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MIRRORS OF THE PAST: HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND AMERICAN HISTORY

"I have seized the light, I have arrested its flight!" With this buoyant explanation, Louis J. M. Daguerre of France announced his success in capturing a photographic image on silver-coated copper plate in 1839. As is often the case in the history of invention, William H. Fox Talbot of England, practically simultaneously with Daguerre's breakthrough, perfected a different photographic technique known as the calotype process that produced a negative image on paper, which could then be used to reproduce an unlimited number of paper prints by contact exposure.¹ Photography had been born. Now, fourteen decades later, we have a surfeit of historical evidence in the diverse forms of photographic images that is without precedent and without peer: a special kind of knowledge—vivid, dramatic, concrete—that provides practically anyone with a novel opportunity to witness the past as if it were, momentarily, present.

Men and women with a historical consciousness recognized this unique potential of the photograph from its earliest days. Following the lead of Lady Elizabeth Eastlake's 1857 essay on "Photography," Oliver Wendell Holmes urged historians to preserve photographs as visual records of change for their future counterparts.² Holmes, a medical doctor, essayist, and noted American philosopher, confessed himself enraptured by the new medium, smitten by its uncanny "appearence of reality that cheats the senses with its seeming truth." Photographs were magical illusions. But even more than that, he explained, they were matchless pieces of information, descriptions of things, scenes, and persons infinitely more vivid than words. Eventually, he foresaw, photography would reproduce the entire world, reducing all solid objects to thin film images.

Holmes followed up his observation by a proposal to establish a national photographic archive that would especially collect stereographs,
an important and extremely popular photograph type in whose development he had played a small part. Unfortunately, nothing came of his plan for a National Stereographic Library. In 1883, however, Holmes’s fellow New Englanders in the Boston Camera Club initiated one of the early systematic historical surveys of extant structures and farmsteads for various local historical societies and archives. Consequently, their undertaking can be considered as one of the early attempts by “above-ground archaeologists” to use photography as a fieldwork research tool. Photographer George E. Francis, in an 1888 essay delineating “Photography as an Aid to Local History,” inadvertently recognized that in claiming: “No words can adequately bring to our minds the chain of little gradual alterations in the houses, the roads, fields, woods, water courses, as would a series of accurate pictures taken at short and regular intervals: something like the family photograph album, where are treasured all the likenesses, it may be, of the youngest son from his infancy to his manhood.” The comparative approach, contrasting American landscape photographs over time, as envisioned by Francis, continues as one of many teaching techniques employed by historians in both museums and in classrooms. In published format, this approach surfaces in numerous “then-and-now” photobooks of urban history.

Paralleling this nascent interest in historical photography in New England was similar activity in Old England. There, Sir Benjamin Stone founded the National Photographic Record Association in 1897 with an aspiration to mount a national effort “for collecting photographic records of objects and scenes of interest throughout the British Isles.” Stone sought to have this ever-expanding cache of historical evidence deposited in the British Museum.

Back on this side of the Atlantic, a Chicago publisher, recognizing the photograph’s pedagogical potential, introduced at the turn of the century a semimonthly magazine entitled History Study Pictures. Each issue of the magazine contained ten reproductions intended to aid teachers in illustrating to “their pupils some of the chief topics in history, geography, and literature, by means of reproductions of paintings and photographs of historic scenes and persons of note.” Unfortunately, History Study Pictures ceased publication after ten issues; yet its purpose and, to an extent, its format continue in certain modern media history-slide sets and photograph portfolios such as Photo-Documents of American History and The American Experience, a pictorial history of America from the Smithsonian and Scholastic Book Services.

Such sporadic instances of awareness of the historical potential of
photographs among historians and photographers in the second half of the nineteenth century are symptomatic of a similar relationship in the first half of the twentieth century. Only occasionally did a historian such as Ralph Henry Gabriel venture forth with a publication like his fifteen-volume history, *The Pageant of America*, which drew upon various kinds of graphic evidence including photographs.\(^9\) Although this excellent source collection has gone largely unnoticed by the majority of historians, Gabriel, an intellectual historian at Yale, could take a degree of solace in one of its historiographically influences. A colleague at Columbia, Professor Harry Carman, recommended these volumes to colleagues and students, one of whom, Roy Stryker, became head of the Farm Security Administration Historic Section.\(^1\) The FSA, of course, became one of the most prolific sources of documentary photography of Depression America. The Gabriel-Carman-Stryker story has an important sequel. In 1939—significantly the centenary of Daguerre’s public announcement of his photographic process—the American Historical Association devoted one of the sessions at its national convention to the topic of “Sources and Materials for the Study of Cultural History: Documentary Photographs.” The principal speaker was Roy Stryker, along with Paul H. Johnstone. At that meeting, their analysis of nine photographs still remains one model survey of the possibilities and pitfalls of using photography in historical research.\(^12\)

As several historiographers of historical photography (e.g., Bernard Mergen, Glen Holt, Walter Rundell) have documented,\(^13\) the acceptance of photography as historical evidence has come begrudgingly in the forty years since Stryker made his appearance at an AHA rostrum. If historians used photographs at all in their published research, or, more probably, in their textbooks, it was usually only to provide materials for illustrative relief from the authors’ narrative. Since textbook writers tend to plagiarize from one another in both idea and image, there have been a series of “most favored photos” (e.g., Dorothea Lange’s *White Angel Breadline* [1933] or *Migrant Mother* [1936], depicting the Depression) replicated ad nauseam in American history texts. An interesting research exercise for students would be to examine the photographs used in their various history texts, attempting to decide why particular photographs were chosen, what conditioned their particular placement in the book, and what might be their effect in conveying historical information and insight. Clues for such an analysis—as well as the basis for a comparison of visual and verbal content in American histories—can be gleaned from Frances Fitzgerald’s *America Revisited.*\(^14\)

Such critical analysis should demonstrate to students the more obvious reasons for historians’ traditional distrust or neglect of photographic sources: most topics of interest to political, economic, and diplomatic historians have had an abundance of written sources; the kinds of questions asked by historians have usually not been phrased in ways that photographic data can answer directly; since the nineteenth century and the coming of pictures (e.g., lithographs or photographs) as either replacements for written words or as enticing and subversive supplements to them, such graphic evidence has seemed to many thoughtful people to be artistically and intellectually suspect. As students of the word, with a large investment in careful verbal analysis, many historians, like other academicians, have tended to deprecate new types of visual evidence that threaten the primacy of printed communication. If historians are to use photographs as data, they should be aware of these caveats as well as others raised by perceptive critics. To be sure, historical photography has significant limitations as historical evidence: it can distort, bias, abbreviate, and misrepresent reality. So do other forms of historical evidence. Yet, after all the methodological rejoinders have been issued, all questions of veracity and representativeness raised, and all the problems of adequate citation and verification noted, historical photography still survives as an important evidential mode enormously valuable to the historian in his or her teaching and research.

Such a perspective informs this discussion of one of the most characteristically American of artifacts. Here a *historical photograph* is defined as a photograph\(^15\) offering: “a believable image of times past . . . capable of supporting the study or the interpretation of history.” The apparent reality of any photographed instant of time, Robert Weinstein and Larry Booth assure us, “can be verified and illuminated by the historical photograph made of it. The moment after it is made, it becomes a visual artifact, although it is not always valued as a historical source.”\(^16\) I value every historical photograph as a potential historical source, but I also value certain photographs more than others. Make no doubt about it, some photographs tell us much about the past, oftentimes much more than the proverbial thousand words; a great many tell us hardly anything at all. The historian must judge.

In this essay, such judgments will exclusively entail what historians of the medium call *still photography.*\(^17\) Although they are equally important evidence for the American history of the modern period, motion pictures, television, and other multimedia data are not analyzed here as they may relate to the use or abuse of historical photography. For guides on how
historians should use this visual evidence, I recommend Paul Smith's *The Historians and Film;* John O'Connor and Martin Jackson's *Teaching History with Film;* the quarterly journal *Film and History;* and Steven Schoenher's *Multimedia and History.*

To acquire a rudimentary knowledge of both the potential and the problems of using still photography as historical evidence, one needs to recognize that photography is many things at once: a branch of chemistry, a form of art, an aesthetic language, and an endeavor involving a process, a product, and, most important of all, persons. Given the complexity and multiplicity of this material culture, I propose to discuss its historical evidential value in three categories wherein photography is studied as historical process, as historical data, and as historical analysis. In the first category, a quick review is offered of the history of photographic technology, typology, aesthetics, and styles followed by a brief enumeration of the major depositories, sources, and collections where historical photographic data can be located and thereby used in historical research. A third section takes note of the literature of visual communication, then surveys the interpretive models and methodological techniques that some American historians, who have made extensive use of photographic evidence, have developed. A final review of the limitations of photography as historical data, as well as a sketch of the needs and opportunities for using such material culture conclude the essay.

