

IMAGE

Journal of Photography of the George Eastman House

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A DAGUERREOTYPE BY DAGUERRE. This portrait of an unknown painter in the George Eastman House Collection is signed by Daguerre. He scratched his name in the lower left hand corner of the silvered-copper plate. In this reproduction the signature is invisible, because reflections must be eliminated to make a good copy of a daguerreotype. See next page for photograph specially lighted to bring out the signature. No other example of a plate signed by Daguerre is known.

FIVE DAGUERREOTYPES BY DAGUERRE

AMONG THE DAGUERREOTYPES in the rich collection of the late Gabriel Cromer, now in the George Eastman House, is a portrait of a painter. Although the identity of the sitter is not known, the daguerreotype is of unusual value, because scratched into the surface of the silver plate is the signature "Daguerre."

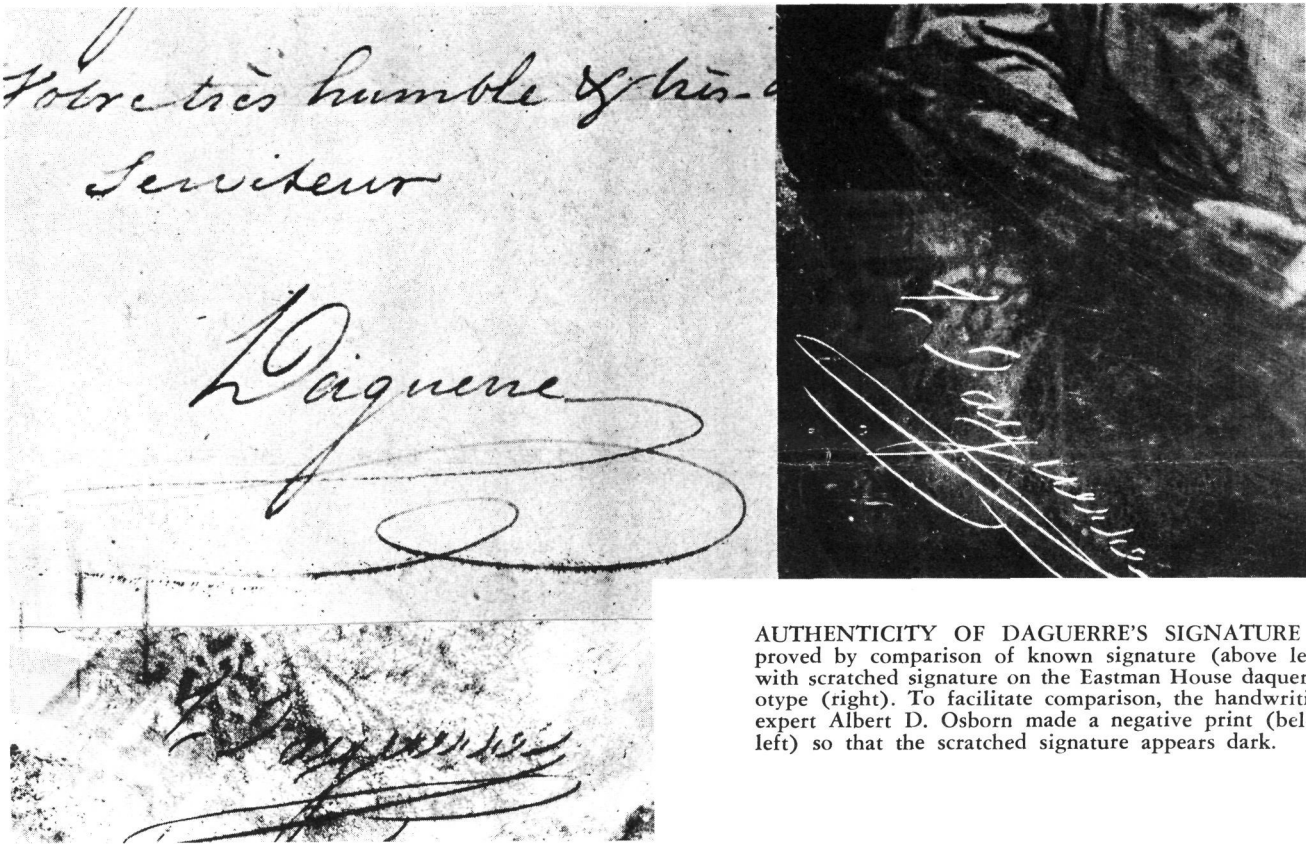
Daguerreotypes by Daguerre are rare, and ours is the only one in the United States. Furthermore it is the only known plate actually signed by the inventor. The scratched signature is almost invisible when the daguerreotype is properly lighted so that it is seen as a positive, but viewed by glancing light the name is clear and distinct. An enlarged photograph of the signature was sent to the well-known handwriting expert, Albert O. Osborn. On comparing it with other, known signatures of Daguerre's, Mr. Osborn came to the conclusion that it was unquestionably authentic.

