

INTRODUCTION TO ANTIQUE PHOTOGRAPHS

Dating Antique Photographs Project

funded by the Institute of Creativity,
Communities and Culture

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*Carte de visite of brother and
sister from Bradford, circa 1875.*

WELCOME TO THE PROJECT

- The aim of the Dating Antique Photographs Project is to develop your skills in being able to deconstruct your old photographs by picking out various features.
- The Project is designed to guide those at various different levels of confidence with dating and interpreting their old photographs.
- The Project will consist of three in-person workshops during which you will be encouraged to practise deconstructing your photographs and helping others to do the same.



Brandon Taylorian
(Project Lead)



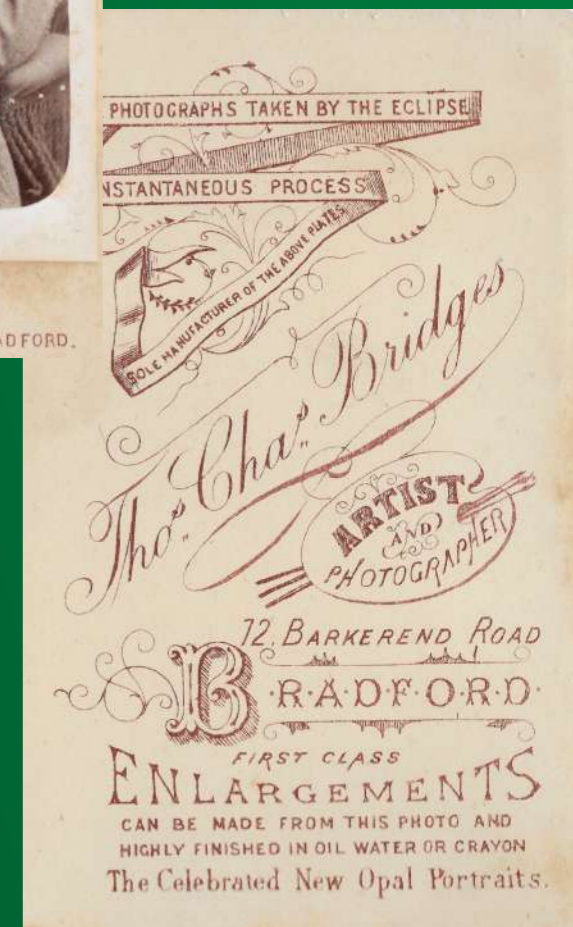
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UCLan

GETTING ORIENTED


- You can find refreshments in the corner.
- Today's workshop will consist of a short lecture followed by an interactive seminar in which you will be encouraged to get your old photographs out and get to work on dating them using the handbook provided.
- Also, once the seminar portion of today's workshop begins, please also take some time to read the displays dotted around the room.
- You will also find many helpful books and resources on antique photographs dotted around the room that will become useful during the seminar portion.



Obverse side of
carte de visite



Reverse side of
carte de visite



HOW TO DATE
ANTIQUÉ
PHOTOGRAPHS

Workshop One

*Carte de visite of woman taken
by T. Illingworth of Halifax*

AIM OF TODAY'S WORKSHOP

- To explore the origins of photography and how the technology developed over the second half of the nineteenth century.
- To discover the different components of antique photographs that will be used to help deconstruct them for purposes of dating and identifying their subjects.
- Gain an understanding of the different types of antique photographs and how to distinguish between the types.
- Learn the significance of using the photographer's logo design for dating photographs.
- Begin to use the Log Sheets provided to start practising deconstructing the photographs you have brought with you.



Obverse side of
carte de visite



Reverse side of
carte de visite

DATING METHOD

1

Categorise the photograph by photographic method or mount type to ascertain the era of its origins

2

Consider features in the background and setting of the photograph including composition and positioning

3

Consider the attire of the subjects in the photograph to help corroborate the era

4

Consider the purpose the photograph was taken for and examine the items held by the subject

5

Use family history resources to help determine the identity of the subjects and add more context

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

- Depending on the family history knowledge you have of the subjects in the photograph, it is likely that only an estimate can be given of when the photograph was taken, perhaps even only a decade.
- It is also important to note that no one feature should be used to determine when a photograph was taken.
- Once the photograph/mount type is established, fashion, setting and composition should be used in combination to corroborate the era in which the portrait was likely taken.
- Some signs of a photograph's age may be easier to spot than others.
- Other factors to consider when dating: the person may not have followed the latest fashion trends of the era; an older photograph may be a copy on a later mount/card so the photograph and mount not be the same age.

LOG SHEETS & HANDBOOK

- As we go through today's workshop, please use the Log Sheets available to make notes of key features for each photograph.
- Use one Log Sheet per photograph to make sure you get all the necessary details noted down.
- You can find these Log Sheets on each of your tables. If you run out of Log Sheets, please let me know and I will provide more.
- Also, you will find on your tables copies of *The Handbook of Antique Photographs*. You may keep these copies and please bring them with you next session.

Antique Photograph Log Sheet Example

Mount type and description of photograph subjects

Mount type - *Ambrotype*

Description - *Ambrotype portrait of husband and wife Ralph and Agnes Moon taken at Woodcock Hall. "Mary Moon 1858" marked on reverse side.*

Key features for helping with date estimation

Clothing features - *Mr Moon wears a large dotted cravat and Mrs Moon wears crinoline and a bonnet. Mrs Moon's ring has been touched up with a hint of gold, a type of gilding that was a common practice among those who developed collodions, usually to emphasise jewellery.*

Background and composition - *the simplicity of their clothing and the setting.*

Curious is how *Mr Moon has placed his arm behind (though not around) his wife with his hand left hanging, thus showing a sense of relaxation.*

Photographer - *likely taken by Mr Robert Pateson who was active in the area as a collodion photographer in the autumn of 1858. Mr Pateson used to photograph people's homes.*

Estimated date of photograph


Estimated date - *1858.*



the handbook of ANTIQU PHOTOGRAPHS

A GUIDE TO DATING NINETEENTH CENTURY FAMILY PORTRAITS

Brandon Reece Taylorian



Funded by
Institute of Creativity,
Communities and Culture

A black and white photograph of a man's face, which is the earliest photographic self-portrait. The man has dark, wavy hair and a mustache. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. The image has a grainy, historical quality with some visible dust and scratches.

PHOTOGRAPHY: A NEW TECHNOLOGY

Earliest photographic self-portrait by
Robert Cornelius, circa November 1839.

ORIGINS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

- In 1826, from a window at his ancestral family's estate Le Gras in the village of Saint-Loup-de-Vareennes, French inventor Nicéphore Niépce took the oldest surviving photograph of a real-world scene using a camera obscura.
- There, the art of photography was born and its practice would spread far and wide with various painters, inventors and chemists scrambling to become the first to make photography commercially viable since Niépce's camera photographs required an incredibly long exposure time, sometimes up to several days.



