

*New Jersey Photographers of the Civil War and Postwar Era: John P. Doremus*

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*Of the more than 3,000 photographers active in New Jersey in the nineteenth century, a number of them were itinerant camera workers at some point during their careers, operating with a horse-drawn wagon.<sup>1</sup> Some photographers, especially those taking views, circulated locally even when they had a gallery where they did portraits and sold other kinds of photographs. Like many other American photographers who did not always wait for customers, John P. Doremus began working in the medium during the Civil War, when there was a strong market for portraits.<sup>2</sup> Doremus is distinguished in that, for much of the latter 1870s and 1880s, he lived and worked on a floating gallery on the Mississippi River while his business back home in Paterson, Passaic County, was managed by his family. For this remarkable episode in his career, he was inducted into the National Rivers Hall of Fame in 1991.<sup>3</sup> He is also exceptional in that he kept a journal in which he recorded fascinating details about his experiences. This essay provides a case study of an able and ambitious photographer and entrepreneur whose career, characterized by both typical and unique experiences, sheds light on photographic and business practices of his era. You can find the Doremus photographs discussed in this article and others in a digital portfolio [here](#).*

**Doremus's Family and Life as a Young Man**

Doremus came from a Dutch background. Descended from Cornelis and Janettje Doremus, who emigrated with their sons, Cornelis and Johannes, from Holland in 1685–1686, John Doremus

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of itinerant New Jersey photographers, see Robert O. Brown, *Collector's Guide to 19th Century U.S. Traveling Photographers* (Forest Grove, Oregon: Brown-Spath & Associates, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the impact of the Civil War on photography in New Jersey, see author, "Photographers of the Civil War Era: Theodore Gubelman of Jersey City," *New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Winter 2021, 209–225. With Joseph G. Bilby. <https://doi.org/10.14713/njs.v7i1.228>.

<sup>3</sup> National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, Port of Dubuque, Iowa, <https://www.rivermuseum.com/national-rivers-hall-of-fame-inductees/inductees/j-p-doremus>.

was born July 21, 1827, in New Jersey to Hendrick I. Doremus and Metye (Martha) Van Giesen.<sup>4</sup> Both the Doremus and Van Giesen families were early settlers near the Passaic River in the area that became Paterson in 1792.<sup>5</sup> John's father, Hendrik, born in Oldham, Nova Scotia, was a blacksmith and millwright, but by 1850 he was unemployed because he had become blind.<sup>6</sup> In the U.S. census for Paterson that year, his son John, 22, was listed as a painter, but not the artist kind.



**John P. Doremus, 218 Main Street, Paterson. Self-portrait, cameo carte de visite, 1870s. Author's collection. Recto and verso.**

<sup>4</sup> Life dates for John P. Doremus's parents: Hendrick I. Doremus (May 10, 1793–March 27, 1858) and Metye (Martha) Van Giesen (August 20, 1792–August 20, 1882). Edith Whitcraft Eberhart, *Doremus Family in America* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1990), 349–350. Also source for marriage date of John P. Doremus in this paragraph. John P. was named after his grandfather, another John Doremus. John's father, Hendrik, was also known as Harry, Henrey, and Henry. John P. had numerous relatives in Paterson, including more than 20 nephews and nieces. His cousin Nathaniel Townsend was mayor of Paterson in 1868 and sheriff at other times during his career. John H. Doremus, relationship undetermined, was a member of the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders in the 1860s.

<sup>5</sup> According to John P. Doremus, his mother, Metye, told him that her “grandfather owned all of Passaic Falls and all the land on the north side of the river up to Oldham brook . . . He gave it to his ten children . . . Her father sold 105 acres which is now in town lots . . . It is just over the bridge above the falls.” John P. Doremus diary, September 27, 1869, transcript, Special Collections, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. This diary covers the period from August 10, 1867, to September 27, 1881. In the first entry, he references an earlier one that the author has not located if it survives. Excerpts from the diary, 1867–1881, were published in Ralph DuPae, ed., “Success on the Mississippi: Selections from a Stereographer's Diary,” *Stereo World*, 30:5 (2004–2005), 12–28, 31. Almost the complete diary from March 14, 1874, to 1881 was published in installments in *S&D Reflector* (Marietta, Ohio), 29:1 to 30:4 (March 1992–December 1993), online at <http://www.riverhistory.org/reflector.html>. Citations for the diary in this article are to published versions, when available, each of which contain illustrations and commentary not in the others. The author wishes to acknowledge with profuse thanks the assistance of archivist Laura Godden, Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse, for sharing a copy of the entire typed transcript, as well as selected pages of a copy of the original handwritten diary, and for responding to numerous reference questions.

<sup>6</sup> 1850 U.S. Census, Paterson, Passaic County.

As a young man, John Doremus was in a militia company with a second cousin with the same name who worked in the medicinal water business. They both stepped forward when called, so the frustrated captain insisted that they take distinguishing appellations. The John involved with water said he would take the middle initial *S* and would be known as “Soda Water John,” and his painter cousin could take *P* and become “Putty John.” Both retained the initials in later life.<sup>7</sup>

On September 1, 1852, John P. Doremus married Sarah Catherine Schoonmaker of Paterson, also of Dutch descent. In the 1850 census, she is found living with her father, Jacob Schoonmaker, a baker born in Holland, and his wife, Harriet, probably Sarah’s stepmother. That census, after Jacob and Harriet, listed five young children, ages 2 to 13, then Daniel Schoonmaker, 23, and his sister, Sarah, 20.<sup>8</sup> In 1856, Dan Schoonmaker became a farmer on 160 acres in the vicinity of Riceville, Mitchell County, in northeast Iowa, a village founded in 1855 that would not have its own post office until 1861.<sup>9</sup>

Dan and his sister, Sarah Doremus, were very close and thus it is not surprising that in 1856, John P. and Sarah Doremus moved to Iowa to be nearer Dan and other relatives, including John’s sister, Sally (also known as Sarah, Mrs. John Beam), who lived in Dubuque.<sup>10</sup> While it is

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<sup>7</sup> William Nelson, *Genealogy of the Doremus Family in America* (Paterson, New Jersey: Press Printing & Publishing Co., 1897), 119. Doremus had a partner in the painting business named W. Carter, whom he visited on June 7, 1869, in Cleveland, and on July 26, 1869, in Detroit. John P. Doremus diary, transcript, Special Collections, Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse.

<sup>8</sup> Marriage date, Nelson, 119. In Dutch, the name Schoonmaker means “clean-maker,” i.e., “janitor.” Find-A-Grave does not list either Dan or Sarah as children of Jacob and Harriet, only the younger ones, but Doremus referred to Sarah’s father as “J. D. Schoonmaker,” in his diary on September 23, 1871. The young children in the 1850 census likely were progeny of Harriet, a second or later wife of Jacob, since usually children were listed oldest first and there is a significant gap in ages between the younger children and Dan and Sarah. Sarah’s death certificate omits her parents’ names and Daniel’s gives his father’s, Jacob, but not his mother’s. Death certificate, Sarah Doremus, Paterson, New Jersey, September 6, 1898, New Jersey State Archives; Death Certificate, Daniel Schoonmaker, Riceville, Iowa, June 20, 1905, Iowa State Board of Health; John P. Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse.