Some years after Daguerre's death in 1851, the daguerreotype, which measures 2 1/4 x 4 3/16 inches, was put into a plastic or "Union" case of the type made in America in the late 1850's. Nothing is known of its earlier history.

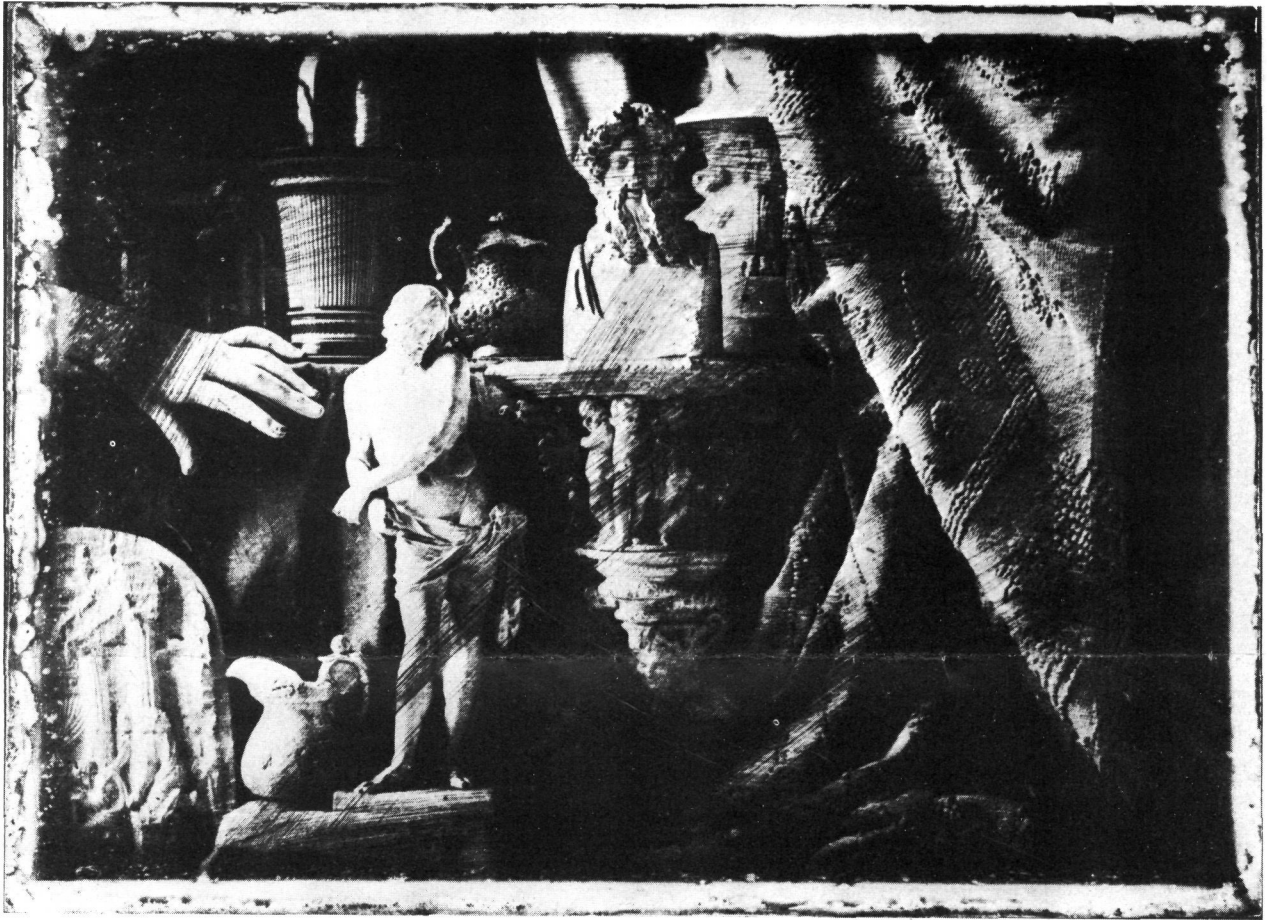
Of Daguerre's few other daguerreotypes, the most famous is the one described by Samuel F. B. Morse in the spring of 1839. It is a view of a Paris boulevard taken,