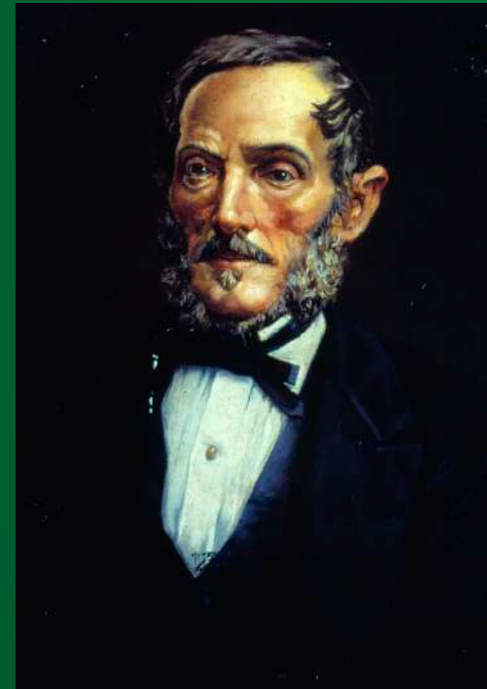
Nicéphore Niépce
(1765-1833)



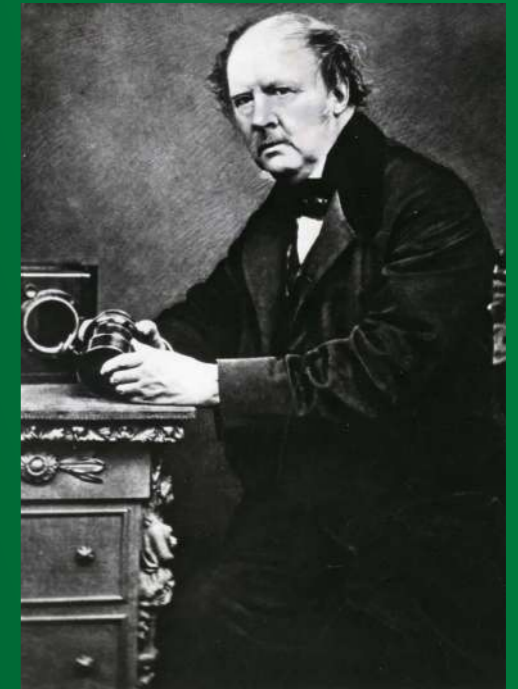
Earliest saved photographic image taken
at Le Gras, France, 1826.

GOLD RUSH OF EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY

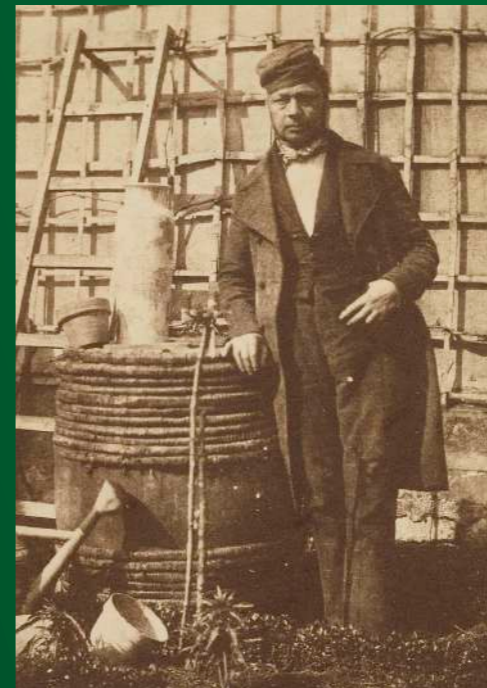
- Hércules Florence (Brazilian) is known as the isolated inventor of photography, three years before Daguerre but six years after Niépce. Florence referred to his process in French as *photographie* in 1834, four years before John Herschel coined the English word *photography*.
- William Fox Talbot (Englishman) invented the salted paper and calotype processes and held a patent for producing calotypes, pricing each licence at £20 but later lowered the fee to £4 for amateur use.
- Hippolyte Bayard (Frenchman) claimed to have invented photography than Daguerre and Talbot. Bayard presented the world's first public exhibition of photographs on 24th June 1839.
- Frederick Scott Archer (Englishman) experimented with a new photographic method called the wet plate collodion process in 1848 and published it in 1851 but without patenting it, resulting in him making very little money from his invention and he died impoverished in 1857.



Hércules Florence
(1804-1879)



William Henry Fox Talbot
(1800-1877)



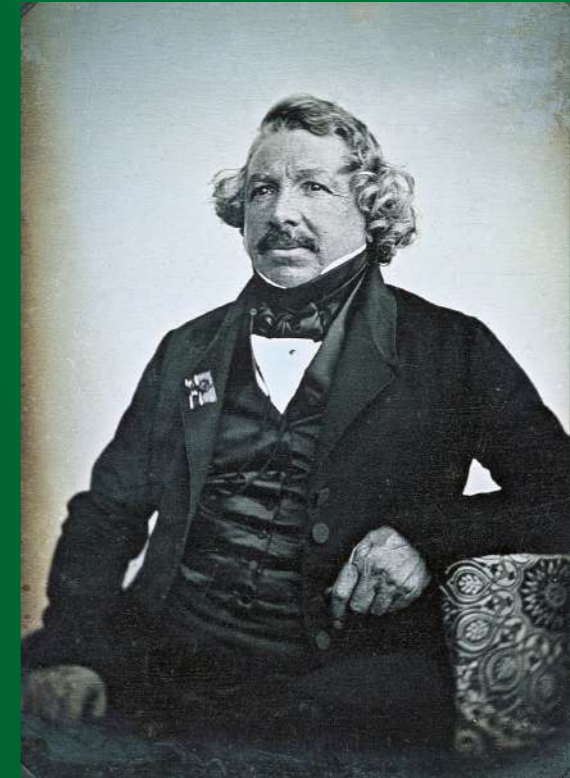
Hippolyte Bayard
(1801-1887)



Frederick Scott Archer
(1813-1857)

DAGUERRE'S GIFT TO THE WORLD

- Daguerre used a silver-plated surface sensitised by iodine vapour, developed mercury vapour and 'fixed' with hot saturated salt water.
- In 1838, Daguerre took the first photograph to inadvertently include people since he had managed to dramatically reduce the exposure time required and captured a man having his shoes polished on a Parisian street below his studio.
- After Daguerre's method was announced to the world in Paris in August 1839, competition became fiercer than ever, leading to a gold rush of sorts with those involved knowing that patenting a method whose exposure time could beat the daguerrotype would earn them a fortune.



Louise-Jacques-Mandé
Daguerre (1787-1851)



Boulevard due Temple in Paris taken by
Daguerre, 1838.

EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY IN BRITAIN

- Photography first came to Britain in 1839 with the first photograph of the streets of London being taken in that year, specifically of the equestrian statue of Charles I at Charing Cross.
- Albert, Prince Consort, first having his portrait taken in 1842, makes it the oldest known photograph of a member of the British royal family.
- Queen Victoria herself was not far behind in the trend as she was photographed for the first time in 1844.



Prince Albert portrait,
1842.



Queen Victoria calotype,
1844.



King Charles I statue taken in front of Whitehall, 1839.

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY IN LANCASHIRE

- In Lancashire, the only mention of photography in northern newspapers during the 1830s was in the *Liverpool Albion* in August 1839 in reference to the daguerrotype that had just been revealed in Paris.
- In the 1840s, portrait-taking appeared in various Lancashire towns and cities including Blackburn, Blackpool, Bolton, Liverpool, Manchester and Preston as well as Lancaster and Ulverston. The service was referred to as “photographic likenesses.”
- In September 1841, in what is today St James’ Mount and Gardens in Liverpool, Mr John Relph organised an event in which the public could have their likenesses photographed in under one minute for just one guinea each, including a frame.



St James Mount & Gardens, Liverpool.



Photographic likeness studio, 1893.

BY HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL LETTERS PATENT.
PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS,
TAKEN BY THE
REFLECTION OF LIGHT,
AT THE
MOUNT GARDENS, ST. JAMES'S WALK;
LIVERPOOL.

The Proprietors of the REFLECTING APPARATUS, by which FAITHFUL MINIATURE LIKENESSES of the Human Countenance and Person are “won from the hand of nature” in the short space of a few seconds, respectfully announce to the Nobility, Gentry, and Inhabitants of Lancashire, that

IN A FEW DAYS
THE EXTRAORDINARY PROCESS WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

The Corporation of Liverpool having granted the site of the late OBSERVATORY, ST. JAMES'S WALK, a neat and elegant Building has been erected thereon, in which the PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, the discovery of which is ranked among the greatest scientific achievements of the present age, will be in DAILY OPERATION.

THE PRICE FOR EACH PORTRAIT, INCLUDING A FRAME, IS ONE GUINEA.
JOHN RELPH, Manager.

The Invention was recently introduced into England, at the ROYAL POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTION, LONDON; and the following are a few Extracts from the leading Journals relating to its merits.—

Advertisement from *The Liverpool Mail*, 9th September 1841.

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY IN LANCASHIRE

- Over the other side of the county, Manchester was behind in being able to offer the public portraits of their likenesses due to a delay in obtaining the necessary patent for establishing such an enterprise in the city.
- However, from the spring of 1842, a photography booth was set up near the Manchester Exchange.
- After being established in Lancashire's two cities, it took the business of portraiture a little longer to penetrate the smaller towns of the North West region with Chester gaining a photographic establishment in 1844 followed by Preston in 1846 which was run by Eastham's Portrait Gallery on Avenham Road.
- By 1848, Mr Eastham had expanded his portraiture business to the nearby town of Blackburn while Mr G. White had established himself as a portrait photographer at Fleetwood by 1849.



The Manchester Exchange,
1835.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS.

These portraits, taken by the means of light, are one of the many wonders of modern science, not so much from the mode of procuring them, as for the wonderful faithfulness with which the object presented is taken. The town of Manchester, in patronising everything relative to science and art, is justly reckoned next to the metropolis. It is, therefore, not surprising that the latter would not be suffered to monopolize the working of a system by which portraits of such faithfulness were taken, and, thanks to the spirited proprietor of the patent, we have now in this town an establishment which produces likenesses as faithfully, as quickly, and as satisfactorily, as any that were ever produced in the metropolis itself.

As many of our readers, particularly those in the

Editorial announcing the service of
photographic portraits from the
Manchester Courier, 14th May 1842.

Business Announcements.

PHOTOGRAPHY.

BEAUTIFUL PORTRAITS, on paper. Groups, &c.,
taken at residences.

NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE COLLODIONS.

R. PATESON,

Photographer, and Operative Chemist, 51, Bow-lane.

Advertisement by travelling collodion photographer Robert
Pateson from *The Preston Chronicle*, 2nd October 1858.

KEY FIGURES FROM LANCASHIRE

- John Mercer (born in Great Harwood), known for developing mercerisation as a method for treating cotton, experimented with colour photography and managed to produce colour photographic prints on cloth in the mid-1850s.
- Roger Fenton was born at Crimble Hall in Heywood. After visiting the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851, Fenton left for Paris where he learned the waxed paper calotype process of photography popular at the turn of the 1850s. Although he took many photographs around England and was the founder of the Royal Photographic Society under patronage of Prince Albert, Fenton became most well-known for his photographic documentation of the Crimean War (1853-1856).
- Edward Mellor (born in Bury) was a pioneer of travel photography and took photographs in never before seen exotic locations like Egypt, India and Jamaica throughout the Edwardian period. Mellor's exhibitions were popular with ordinary people who wanted to catch a glimpse of these faraway places.



John Mercer
(1791-1866)



Roger Fenton
(1819-1869)

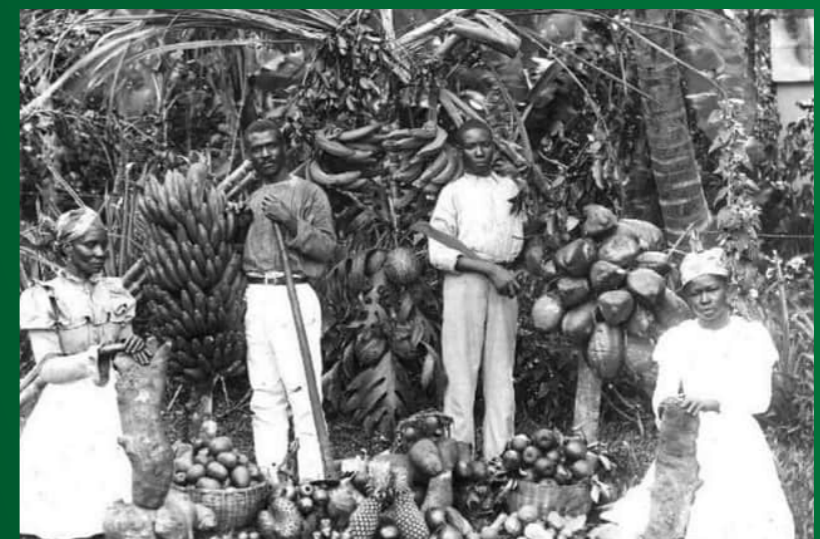


Photo taken in 1903 in Jamaica by Edward Mellor.



PHOTOGRAPH AND
MOUNT TYPES

Carte de visite of Agnes Moon In Mourning by Isaac Bradley, circa 1863.