<sup>9</sup> Dan Schoonmaker, born November 17, 1827, married Margaret Kipp in Geneva, New York, on July 4, 1855. By the 1860 Iowa census, Dan, 33, was with Margaret, 23, and two children, Sarah, 3, and William, one month. William and his sister Elizabeth, born about 1862, would work with Doremus as teenagers, as discussed below. *History of Mitchell and Worth Counties, Iowa* (Springfield, Illinois: Union Publishing Company, 1884), 333; 1860 Iowa U.S. Census, Jenkins, Mitchell County; “Town of Riceville, 1855,” <http://iagenweb.org/mitchell/localdat/ricevill.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> Nelson, 121. It is possible that the Doremus and Schoonmaker families traveled together to Iowa.

not known how Doremus traveled to Iowa in the 1850s, by then there were several options involving multiple changes of railroads and waterways, including the “Northern Route” via the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes, which he and his family did take in 1869, stopping at Niagara Falls.<sup>11</sup> By the time they arrived, they had experienced the death in 1854 of their daughter Emma, born in 1853, and the birth on August 18, 1854, of their son Henry (Harry), who survived.<sup>12</sup> In Iowa, John purchased some inexpensive land to settle on and for speculation. On October 2, 1856, a prairie fire destroyed much of the countryside and Sarah saved the family home by pouring milk on the flames after the water had run out.<sup>13</sup> Not long after averting this tragedy, Sarah gave birth to Leonard (Lenny) on November 9, 1856.<sup>14</sup> Both Harry and Leonard became photographers like their dad.

By May 6, 1859, when their son Walter was born, John P. Doremus and his growing family had returned to Paterson. In the 1860 Paterson census, John is listed as a painter with his wife and three children. As with many families in this era, the Doremus couple suffered the deaths of multiple children. Little Walter died on August 10, 1860. On September 29, Sarah had their son Cornelius (Neely).<sup>15</sup> In the spring of 1870, Neely was bitten by a small dog and although the bite healed, he suddenly became ill and expired of hydrophobia (rabies) on June 29, the third of the Doremus children to die young.<sup>16</sup> John and Sarah visited Cedar Lawn Cemetery, which had opened in September 1867, and purchased lots for Neely and other family members, including themselves. Cedar Lawn lies on part of the 150-acre farm owned as early as 1708 by Doremus’s ancestor

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<sup>11</sup> Ralph DuPae, ed., “Success on the Mississippi: Selections from a Photographer’s Diary,” *Stereo World*, 30:5 (2004–2005), 15. Hereafter cited as *Stereo World*.

<sup>12</sup> Find-A-Grave. Birth date on Doremus family monument, Cedar Lawn Cemetery, Paterson.

<sup>13</sup> *History of Mitchell and Worth Counties, Iowa*, 329. According to Riceville historian Mary Noble, the Doremus farm was just west of the Wapsipinicon River in Riceville. “Local History Article Reprinted,” *Riceville Recorder*, August 13, 1992.

<sup>14</sup> Nelson, 159. The 1900 census incorrectly reported Leonard’s birth as in November 1855.

<sup>15</sup> Nelson, 159.

<sup>16</sup> *Elk County Advocate*, July 30, 1870, 3, reprinted from the *Newark Advertiser*.

Cornelis Doremus, so it was a very appropriate eternal resting place for the family.<sup>17</sup> When they returned from the cemetery after burying Neely on July 2, 1870, Sarah gave birth to a daughter they named Anna (Annie).<sup>18</sup>



**John P. Doremus, Paterson. Doremus family, stereoview, circa 1874. Kenneth H. Rosen Collection. Doremus with wife, Sarah; daughters Annie and Mattie; and sons Harry and Leonard. Note that two family members are holding stereoscopes.**

<sup>17</sup> Nelson, 6. Before 1854, when it was renamed Paterson, the area was called Acquackanonk.

<sup>18</sup> *Stereo World*, 15. Anna (Annie) married Charles H. Scribner, MD, who was president of the Medical Society of New Jersey, 1910–1911. *Journal of the Medical Society of New Jersey*, June 1910, 28, and May 1911, 634. The Robert N. Dennis Collection, New York Public Library, holds a view of the Cedar Lawn entrance, No. 12. in Doremus’s “Views on the New York and Oswego Midland Railroad” series, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-4c03-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>. The George Eastman Museum has a later unnumbered Doremus stereoview of Cedar Lawn with Dundee Lake in the background, <https://collections.eastman.org/objects/15149/cedar-lawn-cemetery-dundee-lake-and-weasel-bridge-from-entr;jsessionid=89225BAFFC0C1872C5F7B76748142F4C?ctx=76bc24a8-621d-4f7f-a339-a3e68d1a53f4&idx=0>.

### Doremus's First Decades as a Photographer

After 1860, Doremus soon transitioned from a painter to a photographer, although subsequently he would use his painting skills when needed.<sup>19</sup> In September 1862, when in Boonton, Morris County, he paid a \$15 licensing fee to practice his new profession.<sup>20</sup> While it is not known why he made this change to photography, it is likely that he thought it would bring him more income. The Civil War helped fuel a boom in photographic portraiture, and numerous galleries opened in the early 1860s to meet the demand. Hundreds of thousands of men enlisted, put on their uniforms, and had their pictures taken, knowing that it might be their last. At Union army camps, photographers in tents offered their services. Soldiers on leave at home often had more images made of themselves for their families and of their loved ones to carry back to their regiments. As Coleman Sellers, the American correspondent for the *British Journal of Photography*, wrote on August 26, 1862: "The streets are filled with bright uniforms, and the photographic galleries are crowded with soldiers and their friends. What a blessing it is that they who go to the war can not only leave behind them their images, but take with them the semblance of those they leave at home."<sup>21</sup>

The evolution of imaging technology made it possible for photographers to sell portraits in the 1860s at much lower cost than had been the case in the 1840s and early 1850s, when the most

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<sup>19</sup> Doremus painted the living areas of his home on May 28, 1870, and on November 19, 1870, wrote in his journal that, assisted by his sons, he had painted 140 feet of fences at lots he had purchased, leaving 609 feet to do. Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse.

<sup>20</sup> Internal Revenue Assessment Records, National Archives and Records Administration, compiled by Ross J. Kelbaugh, *Directory of Civil War Photographers. Volume Two. Pennsylvania, New Jersey* (Baltimore, Maryland: Historic Graphics, 1991), 75. Doremus listed his profession as artist in his draft registration in Paterson in 1863. At the time, it was not unusual for photographers to call themselves artists.

<sup>21</sup> *British Journal of Photography*, 9 (October 1, 1862): 375, quoted in Keith F. Davis, "A Terrible Distinctness," Chapter 6 in Martha A. Sandweiss, ed., *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America* (Fort Worth, Texas: Amon Carter Museum), 1991, 143. For a biography of Sellers, see Henry Morton, MD, "Coleman Sellers, E.D., ScD. A Biographical Sketch," *Cassier's Magazine: Engineering Illustrated*, 24, No. 4 (August 1903): 352–362, abstracted in William S. Johnson, *Nineteenth-Century Photography: An Annotated Bibliography, 1839–1879* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co.), 1990, 565.

widely used process was the daguerreotype, made on a copper support. By the early 1860s, photographers were making cartes de visite (CDVs), small albumen paper prints mounted on thin card stock about 2 1/4 by 4 inches. They also produced vast numbers of ferrotypes (also known as tintypes) on iron plates in varying sizes. Millions of these images were made during the war years, which has been called the “cartomania” era.”<sup>22</sup>

Doremus did not stay in Boonton long and examples of his work there have not been found in major collections.<sup>23</sup> He soon returned to Paterson and in 1863 was listed as a photographer in the Paterson City Directory.<sup>24</sup> At that time, *photographist* was used to distinguish someone who made photographs on paper, as contrasted with daguerreotypists, ambrotypists,<sup>25</sup> and ferrotypists, although the term *photographer* had already been introduced. His ad in that directory stated: “Cartes de Visite, Vignettes, Photographs, Ambrotypes, Melainotypes, Ferrotypes, &c. In the latest and best style. Views of Buildings, Machinery, &c. Photographs painted in Oil or Water Colors. Likenesses of Sick or Deceased Persons taken at their residences. Pictures Copied and Enlarged in the very best style. Instructions Given in the Art.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> For the exhibit, “Cartomania: A Victorian Photographic Phenomenon,” see <https://www.britishportraits.org.uk/blog/exhibition-cartomania-a-victorian-photographic-phenomenon-aberdeen-maritime-museum-until-11-april-2020/>.