quite probably, from Daguerre's studio. The exposure was measured in minutes, and as a result moving traffic does not appear. The images of passing vehicles and pedestrians did not lay long enough on the plate to affect it. But by chance a passerby stopped to have his shoes shined, and, all unwittingly, stood immobile while his image was recorded on the plate. This daguerreotype is the first photograph of a living person. It was presented by Daguerre to the King of Bavaria in 1839, found its way into the Bavarian National Museum in Munich, and perished in a bombing raid during the last war. Fortunately a photographic copy of it was taken just before it perished.* Two other daguerreotypes were in the Munich museum: a similar street scene (without the bootblack), and a pair of plaster casts. The French Society of Photography owns the earliest of Daguerre's pictures in existence: a view said to date from 1837 of statues and bric a brac in his studio, and a number of later pictures. The Technische Hochschule in Berlin possessed a view of the Palais Royale, and in the Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers in Paris is a beautiful view of the Tuileries looking across the Seine River, a still life of Daguerre's studio, and a study of fossils.

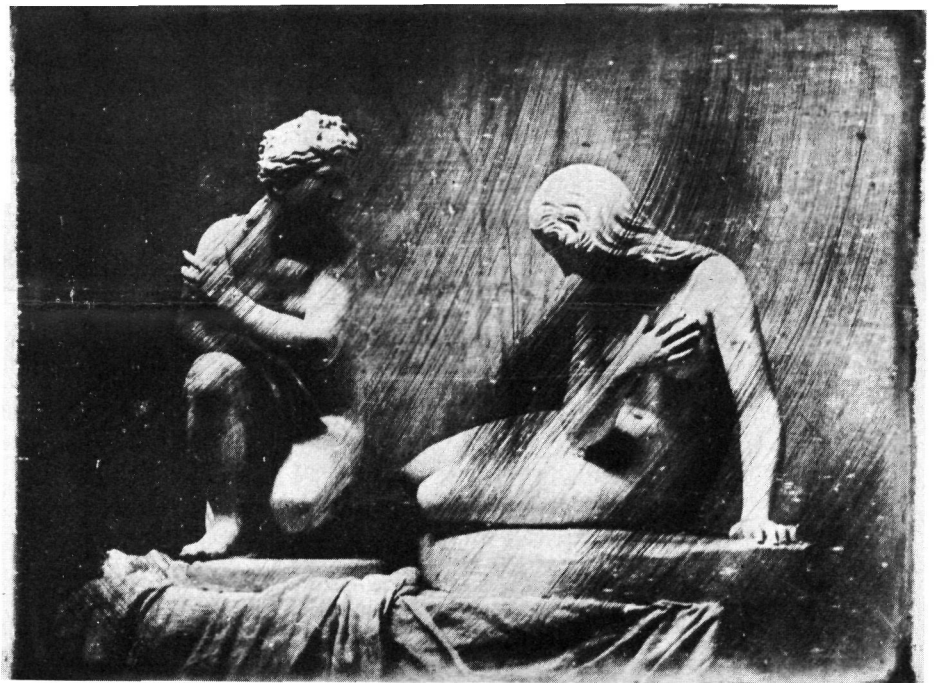
*Reproduced in B. Newhall, *The History of Photography* (New York, 1949) p. 21.