Photography as a Historical Process

"A photograph is a document, and the historian's first business is to ask of it, as he would of any other record, who made it, to whom it was addressed, and what was it meant to convey." How historical photographs were actually made is an absolutely essential body of knowledge that the historian must master before he can competently begin to classify and then interpret photographic images. Such images resulted from a wide assortment of chemical processes producing negatives and prints and involving equally diverse types of cameras. One simply has to understand how photography happens. If one does not, perhaps the best place to find such elementary but indispensable information is from the primer of an American master: Ansel Adams's *Basic Photo: Camera and Lens.*

Basic technical works on photography are abundant, attesting to the importance of photography in contemporary American cultural history. These would-be resources for the historian of technology range from the simplest of how-to-do pamphlets to the most intricate realms of the lens and film esoterica. For the neophyte photo historian encountering the bewildering nomenclature that is part and parcel of historical and contemporary photography, the *Focal Encyclopedia* and the fourteen-volume *Life Library of Photography* are excellent explanatory and reference works. Detailed treatments of technical history (e.g., from the dry plate to Ektachrome) and photographic scientific history (e.g., from "sun artists" to satellite images) are also available. Although in the past decade a pioneering literature has emerged on the history of cameras, material-culture students need to devote much more attention to this fact and symbol of American life. In that context, Eaton Lothrop's *A Century of Cameras,* tracing as it does the historical development of the camera from the original Daguerre model to the beginning of today's miniature forms, provides an approach worthy of imitation in its relating of photography to the equipment of a particular historical milieu.

To apply the history of photography as process to doing research in historical photography, one can divide the technological territory into several separate but related categories. Each category, in turn, can be organized by historical sequence. In the first group, photographic historians usually classify photographs according to the kind of processes produced by different photographic media invented around 1839: the direct-positive process, or the negative-print process. Another typology can be constructed as to the various images resulting from those processes. As the reference chart in Appendix I suggests, knowing the chronology of processes and images used in photographic reproduction, together with the ability to recognize them, is as essential to the photographic researcher as the similar mastery of ceramic types or architectural styles is to the archaeologist or the architectural historian. The ability to recognize the different processes and images is a vital skill but a very specialized one; there are many images, for example, that are quite difficult to distinguish one from another. With a solid understanding of the processes employed and the images produced (ranging from well-known daguerreotype to the more obscure aristotype), the historian has an invaluable tool for beginning to identify and date his evidence. Two excellent applications of this tool to raw photographic data are case studies by William Parker on a single person and William Peterson on single place.

The techniques of producing certain photographic images have been both ways of classifying historical photography and ways of analyzing such data as historical evidence. Among the assortment of early, direct-positive process techniques (e.g., ambrotype, tintype), none has captured our imagination in the past two decades as has Daguerre's original
process and its pictures of fine detail, exquisite tonality, and unique illusion of an image reflected as if in a mirror. American fascination with the daguerreotype began early in photography's career, as is evident from the fact that it was only slightly more than a decade after Samuel F. B. Morse brought the technique to the United States that Nathaniel Hawthorne, in his novel *The House of the Seven Gables*, made his hero, Holgrave, a daguerreotypist.

The daguerreotype became a revered object—one is tempted to say icon—in many nineteenth-century households. The attractively embossed cases made of gutta percha, pressed paper, and leather provide additional artifactual evidence to the cultural historian of the esteem in which the daguerreotype was held. Two comprehensive works—*Mirror Image* by Richard Rudisill and *Facing the Light* by Harold F. Pfister detail the enormous technical and symbolic impact of this technique practiced by the first generation of American photographers.

The collodion version of the negative-positive process introduced in 1851 rapidly eclipsed the daguerreotype. This "wet-plate" process, forming as it did the basis for all modern photography, provided a negative image on glass, from which an unlimited number of prints of high quality could be made. Photographers everywhere rushed to use the wet plate. Until the perfection of the commercially manufactured gelatin dry plate in the 1880s, the wet plate remained the standard negative material. Moreover, with the perfection of the collodion process, commercially produced photographic prints became widely available, and an increasing number of amateurs became attracted to photography. Gradually, photography was becoming an American folk art—perhaps the most democratic art the world has ever known.

This gradual democratization of photography in America deserves much more careful study by historians. Three popular nineteenth-century photographic forms made possible by the collodion process were the *carte de visite*, the cabinet card, and the stereograph. Because of easy, multiple reproduction at relatively cheap cost, the *carte de visite* revolutionized portrait photography. Parents regularly took their children to *carte de visite* studios to have their growth recorded for relatives and posterity. As people acquired more and more of the photographic cards, a way was needed to preserve and present them. Hence the origin of the *carte de visite* or cabinet card album, a precursor of the family snapshot album and a significant artifact of American social and cultural history. The exchanging of *carte de visite* and cabinet card photos in the nineteenth century might also have a twentieth-century analogue in the annual ritual wherein high school and sometimes college students exchange "wallet-size" photographs with their peers. Those photographs, of course, are intended to be preserved in official yearbooks, types of communal albums, that are still another form of photographic material culture to which history students might pay attention.

By the 1880s, no well-appointed American parlor could afford to be without a *carte de visite* album or a cabinet card album and stereograph cards and viewer (stereoscope) and album. The stereograph's role in American life is the subject of an innovative publication of the Visual Studies Workshop called *Points of View: The Stereograph in America—A Cultural History*. Following up on the work of earlier scholars on the topic, a collaborative team of historians, museum curators, sociologists, and art historians has explored, in interdisciplinary fashion, "the stereograph as a primary source of visual history," as well as the "modes of presentation and display of such photographic evidence in order to develop a possible alternative to the traditional historiography" of museum photographic exhibition. While this catalogue does not fulfill all its promises, it is an exciting experiment in both historical methodology and history museum practice.

Stereographs became so popular that large companies were formed dealing exclusively with this new form of photography. Companies such as the Keystone View Company helped feed the public's seemingly insatiable appetite for more and more views. The Keystone photographic corpus—one of the world's greatest archives of three-by-six-inch stereograph cards and negatives, now housed as the Keystone-Mast Collection at the Museum of Photography of the University of California—contains more than 140,000 items and all sorts of fascinating photographic data, such as the *Teacher's Guide to the American History Set of Stereographs* (1927). Perhaps the single most prominent champion of the stereograph was Oliver Wendell Holmes, who boasted that he had viewed more than one hundred thousand stereographs. Holmes, who called the daguerreotype "the mirror with a memory," became so enamored of the stereograph as a means of recording American history that, as we have seen earlier, he recommended the establishment of national and city stereographic libraries throughout the United States.

Unfortunately, Holmes's recommendation never came to fruition, but the perfection of the techniques of the dry-plate process in the 1860s and of roll film ("American film," as it was called) plus the Kodak box camera by George Eastman in the 1880s guaranteed that the next one hundred years of American history would be visually documented as never before.
Eastman’s achievement looms as a watershed in the history of American photography. As Daniel Boorstin reminds us, “Photography could not become universal until there was some simpler way of taking a picture.” Eastman found the way. Photography for the millions became possible to such an extent that, by 1980, photography has become the most popular American hobby, and the United States manufactures more film (especially Kodak) than any other nation on earth. In the absence of a modern historical biography of George Eastman, Boorstin’s analysis of him as one of those inventive entrepreneurs (e.g., Thomas A. Edison, Edwin H. Land) who made experience repeatable by mass-producing the moment, provides the student with many provocative insights.39

With the advent of Eastman’s hand-held Kodak and later the Brownie (designed for Eastman by Frank Brownell, creator of more hand cameras than any other man of his time) came the form of historical photography probably known best to most of us: the snapshot.40 Amid the clutter of material culture to be found filling cupboards and drawers in an average American household, the ubiquitous snapshot must surely rank among the most commonplace. Yet, to date, this most prolific and most democratic of American popular art forms is the least studied by photography historians. Although such visual evidence would appear invaluable to the “new” social history, only slowly have scholars begun to investigate this enormous cache of unpretentious photographic data, most of which is still in the hands of its creators or their descendants. This enormous uncatalogued and uncatalogued archive may prove to be one of the most productive research frontiers for academic and museum historians and their students. Suffice it to note here that the snapshot, which some cultural historians propose may be the appropriate visual equivalent of modern experience, has received only minimal discussion in either the historical or photographic literature. An English publication, The Snapshot Photograph, traces the social background and contents of British snapshots from 1888 to 1939, and an Aperture paperback, simply titled The Snapshot, provides the beginning researcher with a series of articles, interviews, and portfolios examining the vitality and ambiguity of the snapshot photograph in this country.41

In addition to knowing the principal photographic materials, process techniques and forms, the historian should be well informed about two other typologies: photographic subjects and photographic conventions. Probably the photographic subject genres most familiar to historians would be portraits, landscape and city views, warfare, and the rather amorphous categories of documentary and reform photography. What history text does not include a Matthew Brady portrait of Lincoln, a Timothy O’Sullivan view of the frontier west, an Alexander Hesler panorama of early Chicago, an Alexander Gardner perspective of the aftermath of a Civil War battlefield, an Arthur Rothstein documentary of Dust Bowl Oklahoma or a Jacob Riis exposure of a Robbers’ Roost?42

Individual studio portrait photographers have been studied by several scholars, both here and abroad, providing us with valuable material for initiating students in the comparative analysis of images and interpretations.43 The bibliography on American landscape photographs has grown so enormously in the past decade that it deserves to be analyzed separately below. To begin preliminary documentation of American war photography (figs. 3 and 4), a woefully neglected source of cultural as well as military history, see work from George Barnard to David Douglas Duncan.44

Inasmuch as every photograph is indeed a document, the precise classification of documentary photography is a particularly slippery task. Any classification of the genre, however, would have to include the surviving photographic evidence of those photographers who sought to make a conscious record of life and conditions in places all over America. While coined in 1926 by John Grierson, the term came into popular usage during the Depression, when the telling pictures of poverty-stricken farmers taken by Roy Stryker, Margaret Bourke-White, Russell Lee, and Walker Evans awakened Americans to the needs of social reform. In many minds, the first mention of documentary photography connotes only westering “Okies” or southern sharecroppers.