<sup>23</sup> Major collections checked include the William C. Darrach Collection of Cartes-de-visite at Penn State University, which does have examples of Doremus’s CDVs made in Paterson among its 62,608 examples. No examples are at the Boonton Historical Society.

<sup>24</sup> In May 1863, Doremus paid \$16.67 for an eight-month license to the Internal Revenue Service to practice as a photographer at 85 Main Street in Paterson. In May 1864, he paid \$25 for a full year’s license at the same address. Kelbaugh, 75.

<sup>25</sup> An ambrotype is a collodion emulsion on glass that looks positive through use of a dark backing or dark-colored glass and was usually presented in a case like most daguerreotypes. They became popular in the latter half of the 1850s and, although their popularity declined by 1860, continued to be made during the Civil War.

<sup>26</sup> Paterson City Directory, 1863, 33. Melainotypes and ferrotypes were two different names for the same collodion wet-plate process that became commonly known as tintypes, although the image was on iron rather than tin. As one photographer explained, “Not a particle of tin, in any shape, is used in making or preparing the plates, or has any connection with them anywhere, unless it be, perhaps the ‘tin’ that goes into the happy operator’s pocket after the successful completion of his work.” Quoted by Beaumont Newhall, “The Tintype,” *Close-Up*, 13:1 (August 1982), 17.



**John P. Doremus, 218 Main Street, Paterson. African American woman, ferrotypes card, circa 1868–1870, with blind-stamped Potter’s patent, March 7, 1865. National Museum of African American History and Culture, NMAAHC-2010\_36\_11\_12. Potter’s patent specified a method to attach a tintype to the back of an embossed card with an aperture for the image.**

In addition to the strong market for photographs sparked by the Civil War, the 1860s was a period when Paterson’s population was growing significantly, enhancing the local demand for photography. The city was founded in the 1790s at the suggestion of Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton saw great potential in the water power enabled by the 77-foot Great Falls of the Passaic River, also known as Passaic Falls. Paterson’s industries continued to develop throughout the nineteenth century. Its inhabitants increased 72.8% from 19,586 in 1860 to 33,579 in 1870, and



the city grew another 52% to 51,031 in 1880.<sup>27</sup> In the first years of his gallery, Doremus did have competition from a few other photographers, notably Jonathan B. Jenks, John Reid, Anthony Van Riper, and Alfred and Jeremiah Van Emburgh, but there was ample business for him, including from fellow members of fraternal societies in which he was very active.

Doremus's diary contains frequent mention of fraternal meetings he attended in Paterson as well as in Trenton, New York, and farther afield, and he took considerable pride when he was appointed to higher offices and received recognition. He held responsible positions in the local lodges of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (Freemasons), Knights Templar (a fraternal order of the Freemasons), Odd Fellows, and the Improved Order of Redmen. In Trenton on January 16, 1872, he was elected Most Puissance Grand Master by the Freemasons and presented with a Past Masters jewel that cost \$125 (about \$2,500 in 2021 dollars).<sup>28</sup>

From 1863 to 1868 or 1869, Doremus's Gallery of Art was located at 85 Main Street in the heart of Paterson's business district. While there, his reputation among photographers was enhanced in January 1864, when his method of preparing collodion glass plate negatives was published in a professional photography journal.<sup>29</sup> The collodion photographic process, also called the wet-plate process, had been invented by the Englishman Frederick Scott Archer, who published his technique in 1851. Collodion is a clear sticky liquid that could be made light-sensitive through the addition of a silver nitrate solution. Negatives made with it could be used for printing on

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<sup>27</sup> *Compendium of Censuses 1726–1905: Together with the Tabulated Returns of 1905* (Trenton: New Jersey Department of State, 1906), <https://dspace.njstatelib.org/xmlui/handle/10929/25218?show=full>.

<sup>28</sup> Among other positions, Doremus was elected Left Supporter of the North Guard, Odd Fellows, on April 16, 1871, and Eminent Commander of St. Omar's Commandery, Knights Templar, on March 25, 1872. Doremus's extensive involvement in these organizations, documented in his diary, is not relevant to this article and is not discussed in detail here, but it is significant that he regularly visited the lodges of these organizations when he traveled, suggesting that he enjoyed the camaraderie afforded by membership. Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse; Knights Templar: *Paterson Daily Press*, September 27, 1871, 3, and March 28, 1872, 3.

<sup>29</sup> John P. Doremus, "Processes Which Have Been Proved—No. 3," *American Journal of Photography and the Allied Arts & Sciences*, 6:14 (January 15, 1864), 333–334. This report was apparently written by the *Journal's* editor on the basis of information submitted by Doremus.

sensitized paper, most commonly coated with albumen (egg white) to create a smooth surface that rendered superior detail. Collodion was also used for ambrotypes and ferrotypes.

To prepare a collodion negative, the photographer would mix a solution of ether, alcohol, iodine, bromine, and guncotton (nitrocellulose), and let it ripen. After cleaning the glass, the photographer held it in one hand and poured the mixture onto the plate with the other, then rocked the plate to coat it evenly. Once the collodion had set, the photographer dipped the plate into a bath of silver nitrate for sensitization to light. This step had to be done in the dark or with a dim red or yellow light. The plate then would be put into a plate holder and inserted into the camera. After exposure, the plate had to be developed before the collodion had dried.<sup>30</sup> Doremus used a mixture of two different collodions that he aged separately for at least a week and, after exposure, “strengthened” the negative with a silver solution during development.<sup>31</sup>

The Doremus Gallery of Art at 85 Main Street produced many portraits, including one of 2nd Lt. William J. Ward, Co. E, 25th Regiment, New Jersey Volunteers, whose CDV is in the Civil War photo collection at the New Jersey State Archives.<sup>32</sup> The back of the CDV is imprinted, “Photographs, Ambrotypes, Cartes De Visite, Ferrotypes, &c.,” advertising the range of services. Note that he did not mention stereoviews at this time; later they became a significant part of his enterprise. At the end of July 1867, Doremus expanded his business to a second gallery in Paterson at 172 Main Street.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The procedure was similar for ambrotypes and ferrotypes. For ambrotypes, a shorter than normal exposure was used. For ferrotypes, instead of glass, the photographer used an iron plate that was purchased with shiny black lacquer (Japan black) on one side.