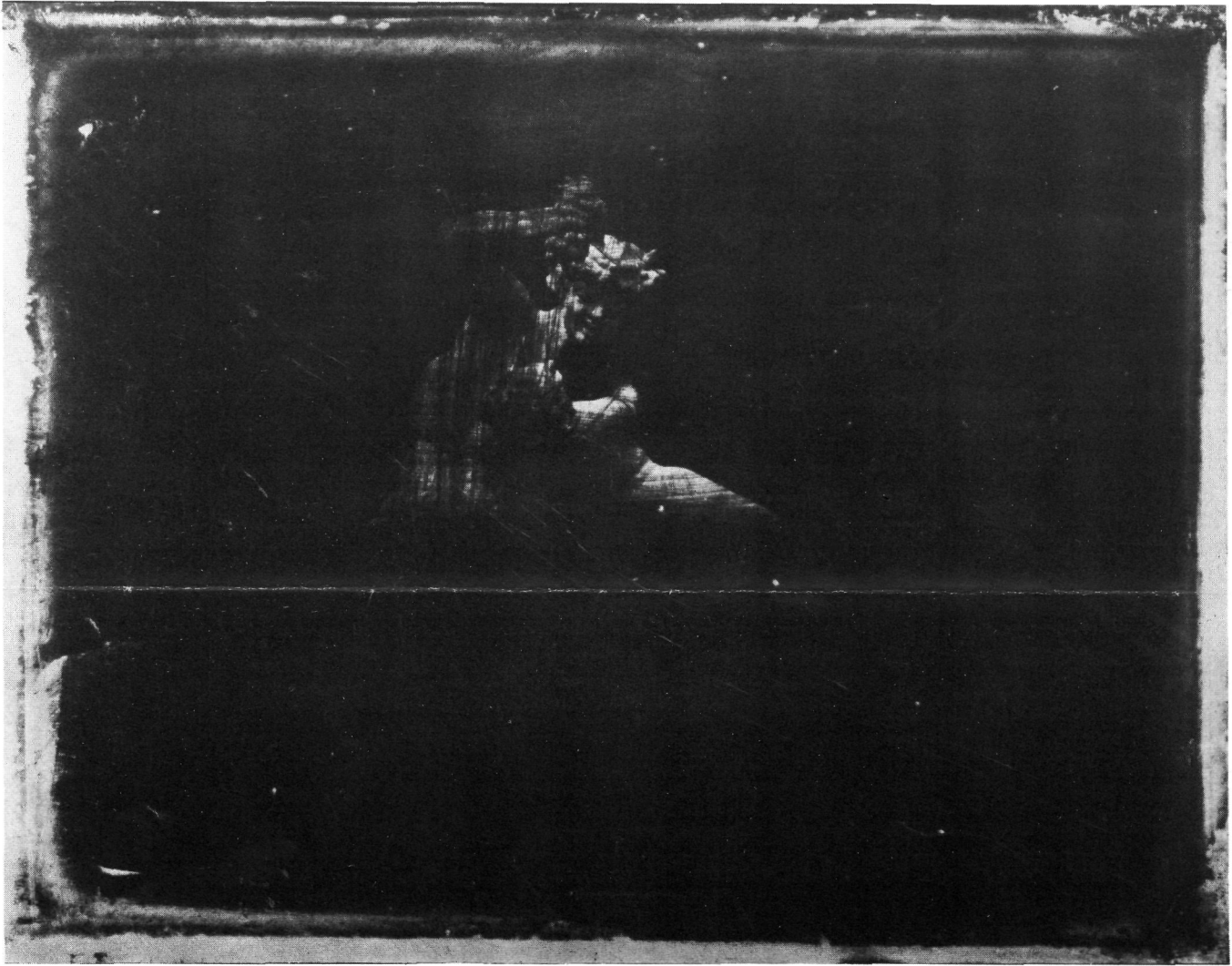
AUTHENTICITY OF DAGUERRE'S SIGNATURE is proved by comparison of known signature (above left) with scratched signature on the Eastman House daguerreotype (right). To facilitate comparison, the handwriting expert Albert D. Osborn made a negative print (below left) so that the scratched signature appears dark.



