

Photographers of the Civil War Era: Theodore Gubelman of Jersey City

By Gary D. Saretzky with Joseph G. Bilby

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14713/njs.v7i1.228>

The Civil War greatly increased what later became known as “picture hunger.” To meet the demand, 235 new photo galleries started in New Jersey between 1861 and 1865, among them that of the ambitious German immigrant Theodore Gubelman of Jersey City. Although many of the Civil War era photographers did not make the medium their long-term career, Gubelman took advantage of changing trends and technology to remain in business into the next century.

Theodore Gubelman was one of a number of young photographers who established their own galleries in New Jersey during the increased market for portraits during the Civil War. His career, which included several studios in Tennessee during the conflict, was characterized by both typical and unique experiences at a time when there was high public demand for photographers to provide multiple copies of inexpensive portraits.

Photography had been publicly introduced in 1839 and by the early 1840s photographic portraiture was widely practiced by professionals, primarily using the daguerreotype process. Each daguerreotype was a unique object because there was no negative from which to make multiple copies. The best daguerreotypists often had art training and their work remains outstanding examples of the art of photography. Advanced daguerreotypists like the Boston partners Southworth and Hawes posed each sitter individually to best portray character and appealing features. These artists took justifiable pride in their work and charged accordingly. By comparison, there were many daguerreotypists, including itinerants roaming the hinterlands in horse drawn wagons, who learned the technical requirements of the process but were satisfied to obtain what was generously described as a “likeness.”

In the mid-1850s, after the introduction of collodion processes, very inexpensive tintypes and photographs on paper mounted on cardboard began permeating the photographic marketplace. By 1860, these images could be made with cameras that took four or more exposures on one blackened iron sheet for ferrotypes, which became known as tintypes, or on a glass plate negative from which multiple prints on glossy albumen paper could be printed and mounted on cardboard. Photographic studios that offered these cheap products were like the Instagram of the era. Customers could go into a photo gallery and leave with a set of tintypes in 15 minutes. Stereotypical poses became the norm. Art in photography shifted more toward craft. Mass production photographers followed the dictates of manuals for beginning photographers that advised, for example, that one hand should be above the other to create a scalene triangulation with the head. Galleries often had several setups from which customers could choose, including standing next to a column with a painted backdrop or sitting in a posing chair with a table on which to rest one's elbow. Subjects were centered in the frame and usually looked right into the lens, as they often do today in selfies taken with cell phones.

As Lincoln Kirstein explained, "The attitude of the early photographic master was a simple but overwhelming interest in the *object* which was set before his machine. His single task was to render the object, face, group, house or battlefield airlessly clear in the isolation of its accidental circumstances, to record the presence of every fact gathered within the net of rays focused on his lens, to create out of a fragmentary moment its own permanence. The human personality, the incidental individual comment of the photographer, was ignored... For them photography was an end in itself."¹ In other words, portrait photographers tried to describe their sitters, not express themselves, and in so doing met their customers' expectations.

¹ "Photographs of Walker Evans," in *Walker Evans: American Photographs* (New York: East River Press, 1975 [Reprint of 1938 edition]), 184.

In New Jersey, as elsewhere in the Northeast, the Civil War greatly increased what can be characterized as “picture hunger.”² Soldiers with uncertain futures wanted images to give to their wives and visual mementos of their families to take with them to the front. Mothers and spouses kept photos in treasured albums with pocket pages for tintypes and like-sized card photographs called cartes-de-visite (cdvs).³

To meet the demand, a few photographers like Joseph Kirk of Newark had large galleries with a number of camera operators as well as other employees involved in finishing the products.⁴ Most, however, were sole proprietors with the photographer doing most of the work, sometimes assisted by other family members. Dozens of new galleries started up each year during the war, most of them of short duration. Between 1861 and 1865, a total of 235 new galleries opened in the state and about 400 photographers lived in New Jersey during these years.⁵ Some of the young photographers, like Theodore Gubelman, who began their careers during the Civil War era, continued in business for decades.

Theodore Gubelman

Theodore Gubelman, born on November 9, 1841, in Constance, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, a town on the shores of Lake Constance, emigrated with his parents in 1854.⁶ Gubelman’s

² “Picture hunger” in John Raeburn, *A Staggering Revolution: A Cultural History of Thirties Photography* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 7. Although Raeburn used the phrase in connection with the 1930s, it seems apt for the entire history of photography.

³ Patented by A.A.E. Disderi in 1854 in France, the carte-de-visite was a photograph mounted on a rectangular piece of cardboard about 2 3/8 x 4 inches, usually with the photographer’s imprint on the back. The cdv peaked in popularity in the 1860s but continued to be made for decades. Until the 1890s, most cdvs were printed on albumen paper.

⁴ For Kirk, see author’s “Joseph Kirk & the Huff Brothers,” *Garden State Legacy*, Issue 41 (December 2018). <http://www.GardenStateLegacy.com>.

⁵ Database of more than 3,000 19th Century New Jersey photographers, abstract available at <http://saretzky.com>. A small number of the photographers living in New Jersey during the war worked in New York or Philadelphia and some worked for other photographers in New Jersey and did not have their own galleries during this period.

