble



Cover:

Whitney, Edward Tompkins

[Portrait of Horace Bush as the fictional character "Jack Sheppard"] ca. 1858

1/2 Plate Ambrotype 73:062:4

George Eastman House Collection

In February of 1858, a "Fancy Dress Ball" was held at the Corn Hill Mansion of Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Stewart, once the home of first Mayor Jonathan Child. Newspapers reported that guests came dressed as Napoleon III, Lady Jane Grey, Old Mother Hubbard, as "The Pleiades," "La Belle France", even as "Kansas." Young Mrs. Frederick Adams came simply as "Evening", wearing sable garments and jewels in her thick dark hair. Many guests, however were attired as characters from the novels of Charles Dickens, Sir Walter Scott, and William Makepeace Thackeray. Twenty-six-year-old Horace Bush dressed as the daring thief and jailbreaker of William Harrison Ainsworth's 1839 novel "Jack Sheppard". Several half-plate ambrotypes by Whitney of costumed subjects have been located in local collections. Perhaps portrait sittings were won or given as prizes at the gala event.

By 1858, many of the studios had introduced the ambrotype process. The materials of the ambrotype, a collodion emulsion on a glass support, were less expensive than the silver and copper plates of the daguerreotype. However, the overriding attraction of ambrotypes may have been that the image absorbed the light rather than reflecting it back. Early ambrotypes were actually marketed as "non-reflecting daguerreotypes". It was a quick, effortless "read", but not without aesthetic rewards ("Ambro" after all means "beautiful")

In a sense, all of the people in daguerreotype and ambrotype portraits seem to be in "costume," but it is worth considering that the frock coat, breeches and stockings worn by Mr. Bush were very much out of date in 1858, and have merely continued, with emphasis, to be an old fashioned style today.

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Captured Images

The Daguerreian Years in Rochester

1840 to 1860

A careful reader of the weekly *Rochester Republican* on Tuesday morning, May 7, 1839 noted four paragraphs, reprinted from the previous Saturday's *New York Observer* describing "The Daguerroscope." Artist and inventor Samuel F.B. Morse, in Europe fighting for patents on his telegraph, had visited M. Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre that March, and his enthusiastic impressions of the exquisiteness of the images on the 5 x 7 inch plates were described in a letter to the New York City newspaper.

The Rochester press did not pick up or report much more about the phenomenal invention, actually termed "daguerreotype" until well over a year later. In September of 1840, Edwin Scrantom's quaintly named bi-weekly publication, the *Rochester Gem and Ladies Amulet* contained some further description of these images, including the perhaps half-serious judgment that "daguerreotypes will never do for portraits... its pictures are quite too natural to please any other than beautiful sitters." ¹ Nevertheless, between 1840 and 1860, thousands of Rochesterians, of every age, social status, and physical description, sat for a daguerreian portrait.

The city had grown by leaps and bounds since the first intrepid families had formed the community of "Rochesterville" near the Genesee High Falls in the beginning of the 19th century. After its founding fathers had been successful in negotiations in Albany that brought the Erie Canal right through its center, crossing the river over an aqueduct, the population of this early frontier town boomed. A population of over 20,000 by 1840 supported a variety of merchants and manufacturing. Clothing, books, fruits, oysters, even pianos and billiard tables were sold, and a visit here must have been eagerly anticipated by the

Genesee Valley farmers who brought their wheat crop over the canal to be ground in the city's mills.

The first daguerreian studios had been established in Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia. Early experiments in portraiture by Morse and by William Draper in New York required bright sunlight, 10-20 minute exposures, white floured faces and determined sitters. This scenario, true for 1839 but hardly the experience of anyone in these cities in



Whitney, Edward Tompkins
portrait of the Henry Elie
Rochester Family, 1852
mammoth plate daguerreotype
(10.25 x 8.25 in.)
George Eastman House Collection
70:095:1

Daguerreotypes were available in a variety of sizes, large "mammoth plates" such as this one, being quite rare. Even the next largest size, the "whole plate" was an extravagance of the wealthy. Most customers selected a "sixth plate size" (2 3/4 x 3 1/4 inches) and paid between \$1.00 and \$3.00 for it. However, by the mid 1850s price wars were evident between the established studios and the "50 cent men", who deep discounted because of their

streamlined business operations, high volume and offering of a smaller ("ninth plate") size in a case of cheaper materials. Rochesterian E. Kirby Marsh had a long business life here (ca.1847-1866), chiefly making Daguerreotype copies and miniatures, and even retaking an image on a used plate, buffed clean.

