

MORE THAN “AN ELEGANT  
ACCOMPLISHMENT”: SARAH GARRETT  
HEWES AND PENNSYLVANIA’S EARLY  
FEMALE PHOTOGRAPHERS

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**Abstract:** This article explores the role of female photographers in the earliest years of photography in Pennsylvania focusing on the life and career of Sarah Garrett Hewes.

**Keywords:** photography, daguerreotypes, women

In 1850, when Sarah (or Sally) Hewes began working as a daguerreotypist, the photographic process had been in existence for just over a decade. News of the eponymous technological wonder, which had been introduced to the public by Frenchman Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre in August 1839, quickly traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to Philadelphia and other American cities. Beginning on September 25, 1839, Philadelphia newspapers began to publish descriptions of how to create and fix an image onto a silvered copper plate.<sup>1</sup> Detailed step-by-step instructions translated into English by University of Pennsylvania professor of chemistry and Franklin Institute member John Fries Frazer first appeared in the November

1839 issue of the *Journal of the Franklin Institute*. Those with a curious mind and scientific aptitude now had the resources to attempt to replicate and improve the process and to explore its possible commercial applications.

Even those not interested in making daguerreotypes on their own had opportunities within a few months of their introduction to learn about this new technological marvel. As early as the December 1839 meeting of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, members had the chance to examine daguerreotypes produced by Philadelphia lamp manufacturer Robert Cornelius.<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia's Franklin Institute offered "monthly conversation meetings," which provided both men and women the opportunity to learn about "the scientific or mechanical novelties of the day," including daguerreotypes.<sup>3</sup> Some public lectures and daguerreotype demonstrations in Philadelphia even specifically encouraged women to attend. On December 30, 1839, Walter R. Johnson, for example, advertised that he would be lecturing on daguerreotyping the next day in the Chemical Lecture Room of the Medical Department of Pennsylvania College and illustrating his lecture with "various experiments and by a variety of samples of the art." Single tickets cost fifty cents, but "a gentleman and two ladies" would be admitted for only \$1.00.<sup>4</sup> Savvy promoters of the daguerreotype process realized that women would be important consumers of the new technology, even if they were not expected to be practitioners.

Women, however, did experiment with the new process. Eliza J. Henry was one of five daguerreotype exhibitors at the Franklin Institute's October 1840 exhibition. The judges' report for the exhibition declared that the "Specimen Daguerreotype, by a Lady, [was] pretty good," but her work did not receive an award.<sup>5</sup> A somewhat more enthusiastic description of all the exhibitors' work was expressed by the *Public Ledger*, which declared that the daguerreotypes on display "consist of views and miniature likenesses and portraits, some of them are excellently well executed, and it would be a matter of difficulty to award the laurel to either of these aspirants to renown."<sup>6</sup> Among those vying for an award was a G. W. Henry who most likely was related to Eliza, but their exact relationship has not yet been determined. Both Eliza and G. W. appear to have been amateurs who did not pursue daguerreotyping beyond their initial willingness to experiment with the new process.

Although news of the daguerreotype captured the public's imagination, the number of people who pursued photography as either amateurs or professionals in its first two decades remained small. John Craig in his *Daguerreian Registry* lists approximately 875 photographers, suppliers, or those in related

industries working in Pennsylvania between 1839 and 1860.<sup>7</sup> Using Craig's list along with other sources, sixteen women or approximately 1.8 percent of the total number were identified as working either as camera operators or as "photographic painters" who embellished images with color highlights. Philadelphia, as befitting its status as the most populous city in the commonwealth, supported 11 women working in the daguerreotype field among its 300 male practitioners, making women approximately 3.5 percent of the city's daguerreotypists. Female photographers are also known to have worked in Pittsburgh, Carlisle, West Chester, and Pleasantville prior to 1860.<sup>8</sup> Overall, these figures are consistent with photo-historian William Culp Darrah's findings showing that women made up a small, but steady, percentage of America's professional photographers between the mid-1840s and 1890.<sup>9</sup>

As is typical in every profession, the quality of these early photographers' work varied greatly. In 1856 an anonymous writer, identified only as Cuique Suum (Latin for "to each his own"), surveyed photographic studios in both New York City and Philadelphia and published brief reviews in the periodical *Photographic and Fine Art Journal*. Of the fifty-eight galleries he visited in Philadelphia, two were headed by women (approximately 3.5 percent of the total). Although Cuique Suum pointedly specified which photographers were female in his brief reviews and only included honorific titles for the female operatives on his list, he seemed able to impartially judge the merits of their work regardless of gender. Although somewhat patronizing to the two women, Cuique Suum directed far more cutting words toward some of the male photographers. He dismissed the work produced in Ambrose Williams's Market Street daguerreotype studio as "dirty, dim and crying aloud for improvement." "We must pass this artist [William Sailer] in silence and tears," he declared about a competing studio. In contrast, Cuique Suum praised the daguerreotypist Miss Mahan. "We grant the lady every compliment of the art," he wrote, "and hope she will be able to raise her prices." A visit to Mlle. Gunn's studio led him to write: "Success to her, whatever her faults."<sup>10</sup>

Even if Cuique Suum seemed able to objectively rate the photographic work of women, the concept of female photographers was not met with universal approval. Mid nineteenth-century photographic literature debated the proper place for women in photographic studios. In 1854 the author of *The Daguerreotype Director, Reese & Co.'s German System of Photography and Picture Making* bluntly declared: "we shall yet believe that female Daguerreians are greatly out of place, pants or no pants."<sup>11</sup>