DAGUERRE: Still life, 1839. Daguerreotype: 5 7/8 x 8 1/4 ins. Collection Perpignan Museum.



DAGUERRE: Statues of crouching Venus and a female model, 1839. Daguerreotype: 4 3/4 x 5 15/16 ins. Collection Perpignan Museum.



DAGUERRE: Statue of Bacchus, 1839. Daguerreotype: 4 3/4 x 5 15/16 ins. Collection Perpignan Museum.,

Recently four more daguerreotypes by Daguerre have turned up in France. They were presented to the Perpignan Museum by Dominique-Francois Arago (1776-1883), the famous French scientist who championed Daguerre. When Daguerre had perfected the process which he invented with Nicéphore Niepce, Arago was perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences and also a member of the Chamber of Deputies for the Lower Seine. He was so impressed by Daguerre's invention that he lectured on it at the Academy of Sciences meeting of January 1, 1839. Arago suggested that the French Government purchase Daguerre's still secret invention and present it to the world. This was done, and Daguerre was awarded an annuity for life. On the 19th of August at a public meeting of the Academy of Sciences, Arago made public Daguerre's secret.

On the back of each of the Perpignan daguerreotypes is written in French: "Picture which served to prove the dis-

covery of the Daguerreotype, given to M. Arago by his very humble servant [signed] Daguerre."

The pictures, which are reproduced herewith, are similar to Daguerre's other daguerreotypes. There is a street scene, a still life, and two studies of statues.

The published descriptions of the daguerreotype process, which appeared shortly after the disclosure, all specify the use of plates 6 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches, a size which became classic as the "whole plate." The fact that these daguerreotypes differ from this size may indicate that they are early experiments.

Through the cooperation of the Perpignan Museum, *Image* is privileged to publish these rare daguerreotypes for the first time since they were given to the museum by Arago in 1841.

BEAUMONT NEWHALL



DAGUERRE: View of Paris, 1839. Daguerreotype: 4 3/4 x 5 15/16 ins. Collection Perpignan Museum.

EARLY LANDSCAPE LENSES

By RUDOLF KINGSLAKE

IN A PREVIOUS note to *Image* we referred to the single landscape lens of Wollaston (Fig. 1) and the achromat of Chevalier (Fig. 2). Landscape lenses have always been

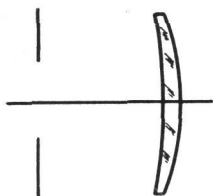


FIG. 1

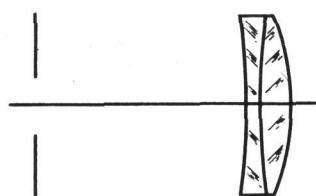


FIG. 2

popular with photographers because of their simplicity and the small number of glass-air surfaces which, in the days before lens coating, resulted in a clean and contrasty image. However, they were always limited to an aperture of about

$f/15$ and covered a field of $\pm 25^\circ$. A further limitation was the distortion which is inevitable in a system of this frankly unsymmetrical type.

Opticians fully recognized and generally accepted the advantages and the shortcomings of landscape lenses; nevertheless a few attempts were made to improve the situation. Thomas Grubb, who referred to himself as "Engineer, of Dublin, Ireland" took out British Patent No. 2574 in 1857 for a so-called "Aplanatic" landscape lens with a reversed sequence of crown and flint glasses (Fig. 3), this name

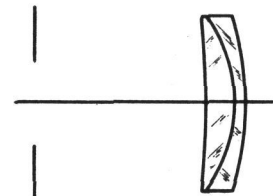
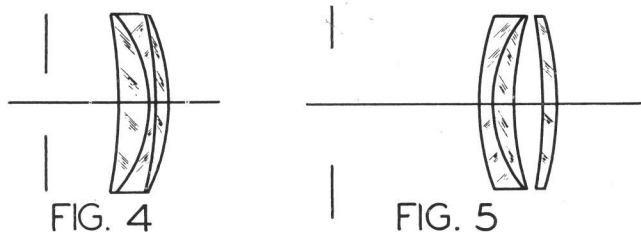