⁶ Constance is spelled Konstanz in German. Except where noted, biographical information from a copy of a typescript of Theodore Gubelman’s unpublished autobiography, “To My Son Fred, Christmas 1916,” kindly provided to the author in 2006 by Anthony J. Peluso, Jr. (1931-2016), who obtained it from Gubelman’s grandson, Herbert Gubelman. A copy of this memoir is at the George Eastman Museum. According to Theodore’s 1893 passport application (<ancestry.com>), he emigrated at age 12 on the *Onward* from Le Havre on or about May 24, 1854.

father Joseph, like his father and grandfather before him, were coppersmiths but Theodore would pursue a different profession. Before his retirement in the early 1900s, as discussed below, he prospered for his work in Hudson County and the New York metropolitan area. Both Theodore and his father frequently changed jobs during their first years in America, seeking better compensation. Not continuing with his education, Theodore began working in New York to help support his family. Initially, he toiled at three part-time, low-paying jobs (totaling \$2 per week, about \$60 in 2020 dollars) at a cigar store, a barber shop, and a brush factory. After the family moved to Jersey City for his father's new job in 1855, he became an apprentice lithographer with a map publisher, J.H. Colton & Co.⁷, on William Street in New York for \$2 per week, and in 1857-1858 worked in Washington, D.C. on the U.S. Coast Survey Maps.⁸ When his father got a job at a lantern factory in Brooklyn in 1859, he moved there with his parents. In December of that year, Theodore obtained employment as a colorist and retoucher of photographs for a photographer on Chatham Square, Manhattan. He would have taken a ferry to commute as the Brooklyn Bridge would not open until 1883.⁹

When Joseph got an offer from his cousin Theopont Miller, who operated a grocery store in Memphis, Tennessee, the family moved again in October 1860. Theodore found work as a colorist in November at a local photographer's, Clark & Co., but Miller offered him a partnership in the grocery store and he accepted. With the approach of the Civil War in April 1861, Miller left Memphis for Dubuque, Iowa, and turned over his interest to Theodore's father. Theodore stayed

⁷ Joseph Hutchins Colton (1800-1893) was a prolific map publisher between 1831 and 1890. George C. Groce, *The New York Historical Society's Dictionary of American Artists* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1957.

⁸ Some secondary sources, based on the autobiography, incorrectly state that in 1854, Theodore Gubelman and his family went to Chicago where his father briefly had a job. Theodore's memoir makes clear that Joseph went to Chicago alone in the fall of 1854, leaving his wife and children in New York. Joseph's second job after his return was in Jersey City, hence the family's relocation there on August 1, 1855. Joseph's new job in Jersey City was with the Knuland & Bruse Locomotive Works.

⁹ The typescript of the memoir gives the name of the photographer as "Julius Voisle (sp?)" but a reference to a photographer by that or a similar name has not been found by the author.

until September and then headed for Louisville, Kentucky. Confederate troops led by General Simon Bolivar Buckner stopped his train and, to escape capture, Theodore and other young men fled through the woods until they reached the Ohio River at West Point, Kentucky. They hailed a steamer and, after reaching Cincinnati, Ohio, Theodore continued on to Jersey City.

Not long after Gubelman's arrival in Jersey City, he rented William Campbell's gallery at 60 Montgomery Street after Campbell began manufacturing tin plate for tintypes.¹⁰ There Gubelman improved his ability to operate the camera and to color photographs. Gubelman worked at this location until he joined Company I, 13th New York State National Guard on May 28, 1862, for a three-month enlistment, during which he did guard duty at Fort McHenry near Baltimore, Maryland. After discharge in September, he became a partner in the firm Parker & Gubelman in Trenton, but it soon failed and he returned to Jersey City on December 10.¹¹

On January 5, 1863, Gubelman began working for Mrs. Moore's Gallery on Canal Street in Manhattan, until May, when he responded to an ad and joined C.C. Giers in Nashville, Tennessee, as a camera operator until October, when Giers sold out and he lost his job. After working as a photographer for about a month for Morse & Pearle in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, operating out of a tent and sleeping in another one, he borrowed \$400 from a friend and opened a gallery in Pulaski, Tennessee, which had been occupied by Union troops since 1862. There he took over an abandoned photography studio with the permission of the Provost Marshal and welcomed his first

¹⁰ William Campbell became active as a daguerreian in 1854-1855 but without a business address until, according to city directories, he had a gallery at 60 Montgomery from 1856 to 1864. Campbell had a strong interest in technological developments in photography. In 1859, he signed the constitution of the American Photographical Society and in 1860, with Joseph Dixon, took over management of Snelling's *Photographic and Fine Art Journal* until November 1860, when it was absorbed into Charles A. Seely's *American Journal of Photography*. By April 1861, Campbell had acquired the patent to the ectograph, invented by Seely in 1855; the ectograph was a glass positive that was coated with white wax on the collodion side and then painted with either oil or water colors. In part, *Craig's Daguerreian Registry; American Journal of Photography*, many references, 1858-1864; Janice G. Schimmelman, *American Photographic Patents: The Daguerreotype & Wet Plate Era 1840-1880* (Nevada City, CA: Carl Mautz, 2002), 50.

