

L. Lodian, "A Glimpse at Old Daguerreotype Days in Manhattan," July 1910

(keywords: A. J. Hargrave, Edward Anthony, 205 Broadway, Scovill, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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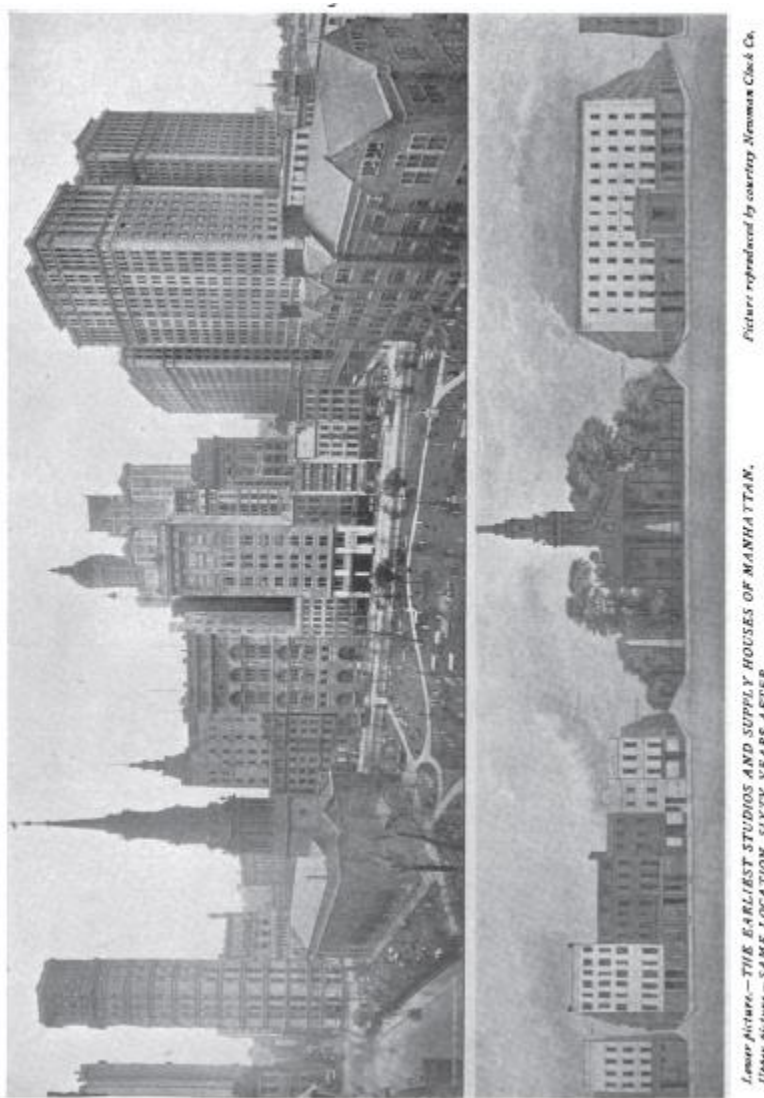
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A GLIMPSE AT OLD DAGUERREOTYPE DAYS IN MANHATTAN.

BY L. LODIAN.

THE earliest studios and supply houses in Manhattan were located around St. Paul's Chapel. Brady, one of the chic artists of the time, was at the corner of Broadway and Fulton, in a squat two-story building. Next door was the sign of E. Anthony, "engravings," and under this was another sign

DAGUERREOTYPE MATER^S

Thus the earliest beginnings—with engravings of an historic house.

The sign-painter had miscalculated, and had no space to spell out "materials." This house was 205 Broadway. On the ground-floor was the bookstore of Clark, Austin & Co. At 201 was the "daguerrian atelier" of (something) & Decker—first name illegible; and next door, No. 199, was Mark H. Newman & Co., "school-books," etc. This was in 1848. These sordid-looking buildings long since disappeared; the *Evening Mail* skyscraper is now on most of the site.

