

"Gurney's Daguerrean Rooms," 12 November 1853

(keywords: Jeremiah Gurney, 349 Broadway, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

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GURNEY'S DAGUERREAN ROOMS, BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

THE Daguerrean art in the city of New York, commencing in the most humble manner, has grown from a most insignificant art to rank among the most important occupations of the day. Each of the very justly celebrated daguerrean establishments which adorn the principal streets of our great cities, seem to vie with each other in the luxury and elegance of their accommodations. To spend an afternoon in inspecting the extensive portrait galleries of the daguerrean rooms of the city is beginning to be classed among the *amusements* of New York. All the most celebrated personages of the day, both American and foreign, can generally be found, in *propria persona*, in some one of the numerous daguerrean frames of New York.

We well recollect the first efforts at daguerreotyping in New York. It was, we believe, commenced in a small seven by nine room, on an upper floor, under the clock, in the building corner of Bowery and Division street. The poor patient was then obliged patiently to look into a reflection of sunlight for about five time the length of time now required for sitting, at the expiration of which a tolerably correct scowling profile view of the sufferer was obtained. To contrast the progress of the art, we desire to present our readers with an illustration of a crack establishment at the present day, for which purpose our artist has selected that of Gurney, 349 Broadway, at the corner of Leonard street.

Mr. Gurney's establishment consists of nine spacious rooms, devoted exclusively to this art. The proprietor owes the high reputation of his pictures entirely to his own personal exertions. Having had, we understand, more than twelve years' experience, he has attained for himself a theoretical and practical knowledge excelled by no others in the profession.

Mr. G. has introduced several new features into his business; for instance, his colored daguerreotypes, which for brilliancy, high tone of finish, and durability, are said to be unsurpassed in this country or Europe. Also his mezzographs, or daguerreotypes on paper, which have not only the appearance of an engraving but the advantage of being a perfect likeness; even the minutest tints of color are accurately produced, thus giving the possessor a portrait as durable as a steel plate engraving at a much less cost.

DAGUERREAN SKETCHES IN NEW YORK.



GURNEY'S DAGUERREAN SALOON—BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

[graphic caption:] DAGUERREAN SKETCHES IN NEW YORK. / GURNEY'S DAGUERREAN SALOON—BROADWAY, NEW YORK.
[End of text.]

The graphic is also available in JPG format:

http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/graphics/P8530015_GURNEY_ILLUST-NEWS_1853-11-12.php

EDITOR'S NOTES:

A brief sketch of Jeremiah Gurney is found in "J. Gurney, Photographer," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (New York) 8:199 (24 September 1859): 266.¹ Additional information regarding Gurney is found in, Christian A. Peterson, *Chaining the Sun: Portraits by Jeremiah Gurney* (Minneapolis : Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1999).

Gurney purchased the 349 Broadway gallery from the daguerreotypist, Jesse H. Whitehurst, in June 1852. Gurney remained at this location until 1857. A calotype by Victor Prevost of the exterior of Gurney's gallery is in the collection of the New-York Historical Society and is viewable on the website, *Visualizing 19th-Century New York*.²

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8590005_GURNEY_LESLIES_1859-09-24.pdf
2. <http://visualizingnyc.org/essays/from-the-second-empire-to-the-empire-city-victor-prevosts-architectural-views-1854-1856/>

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