

“Daguerreotypes,” (James Pierpont, San Francisco) 9 July 1850

(keywords: James Lord Pierpont, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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Daily Alta California (San Francisco) 1:163 (9 July 1850): n.p. (second page of issue).

DAGUERREOTYPES.—On the sailing of every ocean steamer from this port the daguerreotypists are full of business, and Sol is constantly invoked to shed the light of his benign countenance upon deeds of friendship and affection. “Remembrancers” and “tokens” are in general requisition, and the art of copying by nature throws for the time being all efforts of the several excellent *artists* we have in our midst completely “in the shade;” literally “taken the shine” off their profession. Adventurers to California are *so* desirous to assure their friends at home of their perfect safety and welfare in this wonderful region, that nothing short of a picture of the “living reality” is deemed sufficient. Besides, it is more convenient than letter writing, in this land, where time is measured by golden sands. A superb daguerreotype was exhibited to us yesterday, from the rooms of Pierpont, in Clay street. We confess we have rarely seen really *good* pictures taken in this country. The difficulty of obtaining proper *chemicals* in a proper state here appears to have been obviated by the gentleman whose name we have mentioned. With new apparatus and fresh material he has taken the field, and aspires to *perfection* in the art as it exists elsewhere. From the specimen shown us we judge he is well prepared to do his profession an honor, and the requirements of Californians (always of the best to be had,) justice.

[End of text.]

EDITOR’S NOTES:

This text also appears in the “steamer edition” of *Alta California* (San Francisco) [no volume or issue number] “For Steamers Tennessee and Isthmus” (13 July 1850): n.p. (second page of issue).

Another text discussing Pierpont is “Daguerreotyping,” *Alta California* (San Francisco) 1:68 (19 March 1850): n.p. (second page of issue).¹

Advertisements by James Pierpont appear in the *Sacramento Transcript* from 11 July 1850 through 18 March 1851.² Pierpont apparently ceased his daguerreian activities after the destruction of his Clay street gallery in the 4 May 1851 fire. His loss was stated as \$500. See “Terrible Conflagration,” *Alta California* (San Francisco) “Northerner and New Orleans” steamer edition (15 May 1851): n.p.

After leaving California, Pierpont wrote and published the humorous song, “The Returned Californian,” which tells not of returning with riches, but tells of fleeing from the many creditors back in California.³

In August 1857, Pierpont wrote and published the song, “One Horse Open Sleigh.”⁴ Two years later it was re-released with the title “Jingle Bells, or The One Horse Open

Sleigh".⁵ An article regarding Pierpont was published by Margaret Hall in *Yankee Magazine* 1963 (or earlier). The present editor has yet to locate the article. Pierpont is reportedly buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia.⁶

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8500007_PIERPONT_DAC_1850-03-19.pdf
2. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/advert/N8500006_PIERPONT-AD_SAC-TRANSCR_1850-10-02.pdf
3. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/sm1852.501530>
4. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/sm1857.620520>
5. http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Biographies/james_lord_pierpont.htm
6. John Walker Guss, *Savannah's Laurel Grove Cemetery* (Charleston: Arcadia, 2004)

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