

-----  
Filename: first photog-s-st louis canad photog-1896.pdf

Citation information for text:

*St. Louis and Canadian Photographer* Vol. 14, No. 3 (March 1896) p. 114.

Document created by:

Gary W. Ewer / [daguerre@hotmail.com](mailto:daguerre@hotmail.com) / <http://www.thedaguerreotype.com>

Date: 9-22-2005 / last rev: 9-23-2005

Format: Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Document)

Prepared from: photocopy from microfilm

Original spelling/punctuation/grammar generally maintained without correction.

Related files (may or may not be publicly accessible):

first photog-s-st louis canad photog-1896.doc

<http://www.daguerre.org/resource/texts/chapman.html>

Other notes:

This text is in the Public Domain and may be freely used and quoted.

This document file Copyright 2005 Gary W. Ewer ([daguerre@hotmail.com](mailto:daguerre@hotmail.com))

Public access to this document may be via the creator

<http://www.thedaguerreotype.com>

or via The Daguerreian Society:

<http://www.daguerre.org>

**SEE FOOTER FOR DISCLAIMERS.**  
-----

From the *St. Louis and Canadian Photographer* Vol. 14, No. 3 (March 1896) p. 114.

## Our First Photographers

---

In reading of the recent death of the veteran photographer, M. B. Brady, in which it was claimed he was the father of photography in this country, I feel it is only justice to correct some of the statements, so I consulted Dr. A. T. Goodell, who began his career as a photographer in 1843 in this city, and obtained some facts which may interest your numerous readers.

In the year 1840-41, a short time after Daguerre had invented the process of taking pictures bearing his name—the daguerreotype—John Plumbe, Jr., William H. Butler, S. Draper, James R. Chilton, and Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of telegraphy, opened a place at 7 Bowery to experiment in taking pictures by the Daguerre process. They used only a side light. It occurred to John Plumbe, Jr., that a skylight would bring about better results, and he leased the upper floors of 251 Broadway, corner of Murray street, where the Postal Telegraph building now stands, and opened Plumbe's National Gallery, employing twelve operators and Mrs. Thomas, an artist, taking 400-500 pictures a day at from \$3 to \$8 each. At that time M. B. Brady was manufacturing daguerreotype cases at 187 Broadway.

Plumbe's phenomenal success with the top light led many others to embark in the business, among which were Anthony, Edward & Clark, 247 Broadway, J. Gurney, 189 Broadway, and A. Bogardus, 217 Greenwich street. J.M. Scoville started in the manufacturing of stock for galleries, and Brady still made cases, but in about 1845 or 1846 he opened a gallery at his factory, 187 Broadway.

Thus it appears that Plumbe was the first photographer in this country. He opened galleries in all the principal cities in the United States, in London, and Paris, and made a fortune. Dr. Goodell, who was Plumbe's head operator, opened his own place at North William and Chatham streets, selling it out to go to California in 1849, around Cape

Horn, and when he became stranded, after various ups and downs, his training with Plumbe enabled him to take charge of R. H. Vance's gallery in Sacramento, the price for one daguerreotype being a half ounce of gold dust, worth about \$8. From the old Daguerre process, so successfully improved and enlarged by Plumbe and his operators, all of whom became prominent, grew the albumen process on glass, the collodion process, then dry plates, and so on. Plumbe opened two galleries in Washington, one of which was in the Capitol building, and took the pictures of all the prominent men of the day.—[W. M. Chapman, in N. Y. Sun.

-----  
End of text: first photog-s-st louis canad photog-1896.pdf

See header for document information.

**THE NECESSARY DISCLAIMERS:**

The document creator has made every effort to insure the accuracy of the transcription. However, the information provided in this text is provided without warranty, either express or implied. The document creator will not be liable for any damages caused or alleged to be caused directly, indirectly, incidentally, or consequentially by the information provided by this text.

The document creator assumes no responsibility for accuracy of fact; the text is prepared "as found" and factual inaccuracies of the original text are generally not noted by the document creator. It is advised, however, that if this text is used in academic papers, it should be confirmed for correctness by consulting original sources or microfilm; For this cause we have provided source citation where possible.

The document creator also assumes no responsibility regarding the correctness, suitability, or safety of any chemical or photographic processes that may be described by this text. Many of the chemicals used in photographic processes are extremely toxic and should not be handled without a *thorough* knowledge of safe use.

The opinions expressed in this text are solely those of the original author and are not necessarily those of the document preparer. Some texts may contain the use of derogatory racial slurs. Any such word is certainly one that one would choose not to use today. The words remain in the reprint, however, because that is how the text was originally written. Although times have changed, if one is to understand history by studying it, then one must be able to read documents as originally written, without any attempt at cleansing. I do not reprint any text to offend anyone; rather, I hope that the text sheds a sharper light on our cultural past.

-----