In America, the reform tradition in documentary photography extends backwards at least to Jacob Riis, whose life and work can be evaluated as a case study of what David Noble has called the “paradox of progressive reform.” Coupling Riis’s own writings and photographs with a general historical interpretation like Noble’s and recent cultural-history analyses of Riis himself,45 yields a provocative picture of the progressive temper. In an American history survey course, careful study of Riis can be followed by work on Lewis Hine (whose work has been suddenly rediscovered in the last decade),46 and then any of the FSA photographers whose work is widely known and widely published. If one were to go back into the nineteenth century to add two other giants—Matthew Brady and Edward S. Curtis—47 one could teach an intriguing seminar in general American cultural history (1850–1950) from the camera work of Brady, Curtis, Riis, Hine, and, say, Arthur Rothstein.

Other teaching and research possibilities exist in the historical study of lesser-known documentarians such as Francis Greenwood Peabody,
Joseph Byron, Jessie Tarbox Beals, Solomon Butcher, Erwin Smith, Arnold Genthe, and Francis Benjamin Johnston. Much conscious documentary photography of local life survives unexamined in small historical societies, commercial photographers' files, newspaper morgues, and government offices. As a new exhibition catalogue suggests, the federal government produces much photographic documentary evidence—five million photographs are presently (1980) retained in the National Archives alone. Historians probably know best the FSA achievement in the 1930s, but there are equally important documentary photographic records produced by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) agencies in the 1960s and by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the 1970s.49

Fig. 3. Running Water Bridge in Whiteside, Tennessee, as photographed by George N. Barnard in 1865. Executed with a glass-plate negative, the image illustrates several characteristics of both American landscape photography and Civil War photography.—Courtesy University of Notre Dame Archives

Fig. 4. Another type of “war” photograph, documenting the campus dissent over American involvement in Vietnam, was taken by an undergraduate student, William Mitchell, on the University of Notre Dame campus in May 1969.—Thomas Schlereth Collection
Three other subjects of photography little exploited as historical evidence are the group photograph, the news (or journalism) photograph, and the commercial photograph. Neal Slavin's *When Two or More Are Gathered Together* explores the contemporary group portrait and how that photographic genre (Slavin calls it an American icon) can communicate the desire to belong in America in the mid-1970s and the conflicts caused by that wish. Slavin's visual investigation of the relationship of the one to the many—a principle ever problematic in democratic societies—provides the historian with a slate of questions by which to interrogate those formal pictures of past clubs, singing societies, fraternities, sports teams, troupes, occupational groups and associations, or informal groupings of people around a dinner table, on outings, on the front porch.50

Photo-journalism, considered by some historians of photography as a subspecies of the documentary, has a century-long history, beginning with the development of inexpensive methods of reprinting photographs in magazines and newspapers. This reprinting capacity, plus the availability of faster lenses, faster film, portable cameras, and, later, flashlighting via flashbulbs, made modern news photography possible. Cameramen who practiced this trade quested after "newsworthy" events. While the impact of such photography has begun to be assessed at the level of the national picture magazines (e.g., *Life, Time, Look*) and from the idiiosyncratic perspective of the acclaimed "great news photos and the stories behind them," cultural historians have yet to evaluate American news photography in the aggregate.51 John Szarkowski's *From the Picture Press* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973), with chapter headings such as "Ceremonies," "Losers," "Winners," "Disasters," "Heroes," "Good News and the Good Life," could serve as a starting point for making more extensive and interpretive use of photo-journalism as social history.

A similar argument should be made for commercial photography. Since the vast majority of these images were made for money, there is a major bias running through most collections of photographs made by commercial photographers. Despite the inherent biases of commercial photography, nineteenth-century business photographers, such as John W. Taylor and George Lawrence, in Chicago, are a boon to urban historians. They contracted with architectural firms to portray their latest and highest buildings, with real estate developers who were promoting new suburbs, with capitalists erecting industrial and manufacturing plants, and with civic groups detailing particular features of the city for advertising promotions and tour guides.

In addition to basic processes, materials, techniques, types, and subjects, there are also photographic conventions that must be understood in interpreting historical photography. Or, to put it another way, to be able to use photographs as documents, the historian must establish a framework for analyzing the organization of visual documents: that is, what is in the foreground, middle distance, background? Is the perspective elevated or eye-level—and so on. He may work with various analytical tools that other scholars (largely art historians) have already devised,52 or, given the type of photography he wishes to use as historical evidence, he may have to prepare a research design of his own devising.

No one, to date, has developed a universally satisfactory model for analyzing the internal forms by which a picture informs. Perhaps one cannot adapt the concept of model-building to the elusive, multifaceted images that photographs present, especially those taken by unknown photographers of unknown people. Much research in this area of "convention detection" deals exclusively with aesthetic principles and tends to ignore the content of the image as also being an arrangement of historical information. However, one approach pioneered by John Szarkowski in *The Photographer's Eye* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966) can be adapted to the historian's purposes for two reasons: first, in attempting to categorize the basic elements of photographic vision, he defines some of the biases inherent in photographs that every historian using such visual data as evidence should be cognizant of; and second, Szarkowski delineates five components he maintains to be essential elements in photographic vision. These include "The Thing Itself," or the subject on which the camera focused and whose three-dimensional reality has been transformed into a quite different two-dimensional artifact; "The Detail," or the recognition that, outside of the photographer's studio (where he can, more or less, control the content of an image), photographs never can tell a complete story, they merely document a fragment of a scene; "The Frame," or what a photographer sees in the camera's view-finder, which defines what he considers most important, thereby making photography by its very nature selective; "Time," which became increasingly important as advanced photographic technology enabled photographers to capture movement and thereby segregate and stop time; and a finally, "Vantage Point," or the range of visual choices (e.g., bird's-eye view, view from behind, at an oblique angle, etc.) a photographer can make when deciding how to photograph a subject.

Szarkowski's primer, when supplemented with other basic works on the conventions of photographic communication,53 provokes a set of questions that the historian must keep in mind when interrogating histori-
cal photography. We become aware, for example, of the various nineteenth-century conventions of posing for the camera. As frontier Kansas photographer G. D. Freeman recalled, in 1892, cowboys liked to pose deliberately in outlandish costumes, with large sombreros, leather leggings, and weaponry. Amateur photographers were urged by popular writers to “visit all available art-galleries, and carefully study poses by the great masters of portraiture.” Bernard Mergen, who has investigated the conventions of portrait and group-photograph posing, argues that we must remember at least three important points in analyzing nineteenth-century views: that there was a large element of play involved in being photographed; that the subjects of photographs often had definite ideas about the image they wanted to create; and that the photographer often conceived of himself as an artist, creating a portrait.

Historians have only begun to establish the most rudimentary frameworks for interpreting the basic conventions of posing or being posed in photography. As Neil Harris reminds us, pictorial analysis, often called iconography, demands a careful monitoring of the changing inclinations and exclusions, placements, techniques, and visual formulations found in a particular photographic genre. Harris is persuaded, however, that students who combine research in both cultural/social history and material culture studies might be best suited to carry out this intriguing historical task. “The ability to detect changes in the manipulation of images quite obviously rests on familiarity with established conventions,” he insists. “The requisite discriminations belong to those who are habituated to the analysis of pictures and objects.”

A guide to such analysis, and perhaps the most famous of the American historical surveys of the processes of photography, the photographers, and the phenomenon of photographing, is Beaumont Newhall’s History of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964). Used extensively as a basic text in university art courses, Newhall’s survey portrays the history of photography almost exclusively as the history of an art medium, reproducing only those images that have telling aesthetic effect. While art photography and photographic aesthetics are assuredly an important dimension of American cultural history and should be studied as such, historians should not be misled by specialized art history studies of photography that afford them little help (outside of the history of high style or elite aesthetic conventions) in classifying and explaining the type of historical information that can be found in an aesthetically insignificant mass of photographs.

More germane to the historian’s quest for the single survey study that can introduce the novice to the history of American photography without being overdetailed or lacking adequate chronological and typological coverage are works by Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, Robert Taft, and Reese Jenkins. The History of Photography from the Camera Obscura to the Beginning of the Modern Era (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969) by the Gernsheims should be on every photographic historian’s reference shelf. Surveying historical developments in photographic systems throughout the world, it is an encyclopedic reference text of immense use. Inasmuch as the Gernsheim’s volume has a stated emphasis toward English innovations, Robert Taft’s perceptive panorama of Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839–1889 (New York: Dover Publications, 1938, 1964) should also be part of the American historian’s library. As Lilly Kolton points out, Taft, a chemist, enlivens his book with wry and humorous references to the reactions of post-Civil War Americans in the face of the bewildering new scientific artifacts and processes that photography entailed. For example, she notes, “he refers to the 10,000 cackling Yankee hens whose co-operation was needed to produce enough egg albumen to coat the photographic paper of Edward Anthony.” Images and Enterprise: Technology and the American Photographic Industry, 1838 to 1925 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1975), by Reese V. Jenkins, concentrates on the economic significance of photography in American commerce and industry. A detailed examination of the production and marketing of photographic material culture in the United States, this sourcebook also traces the development of monopolies, the legal struggles over patent restrictions, new techniques of business management and corporate structures (particularly as developed by crafty George Eastman), and the interaction between the demands of American society and the supply of the American photographic industry.