¹¹ Other than Gubelman's memoir, no record of this Trenton gallery has been found by the author. Gubelman did not mention Parker's first name.

customers on January 11, 1864.¹² Although many of his clients were Union soldiers, one of his cartes-de-visite is a portrait of Confederate General Benjamin F. Cheatham. But it is improbable that Gubelman made this photograph himself; more likely, it is a copy of another photographer's work.

Gubelman did very well in Pulaski and repaid the loan a few months later. In the spring of 1864, the Union troops left for Alabama. As a result, Gubelman formed a partnership with C.C. Giers and bought the gallery of J.T. Merritt in Nashville for \$5,000. Gubelman owned 1/3 of the business, having put in \$1,500. In September, he made a good profit when he sold his interest to Giers for \$2,600 and returned to Jersey City, where in October he bought a small gallery on the fourth floor of 54 Montgomery Street, as well as a house for his parents.¹³ On May 1, 1865, less than a month after Lee's surrender on April 9, he moved to a second floor gallery at 41 Newark Avenue.¹⁴ Gubelman's father Joseph apparently worked in the gallery, as he is listed as a photographer in Jersey City directories intermittently from 1868 to 1885, including in the 1870 directory which gave his business address as 41 Newark Avenue.¹⁵ The carte-de-visite of the uniformed

¹² Gubelman identified the friend as a Captain Welles of Michigan, presumably an officer in one of the Michigan regiments active in Tennessee during this time. An unfortunately poor copy of Gubelman's photograph of the Giles County courthouse surrounded by Union troops is reproduced in "Nineteenth Century Photographers of Pulaski & Giles County," <http://www.rootsweb.com/~tngiles/hist/photogr.htm>. Three Gubelman photographs from Pulaski are in the Jackson-Thornburg-Murray Collection, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society and at least one is at the Limestone County (Tennessee) Archives.

¹³ The frequent moves of Gubelman and his family in the decade after their arrival in the United States may have been above average but probably were not exceptional. Many other photographers in this era moved frequently, seeking new markets; some eventually settled down, as did Gubelman.

¹⁴ Theodore Gubelman also had a second gallery for 18 months that he opened May 1, 1868, at 192 Washington Street, Hoboken. While he and his wife lived there with his parents, his son Frederick J. was born. The enterprise did not do well and he sold it to photographer Louis Nagel, who operated there until 1887.

¹⁵ In 1867, Joseph Gubelman was listed in the city directory as a coppersmith. He was identified as a photographer in 1868, 1874, 1877, 1883, and 1885. In 1872, he was listed as a music teacher. In 1869-1870, 1873, 1875, and 1878-1879, he was not listed at all. In 1876 and 1880-1882, he was listed but without occupation. The 1884 directory was not checked by the author. Joseph died on March 26, 1886 and his wife Josephine (née Benk) a month later on April 28.

Captain George H. Farrier (elaborated upon at the end of this article) was made by Gubelman at his studio at 41 Newark Avenue, before May 1, 1870, when he moved as recounted below.¹⁶

The majority of Jersey City's population of 17,000 in 1860 were foreign born and there was a substantial German immigrant group, with 11% of the population, compared to Irish (36%) and British (13%).¹⁷ Gubelman soon joined a German singing society, the Jersey City Saengerrunde. Seeking a woman to accompany him to the society's Masquerade Ball in March 1867, he was introduced to Julia Susanne Obenauer, who had emigrated with her half-brother from Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany, six months earlier in October 1866.¹⁸ Gubelman recalled that he was "favorably impressed" when he took Miss Obenauer to the first rehearsal; their relationship quickly blossomed and he successfully proposed on April 11. They were married on August 8 in St. Mathews Church and the Jersey City Saengerrunde sang a chorus as the bride walked up the aisle. Theodore and Julia would have four children, of whom one, Leopold, born February 20, 1871, had a significant photographic career.¹⁹

Gubelman's gallery at 41 Newark Avenue was well positioned. In an 1867 ad, he stated: "City Hall Gallery... First Door Above the City Hall, Jersey City. Photographs in all sizes, plain or coloured, in oil or water. Cartes de Visite, Ambrotypes, Ivorytypes. PORCELAIN PICTURES.

¹⁶ The Farrier cdv is one of 401 Civil War soldier portraits by 62 photographers held by the New Jersey State Archives.

¹⁷ Douglas V. Shaw, *Immigration and Ethnicity in New Jersey History* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1994), 19-20. A substantial number of Hudson County photographers in the 19th century were of German origin.

¹⁸ Julia's birthplace is recorded in the 1880 U.S. Census, Jersey City, age 35, with Theodore and her children, Frederick 11; Leopold, 9; Josephine, 16; and Oscar, 4.