<sup>31</sup> Robert A. Sobieszek, ed., *The Collodion Process and the Ferrotypes: Three Accounts, 1854–1872* (New York: Arno Press, 1973); John Towler, MD, *The Silver Sunbeam: A Practical and Theoretical Text-Book on Sun Drawing and Photographic Printing* (New York: Joseph H. Ladd, 1964, reprinted by Morgan & Morgan, 1969). Using a mixture of two collodions and “flowing with silver” during development were common practices in the 1860s. Historic photographic processes instructor Mark Osterman to author, email, February 16, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> The New Jersey State Archives also has Doremus’s CDV of Chaplain William H. McCormick, 1st Regiment Infantry, New Jersey Volunteers, taken at the photographer’s branch gallery at 172 Main Street.

<sup>33</sup> Doremus diary, August 10, 1867; *Stereo World*, 13.

Doremus did some of the photography and printing himself, but he also had several employees. According to his diary entry of August 10, 1867, Henry F. Post was the camera operator at 172 Main Street and paid \$15 per week.<sup>34</sup> Thomas H. Ellison did the camera work for the same pay at the original gallery at 85 Main Street. Doremus also hired Pierson Van Houten,<sup>35</sup> a local photographer without his own gallery, to do outdoor work for \$9 per week; John Davis to clean glass “and make himself generally useful” for \$6 per week; and Miss Emma Gould to do the printing for both galleries at \$5 per week.<sup>36</sup> His rent was \$350 per year at 185 Main and \$400 annually at 172 Main. On March 30, 1868, he added Emma’s sister Julia Gould to his staff to work at the lower gallery.<sup>37</sup> As will be seen, Doremus regularly employed women in his business.

In addition to photography, his offerings expanded to selling art reproductions that he purchased in New York. On October 8, 1867, he went to the metropolis and bought lithographs of trees at Currier & Ives. On November 12, he wrote in his journal that he went to New York and

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<sup>34</sup> *Stereo World*, 13. Doremus’s somewhat ambiguous handwritten mention of Post led to errors by Ralph DuPae, who did a tremendous amount of excellent work researching Doremus and transcribing his diary. DuPae’s transcript of Doremus’s diary for August 10, 1867, reproduced in *Stereo World*, reads H. C. Port. No H. C. Port has been found in the region around this time. On August 7, 1871, Doremus clearly wrote the name as H. F. Post in the original diary, but DuPae rendered it again as H. C. Port in the transcript; that entry was not published in the *Stereo World* excerpts. The 1872 Paterson city directory listed Henry F. Post as a photographer at 218 Main Street, Doremus’s gallery address at that time. Henry F. Post was recorded as a photographer in the 1870 Paterson census as 30 years old and had his own photography galleries in Paterson, 1882–1898. New Jersey Photographers List, <http://saretzky.com/history-of-photography-indexes-to-photographers.html>.

<sup>35</sup> As with Port/Post, Van Houten was misinterpreted by DuPae when he transcribed the diary and rendered Pierson Van Houten as P. Horton. Van Houten is listed in Paterson directories as a photographer around this time, but no P. Horton could be found. Further confirmation of this identification is in Doremus’s diary on September 7, 1870, when he mentions P. Van Houten as an employee.

<sup>36</sup> Doremus’s diary on September 7, 1870, implies that Emma Gould had become a camera operator, as he noted that P. [Pierson] Van Houten took the pictures at the lower gallery while Emma was off on vacation.

<sup>37</sup> The transcript incorrectly reads “Julius Gould.” Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. On August 7, 1871, he paid wages to H. F. Post, \$15; Emma Gould, \$7.50; Julia Gould, \$5.00; William Bates, an Englishman who did painting on photos, \$7.50; Kate Schoonmaker, \$3.00; and Lizzie Johnson, \$3.00, likely for clerical work. That day, Lizzie Johnson was quitting and Doremus’s son Leonard (Lenny) was taking her place. Lizzie Johnson had begun “tending the store for us” on September 21, 1868. Julia Gould, 20, is listed as a photographer in the 1870 census, living with her parents and other siblings, including Emma, 25. In the 1872 Paterson city directory, Emma Gould managed the Union Photography Gallery at 129 Main Street (formerly numbered 85 Main) and was living with her sister Julia, listed as a printer. Kate Schoonmaker was no doubt a relative of Doremus’s wife, Sarah, but the relationship has not been determined by the author.

purchased many “chromes [chromolithographs] and lithos.” There are weekly mentions in his diary of other trips to New York and even one to Boston, to buy art reproductions, frames, and photographic supplies.<sup>38</sup> On January 21, 1868, he bought 1,000 stereoview card mounts at E. & H. T. Anthony’s, the major photographic supply house in New York.<sup>39</sup> On these shopping trips, he sometimes brought along one of his sons, Harry or Lenny, giving them valuable experience for when they would take on a significant role in the galleries.

Doremus’s expenses for his photographic supplies are an indicator of the extent of his business. On November 12, 1867, he paid his monthly bill at E. & H. T. Anthony in the amount of \$111.03, equivalent to about \$1,181 in 2021 dollars.<sup>40</sup> As for his income, in the last week of December 1867, which he termed a good one, he took in about \$210 at his “upper gallery,” by which he meant the one at 172 Main Street.<sup>41</sup> This income is equivalent to about \$3,700 in 2021 dollars.

In 1867, photographers were supposed to pay 5% of their monthly income in federal taxes.<sup>42</sup> For the entire month of December, Doremus reported a taxable income of \$168 and paid \$8.40. Although he was probably reporting his net income, it is likely that he was underreporting. His tax returns indicated that he was doing about four times as much business at 172 Main than at 85 Main, which was next door to his well-established competitor, John Reid, at 83 Main. His

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<sup>38</sup> Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. In the 1870 Paterson directory, Doremus’s ad included “And Dealer in Oil Paintings, Chromos, and all kinds of Picture Frames.”

<sup>39</sup> A stereoview is a pair of images that look three-dimensional when seen through a viewer with two lenses. Since the extant diary begins on August 10, 1867, it is not known when Doremus first began working in the stereo format, but this entry approximates the latest possible date. For the important role of E. & H. T. Anthony in the history of photography, see William & Estelle Marder, *Anthony: The Man, The Company, The Cameras* (n.p.: Pine Ridge Publishing Company, 1982).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Doremus diary, December 27, 1867, *Stereo World*, 14.

<sup>42</sup> For an overview of the complicated Civil War–era taxes, see Cynthia G. Fox, “Income Tax Records of the Civil War Years,” *Prologue*, 18:4 (Winter 1986). <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1986/winter/civil-war-tax-records.html>.

busiest month in 1867 was September, when he reported \$243.<sup>43</sup> For all photographers in New Jersey that year, he ranked seventh in reported income with an annual total of \$2,496.<sup>44</sup>

Even with his business expenses, Doremus was coming out well ahead and could afford personal items, including six false upper teeth on November 17, 1867; a piano for \$250 on April 2, 1868; followed by music lessons for his sons; and new bedroom furniture for \$121 on May 13, 1868.<sup>45</sup> He also had money to invest in real estate. On September 23, 1870, he bought six lots at Lakeview, a neighborhood in the southern part of Paterson, for \$1,000 with \$400 down. He soon brought hundreds of loads of dirt to the site for grading, fenced the lots, and, with the assistance of his sons, painted the fences and planted potatoes and more than 100 fruit trees. He added three adjoining lots to his Lakeview holdings for \$1,200 on October 7. The next year, on February 16, 1872, he purchased a substantial three-story building at 61 Van Houton Street in Paterson for \$11,000 and rented the store for \$25 per month and the upper floors for the same amount.<sup>46</sup> Currently, this address is the headquarters of the Islamic Foundation of New Jersey.