FIG. 3

having been coined by Sir John Herschel to indicate freedom from spherical aberration. Grubb's lens data are not available to verify his claim, but by making reasonable assumptions, it appears that the spherical aberration was only about a third of that in a comparable Chevalier lens. Now simple theory indicates that any significant reduction in spherical aberration must inevitably lead to large coma residuals or to an impossibly great stop distance. In practice Grubb's lens was but little used.

A more significant improvement was the invention of a cemented triple landscape lens by J. H. Dallmeyer of London, shown in British Patent 2539 of 1864 (Fig. 4).



This lens was named the "Rapid Landscape Lens" since its maximum aperture was $f/11$, or sometimes the "Patent Landscape Lens." The inventor's claims were directed towards a greatly improved angular field ($\pm 34^\circ$), due to the improved correction for coma and a much reduced stop distance. Subsequently Goerz designed a similar lens working at $f/15$, Simon one at $f/10$, Ross another working at $f/16$, and other opticians also followed suit. The Dallmeyer lens was still being sold during the early years of the present century.

Because of the distortion of landscape lenses, opticians were forced to adopt much more complicated types of construction when making lenses for architectural or copying purposes. However, in 1888 T. R. Dallmeyer, son of J. H. Dallmeyer, found that the distortion and chromatic aberrations of a single Wollaston landscape lens could be removed by the addition of a thin cemented doublet lens of low power mounted immediately in front of the landscape lens. The new objective was marketed under the name of Rectilinear Landscape lens (Fig. 5). A similar idea had been suggested tentatively by J. T. Goddard thirty years before, but he made only one example of his lens, which came into the hands of J. Traill Taylor and was described by the latter in one of his sprightly articles on lenses in the *British Journal of Photography*. The Rectilinear Landscape lens in the George Eastman House collection has a focal length of $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches and an aperture of $f/11$. It covers a semifield of about 24° with the usual inward-curving field of those times, but the definition in the curved field is excellent. The added doublet lens has enough positive power to reduce the focal length of the rear lens from $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Traill Taylor suggested that Dallmeyer probably arrived at this interesting design by separating off the front two lenses of his Rapid Landscape lens and turning them around, although Dallmeyer makes no reference to this in his British patent (No. 1583 of 1888), and the available

numerical data on the two lenses fail to bear it out.

The only type of landscape lens to survive today is the single lens of Wollaston, which is manufactured by millions every year and fitted to simple box cameras. The Wollaston lens is thus by all odds the most popular photographic lens ever made, and it was also the first lens to be actually designed.

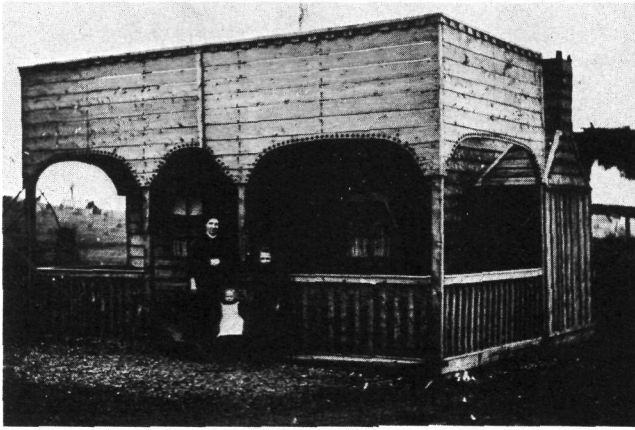
AUSTRALIA'S HOLTERMANN COLLECTION OF WET PLATE NEGATIVES

LATE IN 1951 members of the *Australasian Photo-Review* editorial staff and the grandson of Bernard Otto Holtermann made a dramatic discovery. They found in an old shed in North Sydney 2,000 Carte-de-Visite sized negatives, about 100 stereos, over 600 views on 10×12 inch formats and over 75 on still larger sizes including the world's largest wet plate negative, 4 feet 6 inches by 3 feet 2 inches. The latter was found intact!