Photography as Historical Data

The exact number of photographs with which the American photographic industry has supplied the American populace (and hence historians) since 1839 will remain, of course, forever unknown. What is becoming apparent, however, is that a staggering mass of historical photographic data survives in published and unpublished, identified and unidentified, public and private collections in this country; that millions of photographic images and negatives are extant in governmental and public
agencies, in private businesses and trade organizations, in newspaper and magazine offices, in old photograph studio files and the collections of individual photographers, and in family bureau drawers and albums.

How does the historian find such photographic evidence? Where are such photographic resources located? What finding aids are available?

Several model directories listing many of the public and private depositories where historical photographs might be found in a particular geographical area include Ann Novotny's *Picture Sources 3*, published (1975) and sold by the Picture Division of the Special Libraries Association in New York City; Shirley L. Green's compilation of *Pictorial Resources in the Washington, D.C. Area*, published by the Library of Congress in 1976; the *Oregon Historical Society's Union Guide to Photograph Collections of the Pacific Northwest*, published in 1978; and the Atlanta Historical Society's *Atlanta Images: A Guide to the Photo Collection of the Atlanta Historical Society*, published in 1980. Other clues as to where to find historical photography for researching neglected aspects of American history would be Weinstein and Booth's chapter three on "Sources" and Steven Schoenherr's advice on "Teaching with Audiovisual Documents: Resources in the National Archives." *Picture Sources 3* is the third edition of an invaluable photography directory listing the special collections of photographs (and prints) on all subjects in 1,084 institutions in the United States and Canada. In the majority of these public collections, the pictures are regarded as visual documents, as sources of information, rather than as works of art. Divided by subject matter into fifteen chapters and indexed four ways (alphabetically, geographically, numerically, and topically), this reference work, when used in conjunction with Renata V. Shaw's bibliography on *Picture Searching: Techniques and Tools* (Special Libraries Association Bibliography Number 6, 1973), constitutes the closest counterpart to a comprehensive national research guide currently available to the historian on unpublished photographic resources.

Among the major repositories discussed in *Picture Sources 3* but not as yet mentioned in this essay are the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York; the American Antiquarian Society, in Worcester, Massachusetts; the University of Texas, at Austin; Columbia University, New York; the Museum of the City of New York; the Chicago Historical Society; the New York Historical Society, in New York City; the Missouri Historical Society, in St. Louis; and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Published collections of photographs become more abundant each year. For the historian's use, such collections might be divided into two types: the single-book format, reprinting the photographs of a single photographer (e.g., Nickolas Muray, *Muray's Celebrity Portraits of The Twenties and Thirties*); a single place (William Lee Younger, *Old Brooklyn in Early Photographs*, 1865–1929); a single event (David Lowe, *The Great Chicago Fire*); or a single subject (Children's Aid Society, *New York Street Kids*). A second format would be the prepackaged sets of visual materials distributed by commercial firms, such as Light Impressions, and research centers like the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House. Two excellent examples of these formats produced by the same agency, the National Archives, are the earlier-cited paperback volume on *The American Image* and the National Archives' slide sets of historical photography on the American West, the Civil War, American Indians, and the City. Commercial houses have also reproduced elaborate slide-set teaching kits on various aspects of nineteenth-century America and the Great Depression. Helpful in initiating a beginning class or seminar into the methodology of using photography as historical evidence, they can also be employed to prompt cross-cultural historical comparisons and research when used in conjunction with similar projects, such as *Canada's Visual History*, prepared by the National Museum of Man.

Occasionally, private collectors either publish selections from their personal collections of historical photography or permit selected researchers limited access to study the visual data they have amassed. Here, for instance, one is reminded of the work of David Phillips on American western history. Perhaps the most famous private American collection of photographs, sketches, cartoons, advertisements, paintings, and movie stills is the Bettmann Archive, begun by German refugee Otto Bettmann in 1941. A credit line found at least a dozen times in most American history textbooks, the Bettman Archive has also periodically published samples of its own holdings. Location and terms of access to certain other private repositories can be found in Max and Tina Lent's *Photography Galleries and Selected Museums: A Survey and International Directory* (Venice, California: Garlic Press, 1978).

No matter whether the historian uses unpublished or published, public or private photographic sources, he should watch for the professional curator's or private collector's hand upon the form and content of the collection that he intends to use as evidence. The historian must be sensitive to the assortment of systems that professional archivists and dedicated amateurs have developed for classifying and analyzing their photographs. In the best photographic archives, accession control has expanded far beyond the photograph's provenance and general descrip-
tion to include description of image content, physical format, the photographer, the purpose of the photograph, copyright, physical condition, location, and circulation history. In any photographic research in which students are involved while pursuing material culture studies, they should be encouraged to include such complete documentation with every photograph that they, as historians, take or use as evidence in their investigations of the past.

Such an exercise, in addition to providing accurate documentation of their photography for future historians, should reinforce an awareness that both private and public accumulations of historical photography vary in purpose, content, and time frame. In this context, Marie Czach’s caveat is well taken:

That a philosophy of collecting can change the perception of the history of the medium is often overlooked. Without collections, there would, of course, be no possibility of history. But in an area of inquiry as amalleable as photography, the sensibilities of the curator, reflected in the selections made for inclusion in an archive, even within an institution with a well-defined directive for collecting, has a greater than normal bearing on the direction of the history of printmaking. In general, it is difficult to know how much of the history of photography is attributable to curatorial selection and effective public relations, and how much, on the other hand, is attributable to inherent quality.

Despite this difficulty inherent in any collection of historical data, photocurators, archivists, and librarians provide invaluable assistance to the historian in their careful preparation of finding aids to past photography. Three discussions of their work are particularly worth the American historian’s attention: a series of articles by Renata V. Shaw in Special Libraries; Paul Vanderbilt’s essay, “On Photographic Archives” in Afterimage; and periodic bibliographical pieces in Picturescope, the quarterly newsletter of the Picture Division of the Special Libraries Association.

Writings on photography by photographers and others form a final general resource that historians should consult in their research. Two anthologies, one edited by Beaumont Newhall and another compiled by Nathan Lyons, afford us a study of critical source material written by established photographers on their craft. Of the two, the Newhall is the more useful to historians, since the volume focuses on nineteenth-century developments, whereas Lyons treats only the twentieth century. Newhall also includes inventors, scientists, and cultural critics in his anthology. While a comprehensive reader documenting the changing intellectual, social, and cultural import of photography as seen by contemporaries remains to be compiled, William Welling’s Photography in America: The Formative Years, 1839–1900: A Documentary History (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1977) contains a rich selection of facsimile materials, correspondence, articles, and reminiscences for use in the integration and interpretation of the visual and the verbal elements of photographic history.

Photography as Historical Interpretation

As with verbal literacy, visual literacy requires rigorous and analytical techniques, specifically a knowledge of the logic, grammar, syntax, and epistemology of what Rudolf Arnheim calls “visual thinking,” Jurgen Reusch and Welden Kees label “non-verbal communication,” and Estelle Jussim terms “visual information.” These theorists of “how we see” offer the historian an assortment of principles of visual perception applicable in constructing an appropriate methodology for using photographic evidence to construct a historical interpretation.

One must learn to study a historical photograph, warn these theorists, with the care and attention to detail and nuance that an archaeologist might give to a single potsherd, a chemist to a scientific paper, or a literary scholar to a complicated symbolist poem. “Every part of the photographic image carries some information that contributes to its total statement,” insists Howard Becker. “The viewer’s responsibility is to see everything in the most literal way, everything that is there and respond to it. To put it another way, the statement the image makes—not just what it shows you, but the mood, moral evaluation, and causal connections it suggests—is built up from those details.”

Becker, a sociologist, and John Collier, an anthropologist, provide historians with two excellent overviews wherein abstract visual communication theory is translated into specific research techniques and models for historical analysis. Karin Becker Ohm, in a short essay on “Re-Viewing Photographs: Unexplored Resources For Communications Research,” also contributes a cogent digest of approaches to the historical photograph as a special representation of reality, a communication system worthy of careful and critical interpretation.

What is the current state of the art of scholarly historical interpretation using photographic evidence as an important data base? What are the best models and methods of such historical interpretation? What historical topics have been particularly suitable for interpretation by means of historical photography?

One can answer the first question easily. Use of historical photography
is increasing rapidly in all its genres. Perhaps the most prolific and, unfortunately, least sophisticated, in terms of methodological rigor, has been the pictorial history. Ever since the perfection of the half-tone reproduction process in the 1890s, historians and especially their editors have combed picture archives for striking and colorful images to enliven history texts, or, occasionally, as in Ralph Gabriel’s The Pagant of America (1929) and Frederick Lewis Allen’s American Procession (1933), to construct a panorama of the national experience. Usually, pictorial histories use photographs merely to illustrate the text, rather than to instruct the reader. A few historians have attempted to demonstrate how, in Glen Holt’s estimate, pictorial histories can “use photographs as documents.” Holt’s claim receives further explanation in his perceptive methodological statement that introduces Harold Mayer and Richard Wade’s Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1968. Prefaces, forewords, and introductions to books using photographs are often a significant source of insight and ideas about photography as historical interpretation. They should always be consulted for a historian’s methodological premises. In my own initial venture into using nineteenth-century photography as historical documentation, I used an introductory essay (“Discovering the Past in Print, Person, and Photography”) to apprise my readers of my method of investigation and interpretation. Journal articles, case-studies, and periodical essays are other places to scour for innovative research techniques and explanatory models employing historical photography as a primary evidential base. Several journals are devoted exclusively to photography—Afterimage, History of Photography, Exposure, Image, and Aperture—and contain the most au courant scholarship.

