The Photogram

Newsletter of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society

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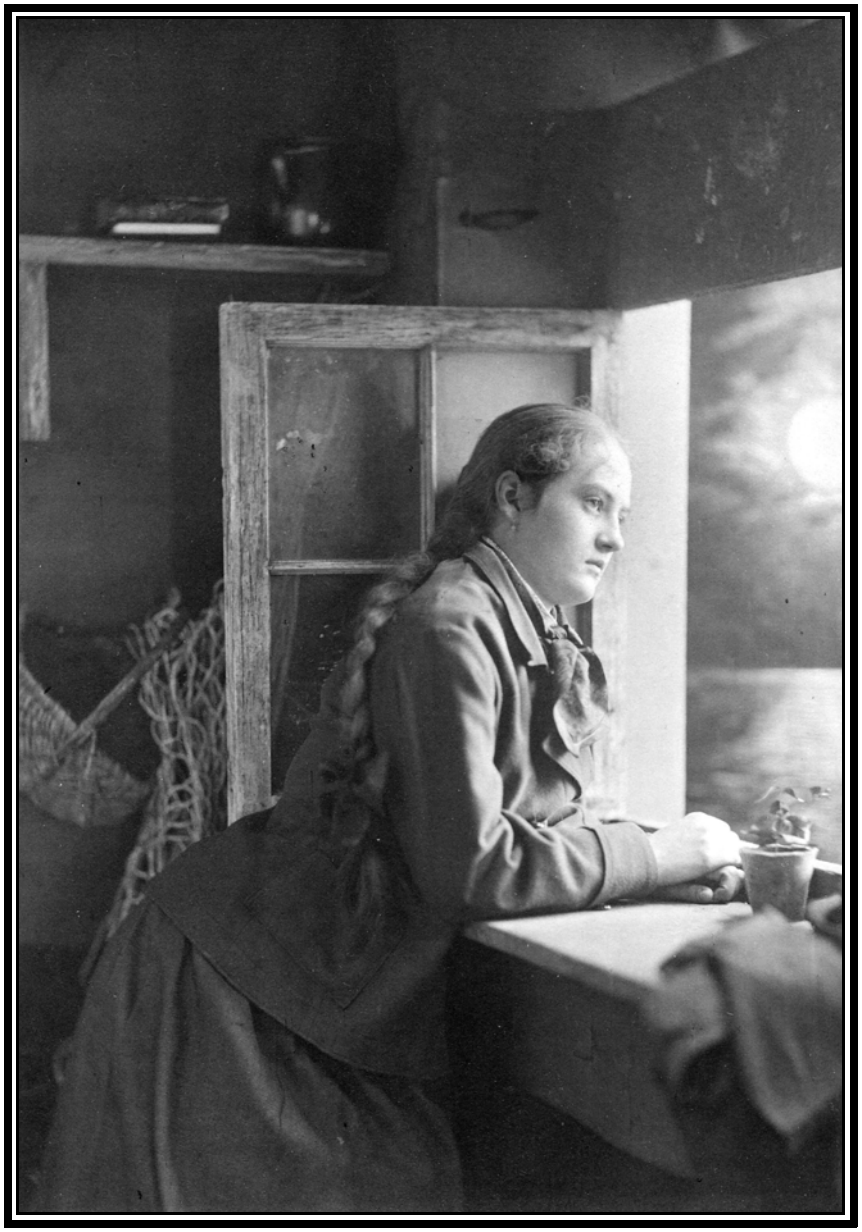

J. Loeffler, "The Fisherman's Daughter," *Philadelphia Photographer* 19, no. 168 (December 1877).
Inspired by a poem, the photograph is an uncommon American example of a composition or subject picture.

THE PHOTOGRAM is the official bulletin of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society (MiPHS). It is published five times a year. The contents are copyrighted the year of publication.

THE PHOTOGRAM welcomes contributions to its pages from both MiPHS members and non-members. To submit an article, review, occasional photo ad (MiPHS members only) or informational item for publication, write to:

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Please include your e-mail address with all correspondence. Authors and advertisers are responsible for the accuracy of their contributions to *The Photogram*. The views of the authors do not necessarily reflect those of the Society.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

June 1 (July-Summer issue)
August 1 (September-October issue)
October 1 (November-December issue)
January 1 (February-March issue)
March 1 (April-May issue)

The MICHIGAN PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY is an organization dedicated to advancing an understanding and appreciation of the history of photography through membership meetings, special events and publications, and through shared endeavors with other organizations and the general public. The MiPHS is a 501c3 non-profit corporation chartered by the State of Michigan.

The MiPHS welcomes new members. Dues are $25 per year (January 1- December 31), $30 outside the USA, $15 for students with valid ID. For information and application forms, call 248.549.6026, visit us online at *www.miphs.org* or write to:

MiPHS
P.O. Box 2278
Birmingham, MI 48012-2278

35TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OF THE PHOTOGRAM

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society. Come help us celebrate by submitting a photograph and a short description (limit 100 words) of a favorite photographic item from your personal collection. It will be shared with the MiPHS membership in a special September-October 2007 issue of *THE PHOTOGRAM*. Our goal is to publish 35 items from 35 members, one for each year of our organization. Send a photograph or jpeg along with your description to the *Photogram* Editor, Jan Schimmelman. E-mail: schimmel@oakland.edu. Mailing address: The Department of Art and Art History, 307 Wilson Hall, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309-4401. Please let the Editor know a.s.a.p. if you plan to submit an item. **DEADLINE—JULY 15.**

CHRIS MAHONEY, "ANSEL ADAMS & THE AUCTION MARKET: A STUDY IN VALUES," AT THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS, THURSDAY, MAY 17

Chris Mahoney, Senior Vice President and Specialist in the Sotheby's Photographs Department, discusses the work of Ansel Adams and its presence on the auction market for fine art photography. His talk coincides with an exhibition on Ansel Adams in the Schwartz Galleries at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The lecture is sponsored by the Graphic Arts Council and MiPHS. In the DIA Lecture Hall at 8:00PM.

ANNUAL MiPHS PHOTOGRAPHICA SHOW AND SALE, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14

Novi Community Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road (½ mile west of Novi Road), Novi, MI, 10:00AM-4:00PM. Mark your calendar now!

Gregory Popovitch, *Winter Scenery at Judville Road Bridge.*

DAGUERREOTYPES BY GREGORY POPOVITCH

MiPHS member and modern daguerreotypist Gregory Popovitch exhibited nine of his whole plates in "Owosso Daguerreotypes," at the Shiawassee Arts Center in Owosso, MI. The show ran from January 30-March 4. Visit: www.shiawasseearts.org/sac.htm. The exhibition was also featured on local ABC Flint news station (channel 12).

W. R. Howell, *Philadelphia Photographer* 9, no. 108 (December 1872).
An unusual reclining pose, it is in stark contrast to the "tasteless uniformity" photographers were told to avoid.

