

“The Daguerreotype,” (Vance & Lerow) 6 February 1846

(keywords: Robert H. Vance, John A. Lerow, 91 Washington Street, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

THE DAGUERREOTYPE: AN ARCHIVE OF SOURCE TEXTS, GRAPHICS, AND EPHEMERA

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Christian Watchman (Boston) 27:6 (6 February 1846): 24.

For the *Christian Watchman*

THE DAGUERREOTYPE.—Since the discovery of this wonderful, and almost incomprehensible art, by Monsieur Daguerre, it has undergone many new and striking improvements.

In 1839, the specimens which were brought from France to this city, were principally copies of public buildings, views, landscapes, &c., in Paris; and although they excited the most intense curiosity in the public mind at that time, yet they were but faint impressions, hardly discernible, and in fact almost nothing, compared with those that are now taken in this country. It is truly a surprising and wonderful thing, that we can seat ourselves before the lens of a camera obscura, and by the action of light alone have an indelible impression of our own form and features stamped upon a silver plate so exact and so precise that it is impossible to mistake it. By the aid of chemical agents, consisting chiefly of iodine and bromine properly prepared, this wonderful thing is accomplished.

The preparation of the chemicals employed, requires the utmost care and attention, and unless the operator thoroughly understands this thing, he can obtain but a poor impression on the plate. Owing to this cause we see many pictures that have a deathlike appearance, are scummy, eyes imperfect, and are also very indistinct.

A poor daguerreotype is not worth looking at, but a good one is invaluable. We have seen none better than those executed by Messrs Vance & Lerow at their rooms, No. 91 Washington Street. For clearness, distinctness, and boldness of execution, they are unsurpassed, and they resemble the finest engravings.

Mr. Lerow has for a long time been an operator for Mr. Plumbe, in Washington city and Boston, where, by diligent attention to his profession, he has made many great improvements.

[End of text.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Robert H. Vance and John A. Lerow advertised as “Vance & Lerow” in this weekly publication from 9 January 1846 through 5 June 1846.¹ Lerow continues the advertisements as “Lerow & Company” (likely with his brother Jacob H. Lerow) from 12 June 1846 through 19 February 1847.

Additional information is found in Peter E. Palmquist, “Robert H. Vance: The Maine and Boston Years, (1852–c.1850),” *Daguerreian Annual 1991* (Arcata: The Daguerreian

Society, 1991): 198–216. The article illustrates a daguerreian camera with lens barrel engraved “Vance & Lerow, 91 Washington St., Boston.”

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8460005_VANCE-LEROW-AD_XIAN-WATCH_1846-02-06.pdf

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