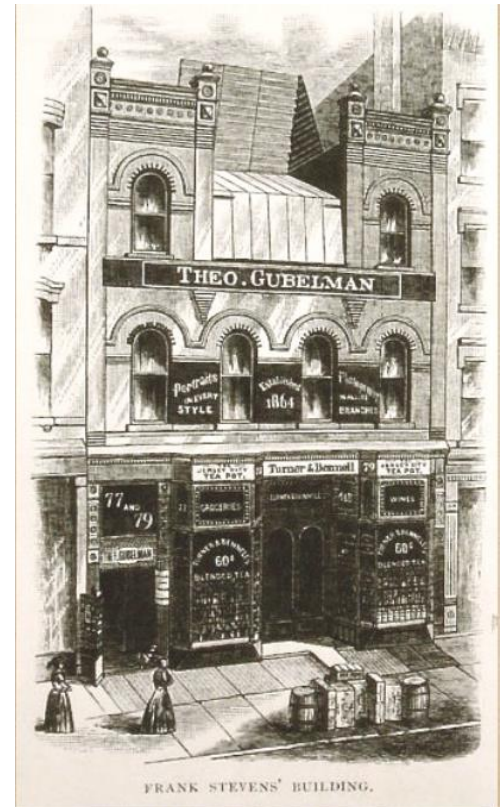
¹⁹ Leopold Gubelman was listed in the Jersey City directory as a photographer beginning in 1886. From 1889 to 1891, he studied with Dr. Joseph Maria Eder at what his father called the Institute of Technical Photography in Vienna but which was probably the Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt (Graphic Teaching and Research Institute). In the fall of 1893, Leopold returned to Vienna for a job where he learned the photogravure process. In May 1894, he came back to Jersey City and began that line of work. Theodore was president and Leopold was secretary and treasurer until 1905, when Theodore became vice-president and Leopold stepped up to president. Theodore likely retired soon thereafter and was listed as retired in the 1909 Jersey City directory. Leopold, who was listed in the city directory as a publisher in 1909, married at age 42 and he and his wife Gertrude had a son, John, born in 1918. In part, 1910, 1920, and 1930 U.S. Census, Hudson County, Jersey City.

Particular attention paid to copying and taking Children's Pictures. A Full Stock of FRAMES AND CASES of the latest patterns. N.B. Prices as low as the quality of the work will permit."²⁰

By that year, he was the busiest photographer in Jersey City.²¹

In 1870, Gubelman rented the second and third floors at 79 Newark Avenue, where he installed a large ground glass skylight on the third floor at his own expense. His cost for fitting up the gallery was \$3,000, of which he paid about half in cash. A huge sign proclaimed "Theo. Gubelman" and beneath it smaller signs such as "Portraits in Every Style" and "Established 1864." He would remain in operation there until his retirement.

Gubelman's business in the early 1870s was only fair so to enhance his reputation, he sent exhibits to the annual American Institute of Photography Fair from 1873 to 1881, as well as to the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 and the Exposition Universelle (World's Fair) in Paris in 1878, where he won a bronze medal.²² He also had a second gallery



View of Gubelman studio, 79 Newark Avenue, Jersey City, early 1880s. Author's digital collection.

²⁰Ad, *Jersey Journal*, December 19, 1867.

²¹Gubelman's total reported income to the IRS in 1867 was \$1,597, substantially more than his nearest competitors in Jersey City, Lewis S. Griffing (\$931) and John T. Green (\$735). Gubelman ranked 13th in the state in income, with 2.3% of the reported gross for all 64 photographers in New Jersey. Internal Revenue Assessment Records, National Archives and Records Administration, compiled by the author.

²² Bronze medal, Class XII. Paris Exhibition. *New York Times*, August 28, 1878, 5. Napoleon Sarony won the gold medal.

at 304 Henderson, Jersey City, from 1872 to 1877, probably operated by his father Joseph who lived nearby.²³

About 1880, Gubelman, like other professional photographers, switched from making wet plate collodion on glass negatives, which had to be sensitized by the photographer immediately before use and developed before they dried, to the gelatin dry plate, which was much more convenient since it could be used right out of the box and could be developed later. In addition, dry plates were much more sensitive to light and Gubelman could take “instantaneous” views with a self-constructed drop shutter between the lenses. Gubelman was an early adopter of dry plates and an 1883 publication, *Industries of New Jersey*, described him as “the celebrated dry-plate worker.”²⁴ The dry plate enabled Gubelman to do much more varied outdoor photography and, by end of the decade, he had a catalog with more than 1,200 views available. Presumably, he sold them at his gallery but how else he may have marketed them has not been determined. One of the highest numbered views is of the Statue of Liberty, dedicated in 1886.²⁵

About half the catalog consists of maritime views. Gubelman claimed that he was the first to sell instantaneous views of yachts, steamers, and other boats and ships.²⁶ In the New York area,

²³ The Jersey City location at 304 Henderson, corner Newark Avenue (1872-1877), was close to Joseph Gubelman’s residence at 196 Henderson in the 1874 and 1876 directories (he was not listed in the 1873 and 1875 directories). In 1877, Joseph’s home address was the same as the gallery’s, 304 Henderson. Theodore Gubelman did not mention this gallery in his memoir and also omitted reference to his father working as a photographer. No examples of Gubelman studio photographs with the Henderson address have been found by the author.