Henry Elie Rochester (1806-1889) was the 10th of 12 children born to the City's founder Col. Nathaniel Rochester and his wife Sophia Beatty. The family lived on a farm in Gates at the time this image was made, but H.E. Rochester later served as alderman in the City's Third Ward and twice ran unsuccessfully for mayor on the Democratic ticket. From right to left: wife, Jane Hart Rochester, daughters Jane Eliza and Anna Mumford, son Roswell Hart, daughters Louisa Beatty and Fanny Cooper and son Henry Hart. Six years after this image was made, Henry Hart Rochester was tragically killed in a fire, a fate which seems eerily compatible with his indistinctness on this plate. Three-year -old Fanny Cooper Rochester however, whose head is being gently steadied by her father, lived until 1930, the last surviving of the 63 grandchildren of the City's founder

unidentified photographer

Portrait of Montgomery Gibbons and his nurse, Margaret

1/6 Plate Daguerreotype

Collection of the Rochester Historical Society

Our ancestors in the 19th Century are frequently believed to have been dour, humorless, stern. Portraits from that era are judged simply as so many versions of Grant Wood's later painting "American Gothic", and we forgive them their grimness by believing that an ordeal was being endured at the moment of their being photographed. Yet neither of these notions is particularly true, and as this portrait shows, the medium was capable of capturing the twinkle in the eye of a real person of those supposedly joyless times. Longer exposure times and artistic conventions may have encouraged sobriety in expression, but a portrait sitting was not usually physically trying. The best of the studios boasted of pier glass mirrors, and luxurious carpets. In 1847, Thomas Mercer, inspired by Matthew Brady and the other New York City studios, spent \$5,000 for improvements, which included something touted as a "Seraphine of fine tone for the amusement of visitors." The low end studios operated efficiently and perfunctorily "you waited your turn, sat down, looked in the direction indicated by the operator, the image was made and you left for the delivery desk."

Montgomery Gibbons was the grandson of Rochester's first mayor, Jonathan Child. The nurse is only identified by her first name. Perhaps she was one of the many young Irish women who came to this area in the 1850s to work as live-in nurse-

maids for Third Ward families.

Washington Gibbons, the baby's father practiced law, served as judge, and was school superintendent in 1847.

However, he would suffer serious financial reversals in years to come and ended his days at the Home Hotel in New York City, an institution "for the benefit of the educated poor."



Whitney, Edward Tompkins

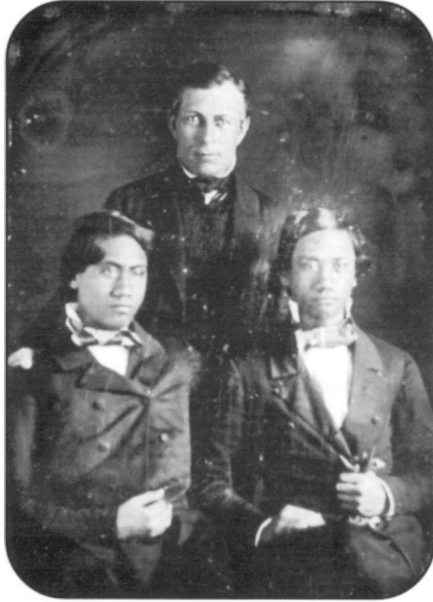
Dr. Gerrit P. Judd with Lot Kamehameha and Alexander Liholiho, 1850

1/4 plate daguerreotype

courtesy of the Hawaii State Archives

Fifteen-year-old heir to the throne of the Hawaiian Islands, Alexander Liholiho (Right) kept a detailed diary (see Further Reading) of his year of travel to the United States and Europe.

Accompanied by his older brother and their tutor, Protestant missionary and government minister Gerrit P. Judd, he arrived at the Genesee Falls on Tuesday, June 25, 1850, after a visit to Dr. Judd's family in Detroit. An uncle of Dr. Judd, Orlando Hastings, lived in Rochester and was director of the Western House of Refuge (reform school) here. Daguerreotype portraits of the brothers with their teacher had been previously made in the prestigious Boston Studio of Southworth and Hawes. Although the teenaged prince makes no mention in the diary of a portrait sitting in Rochester, the Whitney stamp on the brass mat framing the image is unmistakable.



Whitney posed the group in a pyramidal structure, very much like the arrangement of the Stone sisters in another image shown in this issue (68:097:11). Dr. Judd's presence and gesture is an avuncular one. Besides his concerns for the princes' education, he had lofty responsibilities as the "Special Commissioner and Plenipotentiary Extraordinaire" of the Hawaiian Islands. After Alexander's (King Kamehameha IV) marriage in an Anglican ceremony in 1861, Dr. Judd lamented on the behavior of his former charge:

"The King, educated by the Mission, most of all dislikes the Mission. Having been compelled to be good when a boy, he is determined not to be good as a man. Driven out to morning prayer meeting, monthly concert, Sabbath School, long sermons and daily exhortations, his heart is hardened to a degree unknown to the heathen...the picture is dark."

1840 has persisted in the collective imagination as the way all daguerreotype sittings were endured.