"SUICIDAL COMPETITION": THE RISE OF ART PHOTOGRAPHY

By James S. Jensen

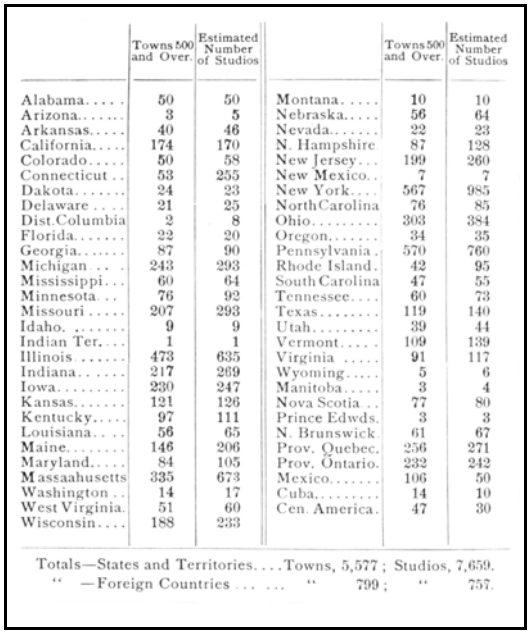
The first 40 years of photography were almost exclusively the province of professionals pursuing it as a business enterprise. As their numbers increased, intense competition forced photographers to adopt self-destructive business practices and surrender profits. The rivalry was so acute that photographers routinely referred to it as "suicidal competition." This essay first identifies the business conditions that created the desperate situation in America during the wet plate era and the first years of dry plate practice, from about 1860 through the mid-1880s. It then describes various responses to these dire circumstances, emphasizing how photographers were encouraged to advance the art of the medium in order to gain status and attract patrons willing to pay higher prices for a better product.

There is ample evidence that even at the beginning of photography with the daguerreotype, competition held prices in check. One of the earliest organizations of professionals, The New York Daguerreian Association, for example, was founded in 1851 with the explicit purpose of combating the "catch-pennies" whose cheap productions threatened the livelihood of better class practitioners. In hindsight, however, most photographers remembered the opening years of photography as prosperous for all. The same was true for the initial period of the collodion, "wet plate" technology that began to supplant the daguerreotype during the mid-1850s. When used to make a negative and multiple paper prints, photographers experienced a rush of business as the public received twelve small pictures called cartes-de-visite for the price they were accustomed to paying for a single daguerreotype. Typical of the reflections about these days when the entire population was getting a portrait for the very first time was photographer W. D. Gatchel who exclaimed: "Ah! Those were halcyon days for our craft." (*PM* 1879, p. 35)

With wet plate practice firmly established by 1860, business in America was augmented further with the advent of the Civil War and the irrepressible desire of families and soldiers to possess images of loved ones made before they headed off to uncertain futures. By the end of the war there were three photography journals being published in America, the newest of which was *The Philadelphia Photographer* founded in 1864 by Edward L. Wilson. Citing the effect of the conflict on the business of photography, Wilson offered this synopsis of the first chapter of collodion photography: "Parties left their stores and their work-shops and took to photography as a more profitable vocation and the art grew wondrously. A great change has taken place however. Increased demand created increased competition, and a villainous reduction in price. Too many operators in the field have caused business to be dull all around." (*PP* 1866, p. 311)

By the time of Wilson's evaluation, photographers routinely referred to themselves as "the fraternity," implying common

interests and goals. This included the "first-class operators" with flourishing businesses in urban centers as well as those in less prominent city galleries and in small towns across the nation. The latter, sometimes described as the "humble" or "country" photographers, comprised the vast majority of professionals and bore the brunt of rabid competition. Decidedly not included in the fraternity were itinerants, cut-rate galleries, and those who made tintypes. With their low prices, inferior productions, and utter disregard for promoting photography as an art, they were disparagingly called "the cheap johns."



	Towns 500 and Over.	Estimated Number of Studios		Towns 500 and Over.	Estimated Number of Studios
Alabama	50	50	Montana	10	10
Arizona	3	5	Nebraska	56	64
Arkansas	40	46	Nevada	22	23
California	174	170	N. Hampshire	87	128
Colorado	50	58	New Jersey	199	260
Connecticut	53	255	New Mexico	7	7
Dakota	24	23	New York	567	985
Delaware	21	25	North Carolina	76	85
Dist. Columbia	2	8	Ohio	303	384
Florida	22	20	Oregon	34	35
Georgia	87	90	Pennsylvania	570	760
Michigan	243	293	Rhode Island	42	95
Mississippi	60	64	South Carolina	47	55
Minnesota	76	92	Tennessee	60	73
Missouri	207	293	Texas	119	140
Idaho	9	9	Utah	39	44
Indian Ter.	1	1	Vermont	109	139
Illinois	473	635	Virginia	91	117
Indiana	217	269	Wyoming	5	6
Iowa	230	247	Manitoba	3	4
Kansas	121	126	Nova Scotia	77	80
Kentucky	97	111	Prince Edwds.	3	3
Louisiana	56	65	N. Brunswick	61	67
Maine	146	206	Prov. Quebec.	256	271
Maryland	84	105	Prov. Ontario.	232	242
Massaahusetts	335	673	Mexico	106	50
Washington	14	17	Cuba	14	10
West Virginia.	51	60	Cen. America.	47	30
Wisconsin	188	233			

Totals—States and Territories....Towns, 5,577; Studios, 7,659.
" —Foreign Countries ... ... " 799; " 757.

Estimated number of photography studios in the United States. Compiled by the Photographic Merchant's Board of Trade and published in *The Photographic Times and American Photographer*, February 27, 1885. The complete tally based on an interpretation of the 1880 census estimated there were 7659 galleries and 15,318 photographers in the United States.

It is impossible to know the exact number of photographers working in the nineteenth century. While the 1860 census reported over 3100, the photographic journals in that decade most often cited 5000. They reported this number on occasions when circulars were sent to all known photographers to alert them to issues of universal concern. Five years after the 1880 census, the Photographic Merchants' Board of Trade derived from the tally the estimate that there were 15,000 photographers in America. That same year, however, the president of the Photographers Association of America stated there were 50,000! More significant than the absolute number was that the photographers' rate of growth far exceeded that of the population at large. As a Missouri photographer noted in 1880: ". . . there is scarcely a place of three or four houses and hardly a crossroad but has someone making cheap pictures." (*PP* 1880, p. 7)

Entry requirements to the profession were minimal. Individuals could learn to make tintypes in a few days, three to four months was cited as the time an apprentice needed to learn to operate a gallery. Insult was added to injury when so many failed to maintain technical or artistic standards. The comments of Texas photographer H. B. Hillyer are typical of hundreds of laments expressed in the photographic press by more committed photographers. In 1876 he wrote: "At the first dawn of photography cheapness and ease of production lured into its ranks thousands of worthless men unfitted for developing this beautiful art. The scrapings of the earth rushed into the 'trade,' competition increased, prices went down, art suffered violence at the hands of tyros, and was re-baptized into shame." (*PP* 1876, p. 333)

The competition led to business practices that only exacerbated the problem. Many cited "clubbing" as a chief culprit. In this strategy, an agent was used to solicit individuals for discounted portraits. Once a group was assembled, they were issued a block of tickets to redeem. The agent made a small profit or received free tickets for himself. In a typical scheme, club members paid $1 a dozen for portraits rather than the $4 to $6 usually charged. Another type of mass marketing that pressured photographers was the rise of copy houses. Re-orders from negatives on file at a gallery could be more remunerative than the first order. Rather than returning to the original photographer, however, these businesses collected pictures with door-to-door solicitors and sent them to a central location to be copied. People could order duplicates as well as life-size enlargements.