Others saw a role for women in the photography business, although not necessarily as actual operators. Some tasks were seen as particularly appropriate

for female sensibilities. Montgomery P. Simons's 1857 book *Plain Instructions for Coloring Photographs in Water Colors and India Ink* received praise as a resource for the "hundreds of young ladies with taste and skill in coloring, who, by the aid of this little book, can apply that taste and skill to the coloring of Photographs, either as a means of earning money, or as an elegant accomplishment."<sup>12</sup> *The Photographic News* a decade later expressed surprise that so few women worked in photography's "productive departments" since "photography possesses so many branches which might be deemed peculiarly suited to the female capacity, requiring neat-handed skill rather than strength, and delicacy of taste rather than endurance." The article concluded that women lacked the seriousness of purpose to pursue the more technical aspects of photography since they expected to marry and give up working outside the home.<sup>13</sup>

While marriage and a domestic life may have been the expected norm for all women, some found their entrée into photography through a husband or male relative and worked in the field as part of a family business. Of the sixteen women engaged in photography in Pennsylvania prior to 1860, five can be identified as having a connection of some sort to men in the field. Elizabeth Mahan who advertised her Market Street photographic studio in the *Philadelphia Merchant and Manufacturer's Business Directory for 1856–57*, for example, was most likely connected in some way to the male Mahans who also operated photographic studios in the city.<sup>14</sup> A more definite connection can be made between Mrs. Currie and her spouse. In 1854 and 1855 Mrs. William Currie was listed in Philadelphia directories as working with her husband who was identified as a "gent. talbotypist" (a talbotype is an early form of paper photography).<sup>15</sup> Evidence of a family business is also found in the 1860 census where Mary Black, the daughter of Philadelphian photographer James R. Black, is listed as living in her parents' home and working as an artist. It is not too hard to assume that she was probably utilizing her artistic skills in her father's studio.<sup>16</sup>

Philadelphian Charlotte Hutton's interest in daguerreotypes may have been sparked by her silversmith husband who possibly supplied daguerreotypists with the silvered plates on which they created their images. Under the listing "C.M. Hutton" Charlotte Hutton advertised her services as a daguerreotypist in the business listings of Philadelphia directories in 1854 and 1855. Her decision to advertise using only initials for her first and middle names may or may not have been based on a desire to conceal her gender, since many of her male counterparts advertised using only their initials as well.<sup>17</sup> Samuel Hutton apparently took over his wife's business in 1856 when he is listed as operating a "Daguerrean Gallery" at the northeast corner of Second and South streets, Charlotte's former location, with no mention of Charlotte.<sup>18</sup>

For other women, their entering the photography field appears independent of a male connection. Ann (Anna/Annie) McGinn, for example, independently operated a daguerreotype studio in Philadelphia from 1857 until 1862. Her five years as a daguerreotypist represent the longest time any female photographer in Pennsylvania remained in business during this period. She then worked as a photographer in San Francisco for several more years.<sup>19</sup> Esther (known as Hetty) Kersey Painter was another woman who seems to have entered the world of photography independently of male family members. In December 1851 Painter, the wife of a telegrapher, advertised her daguerreotype studio in West Chester, Pennsylvania. "Hetty K. Painter respectfully informs her friends and the public that she is prepared to take daguerreotypes in the most approved and durable style," stated the advertisement. "Those wishing either family groups or single pictures, will please give her a call."<sup>20</sup> Painter was not, however, the first woman to operate a daguerreotype studio in West Chester. In the spring of 1850, Sarah Hewes and her business partner Samuel Broadbent had stopped in the Chester County seat and offered their daguerreotype skills to those in the area. Although Painter was living in Ohio in 1850 and probably did not have first-hand knowledge of Hewes's daguerreotype work in West Chester, Hewes may have paved the way for Painter to find community acceptance in pursuing what was an uncommon female occupation.

Painter's late 1851 newspaper advertisement provided the only evidence of her involvement with photography. By 1860 she had graduated from medical college in Philadelphia and quickly put her medical skills to use ministering to Union soldiers during the Civil War. After the war she continued working as a physician in the American West, as well as actively participating in temperance and suffrage organizations. Newspaper testimonials upon Painter's death related her astonishingly busy and productive life story, but made no mention of what seems to have been her very brief time as a daguerreotypist.<sup>21</sup>

Hetty Painter lived a life outside of societal expectations and norms, and to a lesser extent, so did Sarah Hewes. Hewes's story reflects the motivations and means that propelled and enabled women to practice photography in the mid-nineteenth century. As the daughter of a successful Quaker merchant, Hewes probably never expected to be employed outside her family's home and certainly not in such a male-dominated field. When a series of unfortunate, even scandalous, events made it necessary for her to support her young children, daguerreotyping was an avenue of paid employment initially made available to her through a male family member. Whether she entered the

photographic business reluctantly out of necessity or with the enthusiasm of an adventuresome spirit, the daguerreotype illustrated in figure 1 indicates that Hewes mastered the medium. Hewes has nicely positioned the older Quaker couple in front of a painted backdrop. Their interaction with each other as well as with Hewes appears natural and relaxed creating a pleasing portrait.