To date at least four major history subfields (landscape, urban, architectural, and social history) have employed photographs to interpret the American past. Photographic documentation of the landscape began with the introduction of photography into this country in 1839. It was, however, the period from 1860 to 1885 that is considered the first “golden age of landscape photography,” when men such as Robert H. Vance, Carleton E. Watkins, Eadweard J. Muybridge, Alexander Gardner, Andrew Joseph Russell, Timothy O’Sullivan, and William Henry Jackson framed the American West in images that allowed Americans to view parts of their country and its peoples that they would otherwise never have seen. The land, particularly the western landscape, has always been a source of special fascination for the American imagination. Before Frederick Jackson Turner, American historians shared this interest. Only recently, however, has the historical potential of landscape photography begun to be realized. Some observers have interpreted this photography as typically American, focused as it was, physically and aesthetically, on a primeval land. Of course, these western photographers and the images they created became a significant part of the American myth and symbol of a virgin landscape replete with vast open space and awesome natural features.

The photographic process of the “taming of the West,” as David Phillips has labeled it, deserves more careful study by American historians, for it had a significant impact on American literature (the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow), art (nineteenth-century landscape painting), and ecological politics. When F. V. Hayden, leader of one of the western land surveys, sent nine of W. H. Jackson’s best 1871 photographs of the Yellowstone region in Wyoming to each member of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, he set in motion a legislative process that resulted in the country’s first national park in 1872. Other interdisciplinary research can be done by students to compare the important nineteenth-century American literature and literary criticism of the West with the published photography of the western survey photographers, their writings (e.g., W. H. Jackson, Time Exposure: The Autobiography of William Henry Jackson), and the historical interpretations of their achievements. Here one can also contrast the work of Richard Rudisil, Maisie and Richard Conrat, and Weston Naef and James Wood with that of Walter Prescott Webb, Henry Nash Smith, and William Goetzman. Gary F. Kurutz’s finding aid to “Pictorial Resources: The Henry E. Huntington Library’s California and American West Collections” (California Historical Quarterly 54, no. 2 [Summer 1975]: 175–182) offers historians a beginning guide to primary resources for such research.

The changing look of the American land across time can also be traced by exploring the innumerable archives of federal, state, and local governmental agencies. Perhaps most widely published (and hence available for classroom use and student research projects) is the work of the documentary movement of the 1930s. Roy Stryker and Nancy Wood’s In This Proud Land (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1973); Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White’s You Have Seen Their Faces (New York: Viking, 1937); Arthur Rothstein’s A Vision Shared (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1976); Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor’s An American Exodus (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1969); James Agee and Walker Evans’s Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941); and the U.S. Farm Security Administration’s own chronicle of The Years of Bitterness and Pride (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975) have probably shaped our historical
image of a depressed nation struggling against the man-made physical environment as much as any of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's fireside chats or Congress's New Deal legislative acts. William Stott, in a brilliant and seminal work on the meaning of *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), provides us with a persuasive interpretation of this visual evidence. Stott demonstrates that the "documentary expression" that emerged in nonfiction, social science writing, and film, as well as photography, enabled the country to see its social and physical landscape in a totally new way. His choice of photographs goes far beyond any usual decorative function and instead forms an integral part of establishing his central thesis.

Another innovative application of the historical photograph has been put forth by Peter Daniel in his study, *Deep'n as It Come: The 1927 Mississippi Flood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). Some of the historical photography on which Daniel based his interpretation of this catastrophe was secured from the personal albums of flood victims. In addition to gathering this primary data, he also conducted oral history interviews with flood refugees. Daniel found that the snapshots made by the survivors revealed what they thought was important to record at the time and served as an additional stimulus to their memories of the event a half-century after it occurred.

In addition to turning to the extant landscape photography of the recent past, historians are both using and creating photographic documentation of the land and its use. David Prowden's chronicling of *The Hand of Man on America* (Riverside, Conn.: Chatham Press, 1973) is one form that this enterprise has assumed; collective endeavors such as the Environmental Protection Agency's Documerica and the *Nebraska Photographic Documentary Project, 1975–1977: Images of Nebraska* (Lincoln, Neb.: Nebraska Historical Society, 1977) are others. Established in April 1972 "to document photographically America's environmental concerns," Documerica employed over a hundred photographers and produced some 16,000 images. Under the direction of Gifford Hampshire, Documerica conceived of the environment in the broadest sense and undertook projects such as Gary Truman's study of German immigrant culture in New Ulm, Minnesota, and Jonas Dozydenas's study of Indian reservation life in Nevada. Although much of the work is in color (a radical departure from the documentary tradition), some of it recalls the photography of the Farm Security Administration.

Understandably, photographic documentation of the historical landscape also provides the historian of the built environment with significant data. As Phyllis Lambert has demonstrated, the visual recording of buildings as expressions of society has a long European tradition, originating in France in the 1850s. Many early masters of photography—Hippolyte Bayard, Charles Negre, Henri le Secq, Edward Baldus, and the Bisson brothers—made extensive records of buildings and the great engineering works for various government departments under the Second Empire. For instance, Baldus's photographic record of the new Louvre, erected between 1852 and 1868, had a profound trans-Atlantic impact on public architecture throughout North America.

Despite extensive nineteenth-century European precedents for architectural photography and a less well-known corpus of Eastern landscape views, many Americans remained largely preoccupied with the landscape photography of the West until the 1890s, a chronological benchmark Turner took to be the closing of the frontier. The historian of domestic architecture, however, finds some exceptions to that statement in sources like Austin A. Turner's *Villas on the Hudson: A Collection of Photolithographs of Thirty-One Country Residences* (1860); Henry Hobson Richardson's *The New York Sketch Book of Architecture* (1874) and James Corner's *Examples of Domestic Colonial Architecture in New England* (1891).

Researchers can also turn to photographs as historical evidence of the evolution of a single building type, be it the barn, fast-food restaurant, or state capitol. When conducting a historical investigation of a specific building type, the research is immediately defined and encompassed; therefore, sequential graphic evidence of various buildings of a type constructed at different times and places provides an incisive view of changing architectural values that are, of course, expressions of changes in the values of society. When a building's physical evidence or original plans no longer survive, photography often affords us the only clues by which to conduct architectural research.

If building evidence does exist in sufficient abundance but is far too large (as are most structures) to study under laboratory conditions, systematic photography of such data (*in situ*) by historians becomes both an act of evidence collection (again, for future historians) as well as an act of historical interpretation. In a model study, highly adaptable to other public buildings such as fire and police stations, post offices and city halls, Richard Pare has shown what can be done on the history of the American county courthouse. For an explanation of his methodology, one should consult his essay, "Creating the Photographic Record: The United States Court House Project" (*Architovia* 5 [Winter 1977–78]: 78–91), and for his historical interpretation, see his final work, *Court House: A Photographic Document* (New
York: Horizon Press, 1978). Beginning with the earliest (1725) surviving courthouse in continuous use in King William County (Virginia) and tracing the evolution of the building type up until our own time, Pare and twenty-four other photographers made more than eight thousand images of 1,054 buildings.

Pare's work, along with that of other professional architectural photographers,88 should be read carefully by historians, to better understand the common problems (e.g., lighting, distortion, clients' demands) peculiar to architectural photographs. Pare's confession that "even under the best conditions, the photographer of architecture is the slave of circumstance" likewise applies to past photography of buildings. "Much depends on the time of day, time of year, and seasonal change... Thus it is understandably difficult to capture the sense of a building through photographs and yet maintain a sense of its environment."89

Despite these limitations, it must be acknowledged that pictures can often be a mine of historical information about architecture in an environmental context, not isolated from its surroundings, as are the illustrations in most contemporary architectural magazines. During the past 135 years, photographic documentation has been increasingly recognized as an indispensable tool for studying and understanding the social art of building in its fullest expression, which is to say as components of a city, rather than as isolated formal structures.

Historians now investigate the photographic imagery (see figs. 1 and 2) of the American city with increasing frequency. In addition to several methodological assessments of photography's potential for urban historical studies,90 a number of classic texts have been written that can serve as interpretive models. Harold Mayer and Richard Wade's innovative use of graphics of all types—especially photographic imagery from daguerreotypes to aerial views—in their Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1968, currently reigns as perhaps the most creative use of urban photography as actual historical evidence. Older histories by E. H. Chapman on Cleveland, J. H. Cady on Providence, and J. A. Kouwenhoven on New York also offer the current researcher a sense of the available evidence and its interpretive potential.91

Speaking of New York City, it may be the American city with the most published urban photography. Thanks to the aggressive publishing policies of the Pictorial Archives of the Dover Press, the teaching historian can create a small paperback research library of historical photography on New York, ranging from Mary Black's Old New York in Early Photographs to Allan Talbot's New York in the Sixties.92

The published New York corpus is rich in one form of urban imagery—reform photography—but deficient in another—aerial photography. That is not without reason. Almost everywhere in the United States, urban historians researching the nineteenth-century city are confined to urban views from the ground or from elevated structures.93 The 1860 wet-plate exposure of "Boston as the Eagle and Wild Goose See It" by Black was the first aerial photograph made of an American city and one of the only ones made until the late nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, however, photographs taken from the air abound for both rural and urban America.94 Used heretofore primarily by geographers, aerial photography—particularly when researched in concert with extant cartography—provides the urban historian with a storehouse of geological, ecological, architectural, and town-planning data, as well as political, economic, and sociological information.95

Historians have made extensive use of reform photography, unlike their lack of attention to aerial photography. In addition to the much-acclaimed work of urban progressives such as Riis and Hine, Thomas Garver has shown there was even "an urban America as seen by the photographers of the Farm Security Administration."96 In addition, urban social change documented through photography did not, of course, end with World War II. The movement's message assumed varied forms and degrees of political and social radicalism, ranging from Robert Frank's The Americans (New York: Grossman, 1969), with an introduction by Jack Kerouac, and Lorraine Hansberry's The Movement: Documentary of a Struggle for Equality (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964) to Leonard Freed's Black in White America (New York: Grossman, 1965) and Benedict J. Fernandez's In Opposition: Images of American Dissent in the Sixties (New York: DaCapo Press, 1968).