Photographers brought some of the most grievous problems upon themselves. Even small towns had multiple, competing galleries and were overly generous offering inducements to the public. Many promised patrons they could be re-photographed until pleased with the result. Customers took advantage of the hapless photographers by continuing to sit until the combination of pose, expression, clothing and hair was judged perfect. The most exasperating cases were when less attractive individuals claimed a portrait did not look like them. Photographers did not require pre-payment, allowing the public to visit multiple galleries but order from only one. They were facilitated in their comparison shopping when proof prints were allowed to be taken from the gallery. After visiting studios in Europe for several months, New York photographer J. M. Mora became acutely aware of Americans' predilection for re-sitting. He wrote in the 1881 *Photographic Times*: "American people enjoy the reputation of being the most fastidious and troublesome in the world in regard to sitting for their photographs, invariably having to be taken at least a second time, no matter how perfect the pose and the negative made by a first attempt. My French friends inquire whether American photographers are not themselves to blame by pandering to unreasonable, whimsical and silly demands." (*PT* 1881, p. 10) The humble photographers were advised by editors and first-class operators to charge a sitting fee that would include just two poses for a

client to choose between. Some tried to curb the abuse by stipulating that re-sittings would be allowed only if the person was wearing the identical clothing and hairstyle. The plans were of little value, however, as soon as only one advertised, "satisfaction guaranteed."

The most outrageous case reported in the photographic press was a woman who sat 17 times for Brooklyn photographer G. Frank Pearsall and refused to accept any of the results! Outraged by the exploitation, Pearsall sued and was victorious in at least recovering the cost of his materials. The incident was just one of many examples included in a remarkable series of essays titled "Photographic Rights" by New York photographer E. K. Hough. He argued: "The public is wholly ignorant of all principles of artistic representation, yet they set up their uncultured taste in judgment, and condemn [our work] by simply saying they do not like it, asserting that it must be or ought to be repeated until they are pleased." (*PP* 1875, p. 115) To illustrate the public's ignorance, he cited photographers who pretended to take another pose, only to later show the customer the original proof that they then accepted. Hough claimed that in no other occupation was such humiliation and injustice accepted.

Restrictive patents only worsened photographers' economic woes. In this respect, the collodion era began on an ominous note with three patents issued to James A. Cutting in 1854. The most troublesome covered the use of potassium bromide to make collodion negatives more light-sensitive, shortening exposure times and facilitating portraiture. The chemical, however, had been routinely used as an accelerator with the daguerreotype, and photographers at first dismissed the patent out of hand. While there had been prior daguerreian patents, the bromide patent became a paramount concern because exorbitant license fees were demanded, because infringement lawsuits were vigorously filed against violators large and small, and most importantly, because photographers felt they had no choice but to use the chemical. With the Cutting patents about to expire in 1868, about 100 photographers assembled in New York City and pledged to oppose any attempt to extend the bromide patent for another seven years. Wilson, still a novice editor, assumed leadership of the resistance and successfully orchestrated the crusade against the extension.

The defeat of the bromide patent confirmed photographers' need for an organization to safeguard their interests. Those at the 1868 meeting also passed a motion stating: "Resolved, we should organize a National Photographic Union to resist imposition, to promote good feeling, to add dignity to our profession, for the ventilation of useful ideas, and for mutual good." (*PP* 1868, p. 138) Abraham Bogardus, a distinguished New York City photographer since the time he opened a daguerreotype gallery in 1846, and Edward L. Wilson were among the most active in forming The National Photographic Association (NPA) and were elected President and Permanent Secretary respectively, for virtually its entire life. Wilson parlayed his roles as both publisher and NPA officer to become the single most dominant voice in American photography during the wet plate and early dry plate years. Between 1869 and 1876 the NPA held an annual convention and claimed over 1400 members at its peak. Dissensions among manufacturers and publishers, elite and humble photographers, and a continuing depression following the Bank Panic of 1873, finally led to the demise of the NPA after its last convention held at the Centennial Exhibition. Four years later, a new organization, The Photographers Association of America (PAA) would take its place in promoting the welfare of working photographers.

Edward L. Wilson. Portrait frontispiece to *Wilson's Photographics*, 1881. Editor, publisher and Permanent Secretary of the National Photographic Association, Wilson was the dominant voice in America advocating sound business procedures and artistic practice of photography during the wet plate and early dry plate era.

Serious patent burdens re-surfaced in the latter half of the 1870s, by which time the NPA had self-destructed. Behind most was Englishman Theodore Lambert who had purchased patent rights to various methods of permanent printing. The materials for his versions of the carbon process, the Chromotype for making contact prints, and the Lambertype for enlargements, were offered exclusively by the Anthony Company, one of the two leading purveyors of photographic supplies in America. Largely to promote its own products, in 1870 the company began publishing a monthly journal, *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin*. Not surprisingly, *The Bulletin* published many favorable reviews of the Lambert processes and sponsored an annual exhibition of carbon prints. Although Wilson had authored (or plagiarized as most agreed) *The American Carbon Manual* in 1868, ten years later he concluded that

carbon printing and photomechanical processes were impractical for all but the largest publishers. Wilson's refusal to endorse any of the Lambert patents led Anthony to withdraw all of its advertising from Wilson's publications. Lambert initiated malicious tirades against Wilson in *The Bulletin*. He also found a willing ally in John H. Fitzgibbon, a pioneering daguerreian, who in 1877 had initiated *The St. Louis Practical Photographer* as a rival journal to Wilson's *Philadelphia Photographer*. Fitzgibbon added his own scurrilous attacks. He was so preoccupied with challenging Wilson's preeminent position as spokesman for the fraternity that he authored several poems ridiculing his authority and accusing him of fraud and deceit. One short extract reads: "Were Wilson lying by the hill, And a snake bit him by the gill, Which of the twain would suffer worst? Surely the serpent would swell and burst." (*SLPP* 1880, p. 26)

Theodore Lilienthal, carbon print portrait of a woman, ca. 1877. An example of permanent printing using Theodore Lambert's patented Chromotype materials.