Daguerreian studios did not immediately take root in Rochester, as in these much larger places. It was not until June 1841 that two itinerant daguerreotypists, Messrs. J. and

Unidentified
photographer
[Three Sisters of the Isaac
Stone Family] ca. 1842
1/6 Plate Daguerreotype
George Eastman
House Collection
68:097:11



Throughout the 1840s, American improvements in all aspects of the daguerreotype process, optical and chemical, as well as structural changes in studios such as better lighting and back-grounds, led to better portraiture. Consider this early image made in Rochester. One can speculate that exposure time was upwards of 30 seconds, as the features of one of the sitters (probably Minerva Stone Curry) on the left are blurred. Lighting and pose are both rather primitive, and one seldom sees a device such as the potted plant used here, in later daguerreotype images. Nevertheless, these well-to-do sisters, dressed at the height of early 1840s daytime stylishness, may have been quite pleased or even awed by the wonders of a real photographic image.

T.T. Woodruff set up a makeshift studio in a room in the National Hotel. Fifty years later, resident George Darling recalled in an article in the local press what he claimed to be the “first daguerreotype taken in Rochester”:

*A man came here and charged a friend of mine \$5.00 for taking his picture. My friend had to sit 5 minutes and the result was that in the likeness, no eyes were shown. The photographer made as many as a half dozen attempts to take the picture and finally had to abandon the effort, saying that he (my friend) was not a good subject.*²

It may have been in the nature of these early practitioners to deflect the blame for their lack of success. Most of them were young and searching for some way to get a foothold in uncertain yet stimulating times. Thomas Mercer who arrived in Rochester in 1842 had experience as a copper-

Whitney, Edward Tompkins
Portrait of Mary Eloise and
Emma Walbridge ca.

1852

1/6 Plate Da-
guerreotype
George Eastman
House
Collection
68:097:19

Two of the
children of
Daniel
Tilden and
Eunice
Mather
Walbridge,
managers
of the
Osburn
House at
one time,
were photo-
graphed full
length in the
Whitney studio.

E.T. Whitney
regularly corre-
sponded with the "Photo-
graphic and Fine Art Journal"
and other national professional

publications. He freely shared his experiences and advice on some of the more sophisticated issues of portraiture, especially about his success with taking likenesses of children. The Walbridge sisters' attention may have been caught by the photographer's little toy bird, "that I make sing inside the camera, occasionally showing a part of it to draw attention to the instrument." The posing is probably Whitney's as well, since he advocated that the photographer take the lead and not allow the parents to "suggest this and propose that [whereby] the picture is lost."⁵

One child is nicely steadied with support from the posing table, and in turn, she stabilizes and perhaps assures her sister as they face the lens for the several-second exposure. Headrests were used, and these cast iron instruments are infrequently evident in the picture. Present day myth has converted the concept of this head "rest" to the notion of a head "clamp," a much more sinister idea, and one to which the Walbridge parents would certainly never have subjected these innocents.





Unidentified photographer
 Interior View of the Reynolds Arcade, 1877
 Rochester Public Library, Local History Division

The Reynolds Arcade was built on Buffalo Street (now Main Street) in Rochester in 1828 by the city's first Postmaster, Abelard Reynolds. The structure contained 86 rooms and 14 cellars, and at one time had 42 different businesses. Tenants included the Post Office, executive headquarters of Hiram Sibley's Western Union Company, and John Jacob Bausch's optical business. Many daguerreotypists and artists had studios here, attracted by the natural light flooding the interior. The building was remodeled in the 1880s, and at that time, it was estimated that 25,000 people passed through daily. A rebuilt Art Deco style Reynolds Arcade from 1933 still stands on the site.

smith. Edward Tompkins Whitney, who came here in 1846 had worked as a jeweller. Each was in his early 20's when he set out in the new line of work and may have had something of the experiences of Nathaniel Hawthorne's character, Holgrave, in *The House of the Seven Gables* behind him:

*Though now but 22 years old, he had already been a country schoolmaster, salesman in a country store, and the political editor of a country newspaper. He had subsequently travelled as a peddler of cologne water. He had studied and practiced dentistry. Still more recently he had been a public lecturer on mesmerism, for which science he had very remarkable endowments. His present phase as a daguerreotypist was of no more importance in his own view, nor likely to be more permanent, than any of the preceeding ones.*³

About fifty names of "Daguerreian Artists" (all male with the exception of a Miss Louisa Kelsey) have been ferreted out the *Rochester City Directories* and *Censuses* of the period 1840-60. With several notable exceptions, it is a tedious and often futile effort to discover much at all about these individuals, and their course through the decades. It is rarer still to have an opportunity to study or to recognize a body of

WHITNEY'S MODEL

Daguerreotype Establishment,

OCCUPYING 9 ROOMS IN THE GOULD BUILDINGS,
ENTRANCE 14 STATE STREET. RECEPTION ROOM NO 6.



This powerful light makes GOOD PICTURES, when all others fail, rain or shine, at all hours of the day. An elegant Ladies' Parlor,

AND DRESSING
ROOM,

apart from the working and reception rooms.