²⁴ Part 6. Hudson, Passaic, and Bergen Counties, (New York, et al.: Historical Publishing Co., 1883), 829.

²⁵ Anthony J. Peluso, Jr., copied the catalog into a database and in March 2006 kindly shared a printout with the author, sorted by categories that he assigned. Each photo had a number which appeared with the name Gubelman in a corner of the prints, the vast majority of which were mounted on cards 5 1/2 x 8 inches (approximately the size of boudoir cards). It is possible that some of the outdoor photos were taken by a photographer working for Gubelman. Note that Gubelman’s father Joseph was listed in the 1883 to 1885 directories as a photographer. Also, William R. Harrison opened his own gallery in 1901 after working sixteen years for Gubelman, probably starting in 1885. (“Harrison’s Business Venture,” *Jersey Journal*, October 1, 1901, 12.) Moreover, Gubelman’s son Leopold is listed in the Jersey City city directories as a photographer beginning in 1886, perhaps replacing his grandfather Joseph who died that year; by the early 1890s, his occupation was photo chemist. It is also possible that Theodore did the outdoor photography and brought Harrison and family members into the business to “mind the store” when he went out to photograph.

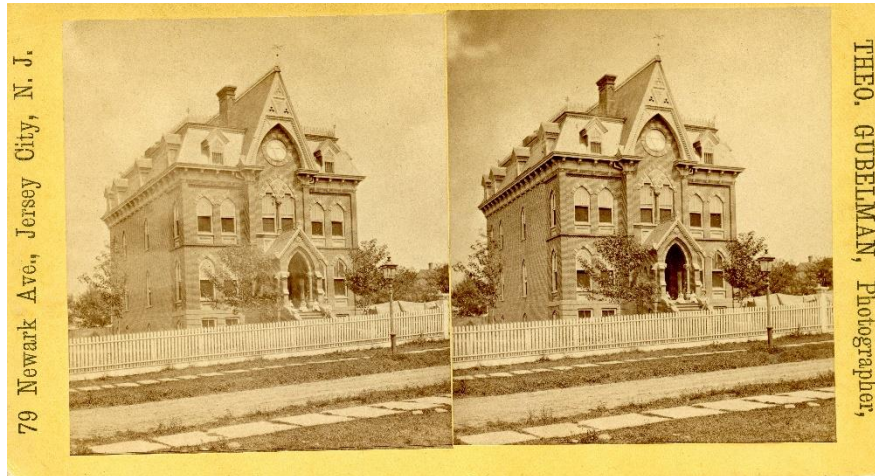
²⁶ Gubelman memoir, *op cit.*, 13. He also stated his exhibit at the American Institute of Photography Fair in 1881 of life-size heads made with gelatin dry plates was the first of its kind in America.

he photographed numerous ships, yachts, and ferry boats under way in the harbor as well as interiors of steamboats; churches; Central Park; Coney Island; the East River Bridge (now known as the Brooklyn Bridge); Hudson River views; Prospect Park; and numerous other photographs taken in the metropolitan area of buildings, railroads, et al. Outside New York, his catalog included series in Boston; Delaware Water Gap; Jersey City; Long Branch; Niagara Falls; Greenwood Lake, Orange County, New York; Kaaterskill Falls in the Catskills; New London, Connecticut; Newport, Rhode Island; Ontario; Washington, D.C.; White Mountains, New Hampshire; and more.

In addition to his prolific outdoor photography, Gubelman continued to pursue portraiture. In a long profile published in 1884, the writer found the proprietor at work photographing a baby and noted, “No excitement or ill-humor; kindness, quietude and equanimity of mind enable the operator to secure success.”²⁷ The unnamed author noted that the reception room did not contain anything gaudy or unusually luxurious and the walls displayed “a large collection of artistically executed crayons and pastels of the various popular dimensions, and plain photographs, from the 18x22 life-size head down through all sizes and shapes in vogue with the public, to the carte de visite, the medallion and the stereograph. Of the last there were many fine interiors and landscapes.”²⁸ The skylight room was very well equipped with “cameras, stands, portable tripods of every description, backgrounds and accessories in great variety; furniture to suit the most fastidious taste; a very comfortable boudoir for ladies and children...The glass house is screened with tissue paper, which, with outside shades and awnings made movable to adapt them to the light,

²⁷ “The Studios of America: Theodore Gubelman’s Atelier, Jersey City, N.J.” *The Photographic Times and American Photographer*, 14:170 (December 19, 1884), 678-679.

²⁸ Stereographs seen by the author, probably from the 1870s, are on yellow cabinet size mounts and include a distant view of a village, buildings on urban streets (probably Jersey City), and an orphanage in Hudson County.



Orphanage in Hudson County, circa 1880, Ken Rosen Collection. Although this copy of the stereograph is untitled, another copy in the New York Public Library is cataloged with this title. Note children on the steps by the door.

enables the operator to obtain at any time of the day the effects desired.” The darkroom and printing room were similarly well equipped. In the latter, the water used for developing and washing negatives came through a coiled

sixty-foot pipe that was cooled with ice in the summer. Gubelman also had an impressive store-room for his glass negatives.