Sarah Sharpless, the eldest daughter of Quaker abolitionist Thomas Garrett and his wife Mary Sharpless Garrett, was born on April 15, 1819, joining an older brother, Ellwood. Within eight years, three more children were born to the couple. The Garretts, a family of some means, owned a farm and mills just outside of Philadelphia in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. In 1822 Thomas Garrett moved his growing family to Wilmington, Delaware, where he established a successful mercantile, iron, coal, and hardware business in the city's commercial district. In 1828, when Sarah Garrett was nine years old, her mother died, and a year and a half later her father remarried. Thomas and his new wife, Rachel Mendinhall Garrett, added one more child to the family.<sup>22</sup>

Only a few months after her mother's death, Sarah Garrett left home to become a pupil at Westtown School, a Quaker boarding school located in rural Chester County, Pennsylvania, about twenty miles from Wilmington. Several of her aunts and uncles had attended Westtown and her two younger sisters later followed in her footsteps. Sarah Garrett entered a school of slightly more than one hundred students, three-quarters of whom were female. With the exception of sewing classes, the girls' curriculum closely followed that of the boys and available classes included reading, grammar, science, spelling, arithmetic, and geography. She remained at Westtown for a little more than a year, leaving the school a week before her father's remarriage. It is not known if she continued her education beyond her time at Westtown.<sup>23</sup>

On September 9, 1841, at the Wilmington Monthly Meeting in front of about sixty witnesses, twenty-two year-old Sarah Garrett married fellow Quaker Edward C. Hewes, a member of a well-off Wilmington family. The Hewes and Garrett families were united not only by marriage, but also through a business relationship. Thomas Garrett and Edward Hewes were partners in the Elk Iron Works, a rolling mill producing metal plates and bars, located in Elkton, Maryland. During their marriage, the young couple had three children, Mary, Emlen, and Charles.<sup>24</sup>

Wedded life, however, proved to be less than blissful. The Wilmington Monthly Meeting minutes for June 1846 recorded that Edward C. Hewes had been charged with adultery. A few months later the committee sent to



FIGURE 1: Sarah Garrett Hewes, *Unidentified Couple*, half-plate daguerreotype, ca. 1850. The Library Company of Philadelphia. "S. G. Hewes" is embossed on the red-velvet pad.

investigate the charge made its final report. Edward Hewes was not "in a state of mind suitably to condemn his transgression," declared the committee, "[and] we testify that he is no longer a member of our Religious Society."<sup>25</sup> Certainly such a public condemnation of her husband in front of their friends and neighbors must have humiliated Sarah Hewes, but he was not the first member of either the Garrett or Hewes family to face similar punishment. Both of Edward's parents had been disowned in 1831 and soon after her marriage to Thomas Garrett in 1830, Sarah Hewes's stepmother had been expelled from the Wilmington Monthly Meeting because of her attendance at other religious services.<sup>26</sup>

It is impossible to know how Edward Hewes's troubles affected their marriage, but by 1850 he had relocated by himself to San Francisco, California. Perhaps like many restless spirits, Edward may have been lured west by the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill near Sacramento in 1848. His western adventure, however, proved short-lived. Edward Hewes died in a cholera epidemic that swept through the area in the fall of 1850.<sup>27</sup> At the age of thirty-one, Sarah Garrett Hewes was now a widow with three small children to support.

At the time of Sarah Hewes's most pressing need for familial support, her extended family was experiencing its own troubles, which may have prevented them from offering assistance. A few months before Edward Hewes's expulsion from the Society of Friends, the business partnership between her father and husband had dissolved. "I found that I could not get along with E. C. Hewes in the concern [Elk Iron Works]," Thomas Garrett wrote, "as his name was a clog in consequence of his extravagance."<sup>28</sup> Thomas Garrett's anti-slavery work also compounded his financial woes in the late 1840s. Garrett had gained a national reputation as an abolitionist, helping to organize a network of like-minded citizens in the Philadelphia area who provided money, transportation, and general assistance to slaves fleeing the south. Thomas Garrett supposedly helped 2,700 slaves escape bondage during his time with the Underground Railroad. In 1848 he faced a serious legal challenge when charges were brought against him and an associate for damages they caused in assisting several slaves to escape. The court assessed the damages at \$5,400, but Garrett actually only paid a \$1,500 fine.<sup>29</sup> This fine did not impoverish him, but may have made it difficult for him to financially assist his eldest daughter when her husband left her and later when she became a widow.

Sarah Hewes's older brother, Ellwood, also experienced financial difficulties in the late 1840s. In 1845 he had opened a machine shop in Wilmington,



but disaster struck in 1849 when his shop burned to the ground. Ellwood then made a decision that influenced Hewes's life. Rather than rebuild his machine shop, he decided to pursue a career as a daguerreotypist. Ellwood Garrett was mechanically inclined and there is anecdotal evidence that he had experimented with daguerreotyping in its earliest days. He began studying daguerreotyping with Samuel Broadbent, an itinerant artist turned daguerreotypist, who in 1849 had opened a studio in Wilmington's new Glazier Building, a very advantageous studio location in the city's commercial district. By the end of 1850, Ellwood was advertising his own studio, located on the same block as Samuel Broadbent's business.<sup>30</sup>