What became of them? Brady went to Washington; died in Manhattan, over a score years ago, in extreme poverty. There is still a Clark & Co., booksellers, at 128 West 23d street, Manhattan. Newman, "school-books," rightly judged clocks more remunerative than books and the firm is still in existence to-day, at 178 Fulton, as the Newman Clock Co.

In the region, but not shown in the picture, were the Rockwell and other studios. That is the only name that survives to-day in the studio world in Manhattan which owned then, as now, their own studio; but an employee of those old houses was A. J. Hargrave, since many years in business on his own account in Manhattan. When in a reminiscent mood, he can keep a listener chaired for an hour right off, without ennui, telling of old studio lore and times in lower Manhattan; that is, if the listener has some reverence for the past and of the early pioneers who have brought the art to its present antenna. He has worked at and lived through all the types—daguerreotype, ambrotype, mikatype, fototype.

Mr. Hargrave is still actively engaged in studio work in Manhattan, at 1183 Broadway, and is very much alive indeed. He is the G.O.M. and historian of the trade.

By a singular coincidence, the donator of the earliest volumes of *Humphrey's Daguerrian Journal* to the Manhattan public library—where they are seeable any day—was also named Hargrave. There is his signature as donor on the title page. Both Hargraves were co-existent, yet never knew one another.

These, then, were the earliest beginnings of two supply-houses which became world-famous, with palatial quarters which culminated in the consolidation on Fifth avenue a few years ago. It is doubtful if the world ever saw a finer equipment under one roof.

The first professional regularly appearing journal issued in America was in 1850, and is called the *Daguerrian Journal*, redacted by S. D. Humphreys. The first two volumes intact are preserved in the public library, Manhattan. It appeared semi-monthly; and the scribe, in going through the old tomes, found them more interesting than one would imagine. Each issue is entertaining to the person interested in the lore of the profession.

Among the earliest advertisers, are the Scovill Manufacturing Co. daguerreotype materials, with the Anthony Company in close contact with their advertisement. They announce more daguerrian goods as being stocked than their friendly rivals. The Scovill

firm was then a small place on Maiden Lane, later on Beekman street; the Anthony people had a more pretentious-looking establishment near St. Paul's church, .with a stoop outside. There is a good view, full page print, of it in the public library. It looks very quaint to-day, when we think of the colossal buildings now on and about the spot.

The word "photograph" does not occur in this the first professional journal in America. Everything is "daguerrian" or "daguerreotype," even all through the advertisements of which these are numerous. The subscription was \$3 per annum. There are no illustrations; the few plate-pictures announced, disappeared kleptomaniacally, no one knows when. I was surprised to learn from an official source in the library, that the greatest sinners in the book-mutilating line were reverend divines and ladies.

In these days, "daguerreotype" was the word. Look up old Manhattan directories of the '40's and '50's, and the word "photographer" will not be found, but there are dozens of "daguerreotypers." After the '60's, "photographer" began to appear. It makes quaint reading to-day to run over that column of studio operators of half a century ago.

[End of text.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

A brief search of web-accessible information indicates that the author, L. Lodian, wrote on a variety of topics, and does not appear to have specific associations with photography. The anecdotal, inexact nature of this article reflects some unfamiliarity with historical narratives previously published in photographic journals.

A. J. Hargrave, named in this article, may be the individual referenced as "Hargraves" in "In Passing By," *Abel's Photographic Weekly* 11:269 (22 February 1913): 173. In a discussion of a New York convention of photographers, it is stated:

Next, Mitchell Elliott and Hargraves produce an old Daguerreotype camera, and, having prepared (or is it fumed?) a silver plate, they proceed to take a Daguerreotype of MacDonald. They show the picture all right afterwards, though it is a little faint.

The contrast between the two illustrations depicting St. Paul's and the surrounding area is somewhat misleading. The "sixty years after" view is taken from Vesey street whereas the earlier view is taken from Broadway.

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