Gubelman’s financial success in the 1880s is evidenced by several events during the decade. In 1884, he formed a partnership with Arthur J. Hargrave, with whom he had established a lifelong friendship at Mrs. Moore’s in the 1860s.²⁹ Gubelman bought out Andrew Jordan’s interest in a gallery at 38-40 W. 23rd Street in New York and put Hargrave, who had no means to invest, in charge there. By 1888, Gubelman was doing so well that he bought two lots near his home and built three houses on them to let. He also took a vacation from June 15 to the middle of October, most of the time in Germany and Austria, traveling with his wife to visit relatives and see the sights. In Vienna, he made arrangements for his son Leopold to study under Dr. Josef Maria Eder

²⁹ Their friendship ended with Hargrave’s death in the Bronx, New York, June 14, 1914. Arthur J. Hargrave was born in Ireland in September 1843 and emigrated with his parents in 1850. During his photographic career, he lived in New York, Jersey City, and Montclair (Essex County). Hargrave married Augusta Bachmeyer in 1870 and they had three children, two of whom survived to 1900. It is likely that he was the brother of photographer William Hargrave, also born in Ireland in the 1840s and active in Jersey City. In part, 1900 Census (Montclair, Essex Co.). In the 1880 Census, Arthur J. Hargrave was listed erroneously as Charles Hargrave.

beginning in January 1889.³⁰ In 1890, he and Hargrave opened the Hargrave & Gubelman gallery at 77-79 Montgomery in Jersey City. Hargrave continued to manage the New York studio and Gubelman supervised this new branch in Jersey City. Beginning in 1892, Hargrave's name does not appear in relation to this location, which Gubelman continued to operate until 1905.³¹

In April 1893, Gubelman and his wife took a six-month trip to Europe, leaving Leopold in charge. When they returned, Leopold headed back to Vienna to work in a photogravure business and not long after his return, he and his father established the Gubelman Photo-Gravure Company, with Theodore as President and Leopold as Secretary and Treasurer. In December 1894, the Gubelman Photo-Gravure Co. exhibited photomechanical prints at the headquarters of the Society of American Amateur Photographers in New York, along with a number of other exhibitors.³²

The Gubelmans began producing photogravures for home decor and other purposes.³³ In 1899, for example, Theodore registered copyright on the following titles: *At the Edge of the Pool*; *Brandywine Meadows*; *The Brittany Peasant Girl*; *Christmas Story*; *The Coming Belle*; *Gleams*

³⁰ In his memoir, Gubelman called Eder's institution, "The Institute of Technical Photography." Eder (1855-1944), a highly respected photochemist, became professor of chemistry at the Staatsgewerbschule in Vienna in 1882. In 1888, he became director in that city of the world-renowned graphic arts school, the Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt (Graphic Teaching and Research Institute). His many contributions to the technical development of photography included enhancements to gelatin emulsions and a system of sensitometry for photographic plates. Eder was a very prolific writer and his publications included his *History of Photography* on the evolution of photographic technology, translated and first published in English in 1945. Louis Walton Siple, *Photography's Great Inventors* (Philadelphia: American Museum of Photography, 1965), 33-34. No examples of photographs taken by Theodore Gubelman on his several European vacations have come to the author's attention.

³¹ In 1896, this address became the headquarters of the Gubelman Photo-Gravure Co. Another indicator of Gubelman's relative prosperity is the list of items stolen when his house was robbed early in 1898 by a thief who burgled several homes in his neighborhood. Gubelman's loss was described in the local newspaper as "the biggest haul." Taken were three dozen silver plated knives and forks, two silver napkin rings, and a silver fork and salad dish, as well as clothing. *Jersey City News*, January 25, 1898, 2.

³² *The Sun* (New York), December 4, 1894, 5. The firm was first listed in the 1895 *Jersey City City Directory*. It was also known as Gubelman Photogravure Co., without the hyphen, and later as the Gubelman Co. In his memoir, Theodore recalled that Leopold returned from Vienna in May 1894 and started the photogravure business "but was met with a lot of disappointment, owing more to the difficulties of the process in the American climate than the improvement in the half tone process that curtailed the Photogravure demand."

³³ Photogravure is a photomechanical printing process whereby a copper plate with an etched photographic image is used to produce high quality prints in ink. Although Nicéphore Niépce had experimented with a photomechanical process before 1830 and William Henry Fox Talbot patented his version in 1852, the technique was perfected in 1878 by the Czech painter Karel Klíč.



Adeline Genée

Gubelman Co., New York, Adeline Genée, dancer, photogravure, circa 1907. Author's digital collection.

of Sunshine; In the Boudoir; Me and Grandpa; The Mendicant; Monarch of the Farm; Noon-day Rest; Recalling the Past; and The Rivals.

Some of the Gubelman gravures were reproductions of paintings and other artwork. The firm also produced gravures of celebrities, including Adeline Genée (1878-1970), a Prima Ballerina billed by Florenz Ziegfeld as “The World’s Greatest Dancer,” when she appeared in New York in 1907. (Since the gravures do not credit a photographer, it is not known if the Gubelman firm took the photos that they published.)