Sarah Hewes undoubtedly learned how to take daguerreotypes from her brother or directly from Samuel Broadbent. Evidence has not been found to indicate that Hewes ever worked in her brother's Wilmington studio. She apparently made the decision to join forces with Samuel Broadbent and partnered with him during her three years as a daguerreotypist. Although Samuel Broadbent's family had settled with him in Wilmington by 1850, Broadbent was not yet ready or able to give up his traveling life, and he now had a business partner, Sarah Hewes, with whom he could travel.<sup>31</sup>

If Sarah Hewes had chosen to work with her brother in Wilmington, she could have stayed rooted within her family and her religious community, not only sharing a studio with Ellwood, but also being in the same building as her younger brother Henry, a dentist. By choosing to work with Broadbent, a peripatetic non-Quaker, Hewes was in many ways leaving her comfortably familiar world behind. She was not yet a widow when she joined forces with Broadbent, but may have realized that with a husband in far-off California, and a family suffering financial strains, she needed to rely on herself for economic security. Unlike her brother, who was just launching his daguerreotype career, Broadbent had years of experience and partnering with him may have made more economic sense. Why Broadbent accepted Hewes as a partner or colleague is less clear, particularly since his nephew Charles Cook lived with the Broadbent family in Wilmington and was apprenticing with him as a "picture maker."<sup>32</sup> Perhaps Broadbent simply recognized Hewes's talents as a daguerreotypist.

Probably sometime in early 1850, Samuel Broadbent made the approximately twenty-mile trip from Wilmington to West Chester, Pennsylvania, and opened a daguerreotype studio. As he had in Wilmington, Broadbent chose a promising site for his business. Located above the law office of Joseph J. Lewis on Market Street, the building, opposite the

county courthouse, next to a hotel, and only three blocks away from the Philadelphia & Wilmington Railroad depot, was conveniently situated in an area sure to be filled with potential customers. Ready to move on by early spring, Broadbent on April 2, 1850, placed an advertisement in the *American Republican* announcing that he had "made arrangements with Mrs. Hewes to continue taking Daguerreotype Portraits, for a short time, at the rooms recently occupied by him in West Chester." The advertisement assured potential customers of the quality of her work, stating that "Mrs. H., who having been associated with him, practices in the same style, and the same process as Mr. B; it being acknowledged superior to that of any other artist."<sup>33</sup>

Broadbent and Hewes were not the only daguerreotypists to have recognized the advantages of operating a studio in what is considered West Chester's first office building. For at least six months in 1849, Messrs. Harned and White had operated a daguerreotype studio at this location. Shortly after Sarah Hewes vacated the premises in the spring of 1850, Phillip Price and Levi Crowl took over the space for their daguerreotype studio. And by the end of July 1850, yet another daguerreotypist, Thomas Van Osten, announced that he would be operating a studio above Mr. Lewis's office "for a short time."<sup>34</sup>

After leaving West Chester, Broadbent returned to Wilmington by the fall of 1850, but Hewes's whereabouts for the rest of that year are unknown.<sup>35</sup> Sarah Hewes and her three children cannot be found in the 1850 census either living in their own household or in the home of any of her family members. Although the logistics of traveling around the countryside with three children under the age of eight seem daunting, Hewes may have continued working as an itinerant daguerreotypist, thus eluding the censustakers. A reproduction of a daguerreotype taken at the Sharon Female Seminary, located outside of Philadelphia in Delaware County, and attributed to Hewes was recently discovered (fig. 2) and indicates that Hewes took daguerreotypes in locations other than West Chester and Philadelphia.<sup>36</sup>

Sarah Hewes and Samuel Broadbent joined forces again and began advertising their new studio in Philadelphia in April 1851.<sup>37</sup> The lure of a big city and its potentially large numbers of patrons must have been appealing, and Philadelphia was not a completely unknown locale for Hewes. Members of the extended Garrett family lived in the city, including her uncle Phillip Garrett, a watchmaker and machinist, whom Sarah is known to have visited as a girl, and her youngest sister, Margaret, who by 1850 resided in the city with her husband, James G. McCollin, an employee of the Bank of



“SISTER MARY” AND “SISTER JANE.”  
From a daguerreotype taken at Sharon, by Sallie G. Hughes,  
of Wilmington, Del.

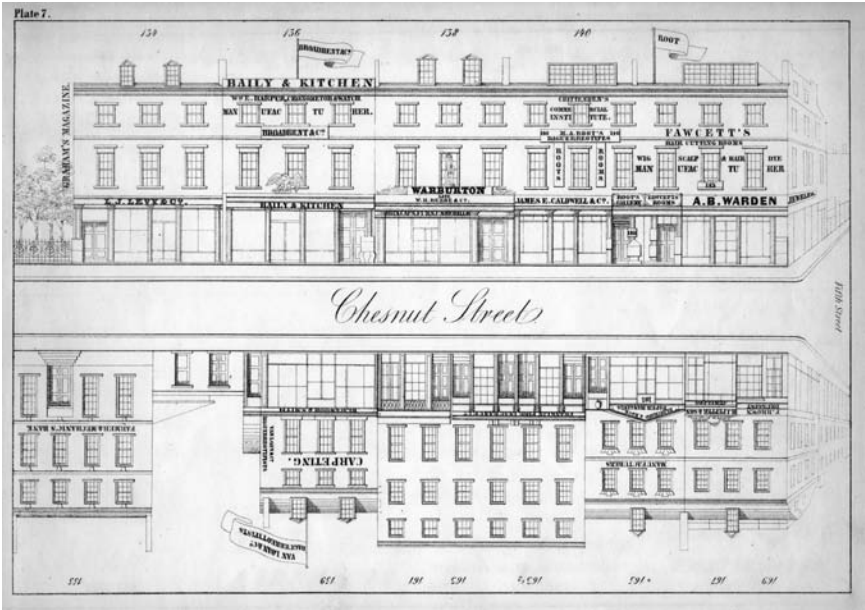
FIGURE 2: Sallie G. Hughes [Sarah Garrett Hewes], *Sister Mary and Sister Jane*, reproduction of a ca. 1850 daguerreotype in *Friends Intelligencer*, May 16, 1903, p. 307. Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections (Haverford, PA).