E. T. WHITNEY, Agent.

R. B. APPLEBY,
DAGUERREAN ARTIST
AND DEALER IN STOCKS,
14 and 15 Arcade Gallery, Rochester.

Daguerreotypes unrivalled for strength, depth of tone, clearness, softness of light and shade, and artistic excellence, are taken at this establishment. Citizens and strangers are respectfully invited to call and examine the pictures in this Gallery, among which may be found likenesses of President Fillmore and his Cabinet, and other distinguished Statesmen. Also, excellent likenesses of JENNY LIND and her Troupe, taken during her visit at Rochester.

The largest and most splendid assortment of Cases and Frames ever in Rochester, is to be found at this Gallery. Likenesses of Children taken in two seconds.

Charges moderate, and pictures in all cases warranted to give satisfaction.
R. B. APPLEBY.

work. The majority of daguerreotypes are unidentified, both as to the maker and the sitter. Boston's Southworth and Hawes, New York's Jeremiah Gurney, Philadelphia's Marcus Aurelius Root and some others produced beautiful daguerreotype images which have been collected and studied. To a somewhat lesser extent, Edward Tompkins Whitney of Rochester can be known, both personally and professionally.

Both E.T. Whitney and Thomas Mercer seem to be typical examples of young men infused with something of the same pioneering spirit. Yet their histories in Rochester take rather different courses, perhaps symptomatic of both the virtues and the shortcomings of such enthusiasms. Like the famous Matthew B. Brady, who started out behind the camera, but quickly hired competent operators which allowed him to open and manage several Broadway studios, Mercer by 1848, employed eight camera operators in his studio in the Reynolds Arcade and another in the Emporium Block east of the Genesee River. He also conducted business as an itinerant in neighboring towns such as Geneseo, Mt. Morris, or wherever he was guaranteed work of between 20-40 portraits. In 1851, Mercer became a partner with Justin R.

Bishop, proprietor of the Rochester Museum. For a slight increase in the price of Museum admission, one could visit the exhibits of fossils, Native American artifacts, and “very superior wax figures” of Jenny Lind and the murdered Harvard notable, Dr. George Parkman, and also have a daguerreotype portrait made.

In July of 1852, in the throes of all this business activity, Thomas Mercer died, at age 32. Perhaps he was a victim of the cholera epidemic which claimed the lives of 400 Rochesterians that year. However, in 1871, Edwin Scrantom remembered Mercer in a column published regularly in the *Rochester Democrat and American* under the pen name Old Citizen:

*Poor Mercer! I remember him as a generous, great-hearted man by nature, with many good qualities and fine traits, but all these only made his ruin the more terrible and sad...[he was] an example of one who could not stand their own prosperity...the club and the billiard parlor opened the way for bad courses and they became at length a prey to vile habits and bad practices.*⁴

Edward Tompkins Whitney had advanced from assistant to Mercer in the Arcade Studio to Chief Operator of the studio in the Emporium Block, before opening his own “Skylight Gallery.” The 12 x 16 ft. skylight in this rooftop studio allowed Whitney to make exposures in only 2 to 10

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seconds, and that advantage, along with his good nature and some charm, helped establish a reputation for making successful images of children. Whitney lived and worked in Rochester until 1859, making regular trips to his native New York City in order to learn new techniques and refine his skills. After he left Rochester, he worked for Brady documenting the scenes of Civil War battles, and stayed active in business until he was 66 years old. Several examples of Whitney's work are reproduced in this article.

The population of Rochester had nearly doubled from 20,191 to 36,403 between 1840 and 1860. Throughout these years, numerous daguerreian businesses sprang to life, and just as quickly closed up. Competition drove prices down, often along with the quality of the product as "no frills" studios competed with the sumptuous enticements of the established galleries. All of the studios eventually abandoned the unique daguerreotype and the related ambrotype for the negative/positive paper photographic process, from which multiple copies could be made. A new, more complex photographic history of Rochester has the decade of the 1860s as its point of departure. At the start of the decade, George Eastman was a 6 year-old boy in Waterville, New York. A proliferation of studios, the photofinishing industry, local camera manufacture are all to come, but the previous years between 1840 and 1860 are where photography began in Rochester.

Joseph R. Struble is Assistant Archivist of the Photographic Collection at George Eastman House.



Unidentified Photographer
GEORGE EASTMAN, AGE 3
ca. 1857, tintype, ninth plate
83:2007:0001

Endnotes

1. *Rochester Gem and Ladies Amulet*, September 19, 1840, pp. 153-154.
2. *Rochester Post Express*, January 10, 1891. Interview with Rochester resident George Darling. See also George Darling's obituary vol. 95, page 80, *Samson Scrapbook*. (Born 1825, died April 14, 1903.)
3. Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *The House of Seven Gables*, Chapter XII, pg. 211, "The Daguerreotypist." Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, New York, 1924.
4. Scrantom, Edwin, "Old Citizen Letter," No. 70, 1871. Appears in Complete File of *Old Citizens Letters* by Edwin Scrantom, Nos. 1- 173; pg. 48 of this scrapbook in Local History Division of the Rochester Public Library.
5. *Photographic and Fine Art Journal*, March, 1855, pg. 76. Correspondence from E. T. Whitney. Source of the quote for portrait of Mary Eloise and Emma Walbridge.
6. *Barton Obituary Scrapbook I*, pp- 198-199, Local History Division, Rochester Public Library. Source of information on Portrait of Martin B. Anderson.