About the same time, the Gubelman Co. issued gravure portraits of Elsie Janis (1889-1956), a stage and screen actor, singer, and songwriter,

and Julia Sanderson (1887-1975), the Broadway actor and singer who later worked in radio.³⁴

Another category of gravures were artists’ renderings of historical scenes, such as the home of Captain William Kidd during his lifetime and the purchase of Manhattan by Peter Minuit.³⁵

Although evidence found is inconclusive, it is likely that Theodore retired from active involvement in the Gubelman Co. in 1905, when Leopold was promoted to president. In 1906, Leopold relocated the Gubelman Co. from Jersey City to New York, although he continued living

³⁴ The photogravures of these women are credited “Gravure Gubelman Co., New York,” without a photo credit or date.

³⁵ Examples at the New York Public Library, available for viewing online at <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/search/index?utf8=%E2%9C%93&keywords=gubelman#>.

with Theodore at their home in Jersey City. Leopold's brother Frederick J. was brought in as secretary-treasurer by 1912. It is likely that the firm provided a range of printing services other than pictures. Its office changed addresses several times before 1920, the last year it was listed in New York directories. In the 1920 U.S. Census, Leopold was described as a merchant in the stationery business.³⁶

In retirement, Theodore and his wife Julia enjoyed socializing with his children and grandchildren but did not go on any more trips to Europe after their last in the summer of 1903. Julia died on April 7, 1916. Theodore survived for another decade, dying on October 31, 1926, at Fairmount Private Hospital of arteriosclerosis at age 84. He was interred with Julia in Bayview Cemetery in Jersey City.³⁷ Following his death, for reasons unknown, Gubelman's sister burned his photographic archives (except that one of his sons sold his glass plate negatives "to the glassman" for \$8 per dozen).³⁸ In consequence, there are no substantial institutional collections of his work, although many repositories and private collectors hold examples by this prolific photographer.³⁹

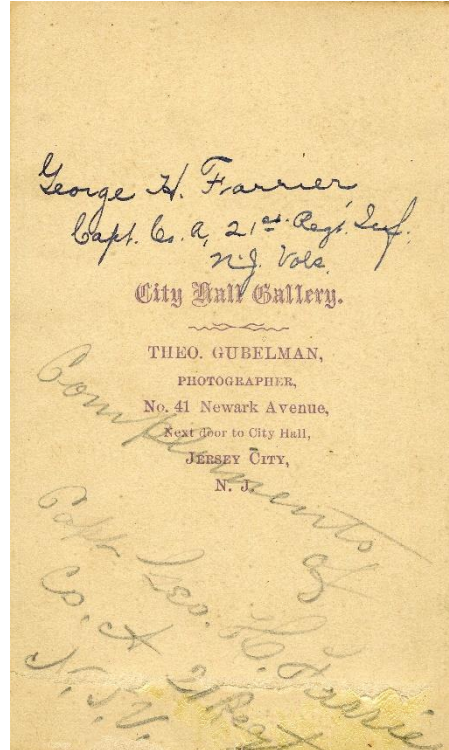
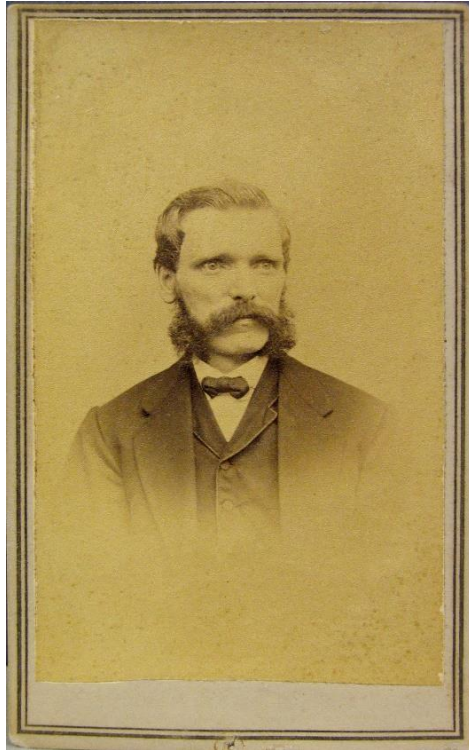
Readers interested in more images by Gubelman can click [here](#).

³⁶ Addresses found for the Gubelman Co. in New York were 801 Third Ave (1906-1910); 345 Fifth Ave., Room 1406 (1910-1911); 45 W. 34th St. (1912); and 47 W. 34th St., Room 204 (1913-1920). Toward 1920, the company was listed in the New York directories as based in New Jersey with Frederick's office at 47 W. 34th St. In the 1920 U.S. Census, Theodore, retired, was living with Leopold and Leopold's wife Gertrude and son at the Gubelman home of many years at 792 Montgomery Street, which Theodore purchased in January 1873. The Jersey City directory in 1925 listed Theodore's last residence at 100 Bentley Avenue, Jersey City, where he lived with Leopold and his family.