Pennsylvania.<sup>38</sup> Her father's abolitionist activities also tied the Garrett family to like-minded citizens of Philadelphia and the surrounding area.

Broadbent and Hewes chose a central location in which to establish their Philadelphia studio. Chestnut Street, one block east of Independence Hall, was an area already crowded with daguerreotypists, but the traffic in and out of the area could support many studios. The firm established itself at 136 Chestnut Street (currently the 400 block of Chestnut Street), in a space recently vacated by daguerreotypists William Marshall and A. F. Porter.<sup>39</sup> On the first floor of their building was jeweler, Bailey and Co., who in the past had supplied daguerreotype plates and lenses to the trade.<sup>40</sup> Directly across the street was the studio of Van Loan & Co. and two doors away stood Marcus Root's gallery (fig. 3). On the next block, still another daguerreotypist, Frederick deBourg Richards, had recently opened a studio in Montgomery P. Simons's former space.

Although the space that Samuel Broadbent and Sarah Hewes took over had previously been occupied by a daguerreotype studio, the new tenants appear to have quickly begun making improvements to the facility. With the exception of the Julio Rae panorama of the block, pre-1851 views of the building show dormer windows on the upper story of 136 Chestnut Street. When Broadbent and Hewes began running advertisements in the abolitionist newspaper *Pennsylvania Freeman* on April 10, 1851, they attempted to catch the attention of the newspaper's readers with text reading "Something New. Broadbent & Co. Colored Skylight Daguerreotypes."<sup>41</sup> What precisely a colored skylight daguerreotype was is not known, but skylights as an architectural feature would let in far more light than dormer windows, and would assist the operator in taking a successful daguerreotype. Broadbent and Hewes wanted to call attention to their building improvements, and mid-1850s views of the block show that the dormer windows of 136 Chestnut Street had been replaced with skylights (fig. 4).

As befitted a studio in a cosmopolitan city and facing many competitors, Broadbent & Co. emphasized the newness and diversity of their offerings. It was no longer enough to merely advertise the durability of their daguerreotype images as they had in West Chester, where they assured the public that "their pictures are strong as steel engravings and beautifully colored."<sup>42</sup> In addition to the "colored skylight daguerreotype," now their studio also offered "beautiful landscape, picturesque or plain backgrounds" as options to customers who wanted to play a part in creating their own images. "Those who desire pictures or portraits[,] copied Stereoscope portraits of



**FIGURE 3:** *Rae's Philadelphia Pictorial Directory & Panoramic Advertiser: Chestnut Street, from Second to Tenth Streets, Plate 7.* Philadelphia: Julio Rae, 1851. The Library Company of Philadelphia.

themselves, or miniatures on ivory or beautifully enameled on porcelain shall be faithfully served at 136 Chestnut St.” proclaimed the studio’s newspaper advertisement in a bid to entice the presumably more sophisticated urban customer.<sup>43</sup>

The exact working relationship between Broadbent and Hewes is not known. Obviously, the name of the firm indicates that Broadbent was the senior person in the business and newspaper advertisements for the studio consistently list Broadbent's name first. An 1851 advertisement for their Philadelphia studio, however, gave equal prominence to both of their names under the larger heading of Broadbent & Co. (fig. 5) In none of these advertisements was there any attempt to conceal Sarah Hewes's gender. She is either identified as "Mrs. S. G. Hewes" or as "Sally G. Hewes." Perhaps the novelty of a female daguerreotypist might have been seen as an inducement to attract curious customers. Rebecca Norris in her article "Samuel Broadbent, Daguerreian Artist" suggests that Hewes and Broadbent had "a loose partnership, with each able to handle his or her own customers, but sharing studio space, expenses and occasionally workload."<sup>44</sup> Since Broadbent & Co. continued to operate under that name for more than a decade after Hewes's