MOUNT TYPES



- From 1840 to 1900, there emerged several different types of methods for taking photographs and for mounting those photographs.
- These methods developed over the course of seven decades to 1900. To help with narrowing down the date for our photographs, it is important to know what type of photographic method or mount type was used.

As we go through the mount types, try to organise your photographs into categories so then you know which are oldest and which are your youngest photographs.

DAGUERROTYPE

Daguerrotype

Key features

First produced: 1838

Most popular: 1840s

End of production: mid-to-late 1850s

- The first photographic method to reach British shores in 1839.
- Daguerrotypes are a rarity in British family collections due to their greater age.
- Daguerrotypes will always be encased, often made of leather and lined with silk or velvet.
- Printed on a polished silver plate and depending on the angle you view them, they can look like a negative or a positive.
- Daguerrotypes are typically quite small, usually around 2" x 3".



Encased daguerrotype with note.

AMBROTYPE

Ambrotype

Key features

- Often called collodion positives by the English.
- Ambrotypes can either be framed or encased.
- Being cheaper than daguerrotypes, the cases for ambrotypes were usually compressed paper and card rather than leather and silk.
- Ambrotypes always appear as a positive image whatever angle you view them from.
- Gilding of jewellery common.

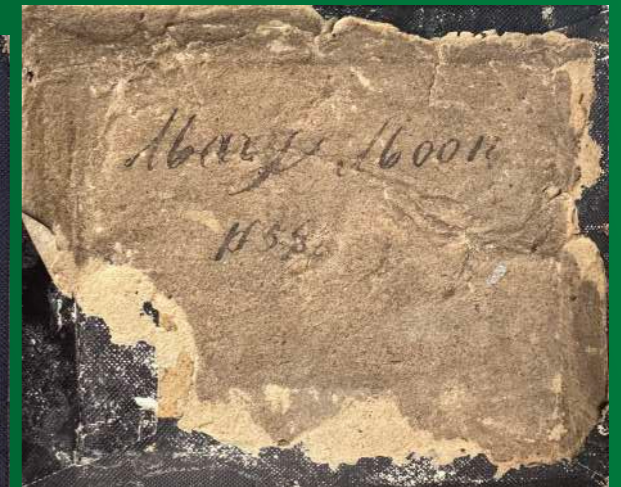
First produced: 1851

Most popular: 1854 to early 1860s

End of production: 1865



Observe side of framed ambrotype. Produced in 1858.



Reverse side of framed ambrotype of Ralph and Agnes Moon, 1858.



Encased ambrotype.

TINTYPE

Tintype

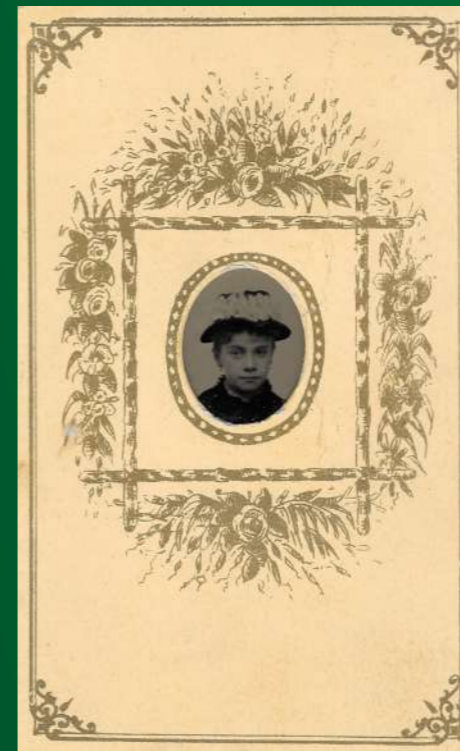
Key features

First produced: 1853

Most popular: 1860s to 1870s

End of production: 1930s

- Also known as the ferrotype. Often taken by travelling amateur photographers at carnivals or the seaside.
- The easiest way to identify a tintype is by feeling for the metal plate that the photograph is placed on. You can also use a magnet to help with this.
- Also look for rust spots or blisters on the surface where the enamel has started to lift off as seen in the example given.
- Tintypes were most often framed in either papier-mâché cases or in a more substantial frame often with a golden border.
- Tintypes can be distinguished from ambrotypes by their lower quality image and very dark grey-black.



Obverse side of a tintype in a papier-mâché frame.



Obverse side of a framed ferrotype of Elizabeth Moon of Daisy Hill Farm, Euxton, 1861.

CARTE DE VISITE

Carte de visite

Key features

- Likely to form the bulk of any British family collection from the 19th century.
- A collodion negative glued onto a thick paper card and typically measuring 2.5" x 4".
- Sometimes feature the photographer's name and city on the front side and the photographer's logo on the reverse side.
- General rule: the more elaborate the photographer's logo the later the *carte de visite* tends to be.
- General rule: the thinner the mount, the earlier the photograph.
- If your *carte de visite* features a line around its edges, then this indicates an older photograph as does any *carte de visite* without details of the photographer.

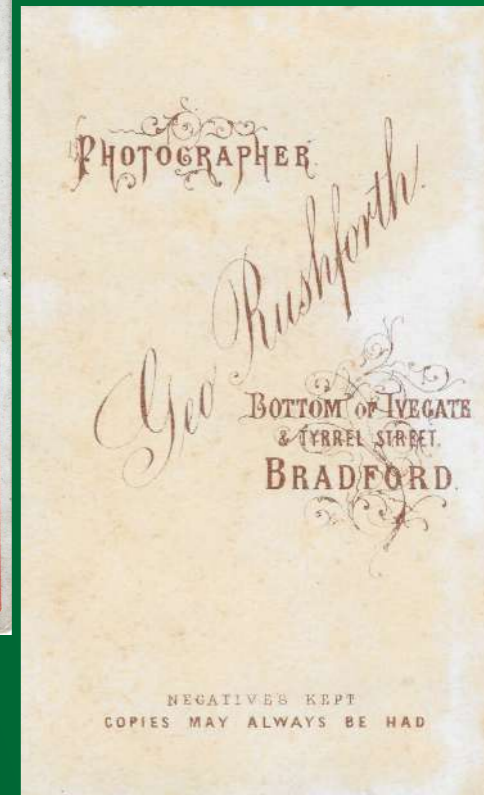
First produced: 1850s

Most popular: 1860s to 1880s

End of production: 1910



Obverse side of *carte de visite*. Circa 1859.



Obverse side of *carte de visite*.

CABINET CARD

Cabinet Card

Key features

- A collodion negative glued onto a stiff piece of cardboard and distinguished from *cartes de visite* by their larger size, measuring 4.25" x 6.5", and their thicker card mount.
- Cabinet cards of the 1880s sometimes had bevelled edges and were often finished in gold or silver.
- Cream mounts were always popular but black, dark brown, green and burgundy mounts became popular in the 1880s and 1890s.
- Cabinet cards were less popular in England than in the United States which is why cabinet cards are more rare to find in British collections today.