THE ORIGINAL CARTES-DE-VISITE were made by Beaufoy Merlin in 1872 in the Australian goldfields of New South Wales. Modern prints by the *Australasian Photo-Review* from the original negative in the B. O. Holtermann collection.

The two photographers who made these negatives were Beaufoy Merlin and Charles Bayliss. The nugget of the collection is the documentation of the two gold mining towns of Hill End and Gulgong in New South Wales which were recorded "with a completeness that must be seen to be believed." But let the editor of the *Australasian Photo-Review*, Mr. Keast Burke, who brought these important pictures to public attention in a series of liberally



BY BEAUFOY MERLIN in 1872 in the Australian goldfields.

illustrated articles in his magazine during 1952-54, brief us on the story.

"Beaufoy Merlin (1830-1873) was a traveling professional photographer of the period with an ambition to photograph every home and every business premises in Australia. When he had completed some 17,000 negatives in this prodigious assignment, his coverage had reached as far as the booming goldfields town of Hill End (in New South Wales). Here he made the acquaintance of a wealthy German miner, by name Bernard Otto Holtermann. Between them they evolved a new project—Merlin was to become Holtermann's personal photographer and was pictorially to record, for eventual exhibition abroad, the great progress which New South Wales and Victoria had made over the previous two decades. In pursuance of this task, Merlin had completed some four hundred negatives (of Sydney and of the principle N.S.W. towns) when he was stricken by the hand of death. His young assistant, Charles Bayliss, carried on with the project and exposed several hundred negatives of important centers in Victoria. He also made the largest negatives ever made on wet plates—these were the famous 'Shore Tower' giant panorams of Sydney Harbour. The resulting contact prints were displayed at the Philadelphia Exhibition (1876) and the Paris Exposition (1878). They were also displayed at Hamburg with the idea of stimulating emigration to Australia."

Today the collection is in the custody of the Mitchell Library of Sydney.

The Holtermann collection is a rich find indeed, and for completeness may well be unique. It comprises the most complete documentation of early gold mining in existence, far outnumbering the daguerreotypes which were taken in the California gold rush.

MOVIE MUSEUM ON WHEELS

A REPRESENTATIVE selection of the George Eastman House collection of motion picture apparatus and still photographs was brought to a wide audience last Fall

through the cooperation of Loew's Theatres. A standard trailer-truck was converted to a traveling museum by the George Eastman House. Inside the trailer were fifty enlargements of motion picture stills from Thomas Edison's day to the present. Visitors could operate, by pressing buttons, three historic pieces of apparatus: a zoetrope, or whirling drum, for viewing drawings in motion; an original 1895 Lumière cinématographe; and an Edison Projecting Kinetoscope. The display also included a Gaumont color camera, a Debie camera of the type used for making newsreels in 1915, and the Cosmograph projector which George Eastman used in his home. A continuous slide projector showed color stills of current attractions, and a Mutoscope viewer, for viewing in motion photographs mounted radially on a drum, was set up for hand crank operation.



THE GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE MOBILE MUSEUM

The traveling museum was built for Loew's Theatres, to be used in connection with their Golden Jubilee. It was opened to the public in Times Square on October 5, 1954 by the Borough President of Manhattan. For several weeks it toured public schools in Greater New York and Newark. It then was shown in Cleveland, Akron, Canton, St. Louis, Toledo and Dayton.

In January the trailer was dismantled and the exhibits permanently installed in the Dryden Theatre of the George Eastman House.

IDENTIFICATION CORRECTIONS

The cover photograph of the December 1954 issue, Vol. III, No. 9, shows the U. S. Treasury Building. It was taken by the official photographer of the Office of the Architect of the Treasury, Lewis E. Walker, and is dated Sept. 16, 1861. Miss Josephine Cobb of the National Archives in Washington was the first to supply the correct information.