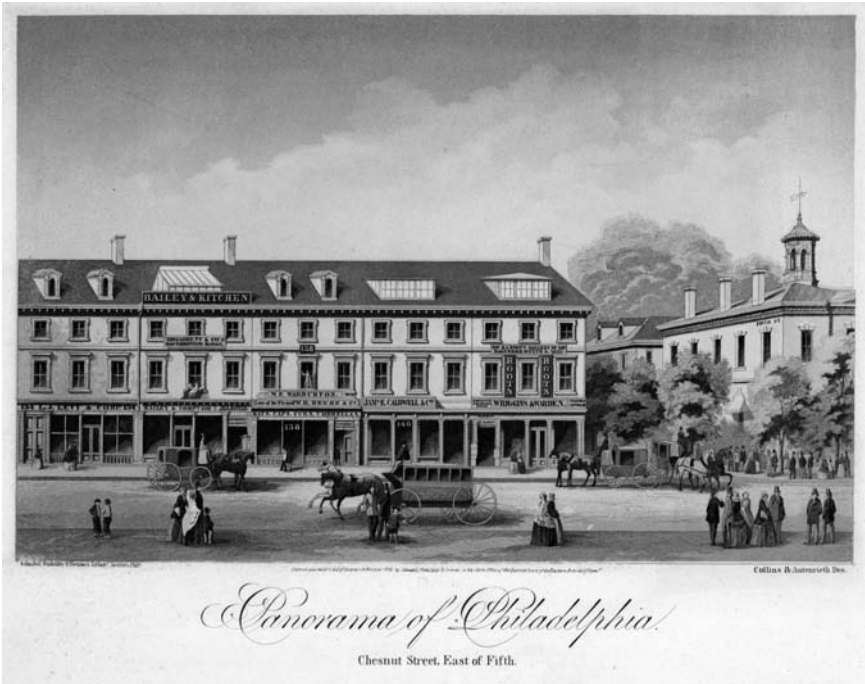


FIGURE 4: Collins & Autenrieth, *Chestnut Street, East of Fifth*, lithograph, Philadelphia: Schabel, Finkeldey & Demme, 1856. The Library Company of Philadelphia.

death, Broadbent either had associates in addition to Sarah Hewes or quickly acquired other partners after her death.

Sarah Hewes and Samuel Broadbent remained in business together on Chestnut Street until shortly before her death on September 3, 1853. Suffering from an unspecified illness, by early August 1853 Hewes had returned to Wilmington, Delaware to live in her father and stepmother's home. Apparently anticipating her own death, she made out a will selecting her brother-in-law and a cousin, both from Philadelphia, as executors for the estate and as guardians for her three young children. Hoping to ensure a successful future for her soon-to-be orphaned children, she requested that all her children “have a substantial and liberal Education out of the general fund” and that whatever money might be left over be divided equally among her two sons and a daughter.<sup>45</sup> A few weeks after writing her will, Hewes penned a letter to her younger sister, Anna, in

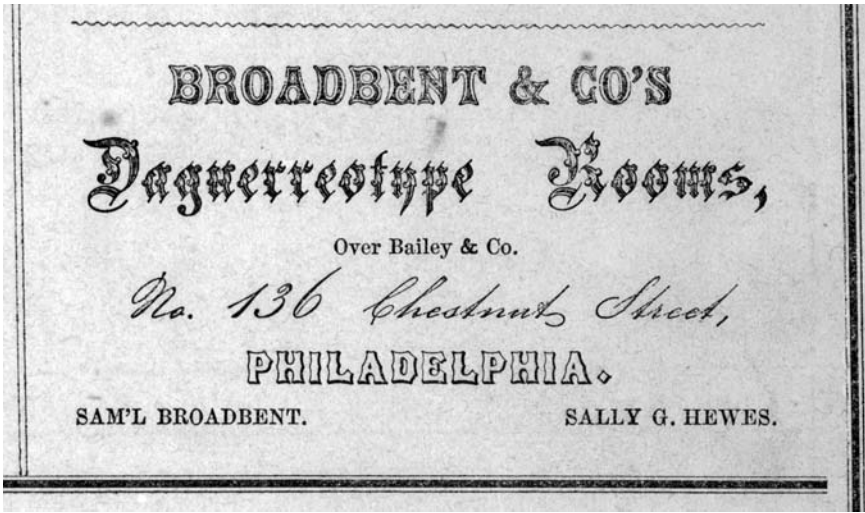


FIGURE 5: Detail from plate 7 *Rae's Philadelphia Pictorial Directory & Panoramic Advertiser: Chestnut Street from Second to Tenth Streets*. Philadelphia: Julio Rae, 1851. The Library Company of Philadelphia.

California, comforting her about her impending death. "I want to express the love I have for thee and thy Husband," she wrote, "and tho feeble in body tell you, how much you have occupied my thoughts on this sick bed." She enclosed strands of her hair and colorful leaves she collected from her time at "the water cure," and wrote, "I have loved the beautiful things of this life, the Bud, the Blossom, the evening Sunset and many, many things." She urged her sister to not fear death and wished her a fond farewell.<sup>46</sup> Sadly, her sister never received the letter since she died two days after Sarah Hewes wrote it.

Obituaries for the thirty-four-year-old Hewes appeared in the *Delaware Gazette* and Philadelphia's *Public Ledger*, but neither made any mention of her daguerreotype work. The newspapers merely reported that Hewes was from Wilmington and that her funeral would be held at the residence of her father, Thomas Garrett. The *Pennsylvania Freeman* printed a much longer tribute to the late Sarah Hewes in its November 17, 1853, issue. Reprinted from the *Saturday Evening Post*, Hewes's obituary was not typical of obituaries appearing in the *Pennsylvania Freeman* and its inclusion may reflect the importance of her father Thomas Garrett's abolitionist activities.<sup>47</sup> Although

almost no personal information about Hewes was included in this tribute, the genuine regard expressed for Hewes is evident amidst the flowery language. "A numerous circle bore witness to her well stored mind, enlarged intellect and kindly nature," praised the anonymous memorialist. "It may seem that this is but a tardy tribute to one so worthy and so regretted," mourned the author. "The writer was too selfishly sorrowful to record that sorrow earlier, and indeed hoped that some more able pen would commemorate the virtues of the loved and lost."<sup>48</sup>