Portfolio

Appleby, Richard B.
Portrait of Martin Brewster Anderson
(first President of the University of
Rochester), 1854
4/4 Plate (whole plate) Daguerreo-
type
George Eastman House Collec-
tion 75:026:1 (detail)

In contrast to the other Rochester Daguerreotypists who began their careers here as young men in the 1840s, Appleby arrived here in 1851 with maturity and past experience as a Philadelphia Daguerreotypist, and after 15 successful years, he moved on to work in Indiana. From the start he redesigned and sumptuously reoutfitted a studio in the Reynold's Arcade, prominently displaying Daguerreotypes he had made of notables such as President Millard Fillmore and his cabinet and opera virtuosa Jenny Lind. To his studio came the extraordinary Margaretta and Kate Fox, together with their Rochester sister, Mrs. Leah Fish. The girls' claim to an ability to interpret mysterious "rappings", occurring in their presence only, as messages from the spirit world, caused a sensation and led to all phases of Spiritualism, still a valid religion today.

The University of Rochester had been established in 1850 by Baptists from Madison University in Hamilton, New York. Until 1861, it operated out of the United States Hotel on Buffalo Street, an 1827 structure which is still intact in the present day. Martin B. Anderson, a native of Maine, was called to the University of Rochester Presidency in 1853 and served in that capacity until 1888. At his death in 1890, the press noted that "his commanding form has been a familiar one upon [Rochester's] streets for nearly four decades. The best years of his life were spent here, and in old age he still stood like some rugged, snow covered mountain peak, enveloped in the darkening shadows which creep upon its weather beaten heights..."⁶ This full plate" Daguerreotype image, taken of the 39-year-old educator, prominently takes it place among the smaller "quarter plate" likenesses of the fourth graduating class in a framed arrangement in the George Eastman House Collection. Appleby continued to have the University of Rochester graduation portrait commission, but made ambrotypes of the class in 1856 and 1859, and tintypes in 1857.



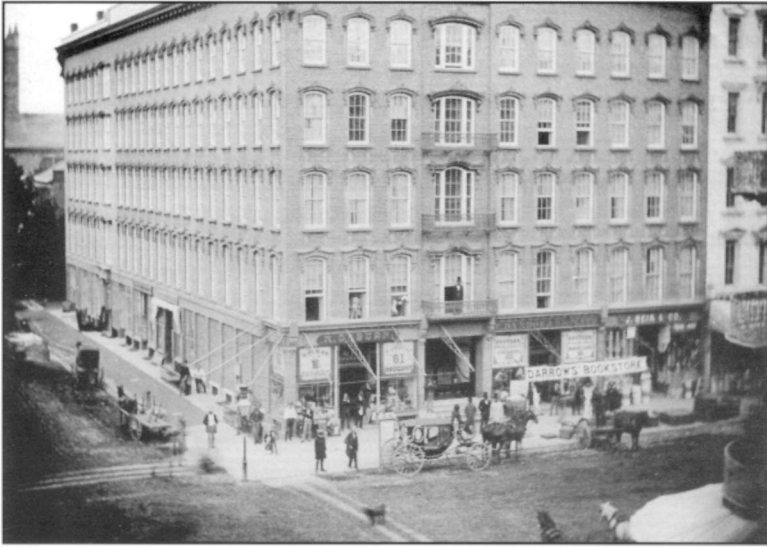
Whitney, Edward Tompkins
 Mrs. Isaac Stone surrounded by three of her daughters, ca 1854.
 1/2 Plate Daguerreotype
 George Eastman House Collection 68:097:41

In contrast to the previous image if the three sisters, made about 10 years earlier (page 7), this portrait was made with many of the advantages brought by the American Process of making daguerreotypes. Whitney boasted of exposure times of between 2 and 10 seconds as natural light flooded his skylight gallery. His posing of the family is graceful and sophisticated. It may also be true that the women were less tentative, more relaxed in front of the camera eye at this later date.