First produced: 1866

Most popular: 1870s to 1890s

End of production: 1924



Man and dog cabinet card circa 1900. © Science Museum Group collection.



The Prince of Wales cabinet card circa 1877. © Science Museum Group collection.

CARTE POSTALE

Carte postale

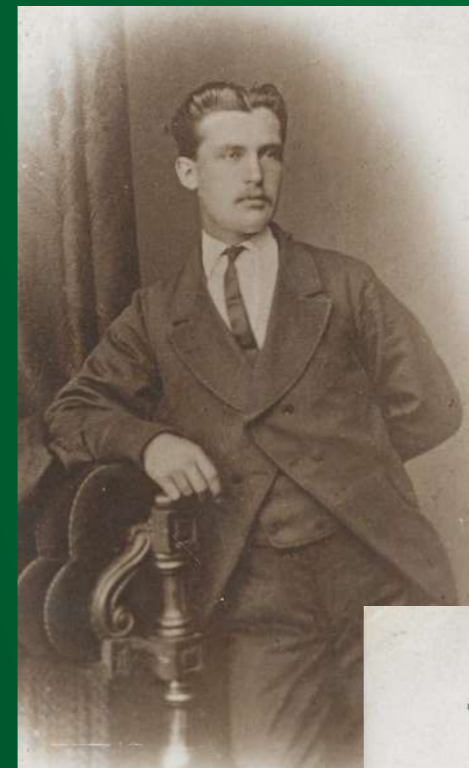
Key features

First produced: 1894

Most popular: 1902 to 1940s

End of production: 1940s

- Known in English as the postcard. Older postcards are more likely to include the French term as well as or instead of the English term. Often measure 5.5" x 3.5".
- If your postcard only has a space on the reverse side for an address then it will originate pre-1902.
- Only after 1902 did the British Post Office provide a space for correspondence to be written on the reverse side of postcards which can help with dating them however beware that your postcard might be a copy of an older photograph (as with the example given).
- Later postcards sometimes have their exact date of production stamped onto their reverse side so check for this.



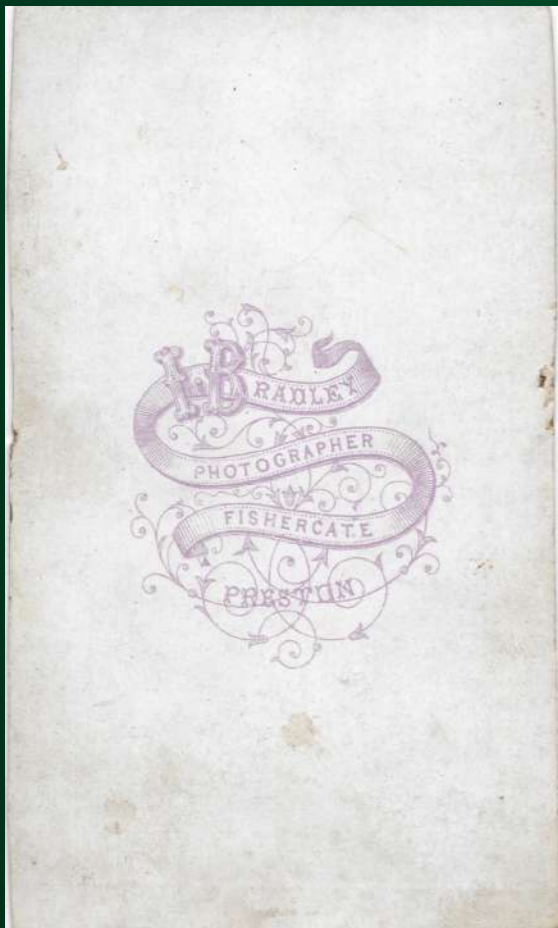
Obverse and reverse side of a *carte postale* of Joseph Prescott, circa 1897.



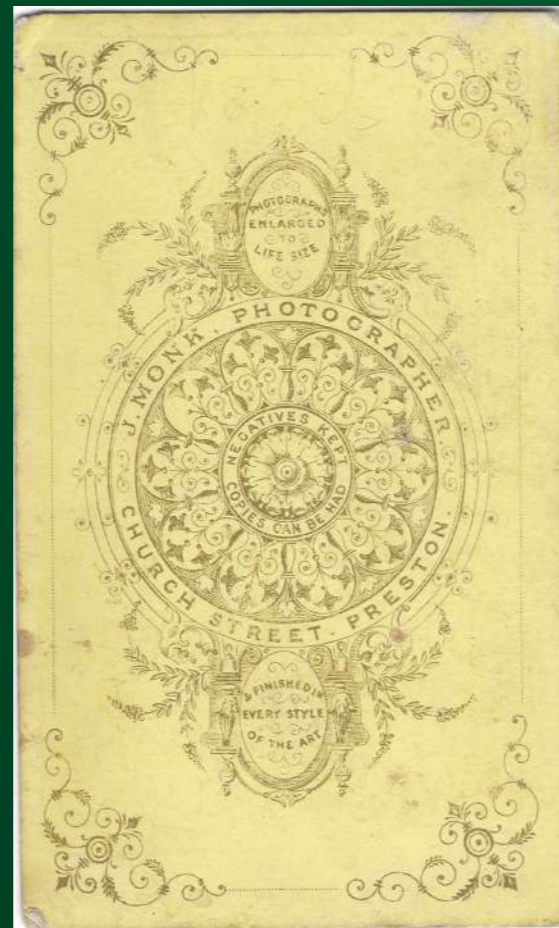
PHOTOGRAPHER LOGO

1. Search Google to see what information you can find about the photographer which will provide more context to the photograph.

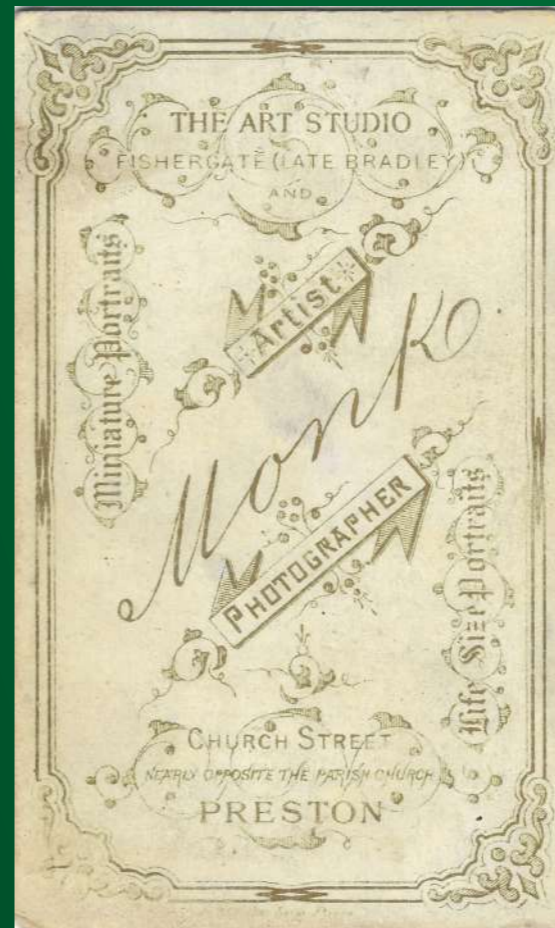
2. Search the British Newspaper Archives for advertisements from the photographer to determine when and where they were active.