Sarah Hewes did not leave behind any cameras or photographic equipment among her personal effects. Her estate largely consisted of clothing, linens, tableware, and a few pieces of furniture. Her executors, however, carefully recorded that her estate was owed almost \$2,600 by Samuel Broadbent from notes dated 1852 and 1853. The last and largest note for \$1,600 was dated August 2, 1853, indicating that Sarah Hewes and Samuel Broadbent had a business relationship up until a month before her death.<sup>49</sup>

Sarah Hewes's time as a daguerreotypist was relatively short and her tangible photographic legacy is not large, but her importance as a pioneering female daguerreotypist should not be minimized.<sup>50</sup> At a time when only about 2 to 3 percent of Pennsylvania's photographers were female, Hewes's decision to pursue daguerreotyping as her livelihood was unusual. Her daguerreotypist brother may have been her entrée into the profession, but unlike some of her female contemporaries who chose to pursue photography within the family circle, Hewes followed a more independent route, forming a partnership with one of Philadelphia's leading daguerreotypists. For three years she supported herself and family through her daguerreotyping skill and her willingness to adapt to changing circumstance whether that meant traveling the Pennsylvania countryside as an itinerant photographer or moving to Philadelphia to establish a studio. Sarah Hewes's experience illuminates a small, but important chapter in the history of the daguerreotype profession.

## NOTES

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1. A.D.B. [Alexander Dallas Bache], "The Daguerreotype Explained," *United States Gazette*, September 25, 1839.
2. American Philosophical Society Proceedings, 1:155. Founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743, the American Philosophical Society is the country's oldest learned society.
3. Alexander Dallas Bache, *Address Delivered at the Close of the Twelfth Exhibition of American Manufactures Held by the Franklin Institute*, October 1842, p. 13, and *National Gazette*, February 8, 1840. The Franklin Institute did not keep attendance records for lectures, but as early as 1825 each Franklin Institute member received a "ladies' ticket" for the lectures. (email between author and Susannah J. Carroll, curatorial coordinator, Franklin Institute, June 17, 2014).
4. *North American*, December 30, 1839, <http://www.genealogybank.com>.
5. The Franklin Institute, Committee on Exhibitions Archives, "American Manufacturers' Exhibition," "11th Exhibition 1840, Judges Reports, Correspondence, Other," "1840 Eleventh Exhibition, Judges' Reports—Fine Arts," report 3.
6. *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, October 20, 1840, <http://www.genealogybank.com>.
7. John S. Craig, compiler and editor, *Craig's Daguerreian Registry*, vol. 1 (Torrington, CT: John S. Craig, 1994), 264–74.
8. Ibid.; Linda A. Ries and Jay W. Ruby, *Directory of Pennsylvania Photographers, 1839–1900* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1999), and Pamela C. Powell, compiler, "Nineteenth-Century Female Chester County Photographers," Chester County Historical Society Library, West Chester, PA, research files were used to compile these statistics. The statistics, however, need to be used with caution. Craig was only interested in daguerreotypists and ambrotypists, while Ruby and Ries included photographers practicing all different processes. Although daguerreotypes and ambrotypes dominated the practice until about 1860, by the late 1850s photographers, including women, may have entered the profession having only produced paper photographs and, thus, would not be included in Craig's survey.
9. William Culp Darrah, "Nineteenth-Century Women Photographers," in *Shadow and Substance: Essays on the History of Photography*, ed. Kathleen Collins (Bloomfield, MI: The Amorphous Institute Press, 1990), 97. Darrah based his study on the names imprinted on cartes-de-visite, cabinet cards, and stereographs and concluded that women constituted 1.6–1.8 percent of American photographers during that period. He did not include amateurs or the names of female photographers only seen listed in city directories.
10. Cuique Suum, "The Photographic Galleries of America, Number Two—Philadelphia," *Photographic and Fine Art Journal*, April 1856, 124–26, <http://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/photographic-fine91856newy>.
11. *The Daguerreotype Director, Reese & Co.'s German System of Photography and Picture Making* (New York: Oliver and Brother Steam Printing, 1854), 21–22; reprinted in *Daguerreian Society Newsletter* 5, no. 1 (January 1993): 10.
12. Montgomery P. Simons, *Photography in a Nut Shell* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1858), 107.
13. "Employment of Women in Photography," *Photographic News* 11, no. 438 (January 25, 1867): 37–38.
14. Craig, ed., *Daguerreian Registry*, 3:374.