Isaac Stone and his wife, Patty Priest arrived in Rochester in 1811 from Connecticut via East Bloomfield. He served in the local militia during the War of 1812. Their youngest child, Mary (standing in rear), may have been the first female born to a pioneer family in Rochesterville. The family ran a tavern near the corner of Main Street and South Avenue (present day site of the Hyatt Hotel). Daughter Eliza (seated at left) and Rochester's first merchant, Ira West were the witnesses at the first wedding in Rochester on October 8, 1815, and one year later were themselves married. Daughter Minerva (at right), married



Rev. William F. Curry of Rochester's First Presbyterian Church. Minerva Street, approximately where the driveway into the Hyatt garage now runs, was named after her. Another daughter, Delia, had left in 1826 to serve as a missionary in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), and returned home for a visit in 1854. Perhaps this portrait was made on this occasion.



Griffin, Lewis V.

View of the Osburn House, ca. 1857

4/4 plate ambrotype, collection M. & N. Graver

It is estimated that 95% of the daguerreotype and ambrotype images made in America were portraits. Of the street scenes and city views, it is not uncommon to see a daguerreian studio included in the view, as in the George Eastman House's 1852 image made by Whitney of the Four Corners in downtown Rochester. (Back Cover) This image may be the second earliest surviving city scene, and in a way, it too is a portrait, both of the brand new hotel, touted as the finest between Albany and Chicago, and its proud owner, Nehemiah Osburn, who stands top-hatted on the balcony. Mr. Osburn had arrived in Rochester in 1821, and spent his first frugal nights at the Blossom House, which had stood on the very site at Main and N. St. Paul Streets, where in 1857, the now prosperous contractor built this impressive structure.

Most of the participants in this scene are aware that an image is being made and there is some sense of staging in the image. Nevertheless, it remains a portrait of a lively city, this quality assisted by the wealth of detail, the multidirectional lines, and not least of all by the dog who paused just long enough to leave his slightly blurred impression on the wet plate emulsion.

Lewis V. Griffin had worked as an artist in Geneseo, prior to coming to Rochester about 1852. He set up a photography studio in the Crystal Palace Block on Main Street (London's 1850 Exhibition of that name having sufficiently impressed itself on Rochester businessmen) and specialized in ambrotypes. This view of the Osburn House was reproduced as a wood engraving in the Rochester City Directory of 1857-8. Perhaps the image was made to serve as a means to that end, i.e. an "at hand" image for the wood engraver to use. It seems unlikely though, that anyone of the 1850s, as today, would fail to appreciate the beauty, the fine tonalities, the "presence" of the scene as conveyed by the original object.

Whitney, Edward Tompkins
Unidentified Woman, ca. 1855
1/6 Plate Daguerreotype
George Eastman House Collection 77:581:2

In 1855, Phineas T. Barnum, known as "the Great American Showman" ventured on a project which he termed "The American Gallery of Beauty." Its purpose was twofold, first to attract an audience to his Broadway Museum with an exhibit of 1,000 daguerreotype portraits of young women, and ultimately to offer ten selections as the American examples in a proposed French publication, "World's Book of Beauty." Barnum planned to exhibit the images according to the states of their origin, and he seems to have specifically arranged with certain studios in larger cities to provide the work - E.T. Whitney's in Rochester. He proposed that "every person having a fair friend over 16 years of age (single or married) whom he believes competent to compete for the premiums...shall forward to him (free of expense), her photograph or Daguerreotype." Along with the entry, information as to complexion and eye color, and a small lock of the sitter's hair was to be forwarded. The reason for this was that the public who visited the exhibit were to cast their votes in two rounds of balloting, from the original 1,000 down to 100 and then to the final ten. Artists would make oil paintings, either from life or from the daguerreotype of the 100 women who had made the first cut and visitors would make their selection from these paintings. Besides celebrity and inclusion in the French publication, the winners would receive prizes ranging from \$1,000 to \$25.

In April 1856, the "Rochester Daily Union" cavalierly stated "we have no hesitancy in saying that we believe the first premium will be taken by a Rochester lady." It is unlikely that this particular Rochester lady participated in Barnum's contest, but her gentle beauty might well have caught the attention of some of the judging public - as a whisper can be more effective

than a shout. It is a mystery if the contest ever actually occurred, and notice of it seems to begin and end with its promotion. Although it would be a marvel to see 1,000 Daguerreotype portraits of beautiful American women anywhere today, and quite interesting to know the choices of an 1850s public, no such collection is known to exist. Perhaps all was lost when Barnum's museum and \$400,000 collection of curiosities was destroyed in a July, 1865 fire.



Glossary

(from Mulligan, Therese and David Wooters, editors "Photography from 1839 to Today, George Eastman House, Rochester NY". Benedikt Taschen Publishers, 1999). Definitions written by Mark Rice.

Daguerreotype: Daguerreotypes are sharply defined, highly reflective, one-of-a-kind photographs on silver-coated copper plates, packaged behind glass and kept in protective cases. Introduced in 1839 by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, the daguerreotype process was the first commercially successful photographic process and is distinguished by a remarkable clarity of photographic detail. Although early daguerreotypes required exposures of several minutes, advances in the process quickly reduced exposure times, to the relief of many sitters. Daguerreotypes were popular through the 1840's and into the 1850's, especially for portrait photography; they were primarily replaced by less expensive and more easily viewed ambrotypes and tintypes, as well as by the improved negative-positive techniques of collodion on glass negatives and albumen prints.