Since high-quality albumen prints were made by contact printing in daylight from same-sized glass negatives, when large prints were needed, Doremus and his operators took views with cameras that used 8-by-10-inch or 14-by-17-inch plates. He used the 14-by-17 camera when he took several shots of a Mr. Palmer's house a short distance below the Passaic River bridge on December 8, 1870.<sup>47</sup> The river and the spectacular Passaic Falls at Paterson were attractive subjects

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<sup>43</sup> Internal Revenue Assessment records, National Archives and Records Administration, examined by the author about 20 years ago at the New York branch of NARA but now available on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com).

<sup>44</sup> Author, "Nineteenth Century New Jersey Photographers," *New Jersey History* (Fall/Winter 2004), revised, [http://www.gary.saretzky.com/photohistory/resources/photo\\_in\\_nj\\_July\\_2010.pdf](http://www.gary.saretzky.com/photohistory/resources/photo_in_nj_July_2010.pdf).

<sup>45</sup> Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Doremus had all six of his upper teeth extracted on October 11, 1867, and had to wait more than a month before getting replacements.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* Doremus also got income from recycling used chemicals and scraps of exposed photographic paper that he took to New York and got money for the silver recovered. On March 8, 1871, Doremus noted that he paid the taxes on 935 acres he owned in Mitchell and Howard Counties in Iowa, at least some of which he purchased when he lived in Iowa in the 1850s.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

for Doremus in all seasons. On August 19, 1871, he wrote in his diary that he had taken his cart to Passaic Falls in Paterson and captured some groups. Then he left the cart there for Emma Gould and his son Harry to take more pictures.<sup>48</sup>

### **Doremus's Stereographic Views in New Jersey and New York**

As indicated by his purchase of card stock on which to mount stereoviews, Doremus was mining that vein by January 1868. Some stereographic images using the daguerreotype process had been made by photographers in the early 1850s, and glass positive stereoviews were also produced in that decade, when binocular cameras with two lenses were introduced.<sup>49</sup> But stereoviews, also known as stereographs and stereoscopic photographs, only became widely affordable in the late 1850s in the form of inexpensive albumen prints from collodion negatives mounted on cards, usually 3 1/2 by 7 inches. Soon many upper- and middle-class homes had one or more stereographic viewers, either handheld or desktop stereoscopes that stored multiple views. The public not only collected local views but also scenes of faraway places so they could travel virtually. Though less popular, stereographic portraits could also be purchased from photographers. By 1883, as Hermann Vogel stated, "There is not a parlor in America where there is not a stereoscope."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Stereo World*, 15. Doremus's stereographs at the falls often include groups standing on the bridge.

<sup>49</sup> Although some American daguerreotypists produced stereos, usually presented in Mascher viewing cases, more stereo daguerreotypes, sometimes with hand-applied color, were created in England and France, although the format was still unusual compared to other types of photographs. Stereographic negatives could be made with a one-lens camera mounted on a bar that facilitated two consecutive exposures, but better results were obtained with a two-lens camera that could take both shots simultaneously. Page & Bryan Ginns, "The Art of the Stereo Daguerreotype in England and France," Chapter 8 in *Antique Photographica: The Collector's Vision*, eds. Bryan & Page Ginns (Atglen, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publications, 2013), 121–130.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted by Kim Bell, *Good Pictures: A History of Popular Photography* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2020), 64, from "Photographers' Association of America: Milwaukee Convention," *Photographic Times and American Photographer*, 13 (1883), 403. Hermann Wilhelm Vogel (1834–1898) was a German chemist and photographer credited with discovering dye sensitization, which led to orthochromatic negatives and subsequently most color photographic processes. He is also remembered for teaching photochemistry to Alfred Stieglitz at the Technische Hochschule in Berlin. For Vogel, see Louis Walton Siple, *Photography's Great Inventors* (Philadelphia: American Museum of Photography, 1965), 32–33.

E. & H. T. Anthony marketed some of Doremus's views in the 1870s with its own imprint and credit to Doremus for the negative.<sup>51</sup> Anthony began publishing views in 1859 and by 1873 offered an impressive 11,300 titles.<sup>52</sup> Bookstores also sold stereoviews; in Paterson in the 1870s, one could buy Doremus views at Milton Sears & Bro., Bookseller & Stationers, at 133 Market Street.<sup>53</sup> Naturally, Doremus also sold his views at his own galleries.<sup>54</sup>

One relatively early Doremus stereoview is of the Passaic County National Bank, next to George Van Houten's dry goods store at 221 Main Street in Paterson. It has a Doremus label on the back with his 172 Main Street address. The view is taken from the second floor across from the dry goods store and is probably from the window at 218 Main Street, the address of Doremus's gallery beginning in 1868 or 1869.<sup>55</sup> A somewhat later view, probably taken in about 1871, shows the Doremus gallery from street level, with a large sign and the three-story building festooned with American flags. At the entrance, several showcases with samples of his work are displayed. Hanging from his building to another across the street is a large banner, the right half of which is

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<sup>51</sup> Views taken by Doremus were issued by E. & H. T. Anthony in its "Popular Series. American Views," some available online in the Robert N. Dennis Collection, New York Public Library. They are from Doremus's series, "Views on the New York and Oswego Midland Railroad," discussed below, and which he also issued on his own cards with his imprint. The specifics of the arrangement between Doremus and E. & H. T. Anthony are unknown. E. & H. T. Anthony also issued related views not credited to Doremus or another photographer.

<sup>52</sup> In Europe, the London Stereoscopic Company had a trade list of more than 100,000 worldwide titles by 1858. William C. Darrah, *The World of Stereographs* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: William C. Darrah, 1977), 3–4, 23–24.

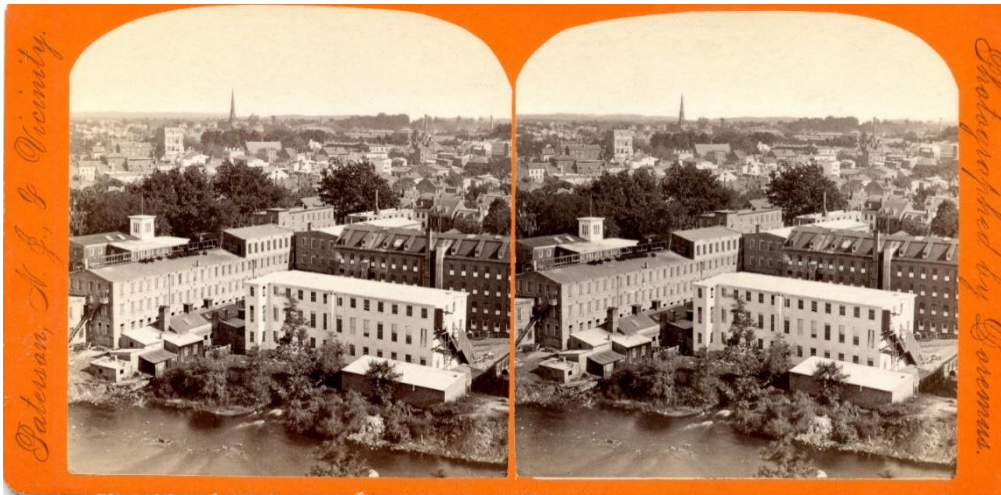
<sup>53</sup> For example, Doremus stereoview, "No. 17. Winter view of Dam of Passaic Water Co.," with Milton Sears & Co. label on verso. Kenneth H. Rosen collection. The author is very grateful to Kenneth H. Rosen for sharing information and images that have considerably enhanced this article.