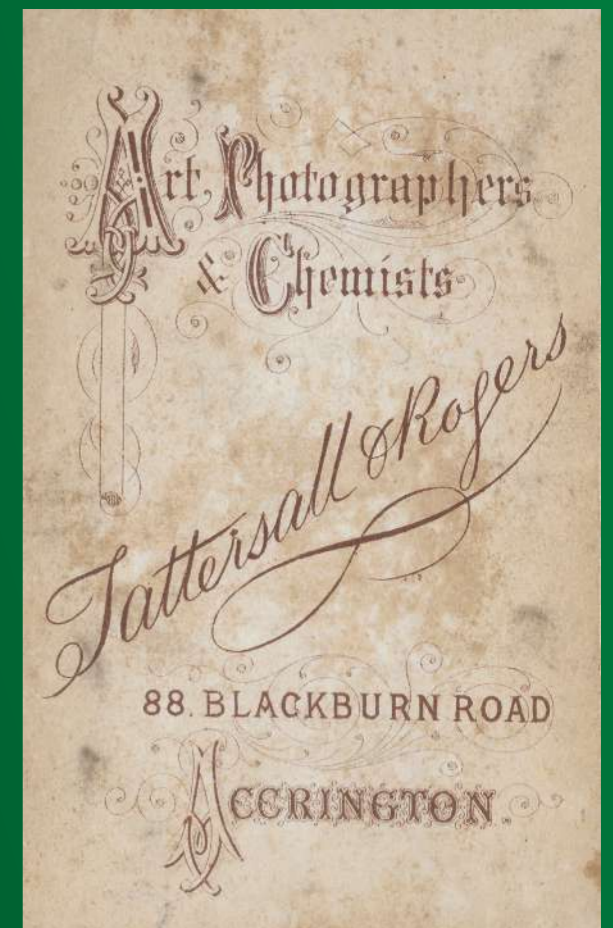
Photographer logo
from 1860s



Photographer logo
from 1860s



Photographer logo
from 1870s



Photographer logo
from 1880s

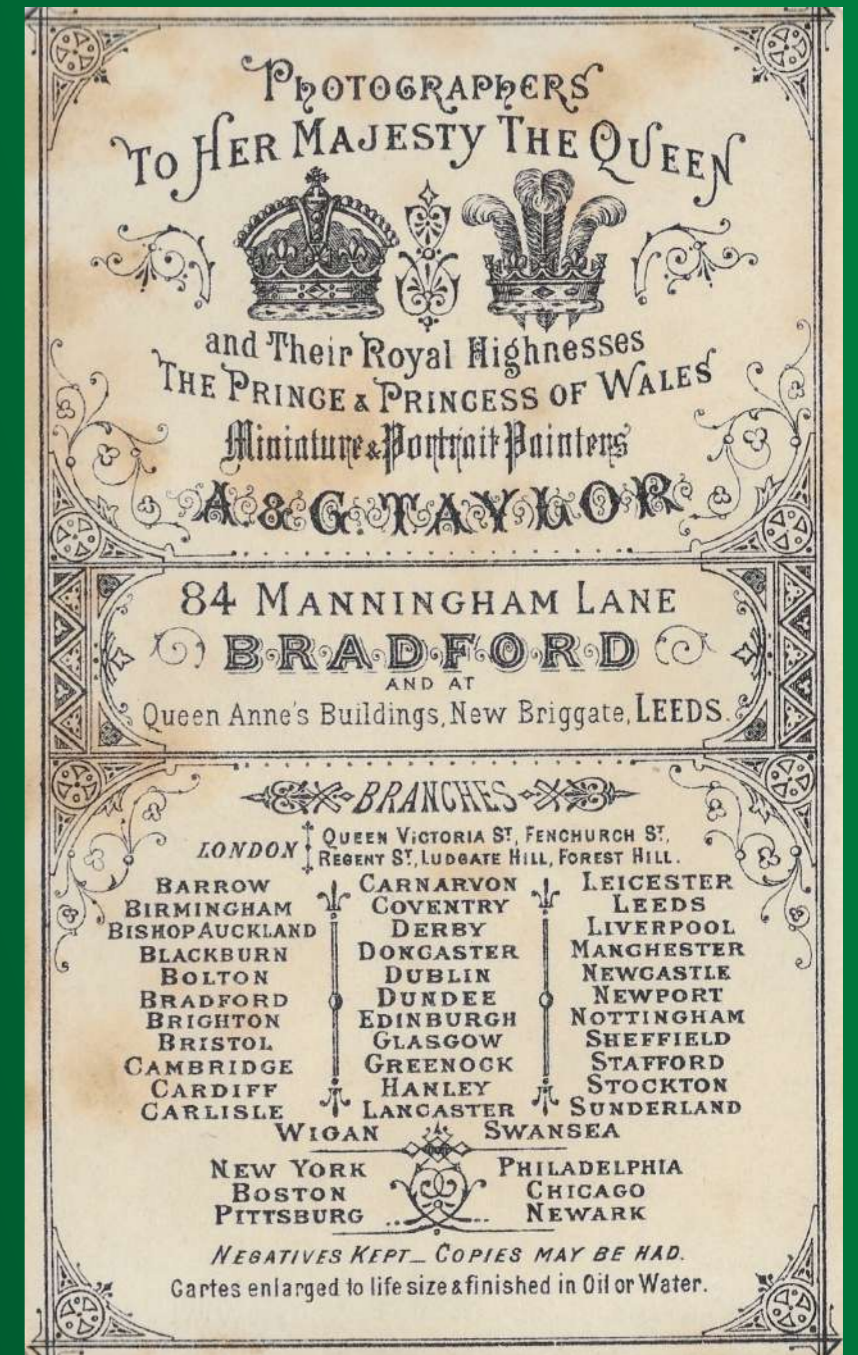
When did the photographer occupy that particular studio?

Did the photographer have a royal warrant?

Did the photographer travel around or stay in one studio?