Ambrotype: Ambrotypes are sharply detailed, one-of-a-kind photographs on glass, packaged in protective cases similar to those used for daguerreotypes. An ambrotype is essentially a collodion on glass negative that is intentionally underexposed so that the negative image appears as a positive image when viewed against a dark background. The process for making ambrotypes was patented in the United States in 1854 by James Ambrose Cutting. Ambrotypes (and the closely related tintype) soon replaced the more expensive daguerreotypes as the favored process for portrait photography. The process has the additional benefit of being non-reflective, making ambrotypes easier to view than daguerreotypes. The popularity of ambrotypes was short-lived, however, and the process was soon replaced by the growing popularity of the negative-positive process of collodion on glass negatives and albumen prints.

Tintype: A tintype is a non-reflective, one-of-a-kind photograph on a sheet of iron coated with a dark enamel. Its most common use was for portrait photography. Like ambrotypes, tintypes rely on the principle that underexposed collodion negatives appear as positive images when viewed against a dark background. Less expensive and more durable than either ambrotypes or daguerreotypes, tintypes did not require protective cases and were often kept in simple paper frames or folders. Tintypes first appeared in the United States in 1856 and remained popular well into the 20th century.

Locations of Daguerreian Studios in Rochester New York

*Reynold's Arcade (Arcade), 28 Buffalo Street
Chappell Block, 58-80 State Street
Crystal Palace Daguerreian Gallery, 79 Main Street
Emporium Block (aka Gaffney Block), 53-55 Main Street
Gould Block, 6-22 State Street
Pitkin Building, 16-18 Buffalo Street*

The following is a list of names of individuals known to have made daguerreotypes in Rochester. In many instances, this was a short-lived experience. Subsequent (and in one instance, previous) occupations, when known, are cited in brackets. Careers in photography extending beyond 1858 involved work in other processes that succeeded the Daguerreotype. Information was obtained using the Rochester City Directories and newspapers of the period. Partnerships are noted in quotation marks.

"Craig's Daguerreian Registry", Vol. 1, compiled and edited by John S. Craig (1994) lists several more names of Daguerreotypists as well as manufacturers and dealers in Daguerreian products in Rochester on pp 244 and 245

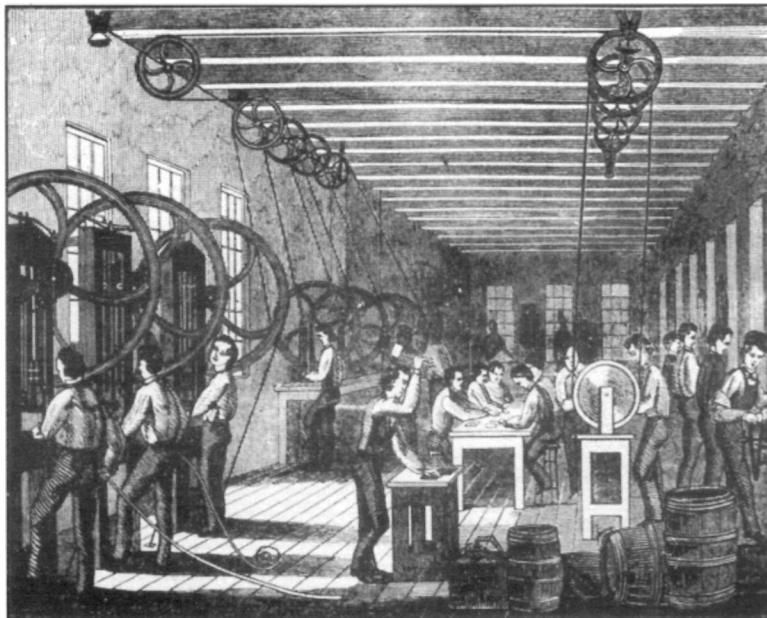
*Aldridge, Robert M., 1855-56 (carpenter 1857-58)
Appleby, Richard B., 1851-57, Arcade
Baker, Isaac, 1857-59 (portrait painter 1855-57)
"Bean & Kelsey", 1853 Gould Block
Bishop, Justin R., 1852, proprietor of the Rochester Museum since 1829,
"Mercer & Bishop", 1852.
Bloodgood, Isaac N., 1851-52, Gould Block, no date
Boyland, Patrick, 1851-52
Brown, William, operator for Thos. Mercer, 1848
Burtis, Robert B., 1845-48, Arcade (nurseryman, 1857-58)
Burtis, Warren L., 1845-46, Arcade (travelling agent, Novelty Works, 1857-58)
Cherry, Peter, 1849-50, Minerva Block (accountant 1855-56)
Clark, John M. 1845-46, Pitkin Bldg.
Crocker, John S. & Co., 1857-59, Gould Block
Davis, Isaac, 1849-50 (cutter 1855-56)
Denny, Conrad B., with E.T. Whitney, 1852-54
Faulkner, Lewis K., 1849-52, "dentist and daguerreian artist", Arcade
Fox, J. Marsden, 1851-90, Arcade
Fuller, William H., 1857-59, Gould Block
Gilbert, Hiram R., 1853-54 (peddler 1857-58)
Granger, Francis, 1853-54, Gould Block (chair maker 1849-50)
Griffin, Lewis V., 1853-59, Crystal Palace Gallery
"Griffin & Squires", 1860
Guignon, Richard V., 1847-48 (brother-in law of Thomas Mercer, aka Richard Gingnon)*