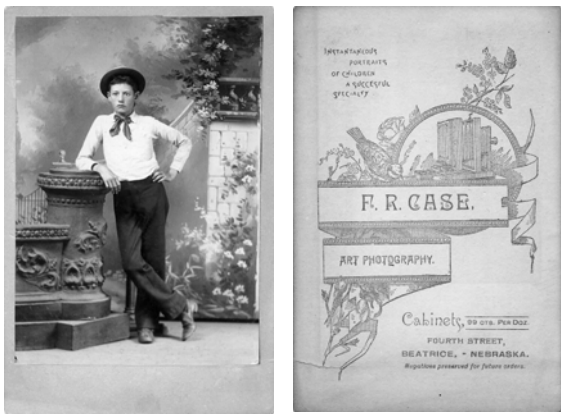
The Lambert patents signaled a change in tactics. The battleground shifted from pursuing individual infringers as assignees of the bromide patent had done, to establishing alliances among manufacturers, stock dealers and publishers to promote a product and monopolize a market segment. Even so, photographers continued to complain that the omnipresence of patents unfairly increased their cost of doing business. It led *The Practical Photographer* to quip: "Wanted: One good idea in photography that is not patented." (*SLPP* 1877, p. 22) Some patents were trivial, including a system for cutting paper to maximize the number of prints possible from a single sheet. Another was a simple reflector on a pole to modify light during an exposure. It prompted one photographer to lament: "In God's name, have not the craft suffered enough cramping and imposition from the patent business already?" (*PP* 1872, p. 56) David Bachrach of Baltimore was so irritated with being swindled by the Artotype, a Lambert patent for a variation of collotype printing, he mailed a pamphlet denouncing the process to 5000 photographers.

Competition also tempted photographers to buy secret processes for some new formula or procedure they hoped would differentiate their work from rivals and give them a business advantage. The nature of the secret processes was rarely specified in the photographic press but most were eventually judged shams. One of the few that was named was Chinese Solvent, later revealed to be simply a solution of lye. The "process mongers" as they were called, often tried to sell information previously published in the journals or falsely claimed their secret process was patented. Process vending was pervasive and enduring. Wilson queried: "What is it about our blessed art that attracts such scamps?" (*PP* 1869, p. 155) *The Philadelphia Photographer* once glued a tintype portrait of a nefarious vendor into a monthly issue in order to forewarn the fraternity should he solicit them. Neither the professional organizations nor the journals were able to restrain the practice. In 1883 an officer of the PAA asked: "Now where in this broad land is there not a photographer who has paid out his money for things and processes which today are utterly useless?" (*PP* 1883, p. 204) Wilson begged his readers to stop bothering him with their complaints. He pleaded: "Be assured ye victimized ones we grieve for you. We will do anything you say if it will save you from these 'sharks and scoundrels.' We will buy out these peddlers; we will take them into partnership with us and give them all the profits; we will give them all the cyanide they will drink; anything—only do, do, do NOT write us any more letters about these naughty, naughty men." (*PP* 1875, p. 121)

The net effect of competition among too many photographers, unsound business practices, and unscrupulous manipulation of the technology, was that the prices photographers received for their products were "ruinously low." Some even wondered if their remuneration covered the cost of materials and overhead. Rather than changing their own business practices, however, photographers blamed the cheap johns, especially the ferrotypers who made tintypes. The disdain for the tintype and the frustration of photographers is evident in this 1879 letter to *The Practical Photographer* signed by Brother Puke: "Ferrotypes are cheaper than dirt, cheaper than you can steal them. Photography is in the gutter covered with filth. Never before has it stooped so low and forfeited the respect of mankind. To all those who have illustrated the capabilities of photography by good and thoughtful work, and have maintained fair and remunerative prices, I can only say 'let us all puke,' let photography take a grand puke." (*SLPP* 1879, p. 736) More mod-

erate proposals to control competition from the cheap johns were to pressure manufacturers to dramatically raise the price of iron stock, and to boycott distributors if they continued to sell tintype supplies.

Tintype, front and reverse, from Hall's Tintype and Ferrotype Gallery, Chicago, ca. 1865. Prices listed on reverse: "Tintypes, 25 cents per dozen. Ferrotype cabinets taken by the single one or by the dozen, cheap."



F. R. Case, cabinet card, front and reverse, ca. 1885. An example of drastic price-cutting that ocurred in the 1880s, the price for cabinet cards advertised on the reverse is just 99 cents per dozen as compared to prices as high as $9 that first-class galleries had once charged.

While the humble photographers denounced the cheap johns, the editors and first class operators argued that the solution to low prices was for photographers to make more artistic pictures to attract a better clientele and charge higher prices. This elite also proselytized that the inverse was true, that low prices were achieved at the expense of art. In an article titled "Photography as an Art and as a Business," Alva Pearsall summarized the conundrum: "Photographers as a class are so avaricious; the almighty dollar is what they are seeking, and everything, art and all, is sacrificed at its altar. So business and photography, by usage, have become very closely allied, and to make the latter recognized among the fine arts will be a very difficult matter under the present regime." (*PM* 1873, p. 112) Even if photographers accepted the premise that art would lead to better prices, the challenge was monumental when the American country photographers lacked the art traditions of their European counterparts. Almost 50 years after its invention, E. K. Hough reflected on this history: "Instead of the new art being adopted and used by the army of artists already trained, it was, as a rule, disowned and derided by them; as it is largely even to this day. It was, therefore, taken up by hundreds who had received no previous art education and who came to it with no artistic insight or ambition, but took it up solely as a new and promising occupation like any other trade; and they were quite satisfied therefore, with making money by it." (*PP* 1887, p. 153)

J. H. Kent, "Cabinet Portrait," *Philadelphia Photographer* 4, no. 45 (August 1867). An early example of the cabinet card, it illustrates the potential to add fancy furniture and props to the larger space of the new format.

The emphasis to advance the art of photography began in earnest in the "dull times" following the Civil War when photographers hoped a new product would re-create the zeal first spawned by the carte-de-visite. In 1866, Wilson in particular began to advocate a "new size" to stimulate sales. He argued: "In our experience, we have found that fashion rules in photography as well as in millinery, and if photographers would thrive, they must create a fashion…The new size should be introduced simultaneously in America and on the Continent. This will create the fashion and convince the public that the fashion exists." (*PP* 1866, p. 312)

ORNAMENTAL

VASES, TABLES, BASES, AND ACCESSORIES.

Printed on PEARL PAPER. For Sale by all dealers.

The *New Cabinet Portrait* having created a demand for the accessories represented in the Photograph above, we have enlarged our facilities for manufacturing them, and can now supply the world! We can make an endless variety, and have ready

Fifteen Styles of Vases, at $5.00 each.

An Elegant Table, with sides and ends differently ornamented, to give the appearance of a different table in each picture. See photograph. Price $30.00.

ORNAMENTAL BASES

For sitting children upon; for breaking the folds of the curtain, and for various uses in the picture. See photograph. Price, $15.00. These are very useful. Several other patterns made.

Photographs of a variety of Vases, Tables and Bases, sent on receipt of 50 cents.

For Sale by all Dealers.

WILSON & HOOD,

Sole Manufacturers,

First Floor Stock House, 626 Arch Street, Philadelphia.

Wilson & Hood, advertisement for "ornamental vases, tables, bases and accessories" to use in the new cabinet card format, which appeared in *Photographic Mosaics: An Annual Record of Photographic Progress*, 1868.

I. W. Taber, "Promenade Portrait of a Lady," *Philadelphia Photographer* 12, no. 143 (November 1875). The promenade format was promoted as being both economical and artistic.