ROYAL WARRANTS

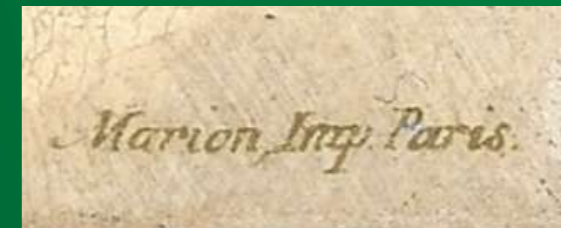
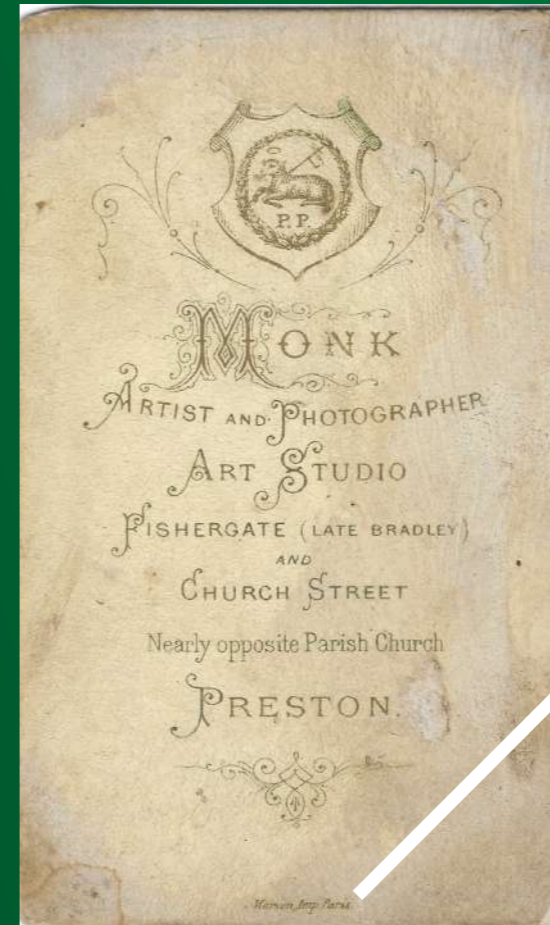
- There is likely to be more information available on photographers/studios that received a royal warrant than those that did not.
- This information could be useful in providing further context to your photograph and may help you in dating it.
- There were around 60 photographers/studios that received royal warrants during the second half of the nineteenth century.
- You can find a list of nineteenth century photographers with royal warrants in *The Handbook of Antique Photographs*.



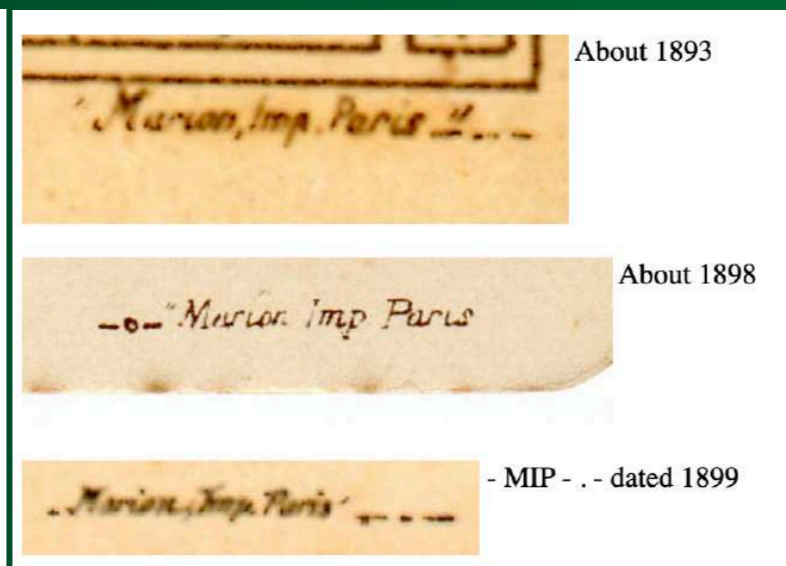
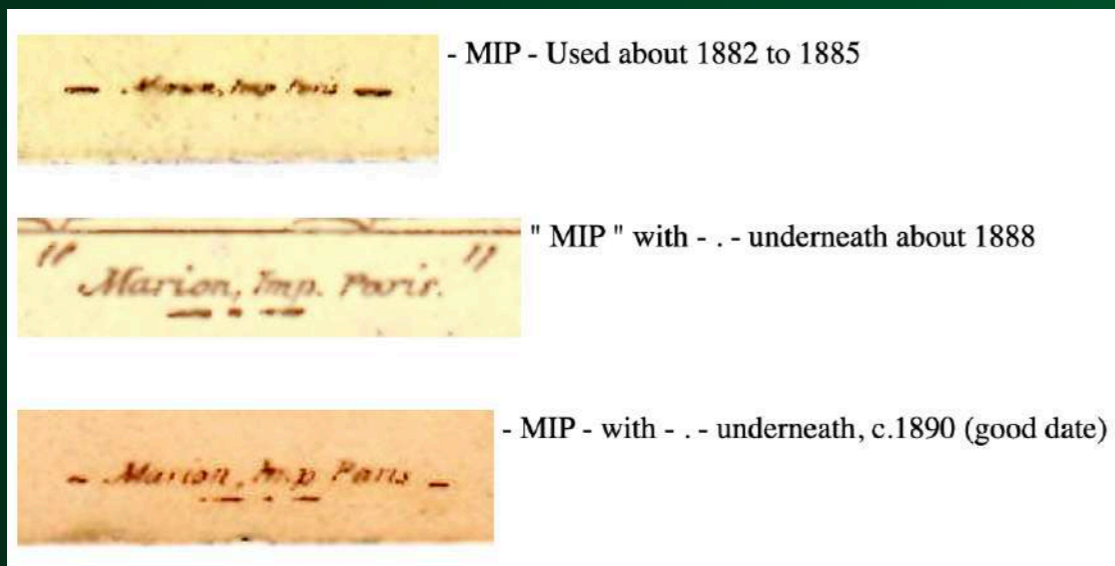
A & G Taylor, photographers with a royal warrant granted in 1886.

MARION DATE CODE

- In 2003, family historian Robert Vaughan suggested that the dots and dashes he had noticed on either side or just one side of the printer's name and only on *cartes de visite* produced during the 1880s formed a date code.
- For instance, Vaughan believed that one dot or dash on either side of the printer's name indicates the card was produced in 1882.
- Vaughan also warned that the printer's name was written just as Marion Imp Paris in the 1870s but that this does not discount that a portrait could have been taken later.



No dots nor dashes on the back of the 1880 *carte de visite* suggests that the mount on which the photograph was placed was printed in the 1870s but used for this portrait in 1880 as a way of using up old stock.