<sup>54</sup> One was Doremus's view of Ridgefield Park, New Jersey, with a printed label on the back, "Views on the New York and Oswego Midland Railroad Photographed by J.P. Doremus. For Sale at Doremus's Photographic and Fine Art Gallery, No. 218 Main Street, Paterson, N.J." The label has a place to write in the title of the particular view. Kenneth H. Rosen collection.

<sup>55</sup> Doremus did not record the move of his "upper" gallery to 218 Main Street in his diary. The first mention of this address in his journal is January 4, 1869, when he noted that he had bought a ton of coal for 218 Main and also a ton for his lower gallery but did not mention the address. The last mention of the lower gallery by number, 85 Main, is May 21, 1868. In the 1868 Paterson city directory, he is listed at both 85 Main and 172 Main. No 1869 directory is known. Beginning in the 1870 directory, he is listed at only 218 Main, which also became his home address. The possibility of street renumbering as the reason for the change from 172 to 218 exists but could not be confirmed or ruled out. A late-1860s CDV from the Union Gallery at 129 Main St notes on the back, "Old No. 85," so there was street renumbering around this time.

in the frame, reading “Art Gallery 218.” No one could pass Doremus’s business without noticing its location.

Around 1870, Doremus issued a “Passaic Falls Series” of stereoviews taken in different seasons, within a larger set called, “Views of Northern New Jersey.” The back of the yellow cards have a blue or pink label with a printed list of views, and the title of the one on the front is underlined. For example, No. 15 is one of two entitled, “New Bridge from the Falls,” showing 18 people standing on the bridge looking at the camera, perhaps taken on August 19, 1871, when he was there, as mentioned above. Stereoview collector Kenneth H. Rosen believes that Paterson, especially its Great Falls, was the most popular subject for stereoviews of New Jersey in this era. Local photographers like Doremus and John Reid competed with many others who came from elsewhere, including E. & H. T. Anthony (New York), the brothers William and Frederick Langenheim (Philadelphia), and William England for the London Stereoscopic Company in 1859.<sup>56</sup>



**John P. Doremus, Paterson. Paterson from Cannon Rock, No. 27, No. 5, “Passaic Falls & Vicinity” series, stereoview, 1870s. Kenneth H. Rosen Collection.**

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<sup>56</sup> Email, Kenneth H. Rosen to author, May 6, 2021. William England’s view of the falls is reproduced in Ian Jeffrey, *An American Journey: The Photography of William England* (Munich, London, and New York: Prestel Verlag, 1999), 12.



Doremus issued at least 76 different images of Passaic Falls in his “Views of Northern New Jersey” series.<sup>57</sup> Another series with titles printed directly on the back without a label he called “Passaic Falls & Vicinity,” with 27 views of the falls, 8 of Paterson from Garret Mountain, and 8 of Cedar Lawn Cemetery. He also had a set called “Paterson, N.J. & Vicinity,” with titles printed under the image. In addition to series, Doremus produced unnumbered views, for example, one labeled by hand “Main Street Bridge” on a “Passaic Falls & Vicinity” series label on the back.<sup>58</sup> Others, generally on yellow mounts, have no information on the front while the back has an imprint with “J.P. Doremus” and his 172 Main Street, Paterson, address. These sometimes have a title handwritten on the back. Finally, some of his stereographs just have “Photo by Doremus, Paterson, N.J.” on the front along the sides of the image and there is no title provided on either the front or the back; one is of a patriotic parade in Paterson, perhaps celebrating July 4. In this shot, Doremus pointed his camera diagonally across the street with Van Saun & Muzzy’s paint store at 193–195 Main Street at the far right of the frame, near Cole’s grocery store and Laverick’s, a jeweler and watchmaker. The number of different stereoviews Doremus produced in the vicinity of Paterson must have been well over 100.

Doremus also made a large-format view of the falls in the mid-1870s that he framed to about 18 by 24 inches and hung on the wall of his parlor. It appears in the background of a

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<sup>57</sup> Doremus noted in his diary on October 10, 1868, that he had taken quite a number of views, mostly stereoscopic, of the falls and surrounding vicinity. Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. Labels found with views of Passaic Falls are found with Nos. 1–30, 31–56, and 57–76. The label listing Passaic Falls views up to No. 76 is followed by photographs of Paterson, Nos. 77 to 83.

<sup>58</sup> Doremus’s “Views in Northern New Jersey, Passaic Falls” series, was issued with three different back labels listing views numbered 1 to 83. Most are of the falls and nearby scenes in all seasons, supplemented by a group taken elsewhere: two of Washington’s Headquarters in Suffern, New York; three of an iron works; several of Passaic, among them the Episcopal church, St. Agnes Institute, and Paterson Street from Broadway; and seven of Paterson, i.e., an “Instantaneous View” of Main Street, Ellison Street, Paterson Orphan Asylum, Pennington House, Town Clock on Main Street, East Ward Schoolhouse, and First Baptist Church. His earlier views were in the standard stereograph size, 3 1/2 by 7 inches. In the late 1870s, he began issuing cabinet stereographs, 4 1/2 by 7 inches, sometimes from the same negatives previously used for the smaller size. Email, Kenneth H. Rosen to author, May 6, 2021.

remarkable stereoview view of Doremus with his wife, Sarah, and children Mattie, Annie, Harry, and Leonard sitting around a table. Sarah and Leonard hold stereoscopes while Mattie cradles a CDV album (see the illustration of page five of this article).<sup>59</sup>

Although Doremus was hired occasionally to take outdoor or indoor shots in large format or in stereo by homeowners and local businesses, his career as a view-maker expanded significantly when he was given a pass in August 1871 by Cornelius A. Wortendyke, the president of the New York and Oswego Midland Railroad (Midland RR), which when completed ran south from Oswego, New York, at Lake Ontario and passed through New York and New Jersey near Paterson to the Pennsylvania Railroad terminal at Weehawken, where passengers could take the ferry to Manhattan.<sup>60</sup> Although no contract has been found, it is likely that Doremus was given the pass with the understanding that he would make views of scenery and other places of interest to publicize the railroad. Doremus regularly took trips over the next two years photographing up and down the line.

Doremus's hard work along the route of the Midland RR was described in a newspaper article about his efforts to photograph the now abandoned 3,855-foot Shawangunk Tunnel, which was completed in 1871.<sup>61</sup> Doremus copied the article, without mentioning the source newspaper, into his diary on September 18, 1872. It was written by a journalist who accompanied the

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<sup>59</sup> Reproduced and discussed in Kenneth H. Rosen, "Early American Stereoviews," in Ginns, 137. Doremus also made a stereoview of his wife sitting by herself. Kenneth H. Rosen collection.

<sup>60</sup> The New York and Oswego Midland Railroad initiated construction in September 1868 and was completed in July 1873. James Eldridge Quinlan, *History of Sullivan County . . .* (1873), transcribed at [http://genealogytrails.com/ny/sullivan/history\\_oswegorailroad.html](http://genealogytrails.com/ny/sullivan/history_oswegorailroad.html). An 1869 map showing the route of the railroad is available at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3801p.rr004850/?r=0.324,0.268,0.304,0.198,0>. In 1880, the railroad became the New York, Ontario and Western Railway, known as the O&W. As a result of bankruptcy, its assets were liquidated in 1957.