Wilson favored the cabinet card that had just appeared in England, a format almost three times bigger than the carte-de-visite. Although introduced as a sales tactic, the cabinet card was also promoted as an opportunity to improve the art of photography. Compared to the simple, full-length portrait typical of the carte-de-visite, it demanded greater skill to control light on faces and figures that were now more prominent. Painted backdrops, fancy furniture and props that filled the larger picture space also called on photographers to become more adept at arranging them into a pleasing composition. Promoting business and promoting art were thus complementary endeavors. Ten years later, the same strategy was used to promote the new promenade format. Designed in 1875 by Taber and Morse of San Francisco, its tall, narrow shape was fashioned for the standing figure and required more skill to compose than the simple vignetted head that was the most popular style of cabinet card. At the same time, the promenade used less paper, needed smaller mounts and required less time for an employee to retouch. Wilson argued that it was a marvelous opportunity to simultaneously advance art, reduce costs and attract better-paying customers.

Edward L. Wilson, "Over the Hills to the Poor House," *Philadelphia Photographer* 15, no.169 (December 1878). Illustrating a contemporary popular poem, Wilson's own composition picture was also meant to represent the trials of being a publisher and photographer.

Fitzgibbon also asserted that artistic practice meant greater profits. Citing his own long experience beginning as a daguerreian in 1841, he told the humble photographers that it was only crowded at the bottom of the ladder, that if they steadily

climbed it by improving their work, "there was plenty of room at the top." The art strategy was summarized in the NPA slogan: "Elevate Your Art and It Will Elevate You." "Excel, not undersell," was how Bogardus phrased the idea. Wilson, however, was by far the most vocal in promoting art as a business scheme. In the pages of *The Philadelphia Photographer*, in his annual summary of progress in photography titled *Photographic Mosaics*, and in three comprehensive textbooks on photography, it was Wilson who most explicitly instructed photographers *how* to accomplish the task. Coinciding with the push to adopt the cabinet card he published a 13-part series titled "Art Principles Applicable to Photography." With references to Old Masters, he attempted to educate his readers about perspective, chiaroscuro and classical forms of composition. To reinforce the lessons, the original print tipped into each issue of *The Philadelphia Photographer* as a frontispiece often echoed the same concern. To encourage photographers to turn theory into practice, the journal often sponsored competitions with a medal or cash prize in order to cultivate interest in the latest artistic style.

William Kurtz, "'Rembrandt' Portrait," *Philadelphia Photographer* 7, no. 78 (June 1870). The "Rembrandt Effect," with the side of the face toward the camera in shadow, was one application of artistic lighting.

The overwhelming majority of entreaties to advance the art of photography concerned portraiture as this was the staple of virtually all professional galleries. Although most articles about art simultaneously discussed many different elements and were often convoluted, even contradictory at times, one can isolate the individual components that photographers were being told to pursue. First among the necessary improvements was to use expressive lighting instead of flooding the studio to minimize exposure times. "Light the sitter, not the room" was how many expressed the distinction. Photographers at this time, of course, used only natural light and that constantly changed with season, weather and time of day. With a combination of skylight, sidelights, shades and reflectors, the challenge to control light took considerable effort, experimentation and ambition. To aid photographers, the journals regularly published descriptions and diagrams of glass houses and used frontispiece photographs to educate them about subtle differences in lighting. Antoine-Samuel Adam-Salomon of Paris was regarded as the most accomplished master of lighting. Period analyses of his work reveal the artistic traits photographers sought as well as the jargon of the period. His portraits were acclaimed for their extraordinary "depth," that is, for their shadow detail; for their "bold relief," meaning the three-dimensional, sculptural rendering of his subjects; and for their "breadth of effect," meaning the dramatic juxtaposition of light and dark areas.

Napoleon Sarony, "Portrait Studies," *Philadelphia Photographer* 4, no. 39 (March 1867). Famed for positioning his subjects in natural, graceful poses, Sarony provided these studies for photographers to emulate.

The ability of the photographer to pose his subject was the next integral aspect of the artistic portrait. Although reams of advice were proffered, there was but a single desired effect—the subject should assume a natural, relaxed, graceful position. Prior to the "instantaneous" exposures of the dry plate, this was challenging for photographers to secure when their subjects had to remain motionless for as long as 30 seconds. New York City celebrity photographer Napoleon Sarony was one who

overcame those limitations. In describing his work Wilson compared using the standard headrest to the tortures of the Inquisition, to the excruciating experience of riding a speedy stagecoach down a rocky mountain side, and to the agony of having a tooth pulled. In a characteristic example of how art and technique were integrated, Wilson went on to describe how Sarony's patented posing machine alleviated all discomfort, making it possible to produce the animated positions for which he was famous.

Leon Van Loo, "A Wild, Weird Tale," *Philadelphia Photographer* 21, no. 245 (May 1884). An artistic portrait of three children, it tells the story of their recreation and diversions at home at the same time it represents the ideas of the photographer.

Compared to the unadorned picture space of most early cartes-de-visite, the illusory painted backgrounds, studio furniture and props that became commonplace with the cabinet card were considered artistic elements in their own right. The uneducated photographer, however, could easily abuse the almost unlimited number of possible combinations and ruin harmony, the overall visual balance of the picture. The journals routinely railed at photographers who permitted such contradictions as balustrades ending abruptly at the edge of the forest, tree stumps in a parlor, or pianos that seemed to fly through the air. A *Philadelphia Photographer* frontispiece from 1879 deliberately illustrated such problems. In it a young woman in warm winter dress sits in front of an open window with a distant summer scene complete with sailboat. Although the lamps (still with price tags affixed) suggest evening, the light on her face suggests day. The birdcage is impossibly high, maple and ivy leaves grow on the same vine, and butterflies never alight on perpendicular glass. Wilson concluded: "Indeed the whole picture is spoiled by an utter lack of harmony caused by an undue crowding in of incongruous accessories." (*PP* 1879, p. 353)

S. V. Allen, *Philadelphia Photographer* 16, no. 192 (December 1879). A deliberate misuse of accessories meant to educate photographers about the judicious use of backdrops and props; two articles on the artistic use of accessories appeared in the same issue.

If controlled lighting, graceful posing, and tasteful use of accessories were the first requirements of the artistic portrait, it was composition, or "managing the lines" to use the nineteenth century term, that gave the portrait its final form. In one sense, the goal of creating a unified and balanced harmony among picture elements was quite straightforward as there were but a limited number of classical arrangements the photographer could impose on his subjects. Chief among these strategies were angular, linear, pyramidal and circular compositions. The academic rules and principles Wilson provided to his readers were the same as those advocated by Henry Peach Robinson in his landmark 1869 book, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*. Robinson and Wilson were influenced by the writings of English art critic John Ruskin who advocated that art was a universal language, and especially by John Burnet, a Scotsman first trained as an engraver to copy Old Masters paintings. A minor painter, Burnet found his real success as an art historian and theoretician. Wilson believed the aspiring artist-photographer needed nothing beyond Burnet's essays

written before the advent of photography between 1822 and 1827. Over a 35 year period Wilson published eight multi-part series on how to achieve art in *The Philadelphia Photographer* but freely acknowledged there was little new information being presented in each. His faith in the eternal principles borrowed from painting never faltered, leading him to publish an American edition of *Pictorial Effect* in 1881 and to compile and reprint Burnet's essays almost seven decades after their initial publication.