"Guignon & Mann", Emporium Block, 1848
Guignon, Henry, 1851-52
Hartman, James, 1859
Hartman, Henry G., 1857-59, Emporium Block
Hayes, Israel, 1851-52, Arcade
Heath, James, 1853, Emporium Block (grocer 1855-56)
"Heath & Kelsey", 1853 Emporium Block
Howard, John, 1850, Gould Block (confectionery and ice cream, 1855-56)
Hovey, Douglass, 1854-68
"Hovey & Hartman", Emporium Block, 1857-63
Keeney, James M., 1853-56
Kelsey, John D., 1853-56 Emporium Block
"Kelsey & Hovey", 1854-56 Emporium Block
Kelsey, Louisa, 1855-56
Marks, Henry W., 1853-54, with Richard B. Appleby 1855-56 (clerk 1857-58)
Marsh, E. Kirby, 1847-66 Pitkin Bldg.
McKee, George T., 1844-46 (joiner 1855-56)
McMahon, Patrick, 1845-46 Arcade (boat caulker 1847-48)
Mercer, Thomas, 1841-52 Arcade, Emporium Block
"Mercer & Co.", 1848
"Mercer & Guignon"
"Mercer & Bishop", 1851-52 Museum Bldg.
Monroe, Myron H., 1858-1883 Pitkin Bldg.
Paradise, Andrew E., 1851-54, operator for Mercer 1850
Perry, Chauncey, 1849-56 Arcade (attorney and alderman 1857-58)
Rumley, Charles, 1850 Gould Block (tobacconist 1855-56)
Sintzenich, Eugene, 1841-42 Arcade
Smith, Seneca B., 1849-54 Gould Block
Squires, George W., 1853-64 Arcade
Way, William C., 1851-52 (theological student 1857-58)
Webb, James, 1853-54
Whitney, Edward Tompkins, 1846-51, 1855-59 Gould Block
"Whitney & Denny", 1852-54 Gould Block
Wickes, C., 1842-43n
Wilkins, Levi L., 1857-59 Chappell Block
Woodruff, J. and T.T., 1841 National Hotel



*From Dictionary of the Photographic Art by E. & H.T. Anthony,
Daguerreotype workshops. Case Factory — Covering and Finishing Room.
Note the female employees*

*From Dictionary of the Photographic Art by E. & H.T. Anthony,
Daguerreotype workshops. Mat and Preserver Factory*



Further Reading

1. Adler, Jacob, editor, "**The Journal of Prince Alexander Liholiho**," University of Hawaii Press, 1967.
2. Erikson, Bruce T., "A Mammoth Plate Daguerreotype in Hawaii: The Result of a Diplomatic Indiscretion." **The Daguerrian Annual**, 1994. Edited by Laurie Baty, John Wood and Matthew R. Isenburg.
3. Newhall, Beaumont. **The Daguerreotype in America**, third revised edition, Dover Publications, 1976.
4. Rochester **City Directories** 1840-1860.
5. Rochester newspapers 1840-1860, microfilm at the Rochester Public Library, Local History.
6. Rudisill, Richard. **Mirror Image: the Influence of the Daguerreotype on American Society**. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque 1971.
7. Scrantom, Edwin "Old Citizen's Letter" No. 69 and 70 (1871), feature column in the **Rochester Democrat and American** from 1862-1879.
8. Rochester Historical Society, **Publication Fund Series**, Vol. III, pp. 339-367, 1924. Further information on the Rochester family.

Back Cover:

Whitney, Edward Tompkins

Corner of State and Main Streets, Rochester NY

ca. 1852

4/4 Plate Daguerreotype

George Eastman House Collection 79:3275:1

Edward Tompkins Whitney made this image around 1852, a date which had been established by former Eastman House Director Beaumont Newhall's research into the years of operation of the various businesses pictured. Perhaps Whitney had only intended this to be a portrait of his rooftop studio, about which his ads boasted "light is plentiful, light is free, rain or shine, it's always light enough for me." However, besides including a glimpse of the front curve of the Eagle Hotel (soon to be replaced by the Powers Building) and the variety of life on the street, his image has the distinction of being the earliest known photograph of Rochester.