In addition to their conscious and unconscious documentation of urban historical phenomena such as housing, sanitation, transportation, immigration, work, and neighborhood life, such historical evidence contains a subtle but powerful political interpretation of modern American history. As Sam Walker and Victor Greene have persuasively argued, this photography is imbued with the tradition of liberal reform.97 And as Steven Schoenherr notes, the misinterpretation of such photographic evidence has, on occasion, distorted historical research on working-class life as well as stereotyped scholarship on ethnicity.98

Mention of working-class and ethnic-group culture introduces the subject of social history, a final special historical field that investigators have begun to explore in earnest but one almost totally neglected until
twenty-five years ago. Attempts at collecting historical evidence of social behavior via photographs was begun by photographers such as Edward S. Curtis, whose twenty volumes of *The North American Indians* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1907) sought to document the vanishing culture of the native American. Curtis's extensive visual and verbal evidence can be contrasted with the photographic legacy of other American ethnographers, such as A. C. Vroman, and then evaluated in light of the methodology of anthropologists, folklorists, and social scientists who use photographs as analytical tools for ascertaining the patterning of societal values, attitudes, and behavior. Joanna Scherer, "You Can't Believe Your Eyes: Inaccuracies in the Photographs of North American Indians," *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 2, no. 2 (1976): 67–78 reminds us, however, of the potential bias present in such supposedly social scientific images, particularly in the staged and manipulated photographs of Curtis.

Photographs have also perpetuated stereotypes in their depiction of immigrants. At the same moment that American immigration reached epic proportions, in the period from 1890 to 1920, photography matured technically to provide an extensive pictorial record of that generation. Reformist photographers such as Lewis Hine concurrently found immigrant ghettos and poor blue-collar workers to be excellent sources for compositions. Modern social history research now suggests, however, that Hine's familiar compositions, reproduced repeatedly in histories of American labor, and those of his liberal colleagues probably have created an inaccurate impression, in that these now-classic photographs fail to give the viewer much of an idea of the dynamic, multifaceted social community of which the immigrants were a part.

To be sure, these Eastern and Southern Europeans were primarily working-class populations and photography remains a superb primary resource in researching the social history of work and working. Nevertheless, as Victor Greene's analysis of ethnic photographs concludes, "The workers were also individuals who functioned in definitely stratified societies; that is, among complex groupings with middle- and even upper-class members." Historians using such photography must recognize and examine the visual record left by the anonymous masses (e.g., construction workers, garment workers, mine laborers), the "middling sorts" (shopkeepers, businessmen, fraternal heads), and the ethnic elite (religious leaders, politicians, newspaper editors). To date, American Jewry, in its multiple historical and geographical features, probably has been studied the most comprehensively by historians using its diverse photographic evidence.

George Talbot, curator of the Visual and Sound Archives at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and an innovative pioneer in the historical interpretation of local, amateur, or "vernacular photography," together with Majorie Mellon, has launched an exciting research project into the themes of ethnicity, continuity of traditions, self-identity and family process through the reinterpretation of rural life in a Pommeranian farming neighborhood near Watertown, Wisconsin. Working extensively with the photographs, artifacts, and the oral folk traditions of the Krueger family, Talbot and Mellon are working on a State Historical Society of Wisconsin museum exhibit—"Six Generations Here: A Family Remembers Ethnicity and Change on a Wisconsin Family Farm, 1851–1978"—that, while recognizing the many pitfalls involved in interpreting photographs as social history, shows their enormous value because they simultaneously give information about the substantive content of family life (dress style, architecture, environment) and the subtle (sometimes unconscious) images that the photographer and his human subjects wish to project.

Talbot's current ethnicity research grows out of an earlier work (At Home: Domestic Life in the Post-Centennial Era, 1876–1920 [Madison, Wisc.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976]) in the two final subtopics—family and community history—that presently intrigue so many social historians seeking to extract new historical insight by consulting photographic evidence. At Home, in addition to two short but excellent methodological essays that are essential primers for any historian venturing forth into the social history of American domestic life via photography, affords a concise summary of the topical subdivisions of historical domesticity. Whereas architectural historians using photographs tend to be interested in exteriors, social historians, like Talbot, research interiors. The meanings of house, home, hearth, and household can be explored, he suggests, in the extant photographs of nineteenth- and twentieth-century interiors. Preliminary investigations can be executed as to arrangement of artifacts, furniture styles, and general ambience of the room. But no single photograph of an interior can be trusted as complete evidence if one wishes to do careful social history with visual material culture. Many interior photographs must be examined, cross-examined, and re-examined. Talbot, Bernard Mergen, and William Seale suggest that the social historian should do this, primarily by interrogating large collections of interior photographs (see fig. 12) with such questions as:
How did individuals organize and utilize space? Did arrangement of rooms, furniture, and artifacts influence relationships among family members? Was there a specific woman’s place in the home? Children’s place? Servant’s place? Are there typical or novel features to be discovered in the ways that different socio-economic classes in society chose to organize their homes and households? If people are included in the photographs, in what rooms are they shown most often and in what relationship to the assorted material culture around them?  

To provide a general context for initial exploration of these broad research inquiries, the beginning student can consult any number of overviews that attempt to survey The American Family via an American Album or The Family Album in Home Town, U.S.A. More concretely rooted in a specific historical time and place are the edited catalogues of commercial photographers’ collections, wherein can be found much evidence for the history of American domesticity. The Smith and Telfer Photographic Collection, published by the New York State Historical Association in 1978, is a typical example. What Washington Smith (1828-1893) and his successor Arthur Telfer (1859-1954) unconsciously did in Cooperstown, New York, and what other relatively unknown commercial photographers (e.g., Henry Koopman, E. A. Scholfield) did in hundreds of other American cities, was to produce something close to the kind of photographic archive that the British Journal of Photography had pleaded for in 1889, an archive “containing a record as complete as it can be made of the present state of the world.”

In pursuing the potential of commercial studio photographs as social-history evidence, we also need a thorough social history of the American commercial photographer. We need far more detailed information—ascertainable through traditional historical sources such as city directories, tax records, census reports, business directories, newspapers, and genealogical registers—about how photographers worked, about their relations and commercial arrangements with clients, about their ways of presenting pictures to particular publics. We need to know much more than we do about how people behaved toward such “public” pictures (leaving aside the even more complex matter of their private use of photographs within family circles or personal life), whether they preserved them (and how), exhibited them (and where), or inscribed them (and in what manner).

Social historians have begun to put such questions to what assuredly is the largest cache of photographic evidence of any type, form, or subject—the kind variously called “nonprofessional photography,” “amateur vernacular photography,” or, simply “family or home photography.” The bulk of these family images, stored in shoeboxes, film processors’ envelopes, or family albums, remains uncatalogued, unclassified, unedited, unresearched, and uninterpreted. Often the historian must act as his own archivist, attempting to bring some order to such a body of material before ascertaining if it is to be of use historically. Thomas L. Davis has prepared a beginner’s primer called Shoots: A Guide to Your Family’s Photographic Heritage (Danbury, N. H.: Addison House, 1977), but two superb methodological articles by Karin Becker Ohnm and Steven Ohnrn are essential to understanding how a family photograph collection can serve as an “archive” of family life—a way of remembering people and events and also a way of passing on these memories to other members of the family.

Social historians such as Judith Mara Gutman have maintained that it may also be possible to decipher specific functional and psychological roles that different family members may have performed, roles that we may have overlooked in family-history research. Gutman argues that, in most American family photographs, there is a kind of inward, propelling action led by the mother—not by the sister, daughter, or wife, but by the mother—whose “look, clothes, hand, or face becomes the fulcrum for the [family] photograph’s movement.” Gutman’s hypothesis deserves empirical testing before it can be awarded the status of a satisfactory explanation in social-history research, but it is the kind of question that social historians should be asking of extant photographic data.