The cover photograph on the April issue, Vol. III, No. 4, has been identified as Saint Vulfran at Abbeville, France by William Oepp, assistant professor of Fine Arts at Ohio University. We sincerely thank our readers for their generous cooperation.

THE SCREEN'S FIRST TRAGEDIENNE: ASTA NIELSEN

The first motion picture players to gain world-wide attention were France's Max Linder, our Mary Pickford and the Danish actress, Asta Nielsen. Linder's first comedy was made in 1905; Mary Pickford started with Griffith in 1909 and Asta Nielsen's film debut in Copenhagen for Nordisk was in 1911.

The success of Max Linder and Mary Pickford was primarily dependent upon their personalities, vivid and striking enough to mark them apart from all the anonymous faces of the earliest films.

The contribution of Asta Nielsen to the art of acting was profound and lasting; she was the first great actress of the screen whose work commanded the same respect accorded to talented performers of the theatre.

Before the war, Asta Nielsen and her husband, the director Urban Gad, were making films in Germany. The first signs of maturity, the earliest examples of naturalistic acting had appeared in Danish films a good ten years before such qualities could be found in the primitive movies of the rest of the world. The Danish group in Berlin (directors Stellan Rye, Urban Gad, Alfred Lind and the players Viggo Larsen, Olaf Fonss along with Asta Nielsen) helped rescue the German film from the infantilism that marked its tardy beginnings.

In 1912 the Asta Nielsen pictures began to arrive in this country. Apparently *Gypsy Blood* (1911) was the first, and its Danish star was hailed as the "German Bernhardt."

The Girl Without a Fatherland (1912) was shown in the United States in 1914 under the title "A Romany Spy." It is significant that in this country, the Nielsen films of 1912 were being seen along with the best of Griffith in 1914. At this period in motion picture history, a difference of two years could be enormous. Yet the Nielsen films of 1912 were considered masterpieces by reviewers comparing them with the outstanding American productions of 1914.

In the *Moving Picture World* of March 12, 1914, W. Stephen Bush wrote of "A Romany Spy": "The part of the gypsy girl was taken by Asta Nielsen and it may safely be said that this gifted woman never played with more art. She portrays the awakening of love in a woman's heart with an inspiration which amounts to genius. This is indeed a masterpiece."

Earlier in 1914 Hanford Judson, in the *Moving Picture World*, reviewed *Behind Comedy's Mask* which had been made in 1913. Writing of Asta Nielsen's performance, Mr. Judson was almost moved to lyricism:

"Miss Nielsen has put the naturalness of truth into her



ASTA NIELSEN in "Dora Brandes" a German film of 1916.

picture . . . with one emotion in it opening the door to another. In her clown's queer dress she has not a whisper of direct help in her portrayal of her grief. Her dress and make-up are both against her; but as Asta Nielsen makes the grief-stricken mother rush from the theater to the bedside and pray in her agony, it is like a cry from the depths of the spirit. The impression rings true with no counter suggestions and is carried to us almost solely by facial expressions. Here is passion without the rags. There is no clawing of the air; but a soul being wound up on the wheel of pain before us."

Asta Nielsen has created about forty-five film roles; many of them are glowing performances that still illumine the motion picture's past. She appeared as Strindberg's Julie and Wedekind's Lulu. For the silent drama she acted the complex characters created by Stendhal and Ibsen. It is no accident that students seeing her early films are struck with their Garboesque quality for in Pabst's *Joyless Street*, Garbo's second film, the young Swedish actress shared honors with veteran Asta Nielsen whose films she had been admiring for ten years.

In many ways Asta Nielsen's performance as Hamlet is far more moving than that of Sir Lawrence Olivier. Even with the advantages of Shakespeare's verse, Olivier was far less a haunted and melancholy Dane than was Asta Nielsen in 1920.

* * *

Asta Nielsen films in the George Eastman House Study Collection: *The Black Dream* 1911 (Urban Gad), *Hamlet* 1920 (Svend Gade), *Poor Jenny* 1912 (Urban Gad), *Joyless Street* 1924 (G. W. Pabst), *The Great Moment* 1912 (Urban Gad), *Dirnentragoedie* 1927 (Bruno Rahn).

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