<sup>61</sup> Also known as the High View Tunnel or the Bloomingburgh (now Bloomingburg) Tunnel, it was used to connect High View with Mamakating, New York, from 1871 to 1957. <https://www.steamphotos.com/Railroad-Photos/Abandoned-Railroad-Tunnels/NYOW-High-View-Tunnel/>. A Doremus stereoview of the west end of this tunnel, published by E. & H. T. Anthony, is in the J. Paul Getty Museum and available at <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/67218/edward-and-henry-t-anthony-co-west-end-of-shawangunk-tunnel-new-york-and-oswego-midland-railroad-american-about-1868/>.

photographer on “a sort of family picnic” to the site. After riding the train from New Jersey to Orange County, New York, the group was dropped off after Middletown at the mouth of the tunnel.

They were immediately greeted by a swarm of big hornets and Doremus got stung on the nose.

The writer continued with a bit of jocular hyperbole:

Then [we] began the work of the day, and whilst the children took to the woods, we found work enough for half a dozen men in bringing hither and yon the picture taker’s traps. We had thought it a very easy matter to take pictures, to stick up a machine, point it at a fellow, slap on a back cloth, and the thing was finished. What was our astonishment, however, to find a great deal of work to be done. One had to fetch water, another to help with the machine, and Doremus himself began to unpack a whole apothecary shop and two or three wholesale drug stores. We began to feel discouraged, and soon we found there was too much work for the small amount of fun; but there was no help, for we were in for the job and Doremus forgot his piety and began to swear like a trooper when we didn’t ‘hurry up.’ He took the tunnel’s mouth and the tunnel’s top, and the tunnel’s sides, and the tunnel’s inside and outside. In fact, before he was through he wore us out . . . and we had put in three hours harder work than digging on the railroad . . . Our wives and babies had a good time in the grass on the side of the mountain and found delightful grottos, and glens, and springs, and brooks, and waterfalls . . . As for the picture taking business we’ve had enough of it, and we don’t propose to help in any such artistic efforts hereafter, and if anybody wants to know how easy pictures are taken, let him go out with Doremus . . . on one of those picture taking picnics.<sup>62</sup>

This railroad-related work required more card stock on which to mount his stereoviews. On November 12, 1872, Doremus wrote in his journal, “Went with the boys [Harry and Lenny] to New York and bought up 2,000 stereo mounts for the views of the Midland RR with the names of the subjects printed at the bottom.”<sup>63</sup> Unlike his earlier stereoviews on yellow or beige cards, most of the Midland RR views were pasted on red-orange cards. Although he did make some in New Jersey, for example, in Bloomingdale, Charlotteburgh, Maywood, and Ridgefield Park, others

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<sup>62</sup> *Stereo World*, 16–17. Word in brackets not in original transcript was added in *Stereo World*.

<sup>63</sup> *Stereo World*, 17. Some of his stereoviews are printed on the left, “Views in Northern New Jersey”; on the right, “Photo. by Doremus, Paterson, N.J.”; on the bottom left, “Views on the N.Y. and O. Midland Rail Road”; and at bottom right, the number and title. Others only have “Photo by Doremus” and “Paterson, N.J.,” on the sides of the front, and on the back a label entitled, “Views on the New Jersey Midland Railroad,” followed by a list of 31 titles with the title of the image on the front underlined.

were taken in New York State, often in or near depots such as Liberty Falls, Unionville, Wurtsboro, Norwich, Mannsville, Cuddebackville, and Walton.

On several occasions, Doremus went to the end of the line at Oswego, sometimes taking family members along. Accompanied by his wife, Sarah, and youngest child, Annie, he visited Oswego in late September 1873, and took views of their hotel, for which he charged \$20 for two dozen and added the pictures to his Midland RR series. In October 1873, he stopped at the Oneida Community, the religious utopian commune founded by John Humphrey Noyes in 1848, which had about 300 members by 1870.<sup>64</sup> Doremus's stereoview "Oneida Community. South Front of Mansion" was published by E. & H. T. Anthony & Co, one of about 140 in its Midland RR series.<sup>65</sup>

Doremus's first Midland RR stereographs under his own imprint had a list of 31 views on the back. Number 1 is a view of the *C. A. Wortendyke*, claimed to be the first locomotive used on the railroad, and Number 31 is a portrait of Mark Wilkinson, the first conductor on the Midland RR.<sup>66</sup> Doremus subsequently issued others on the list with the same title but different numbers at

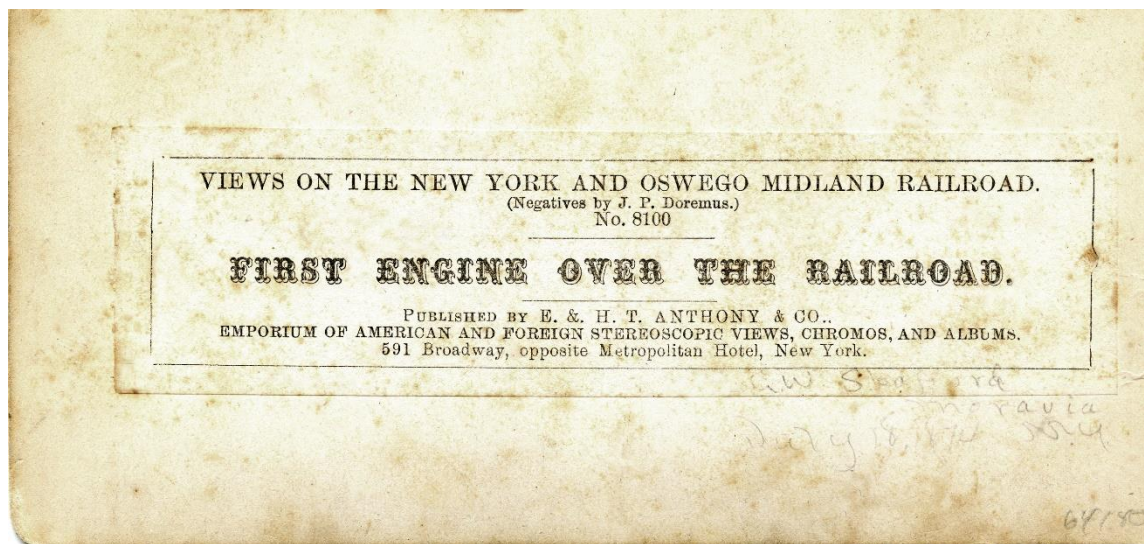
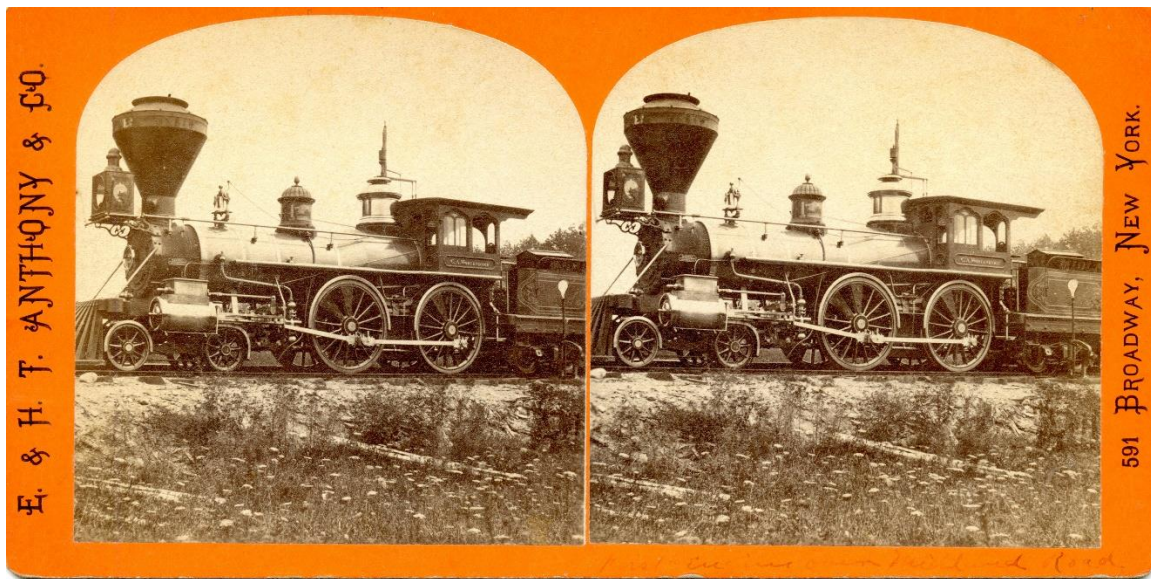
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<sup>64</sup> Randall Hillebrand, "The Oneida Community," <http://www.nyhistory.com/central/oneida.htm>.