We should likewise be trying to differentiate what constitutes family photography and what may be more properly community photography. Perhaps wedding and funeral photographs, although undoubtedly involving family members, are really more concerned with community history than familial activity. Barbara Norfleet’s historical assessment of American Weddings demonstrates that this type of group imagery can tell the historian a great deal about American social behavior within a cultural institution such as marriage. In what she candidly subtitled “a brief and highly speculative history of wedding photographs in America, based on pictures found in attics, basements, professional photograph negative files, historical societies, and interviews,” Norfleet suggests the multiple provenance of wedding photographs and then outlines their historical evolution in four major chronological periods from 1850 to 1970. Her comparative analysis of wedding photographs (ca. 1855 and 1905), show-
ing changing aesthetic styles as revelatory of changing behavioral patterns, indicates still another of photography's uses to social historians.\textsuperscript{112}

So does the innovative work currently being done by Karin Ohrn, Jonathan Garlock, and Amy Kotkin on family photograph albums. While the family photograph album may be the single history book that each of us has had a hand in creating, only recently have repositories dedicated to the collection of historical photography shown the slightest interest in this abundant visual legacy of the American Everyman. There are only about sixty family albums in the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, but Jonathan Garlock's survey of that same community turned up evidence that more than half the people surveyed possessed family photographs (numbering between one and five hundred) in drawers and envelopes, and especially in albums.\textsuperscript{113}

From 1974 to 1976, the Family Folklore Program at the Smithsonian Institution conducted oral history interviews with more than five thousand local residents and visitors to Washington, D.C. The folklorists asked those interviewed about the stories, expressions, and traditions that encapsulated their families' past experiences and could characterize their relationships in the present. The researchers also asked people how their families preserved shared experiences. Keeping family photos, family photo albums, along with home movies, slides, and forms of needlework were among the most frequent methods of historical preservation.

Recognizing that the family album is the most common and in many cases the only unified, conscious document of a family's history, Amy Kotkin (who worked on the Family Folklore Program) recommends that we interrogate this text as we would any other work of history: Who made the album? When was it made? How was it made? Where is it kept? What can we say about the way that images are arranged, in terms of pose and setting? What processes of selection of images have taken place from the total number of images available? What processes of editing and juxtaposition have been imposed upon the images? Is it possible to know what kind of emotional attachment there was (is) to the album?\textsuperscript{114}

Historians have only scratched the surface of the enormous potential of vernacular photographs found in family photograph albums. Their research value probably lies not in their proclivity to detail life as it is, but in their tendency to express communal ideals, beliefs, and attitudes. On an immediate level, they seem to represent shared notions of appropriate moments to photograph. Stanley Milgram, a social psychologist, recognized this phenomenon and notes that, while we are free to photograph anything we want, we in fact do not. "Photography," he claims, "extends two psychological boundaries, perception and memory. . . . It is essentially a future-oriented art.\textsuperscript{115} Milgram's observation, in addition to being a valuable caveat to remember when critically evaluating photographic imagery, may also help explain photography's enormous popularity in America, a nation that Alexis de Tocqueville thought to be the most future-conscious in the history of mankind.

Acknowledging that we tend to take photographs according to what we want to remember, and how we want to be remembered, it must be admitted that family photographs represent a stylized reality. The researchers at the Family Folklore Program still concluded that, on at least three levels, social historians can legitimately use photography as evidence of domestic life.

Viewed over time, photographs evoke stories and expressions, and may even serve as the basis for family legends. As part of our material culture, their similarities in pose and setting suggest that they derive from widely shared values and aesthetics. Finally, photographs not only capture the common folkloristic events in the family, such as weddings, birthdays, and holidays, but become part of the rituals they record. Today, the act of picture-taking itself is a central part of holiday celebrations.\textsuperscript{116}

Photography as Historical Distortion

"Cameras Don't Take Pictures," warns Paul Byers. In a perceptive article,\textsuperscript{117} he dispels the persistent folk notion that the camera records objectively what is there for it to record, no matter the purposes, attitudes, biases, or preconceptions of the person who pushes the button. Yet, not without cause, people appear more prone to "believe" in the factual accuracy of a supposedly "impersonal" photograph than they are of a painting, drawing, or engraving. Photographs quickly became, and still are, acceptable legal evidence. That trust, of course, is often naive; the camera can lie, as often and as cleverly as any other tool wielded by people intent on telling lies. And even in the best of cases, where the photographer is as honest as one can wish, his picture will inevitably show only what the particular lens on the camera is capable of showing in the way of depth, clarity, and spatial relations. The very frame of the photograph is itself something of a distortion or imposition of artificiality; had we been present at the scene, standing where the camera stood, we all know that we would have seen more than what the frame or the exposure allows us to see. Cropping of a scene cuts off the viewer from other details that may well be relevant to an understanding of the picture.
In the past, the lengthy exposures and high sensitivity to the blue end of the color spectrum required by the wet collodion process prevented the simultaneous recording on the same negative of both geographical features and meteorological phenomena such as clouds. Other exposure liabilities minimized motion and curtailed picture-taking in inclement weather and at night. Until the development of panchromatic films, photographic records could not reveal accurate color relationships. To this day, photographic technology other than holography cannot easily record true perspective and scale or exact spatial relations of one object to another. Thus, historians using photographs as evidence must ever remember a simple, obvious, commonplace (yet often forgotten) truth: a photograph is not a facsimile of a total past reality; it is only a partial reflection of that past reality. Moreover, the photographer exerts enormous control over that reflection and the information and insight it conveys.\(^{118}\)

These inherent limitations in the truth-telling capacities of historical photography point up, however, one of its essential characteristics and one of its major differences from paintings, maps, drawings, and other originally hand-produced images: the photograph could not have been made had not a camera been present at the scene of its making. Photographs cannot be made from memory. A photographer does not retire to a studio to render a scene he has witnessed; he makes the rendering at the same time that he witnesses the scene. Of course, many artists also paint or draw before a living scene, but the painting’s “past” is the imagination of the painter, not the light rays that once passed through a lens on to a plate or film. Unlike the painter’s brush, the camera makes its exposure and its record on film almost instantaneously.

To be sure, the photographer has considerable leeway in the darkroom to alter tones and to crop the negative or print even further; he may also retouch or manipulate the image in other ways. To paraphrase Byers, cameras don’t develop or print pictures. But when the photographer does airbrush, “dodge,” “burn,” or “outline,” he is altering a picture that already exists: a picture formed in a chemical change on emulsified film in the fraction of a second measured by the click of the shutter. Any straight, single-negative photograph tells us that at the very least a camera was there at some point in past time.\(^{119}\)

Since every photograph is altered or manipulated in some manner by the intention of its creator, the nature of the camera apparatus, the film, the developing and printing, a historian must account for all of these variables in his or her interpretation, recognizing that the manipulation of the images can be either honest or dishonest. As Richard Huyda reminds us, knowing which is the case becomes critical for any accurate interpretation of any photographic record:

Honest manipulation is present in the inherent bias of the person taking the photograph for a purpose and is restricted only by the limits of photographic technology and the practical and aesthetic concepts of the photographer and his clientele. Dishonest manipulation involves, for example, removing the subject of the photograph from its proper context. This can be done by simulating events and presenting the photographs taken as records of another event—a common practice of some photojournalists. Deliberate distortion occurs when the photographer records only those realities which support his viewpoint, for example, a passing smile during an otherwise sombre occasion.\(^{129}\)

One way to unmask deliberate distortion in photographic evidence is to make a careful distinction between a photographer’s negatives, the positive prints made therefrom, and the photomechanical prints reproduced from the positives in the magazines and books where most of us derive our knowledge of historical photography. Among photographic data, negatives are unrivalled as historical documents, because from them alone can we derive record of the forms and textures first recorded by the camera. When they survive, the historian should always go to the negatives, since they are the primary source of his photographic evidence. Alterations, even in their most sophisticated forms, are usually detectable on a negative, whereas they might pass unnoticed on a positive print or a published photograph.\(^{121}\)

Yet even when a negative is available, the image it records is a storyless fragment; photographs are basically nonnarrative, as well as nonfictitious. What have historians—whose function has always been that of narrative storytellers—made of such evidence? How have the historical interpretations of historical photography promoted or perpetuated historical distortions? How can historians overcome the range of nettlesome methodological dilemmas such as measurement of change, evidential veracity, sampling, modes of communicating research, reactivity, representativeness, and objectivity? How do we surmount the fickleness of historical preservation that, quite by accident, salvages certain photographs and confines others to oblivion?\(^{122}\)

Answering the first question is relatively easy, since, with the exception of the model works cited previously in the discussion of “Photography as Historical Interpretation,” most of the serious historical scholarship that has used photography to tell American history has been
descriptive or analytical, rather than narrative. Issues of using photographic imagery to monitor change over time, to ascertain its meaning in a broad cultural context, and to relate such understanding, in an appropriate narrative form, should be on the agenda of every historian intrigued by the abundant yet elusive evidence that is American historical photography. 123

What should not be permitted on that agenda is the tendency, encouraged by pop psychologists and some psycho-historians, to overinterpret “the hidden psychological meaning of personal and public photographs.” 124 Too often, interpreters of a historical photograph move from the literal content of a single document to its alleged symbolic meaning, deducing, from such symbolism, far-reaching conclusions supposedly applicable (despite the limited data base) to a vast expanse of historical time and universal human experience. Without a doubt, the historian should attempt to get inside the mind of the photographer, to ferret out his intentions, or to point out ways in which his picture may say more than he realized or intended. But as Alan Trachtenberg (one of the most astute practitioners of the myth-and-symbol, interpretive school of American Studies and material culture scholarship) acknowledges, “Symbolic interpretation is an enterprise full of risks, not the least of which is the temptation to be reckless, to venture guesses without evidence. Like all pictures, photographs invite interpretations, but the interpreter needs some controls upon his own imagination, some limits, and a boundary between sense and nonsense.” 125