Top: William Notman, "Cabinet Portrait," *Philadelphia Photographer* 4, no. 37 (January 1867). One of Notman's first efforts with the new cabinet card format, it demonstrates pyramidal composition, said to be especially appropriate for single figures, particularly ladies. Bottom: Pyramidal Composition, illustration from "Art Principles Applicable to Photography," *Philadelphia Photographer* 5, no. 53 (May 1868): 165.

Robinson & Cherrill, "Cabinet Genre Picture—The Little Flower Girl," *Philadelphia Photographer* 6, no. 68 (August 1869). Held up as a model for American photographers to emulate, English photographer and art theoretician Henry Peach Robinson sought to elevate photography to high art by borrowing painterly themes and forms.

All that remained to complete the artistic portrait was for photographers to secure from their subjects a meaningful expression that conveyed a distinct sentiment or revealed a unique personality. It was considered the photographer's responsibility to draw out such expression more than it was the subject's responsibility to project it. Compositional forms could be illustrated and taught, but the ability to secure expression was a vague concept. As Wilson once commented: "To make a face speak…the peculiar character of the individual, the disposition of the mind, must mirror itself in the countenance. This is what we call expression in portraiture, and the photographer who possesses the genius to call forth these feelings . . . is entitled to the name of artist." (*PP* 1884, p. 346) One can understand the difficulty the humble photographers encountered with the uncertain notions of genius and taste. Some were forthright about the problem. At an NPA convention in 1873 W. J. Baker demonstrated his methods of lighting the sitter and began with this disclaimer: "In the first place, it is of utmost difficulty to convey artistic ideas of any kind. They are intangible, easily elude the grasp, and always evade the attempt to reduce them to anything more than a generalization . . . Art teachings lack the element of certainty that those of science have. Instead of *facts* we have *taste* as the basis of judgment." (*PP* 1873, p. 394) Unfortunately, as noted in an article titled "Pleasing Portraits," "the immovable and very often constrained position of the sitter has a tendency to render the expression of the face dull and unnatural." (*PP* 1869, p. 399)

The question of expression expanded the requisites for art beyond the form of the picture. In the previous understanding, the photographer had to be an artist to capture the individuality of the subject. In another understanding, however, the artist-photographer was called upon to express his own feelings and ideas. Many authors tried to educate the humble photographers how this could be so when the photograph was so mechanical in origin and so literal in transcribing the world. In the first place, managing the lines was integral to expression; for example the vertical expressed dignity or the horizontal suggested calm. More generally, photographers were told to "study," that is, become more broadly cultured by examining painting, literature, history and nature itself. G. Frank Pearsall, a photographer in Jeremiah Gurney's gallery and later an independent photographer in Brooklyn, could have been one adding to the confusion when he described his 1873 *Philadelphia Photographer* frontispiece and emphasized the need to portray feeling, sentiment, and passion: "This [picture] is the result of my art education. It is . . . what I willed the chemicals and camera to produce for me . . . an embodiment of not only the outward form of nature, but the lady's soul, intelligence, and refinement. . . . Art is the power of seeing nature as it appears to be, not as it absolutely is." (*PP* 1873, p. 340)

G. Frank Pearsall, "Cabinet Portrait," *Philadelphia Photographer* 10, no. 117 (September 1873). Praised for its individual treatment and expression, the photographer said, "it is what I willed the chemicals and camera to produce for me."

While Wilson was also guilty of confusing the issue at times, he nevertheless offered photographers concrete guidance. He began the first of a 6-part series titled "Art Studies for All" with the rhetorical question, "What is Art," and responded simply, "anything which admits the expression of an idea, or sentiment, or the telling of a story is an art." (*PP* 1873, p. 40) One literal application of the concept was for the photographer to create genre pictures. We understand genre to be a portrayal of everyday life, often a re-creation of a domestic scene using costumed figures and a constructed environment, the picture's narrative content being more important than representing individual personalities. It seems most of the humble photographers did not completely understand the concept. Knowing at the least that the term connoted art, they began calling their routine pictures "genre portraits." George Ayers, a painter, colorist and author of *How to Paint Photographs*, was exasperated that its use by photographers "exceeds almost everything else in misapprehension." (*PP* 1873, p. 115) In a striking example of the confusion, *The Philadelphia Photographer* in 1870 sponsored a competition where photographers were invited to submit entries in one of three categories: landscape, portraiture, or genre. Photographers failed to indicate in which category they were submitting their pictures and the three judges, unable to tell whether entries were portrait or genre examples, had to put all photographs with a human subject together and judge them as a single category. Perhaps the confusion was understandable since the ordinary portrait with its backdrops and accessories was itself a construction meant to recreate a home or rustic environment.

A. J. Fox, "Cabinet Genre Picture—The May Queen," *Philadelphia Photographer* 6, no. 65 (May 1869). Photographers were encouraged to create pictures such as this one to elevate the art of photography.

Still, the language of the day at least provides us with clues to photographers' intent: *likeness* signaled the common understanding of the portrait as an accurate depiction of an indi-

vidual produced for a client, while *picture* indicated the image had higher aspirations to be considered art and represented the conceptions of the photographer. "Composition picture" represented a similar strategy to genre but was a more inclusive term. Also called a "subject picture" on occasion and not limited to portraying domestic life, it was just as likely to depict a literary or historical character. Henry Peach Robinson provided American photographers with the model for this approach. In using his photograph "The Little Flower Girl" as an 1869 frontispiece, Wilson drew this distinction: "[Mr. Robinson] has produced a *picture* not simply a portrait. Aimed to meet the painter on his own ground, he has selected and combined the materials presented by nature, so as to exercise something of the creative power in producing a pictorial composition which should tell its story without the need for explanation." (*PP* 1869, p. 253) American photographers only occasionally followed Robinson's lead. Preoccupied by the business of photography, they produced portraits of individual patrons rather than artistic pictures intended for a general audience.

The related themes of advancing art and advancing prices continued through the 1870s. Despite the many challenges to photographers and despite the cheap johns simply ignoring rebukes to raise the quality of their productions, there were modest signs art was gradually improving. At the time of publishing its one hundredth issue in 1872, *The Philadelphia Photographer* was praised by *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* as responsible for having photography increasingly recognized by the public as a fine art. The quality of work at the exhibition that accompanied each annual convention of the NPA improved from year to year and the organization was acknowledged as having heightened the awareness of artistic issues. Even so, it did not seem to have the promised results of making common photographers more prosperous. The situation also revealed different motives for pursuing art. While the humble photographers looked for an immediate, tangible result in profits, the elite were more generally concerned with having photography recognized as a fine art. One frustrated photographer pleaded at the 1885 PAA convention: "Let our great men, our journals, merchants and associations stop talking about art culture and try to remove the disease [of low prices] that is sapping the very roots and foundation of our art." (*PM* 1885, p. 73) The counter-argument that art status would generate greater respect and eventually allow professionals to charge higher prices seemed far in the future.