³⁷ New Jersey Death Record, New Jersey State Archives. The Obituary Note for Theodore Gubelman in the *New York Times*, November 2, 1926, 27, stated that he "served as a photographer in the Civil War," which is misleading as his involvement was commercial.

³⁸ Anthony J. Peluso, Jr., "Theodore Gubelman, Photographer," *Maine Antique Digest*, January 1999, <http://www.maineantiquedigest.com/articles/gub0199.htm>. (Available through Internet Archive Wayback Machine). Peluso wrote that the sister burned his paper negatives but more likely it was prints and possibly film. Whether any of the glass plates survived has not been determined.

³⁹ Among repositories with Gubelmans are the Canadian Centre for Architecture (Montreal); George Eastman Museum; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University; Hoboken Historical Museum; Indiana Historical Society; J. Paul Getty Museum; Jersey City Public Library; Limestone County (Tennessee) Archives; Monmouth County (New Jersey) Historical Association; Montclair (New Jersey) Public Library; Mystic Seaport Museum; National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution; New Jersey Historical Society; New Jersey State Archives; New York Public Library; Newark (New Jersey) Public Library; Rutgers University Libraries; Stowe-Day Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut; William C. Darrah Collection, Penn State University; and the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

Addendum**George H. Farrier****By Joseph G. Bilby**

Captain George H. Farrier, Co. A, 21st Regiment, New Jersey, carte-de-visite, 1865-1870, New Jersey State Archives, Record Series SDEA4010.

George H. Farrier, shown in the carte-de-visite portrait by Theodore Gubelman above, enlisted in the 21st New Jersey Infantry on September 9, 1862, as Captain of the regiment's Company A. The 21st, enlisted for nine months, was organized in Trenton, although most of its men were from Hudson County. The officers of the regiment elected Gilliam Van Houten, a former New York militia officer, as Colonel. On September 24, the regiment, totaling 38 officers and 928 enlisted men, left New Jersey for Washington, DC.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ John Y. Foster, *New Jersey and the Rebellion: A History of the Services of the Troops and People of New Jersey in Aid of the Union Cause* (Newark: Dennis and Company, 1968), 486.

The 21st was assigned to the Third Brigade, Second Division of the Sixth Army Corps. Colonel Van Houten and the Corps Commander had their differences, and as a result the regiment was assigned to some dirty details. At the Battle of Fredericksburg in December, the 21st served as an advance guard and rear guard for the Corps.⁴¹ During a winter camp at White Oak Church, the Jersey City boys helped build a road and participated in the infamous “Mud March.” As Spring arrived, the regiment’s baseball team defeated the 3rd New York in a baseball game.⁴²

In General Joseph Hooker’s Chancellorsville Campaign in Spring 1863, the 6th Corps was involved in a diversionary attack at Fredericksburg and Salem Church. The Jerseymen drove back a Mississippi regiment and, when the units to their left and right broke and ran under a counterattack, the New Jerseyans were overwhelmed by Confederates. Colonel Van Houten was mortally wounded, and the 21st suffered 211 casualties.

Although deployed to harass the Army of Northern Virginia as it moved north in June, the 21st, its term of service up, returned to Trenton for discharge and was mustered out on June 19, 1863. Farrier survived his tour of duty unscathed. After the war he served as a Hudson County Assemblyman and accumulated a notable 5,000-piece coin and medal collection. He died suddenly on April 26, 1895.⁴³

Gary D. Saretzky, archivist, educator, and photographer, worked as an archivist for more than fifty years at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Educational Testing Service, and the Monmouth County Archives. Saretzky taught the history of photography at Mercer County Community College, 1977-2012, and served as coordinator of the Public History Internship Program

⁴¹ *Jersey City Standard*, September 22, 1862.

⁴² *Hudson County Democrat*, May 4, 1863.

⁴³ *Daily Times* (New Brunswick), April 27, 1895, 4; *Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, California), March 17, 1877, 2.

for the Rutgers University History Department, 1994-2016. He has published more than 100 articles and reviews on the history of photography, photographic conservation, and other topics, including "Nineteenth-Century New Jersey Photographers," in the journal, New Jersey History, Fall/Winter 2004, a revised version of which is available at <http://saretzky.com>.

Joseph G. Bilby received his BA and MA degrees in history from Seton Hall University and served as a lieutenant in the First Infantry Division in Vietnam in 1966-1967. He is Assistant Curator of the New Jersey National Guard and Militia Museum in Sea Girt, a columnist for The Civil War News, and a freelance writer, historian and historical consultant. He is the author, editor or co-author of over 400 articles and twenty-one books on New Jersey, the Civil War, and firearms history. Mr. Bilby has received the Jane Clayton award for contributions to Monmouth County (NJ) history, an award of merit from the New Jersey Historical Commission for his contributions to the state's military history, and the New Jersey Meritorious Service Medal from the state's Division of Military and Veterans Affairs. In November 2018 he was awarded the Richard J. Hughes Prize by the New Jersey Historical Commission for his lifelong contributions to New Jersey history.