## MORE THAN “AN ELEGANT ACCOMPLISHMENT”

15. *McElroy's Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: Edward C. and John Biddle, 1854), 114, and (1855), 117.
16. 1850 United States Federal Census. <http://www.ancestry.com>.
17. *McElroy's Philadelphia Directory*, 1854 and 1855, 602 and 647. The business listing in the 1855 McElroy directory includes forty-one daguerreotypists and twenty-eight use only their last names or initials. Charlotte Hutton is the only known female among the forty-one daguerreotypists listed.
18. *Philadelphia's Merchants' and Manufacturers' Business Directory for 1856–57* (Philadelphia: Griswold and Co., 1856), 108.
19. Philadelphia City Directories, 1857–62, and Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840–1865* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 392.
20. *West Chester Village Record*, December 16, 1851. Newspaper clippings files at the Chester County Historical Society Library.
21. *West Chester Daily News*, August 24, 1888, and August 21, 1889; newspaper clippings files at the Chester County Historical Society Library. Painter is not identified in the 1850 or 1860 US Census as having an occupation and is recorded as keeping house in the 1870 US Census.
22. James A. McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad: The Life and Letters of Thomas Garrett* (Moylan, PA: The Whimsie Press, 1977), and Robert E. Seeley and Lori Clark, “Garrett Family, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania,” unpublished genealogy, 2005, provided basic biographical and genealogical information about the Garrett family.
23. Westtown Boarding School, *A Brief History of Westtown Boarding School* (Philadelphia: Sherman and Co., 1873), 290, Girls Register, 1799–1836. Westtown School Archives and conversation between the author and Mary Brooks, Westtown School Archivist.
24. McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad*, and Seeley and Clark, “Garrett Family.”
25. Wilmington Monthly Meeting, minutes, September 25, 1846, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College.
26. Wilmington Monthly Meeting List of Members, 1827–85, US Quaker Meeting Records, 1681–1994, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com); mss. letter, January 29, 1830, in Folder V, Garrett Papers, Historical Society of Delaware.
27. Edward Hewes obituary, *Delaware Gazette*, January 14, 1851.
28. James A. McGowan, comp. and ed., “Thomas Garrett to John Clark, Ziba Ferris & Edward Bringhurst, February 2, 1847” in *Letters of Thomas Garrett* (Princeton, NJ: Ken-Ray Press, 1982?), 23.
29. McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad*, 9, 62.
30. Jon M. Williams, “Daguerreotypists, Ambrotypists, and Photographers in Wilmington, Delaware, 1842–1859,” *Delaware History* 18, no. 3 (Spring–Summer 1979): 185–86. Family members claim that Ellwood made his own camera and plate after reading a pamphlet describing the daguerreotype method. Another story claims that Ellwood received from England one of the first available daguerreotype cameras.
31. 1850 US Federal Census, <http://www.ancestry.com>.
32. Ibid.
33. *West Chester American Republic*, April 9, 1850, newspaper clippings file at Chester County Historical Society Library.

34. Newspaper clippings files at Chester County Historical Society Library: No newspaper cited, January 29, 1849; *West Chester American Republican*, May 28, 1850; and *West Chester Village Record*, July 30, 1850.
35. The US Census taker visited Broadbent's Wilmington residence in September 1850.
36. The author would like to thank Paul Davis for bringing this reference to her attention. Mr. Davis is researching pre-1900 Delaware photographers and is exploring whether Sarah Hewes took daguerreotypes in Wilmington.
37. *Pennsylvania Freeman*, April 10, 1851, <http://www.accessiblearchives.com>. This advertisement ran through September 4, 1852.
38. McGowan, *Letters of Thomas Garrett*, 11–12, and 1850 US Federal Census.
39. Philadelphia city directories list Marshall and Porter as daguerreotypists at 136 Chestnut Street in 1850 and 1851.
40. Floyd and Marion Rinhart, *The American Daguerreotype* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), 417, lists Bailey & Ketchen (*sic*) as suppliers of daguerreotype plates and lenses and cites an 1842 *US Gazette* advertisement that could not be independently located. In 1842 *McElroy's Philadelphia Directory* lists Bailey & Kitchen as jewelers and silversmiths.
41. *Pennsylvania Freeman*, April 10, 1851, <http://www.accessiblearchives.com>. Publication of the *Pennsylvania Freeman* began in Philadelphia in 1838 by the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, a more radical organization than the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society. Those who advertised in the newspaper most likely had abolitionist sympathies, or at least were aware that their advertisements would reach an abolitionist audience. Among daguerreotypists, Broadbent & Co. frequently advertised, as did the Collins brothers whose father is known to have attended an "anti-slavery picnic" in the summer of 1846. Thomas Painter Collins to Cynthia Collins, August 3, 1846, Collins Family Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, cited in Rebecca Norris, "The Eye Perfected: The Daguerreotypes of T. P. and D. C. Collins," *The Daguerreian Annual* 2006, 46. In the mid-1840s Robert Douglass, an African American daguerreotypist, also frequently advertised his Philadelphia studio; <http://www.accessiblearchives.com>.
42. *American Republican*, April 9, 1850.
43. *Pennsylvania Freeman*, December 9, 1852, through June 15, 1854, <http://www.accessiblearchives.com>.
44. Rebecca Norris, "Samuel Broadbent, Daguerreian Artist," *Daguerreian Annual* 2001, 140.
45. RG 245 New Castle County Probates, Sally G. Hewes, 1819–53, Delaware Public Archives, Dover, Delaware.
46. Sarah Hewes to Anna Edwards, August 21, 1853, private collection of Thomas Garrett Hewes II.
47. Conversation between the author and Krystal Appiah, curator of African Americana at the Library Company of Philadelphia.
48. *Pennsylvania Freeman*, November 17, 1853, <http://www.accessiblearchives.com>.
49. The Hewes estate was owed less than \$350 by other debtors. Copies of Sally Hewes's estate appraisal are in the Garrett Papers at the Historical Society of Delaware and the Delaware Public Archives.
50. In addition to the two daguerreotypes illustrated in this article, two other examples have been identified. Both are sixth-plate daguerreotypes of unidentified sitters. One, a tinted daguerreotype of a painting of a young woman, appeared for sale on eBay in 2000. The other Hewes daguerreotype was identified by John Craig as being either in private hands or in a Norwegian museum's collection.