FURTHER GUIDANCE ON MOUNT TYPES

- 1858-1870: No studio details on front; thin card; square-cut corners.
- 1860-1870: Simple trade plate backs.
- 1870-1880: More ornate backs, all-over design.
- 1870-1905: Corners generally rounded.
- 1876-1884: Some coloured card.
- 1880-1895: Highly elaborate and informative backs.
- 1882-1905: Bevelled edges.
- 1883-1895: Backs often with pictures.
- 1883-1899: Dark card, pale lettering.



Carte de visite of older woman by W. H. Ledgard of Bradford.



Early Carte de visite of young woman with no details on reverse side.

TEN MINUTE CATEGORISATION TASK

- Now take some time to put your own photographs into the categories of mount types.
- There are also samples available for each mount type to help guide you to give you an idea of the different types mentioned.
- I will also be available to help with any difficulties.
- Please begin to fill in your Log Sheets per photograph.
- Please also use the *Handbook of Antique Photographs* that you were given at the start of today's session to help.
- Also, help each other by comparing your photographs and sharing knowledge.



BACKGROUND & SETTING

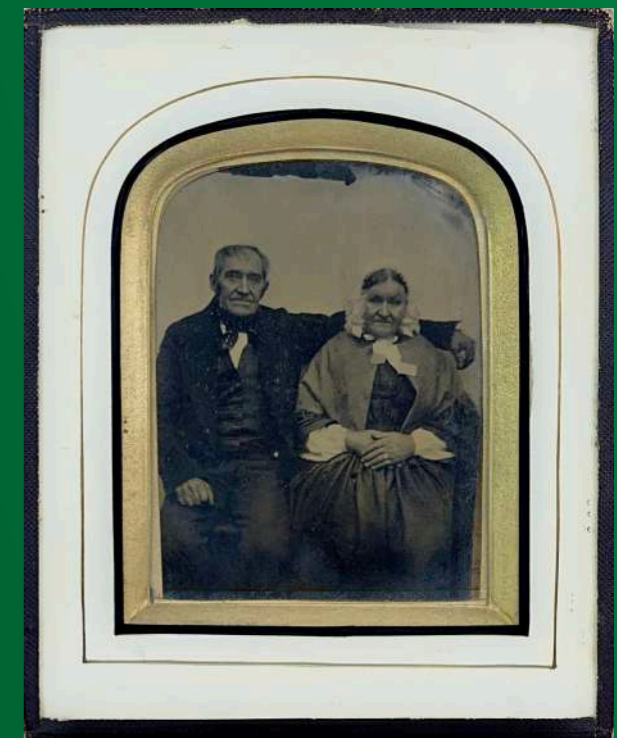
*Carte de visite of a lady from Bradford
taken at The Eclipse Photographic Rooms.*

SETTING

- 1855-1865: Neutral backgrounds, simple settings, curtains.
- 1868-1880: Chairs increasingly elaborate with padded backs, fringes; padded rests, lecterns.
- 1870-1880: Outdoor sets, 'natural' backdrops, stiles, fences, bridges, foliage (often painted).
- 1870-1880: Occasional seaside backgrounds.
- 1880-1890: Elaborate outdoor sets, swings, tussocks, rocks, hammocks; occasional railway carriages.
- 1880-1890: Revival of balustrades and plinths, often more weathered.
- 1890-1900: Exotic set details, highly artificial and elaborate sets, pot plants, mirrors, palms, cockatoos.



Earlier *carte de visite* of man from Chorley, circa 1859.



Ambrotype of Ralph and Agnes Moon, 1858. Notice the simpler background/setting.

EXAMPLE OF SPOTTING FEATURES

Estimated date: circa 1859

The red line border is characteristic of earlier *cartes de visite* of the late 1850s or early 1860s.

Notice the man's large cravat, popular in the 1850s.

The man wears a high coat and shirt collar.

Three-quarter length portrait.



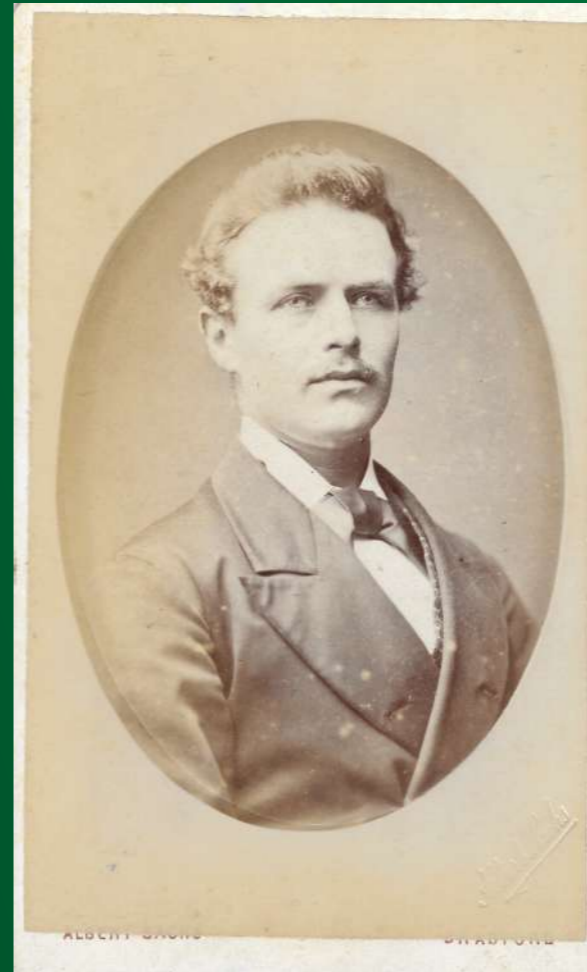
Notice the sparse background, indicating an earlier photograph.

Notice the table draped with a patterned tablecloth.

The background is neutral and has no curtain which became a ubiquitous feature of portraiture from 1860 onwards.

REMAINDER OF TODAY'S WORKSHOP

- Now begin to fill out the Log Sheets for each of your photographs by using the techniques shown.
- Use the handbook available to you and help each other by comparing your photographs.
- Next session we will be looking at fashion and composition in antique photographs which will allow you to fill in more details in the Log Sheets.



Carte de visite of man by Albert Sachs of Bradford.



Metal plate portrait of woman by Gregson of Blackpool.

DATING METHOD

1

Categorise the photograph by photographic method or mount type to ascertain the era of its origins

2

Consider features in the background and setting of the photograph including composition and positioning

3

Consider the attire of the subjects in the photograph to help corroborate the era

4

Consider the purpose the photograph was taken for and examine the items held by the subject

5

Use family history resources to help determine the identity of the subjects and add more context



THANK YOU FOR
ATTENDING

brtaylorian@uclan.ac.uk

*Carte de visite of woman from
Halifax by W. M. Hilton.*



VICTORIAN FASHION IN
**ANTIQUE
PHOTOGRAPHS**

Workshop Two

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