It was a vicious circle as the overwhelming opinion expressed by photographers was that the public continued to hold their profession in low esteem. The cause was low prices. With tintypes available for as little as 25 cents per dozen, it implied that a photographer's time, skill and culture were also of little value. Frequent appeals to uphold the dignity of the medium were attempts to change the perception of someone being "only a photographer." Wilson tried to educate the public through pamphlets such as "The Photographer To His Patrons," first issued in 1871. To be distributed by photographers as advertising, it contained advice on what to wear and how to behave for a portrait, but also averred that photographers were professionals, and like ministers, physicians and lawyers they deserved respect and cooperation because of their skills, taste and training. Still, competition remained so intense and prices so low that one photographer wryly noted, "we need to be defended from ourselves."

F. W. Guerin, "The Emulsion Prize Portrait," *Philadelphia Photographer* 18, no. 216 (December 1881). The first frontispiece from a gelatin dry plate negative to appear in *The Philadelphia Photographer* and a winning entry in a competition designed to stimulate interest in the new technology, it demonstrated the potential for more natural posing with "instantaneous" exposures.

By the end of the 1870s a growing chorus of photographers appealed for the NPA to be resuscitated. Although the depression was waning, photographers were so mired in the dilemma of low prices they were desperate for relief. At the same time, interest in dry plates was accelerating. Many versions had been tested but all were too slow for portraiture. It was not until faster gelatin bromide plates appeared that professionals considered abandoning collodion. With the stimulus of a new technology, the Chicago Photographic Association ventured to call the first national meeting since the Centennial. Avoiding the controversies of the past, they announced that a totally new organization, The Photographers' Association of America, would be managed by photographers, not manufacturers or publishers, and would hold its inaugural convention in August, 1880. As eager as photographers were to see an end to the

"obstreperous manipulations" of collodion, they did not anticipate that the dry plate would attract even more individuals into the profession. A Rhode Island photographer commented: "The introduction of gelatin plates has so simplified photography that every civilized community is overwhelmed with photographers." (*PM* 1887, p. 103) Amateurs too, now had direct access to the medium. Many feared they would depress business even further. On the other hand, Bogardus enumerated common amateur mistakes and concluded: "These failures show the amateur that making a good photograph is a work requiring care, skill, judgement, knowledge, taste and experience. They now appreciate a good picture because they know the difficulties in making it." (*PM* 1885, p. 44) Still, dignity suffered another blow when amateur camera outfits were available for as little as $10, and the public had even less reason to respect the professional.

As the pace of the medium's expansion accelerated, so too did the tempo of complaints about low prices. Suggestions on how to combat the problem now added restricting technical instruction to a secret brotherhood; establishing an "art-censor" for each state who would classify a gallery's work and settle disputes over the value of pictures; encouraging each gallery to offer different tiers of quality and corresponding prices; and creating a price-fixing union with the stock dealers. A more pragmatic idea came from a Kansas photographer who advised: "If business happens to be dull, keep out of sight of folks. When they ask, 'How's business,' say 'It's pretty brisk right now,' and hurry off with some remark to the effect that time is money. In this way you make a good impression." (*PM* 1886, p. 55) A few even advocated making tintypes: "People *will* have them, and we may as well make them and get all we can out of them." (*PM* 1884, p. 64) The most radical idea came from E. K. Hough, author of the "Photographic Rights" essays. He urged groups of photographers to form cooperatives. Not only would overhead be reduced, but the diverse roles required in photography—business manager, positionist, chemical manager and printer—could each be undertaken by a specialist.

With the rise of the dry plate, the price debate subtly shifted from *low* prices to price-*cutting*. The different framing reflected the fact that even first-class galleries were now being forced to drop prices. The most publicized case occurred in Baltimore. David Bachrach and the accused cheap john, R. Walzl, flooded the journals with accusations and denials, with affidavits and with published advertisements submitted as evidence. Walzl claimed he had written proof that Bachrach had threatened to assassinate him. Walzl had purchased the two most luxurious galleries in the city and commenced an advertising blitz offering the highest quality cabinet cards, made by the new "instantaneous" process, at just $3 per dozen. This compared to the $9 first class galleries were charging. Within a year's time all but three of the city's forty galleries had matched Walzl's price, at which time he cut it again, to $1.50. Dubbed "the Baltimore Price War," the practice spread to New York, Boston, Kansas City, and Chicago.

The U.S. economy suffered another depression in 1884. While neither as long nor as severe as the previous one, it made an acute situation worse. That year, Wilson toured galleries and reported that he had had no idea of just how despondent photographers were. He solicited price scales and ideas and published them as a regular column titled "A Discussion on Prices To Be Continued Until There is Resolution." *The St. Louis Photographer*, now re-titled and edited by Mrs. Fitzgibbon after the sudden death of her husband in 1881, followed suit with a monthly article on prices. It declared that a "movement" was underway. By the time of the 1884 PAA convention, Wilson compiled the price lists into a new pamphlet titled "A Quiet Chat on Prices." It explained to the public that photographs were better and more expensive to make than before. It pointed out that sitters were now treated with individualized poses and with more harmonious and costly studio accessories. Negatives were more expertly retouched, prints had an expensive burnished finish, and there were hundreds of choices of tasteful mounts available. In a word, photographs were more artistic than before and higher prices were justified. Even though pressure was building, the discussion at the1884 PAA convention degenerated into a verbal brawl that only exacerbated tensions among photographers. It became so dysfunctional that afterward Wilson pleaded, would "the price cranks just shut up at the conventions." (*PM* 1884, p. 9)

Wilson was not alone in feeling frustrated that all the noble efforts to raise prices had failed to achieve the desired end. Signs of resignation appeared in the photographic press beginning in the early 1880's. The *St. Louis Photographer* admitted that the movement had failed, that the PAA was powerless to coerce all photographers to raise prices, and that ten years of effort had produced few positive results. Photographers themselves finally dared to admit that neither the professional organizations nor their price-fixing schemes could alter the economics of competition. Ironically, it was an amateur who offered one of the most definitive statements about the obvious. In *Photographic Mosaics* for 1885 W. R. Trippe wrote: "It seems as if photographers, in their natural desire to raise prices, have lost sight of the fact that prices are subject to the natural law of supply and demand, and that any attempt to override this law will not only be futile, but as involving a waste of energy and strength, foolish. . . . Certainly no resolutions of conventions; no schedule of prices, certified by the 'leading photographers' as the lowest at which good photographs can be made; no denunciations of the 'cheap johns,' can alter this." (*PM* 1885, pp. 65-66)

Just as the dry plate and hordes of new photographers precipitated the most devastating of the price cuts, the rising number of amateurs also wrested from professionals the pursuit of art. Not burdened by having to cater to clients, they were free to pursue photography as self-expression and take far greater risks with photographic form. Even the casual "Kodakers" influenced professional portraiture. With amateurs taking pictures in their own intimate home settings, some professionals were

spurred to do away with the artificiality of painted back-drops and papier-mâché props. Instead, they adopted a spare, low-key style that positioned their softly focused and illuminated subjects against a plain background. Many thought the less sophisticated clientele of the country photographers would continue to demand the old style of portraiture and only the most advanced urban photographers would prosper with the new, modern style. Rather than pursuing contrived illustrations to poems or operas or literature, photographers were prodded to return to simple portraiture, now referred to as "everyday work." With portraiture less in demand, they were encouraged to enter specialized areas outside the amateur realm. Photomechanical printing, advertising and product photography were among the new opportunities for the professional to grow his business. For all practical purposes, the changes amounted to a surrender of two decades of efforts to simultaneously advance the art and business of photography.