Michael Lesy’s much-touted Wisconsin Death Trip (New York: Pantheon, 1973) has been severely criticized by his fellow historians for overstepping those limits and that boundary in his use of historical imagery. To present enlarged images of the staring eyes in photographs taken during the 1890s in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, as definitive evidence of the suffering and mental illness resulting from an economic depression, complaints one interpreter, “is bad history, whatever it may be as surrealistic self-expression on the part of the author. Those images of staring eyes are not primary evidence for the psychic history of a bleak, isolated, small midwestern town; they are the visual documentation of average people’s difficulties holding still during the long exposures required by available lenses and emulsions.” A second lesson to be learned from Lesy’s interpretation, remarks still another critic, concerns his overinterpretation (and hence historical distortion) of photographs of the dead as evidence of the morbid world-view of the entire Black River Falls community. In so doing, Lesy overlooked the changing conventions of sepulchre photogra-

phy, a widespread and appropriate ritual event of the past now considered by us to be a rather bizarre practice. 126 Wisconsin Death Trip, despite its methodological naiveté and evidential distortion, attempted to analyze a large aggregate of vernacular photographs in the Charles Van Schaick Collection at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. If historians are to overcome the multiple factors that can distort their research in historical photography, one technique will be to use as wide a data base as possible. Another method should involve juxtaposition of certain types of images with other related images in order to evolve a comparative historical approach. Use of oral history to correct misinterpretations and to point out myopias should likewise be employed. Methodological skills can be tested and refined—in concert with students—on the abundant photographic data close at hand to all of us: the family album, or its academic counterpart, the school yearbook. Finally, historians themselves should become photographers; there is no better way to equip oneself to interpret the processes, the photographers, and the photographs of the past. In so doing, the historian, in addition to expanding his teaching and research skills, should also consider adding to the future’s historical record by contributing his own photographs to any of the current research programs for historical photography sponsored by local historical museums and municipal documentation projects. 127

Both photographers and historians attempt to arrest time. A photograph is a fragment snipped from the film of history, a physical impression of light bouncing off the surfaces of a past event; a history is a narrative created from both the stuff and the spirit of past and present human moments. Photography and history, while seemingly sharing a common objectivity in interpreting the past, turn out to be similar provocateurs in portraying the ambiguity and obscurity of the past human experience. Reading photography is assuredly analogous to pursuing history. Inquiry is crucial to both. One question, whether it is raised by a family letter or by a family photograph, invariably leads to another. Of course, many questions raised by the historian’s inquiries or the photographer’s pictures are never answered, but part of the challenge lies in the chase. That important questions are raised by historical photography cannot be denied. The validity of the photograph’s enormous value as historical evidence, despite its necessary qualifications, remains intact. “If the historian will be faithful to the photograph,” concludes Beaumont Newhall, “the photograph will be faithful to history.” 128
Chapter 1

3. Holmes did not actually invent the stereoscope, as has often supposed; however, he did popularize it. The principle of the stereoscope had actually been put forth by Charles Wheatstone as early as 1838.
4. See chapter 9, “Above-Ground Archaeology.” The Boston survey was not, however, the first American urban photographic survey. The earliest work appears to have been done in Philadelphia, beginning in 1833. The Library Company of Philadelphia owned a number of images of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century structures by James McClees and Frederick DeBourg Richards from the 1860s. Unfortunately, there is no documentation as to why they were done, but there is a consistency to them that suggests they were motivated by a coherent antiquarian concern. Moreover, it is known that Richards was commissioned to photograph historic Germantown in 1859 (see Kenneth Finkel, Nineteenth-Century Photography in Philadelphia [New York: Dover, 1980]). I am indebted to William Stapp for this information.
6. For example, see Edward B. Watson and Edmund V. Gillon, Jr., New York: Then and Now (New York: Dover, 1975).
9. Order from Documentary Photo Aids, P.O. Box 956, Mount Dora, Florida 32757; The American Experience, Scholastic Book Services, 906 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632.
29. The design and workmanship of cases and frames for nineteenth-century photographs deserves careful study by researchers for American material culture. Such work should be placed in a broad context of popular-culture history.


31. The collodion process came to be known as a “wet-plate” process because collodion was a gluey liquid that was spread on glass plates and coated with light-sensitive chemicals. The plates had to be exposed while moist and developed immediately because the coating’s sensitivity to light diminished as it dried.


35. Earle, Points of View, p. 6.


38. Richard L. Maddox, a London physician, used gelatin (which dried) instead of wet collodion on his photographic plates—a technique that libelated the photographer from his darkroom, since dry plates could be developed at any reasonable time after they were taken. Moreover, dry plates had quicker exposures, so cameras could now be hand-held rather than mounted on tripods. Finally, since the manufacture and the development of the dry plate could take place at times other than actual exposure, these two components of photography could be turned over to others—plate (later film) manufacturers and plate (later film) developers. With the advent of dry-plate photography, the photo-finishing industry was born.

39. Carl W. Ackerman’s George Eastman (1938), now more than forty years old, is the only complete biography. For Boorstin’s interpretation of Eastman, see his The Americans: The Democratic Experience (New York: Random House, 1973), pp. 373-376.

40. Originally a shooting term, the ‘snapshot’ taken with little or no delay in aiming, began to acquire a photographic meaning in the late 1850s, when the first instantaneous photographs were made. A writer in 1859 talked of “snapping” the camera shutter at a subject, and in 1860 Sir John Herschel, a pioneer in photography and the inventor of its name, used the term “snap shot” in discussing the possibility of a rapid sequence of instantaneous photographs for motion analysis. The phrase did not come into more general use until the 1880s, when instantaneous photography became more feasible and widespread through the hand-held camera.


50. Neal Slavin, *When Two or More Are Gathered Together* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), p. 6. Merger, following the Slavin technique, extrapolates a set of questions (p. 295) for the historian to raise when studying group portraits: “Are the people in the photograph aware of a group identity or cohesiveness? Does the photograph communicate this identity? Does the act of being photographed bring cohesiveness to the group? Does the photograph create stereotypes or capture already existing ones? What is happening in the photograph that defines the identity of the group?”


59. Catalogued collections such as these can be compared with John Wall’s *Directory of British Photographic Collections* (New York: CAMERA Press, 1977) for purposes of cross-cultural interpretation of American photographic subject matter.

60. Weinstein and Booth, *Collection, Use, and Care of Historical Photographs*, pp. 73–86;


87. Three institutions possessing extensive photographic holdings pertinent to American architecture are the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), and the U.S. Department of the Interior National Register of Historic Places. Somerset House (Teaneck, N.J.) now sells the fifty thousand photographs of the Library of Congress's Historic American Buildings Survey, arranged by state, and published on sixty-frame monochrome microfiche.


92. Other anthologies of historical photography on New York published by Dover are Bernice Abbott, New York in the Thirties; Andreas Feininger, New York in the Forties; Joseph Byron, Photographs of New York Interiors at the Turn of the Century; Alfred Stieglitz, Camera Work: A Pictorial Guide; Victor Laredo and Henry Hope Reed, Central Park: A Photographic Guide; Richard Wurts, et al., The New York World's Fair 1954-40; Edward B. Watson and
Edmund V. Gillon, Jr., New York Then and Now; Mark Feldstein, Unseen New York; Victor Laredo and Thomas Reilly, New York City: A Photographic Portrait.

93. George Stewart, in his book on U.S. 40: Cross-Section of the United States of America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), shows in a detailed two-page analysis (pp. 158-159) how a single photograph—in this case one taken northward from the tower of the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City—"may be permitted to stand for the portrait of the typical American city as traversed by U.S. 40."


96. Thomas H. Garver, editor, Just before the War: Urban America from 1935 to 1941 as Seen by the Photographers of the Farm Security Administration (Los Angeles: Rapid Lithograph Co., 1968). A useful film, Photography and the City (1969), tracing the influence of photography on the shaping of cities and/or proposals for solving urban problems, is distributed by the University of California Film Distribution Office, University Park, Los Angeles, Cal. 90020.


103. The exhibition “Six Generations Here: Ethnicity and Change on a Wisconsin Family Farm, 1951-1978” will be temporarily housed at Old World Wisconsin, Eagle, Wisconsin.

104. See essays “The Modern World and Taste” (pp. iv-vi) and “Photography, Society, and Taste” (pp. 65-66) in At Home: Domestic Life in the Post-Centennial Era, 1876-1920.


114. "Family Photo Interpretation," in Kin and Communities, pp. 262-263.


Chapter 2


8. For the cover of the 1926 Spring/Summer Catalog, Montgomery Ward reproduced John Trumbull’s painting of Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson drafting the Declaration of Independence as the store’s tribute to the American sesquicentennial. Inside the catalog (p. 3), the company claimed its own founder, not Franklin, as the mail-order catalog’s originator: “Selling goods by mail was unknown in 1787. A. Montgomery Ward, the pioneer, was the young man with vision who foresaw a new merchandising method—who laid down his principles, and so won a niche in the ‘World’s Hall of Business Fame.’”
11. For ordering and pricing information on Sears catalog reproductions, write to Book Digest, Inc., 540 Frontage Road, Northfield, Illinois, 60093, for the 1897, 1900, 1908, and 1923 editions; Castle Books, 110 Enterprise Avenue, Secaucus, New Jersey, 07094, for the 1906 edition; and Crown Publishers, 34 Engelhard Avenue, Avenel, New Jersey, 07001, for the 1902 and 1927 editions and the anthology, Sears Catalogs of the 1930s.
14. For the location of Sears catalogs on microfilm in the libraries and research centers in any state, write to Lenore Swislocki, Archivist, Sears, Roebuck and Company, Forthieth Floor, Sears Tower, Chicago, Illinois.