ABBREVIATIONS:

NPA - The National Photographic Association

PAA - The Photographers Association of America

PM - Photographic Mosaics: An Annual Record of Photographic Progress. Philadelphia: Benerman & Wilson, 1866-77; Philadelphia: Edward L. Wilson, 1878-87; New York, 1888-1903.

PP - The Philadelphia Photographer. Philadelphia: Benerman & Wilson, 1864-September 1877; Philadelphia: Edward L. Wilson, October 1877-1888. Retitled: *Wilson's Photographic Magazine*. New York, 1889-1914.

PT - Photographic Times. New York: Scovill Manufacturing Co., 1871-88; New York: Photographic Times Publishing Association, 1889-1915.

SLPP - St. Louis Practical Photographer. St. Louis: John H. Fitzgibbon, 1878-1905. Re-titled: *St. Louis Photographer*, 1883-87, and *St. Louis and Canadian Practical Photographer*, 1888-1905.

James S. Jensen is a professor in the Department of Fine Arts at Loyola University, Chicago where he teaches the practice and history of photography. He has published a monograph on Illinois photographer W. E. Bowman and articles on vernacular photography and on the career of Edward L. Wilson. Jim's article on the "History of the National Photographic Association," was published in *The Photogram* (November-December 2004). He most recently presented a lecture for the members of MiPHS in 2005, entitled: "Of One Cloth: The Business, Science and Art of Nineteenth-Century Photography." All illustrations in this article are from his collection.

PHOTO-HISTORY CALENDAR

EXHIBITIONS

February 1-June 17: "Working America: Photographs from the Ewing Galloway Agency, 1910-1950," Michigan Historical Museum, 702 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI, www.michigan.gov/museum

March 4-May 27: "Ansel Adams," Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI, www.dia.org

March 23 - April 6: "Cheap Shots," Krappy Kamera Club, Gallery 4, 212 Nichols Arcade, Ann Arbor, MI, www.mattcallow.com/cheapshots.html

June 9-December 30: "Developing Greatness: The Origins of American Photography, 1839-1885," Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, KS, www.nelson-atkins.org

LECTURES, SYMPOSIA & TRADE SHOWS

April 1: Michigan Antiquarian Book & Paper Show, Lansing Center, Lansing, MI, www.curiousbooks.com

April 1: Boston Antique Photo Show, Westford Regency Hotel, Westford, MA, www.stereoview.com

April 12-15: Association of International Photography Art Dealers, Photography Show, 7th Regiment Armory, NYC, www.aipad.com

April 14: Postcard & Paper Show, Southwest Michigan Postcard Club, Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds, 2900 Lake St., Kalamazoo, MI, postcardwally@comcast.net

April 15: MPM All Image Show, Emeryville Courtyard Marriott, Emeryville, CA www.mpmpresents.com

May 6: Ann Arbor Antiquarian Book Fair, Michigan Union, 530 S. State (S. State & S. University), 11AM-5PM, Ann Arbor, MI

May 6: International Camera & Image Show & Sale, Chicago Photographic Collectors Society, Holiday Inn, Rolling Meadows, IL, www.chicagophotographic.com

May 13: London Photograph Fair, Bonnington Hotel, London, www.photofair.co.uk

May 17: **MiPHS & GRAPHIC ARTS COUNCIL** – Lecture: Chris Mahoney, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI, www.dia.org

May 19: Postcard & Paper Show, West Michigan Postcard Club, Kuyper College Student Center Gymnasium, 3333 E. Beltline Rd., Grand Rapids, MI, postcardwally@comcast.net

May 25-27: Ohio Camera Collectors Society, Trade Fair & Auction, Radisson Hotel Columbus-Worthington, Worthington, OH, www.historiccamera.com

May 27: Photographic Historical Society of Canada, Photographica Fair, Soccer Centre, Woodbridge (Toronto), Ontario, Canada, www.phsc.ca

June 30: Postcard & Paper Show, Cobblestone Events Center, 205Mason St., Mason, MI, postcardwally@comcast.net

October 14: **MiPHS** – Annual Photographica Show & Sale, Novi Community Center, Novi, MI 10:00AM-4:00PM

November 1-4: Daguerreian Society Symposium & Trade Fair, Kansas City, MO, www.daguerre.org

Doug Aikenhead (left), and Mark O'Brien and Dick Vanderburg (right) at the John Naslanic Estate Sale and Auction.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

March came in like a lion for MiPHS. We ran an estate sale for the Naslanic family at charter member John Naslanic's house. It was a Herculean task, even after the family went through the house and removed the non-photographic items.

Then MiPHS stepped in and helped with the technical items. There were lots of interesting tidbits, like one volunteer going through a closet yelling, "Bingo!" over and over when he found something wonderful. A lot of head shaking by everyone went on over the quantity and variety of items. One person described it as "shock and awe." Another said they never thought that they would ever see that variety of cameras in one place, let alone be able to handle them. We had an image collector who loved to sort. Well, sort he did, cameras, camera toys and more cameras, up and down the stairs. People were working in teams with their heads in McKeown's and McBroom's to price the items so they would move out the door.

We were there to make everyone happy, members AND family! So here's a ***MAJOR*** thank you to all the volunteers who came and experienced the enormity of the task. All I can say is, please everyone, if you care about your "stuff," make sure a family member is aware of its value. We were very lucky that John's family wasn't overwhelmed by the prospect of disposing of his collection. It would have been a lot easier for them to just throw it all away. We thank them for allowing us to sell it to members. Myself, I came away with a better understanding about John Naslanic, a Battle of the Bulge survivor, and all that he knew. I wish he had written more of it down. But such is life, eh?

The one conversation that surfaced through all of the volunteers talking together was the evolution taking place in the photographic collectible market. The age of cameras seems to have taken a back seat to images, even though the high end items of each will never go out of fashion. In addition, it has become harder to find photographic materials at estate sales and flea markets. The mass quantities of snapshots produced years ago have ceased. Who is saving their camera phone images? And do you have images on computer discs? Have you printed much of it out on archival paper? The age of getting your photos back from the photo lab is for the most part gone. So we talked about starting a small informal snapshot trading group. Because when you go through a large box of snaps, you can hunt for someone else and trade for what you'd like. So one person collects pictures of Christmas trees, another collects shots of people with pets. I like photos with goofy back drops, odd props and silly behavior. So if you're interested in getting together to do such a thing, let me know (motz48073@yahoo.com or 248.549.6026) We're leaning toward Friday evenings to meet. There are at least five people interested. I'll keep you posted.

Cindy Motzenbecker