<sup>65</sup> Entries in Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, with mentions of places recently visited, as follows: Maywood, October 22, 1872; Charlotteburgh, October 30, 1872; Bloomingdale, January 14, 1873; Liberty Falls, May 23 and 30, 1873; Unionville, July 15, 1873; Wurtsboro and Sandburgh, August 9, 1872; Wurtsboro, Liberty, Norwich, Oswego, Munnsville, and Liberty, September 8, 1872; Oswego and Walton, September 27, 1873; Cuddebackville, Oswego, Oneida Community, Lynn Brook Bridge, October 16, 1873; Oswego, Walton, Sidney Centre, November 11, 1873. Oneida Community stereo, E. & H. T. Anthony view No. 8773, '74, Kenneth H. Rosen collection. Confirmed Anthony numbers for its Midland RR series include 8100–8187, with 8167–8187 not marked on the back as negative by Doremus; 8521–8527, not marked on the back as by Doremus; 8761–8796, credited to Doremus; and 9103–9110, which are Oswego Harbor views not marked as by Doremus or as Midland Railroad but could be considered as part of the set. Those not identified with negative by Doremus were possibly by him; no other photographer is credited. Email, Kenneth H. Rosen to author, March 8, 2021, et al. For an incomplete list of numbers and titles of Midland RR stereoviews published by Anthony, see pages 319–320 at <https://stereoworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/anthonybook-1.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> The locomotive view is available on the J. Paul Getty Museum webpage, <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/71541/john-p-doremus-first-locomotive-on-the-nj-midland-rr-american-1865-1875/>. This view was also issued by E. & H. T. Anthony, No. 8100, with title, "First Engine Over the Railroad." Doremus made stereographs of his residence in Wortendyke, New Jersey, numbers 5 and 7 in his series "Views of the New Jersey Midland Railroad." Wortendyke is now an unincorporated community in Midland Park, Bergen County. Note that *History of Bergen and Passaic Counties, New Jersey . . .* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1882), 88–89, stated that the first locomotive used by the New Jersey Midland was named the *Passaic*.

the bottom below the image and no list on the back; the numbers on such views go up to at least 100.<sup>67</sup>



**John P. Doremus, Paterson. First Engine over the Railroad, “New York and Oswego Midland Railroad” series, published by E. & H. T. Anthony, No. 8100, stereoview. Kenneth H. Rosen Collection. Recto and verso. Dated July 18, 1874, in pencil by previous owner, probably acquisition date. Doremus also issued this view with his own imprint.**

<sup>67</sup> For example, No. 17 on the list, “Lake Arrareek, Pompton, N.J.,” has been found as No. 60; “Departed Power: ruins of old mill, Bloomingdale, N.J.,” No. 19 on the list, is also No. 63; and “At Rest; ruins of old mill on Pequannock, Bloomingdale, N.J.,” No. 20 on the list, has been found as No. 64. Emails, Kenneth H. Rosen to author, March 8, 2021, et al. Further research is needed to determine if all of these higher numbers are variants or the same image as issued with the lower number.

While Doremus usually went on these trips for one to a few days, sometimes he was gone from home for as long as two weeks. On shorter trips, he was often accompanied and assisted by either of his sons, Harry or Lenny. They were particularly useful to help carry equipment and supplies when he wanted to walk to a scenic spot such as a waterfall a mile or more from the station. In addition to cameras and tripod, Doremus needed to bring along glass plates, chemicals, and his dark tent, where the plates were prepared and developed. After returning to Paterson, he would print and mount views and take them back on his next trip and sell them. On November 11, 1873, he brought home \$80 (about \$1,744 in 2021 dollars) that he had received for retail sales to stores.<sup>68</sup>

### **Doremus Goes West to Make Mississippi Views**

By the end of 1873, Doremus must have felt that he had completed work on the Midland RR series, as he began to make plans to go West. After a recreational trip in January 1874 to Washington, DC, where he visited the Capitol, Georgetown, the Corcoran Art Gallery, the Navy Yard, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Patent Office, he headed for Kentucky on February 4.<sup>69</sup> He enjoyed a stay with cousins in Lexington, then made his way to Le Roy Post Office, Minnesota, where on February 13, his brother-in-law Dan Schoonmaker picked him up and drove a horse-drawn sleigh through heavy snow across the state line to Riceville. During his visit, Doremus went to one of his properties in northeastern Iowa and “trimmed up a lot of my growing timber near the Wapsipicon River,” despite frigid temperatures.<sup>70</sup> On February 20, he went to a wedding party and

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<sup>68</sup> Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. On August 9, 1873, Doremus recorded in his diary that while at Liberty, someone upset his dark tent and spilled his chemicals. He telegraphed home for another outfit and Lenny brought it to him, after which they worked together for a few days. Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse.

<sup>69</sup> Doremus stayed and saw the sights with Henry Beam, possibly the brother of Doremus’s brother-in-law, John Beam. *Ibid.*, January 6, 1874; February 4, 1874; February 8, 1874.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, February 17, 1874. Doremus noted that it was -13 degrees on February 20 and -27 on February 24. He recorded this place name as Le Roy Post Office. Le Roy, Minnesota, is just north of the state line with Iowa and is not to be confused with Leroy, Iowa, which is south of Riceville.

“danced considerably and had a good time.” Doremus stayed in Riceville until March 11, when Schoonmaker took him by sleigh to Le Roy Post Office and he entrained for St. Paul. By March 13, he was in Minneapolis.<sup>71</sup>

After his arrival in Minneapolis, Doremus must have discussed his plans with a newspaper reporter, for on March 14 he wrote in his diary that he was pleased to see an article in the *Minneapolis Tribune* about his intention to travel down the Mississippi in a flat boat to New Orleans. Doremus did not originate floating galleries and may have been aware of others. Perhaps he had heard of or seen *The Daguerrean* [sic] *Boat*, a floating gallery opened in 1853 by Joseph Rupert Gorgas (1828–1903) that was based in Madison, Indiana, on the Ohio River. Gorgas sailed on the Mississippi as well. The vessel, according to Gorgas’s recollection published in 1899, was 65 feet long and “well appointed, a good cook, with flute, violin and guitar, [and we] had a jolly time.”<sup>72</sup>

Doremus must also have been aware that the 1840s and 1850s had featured a revival in moving panoramas, the precursor to motion pictures, which featured long rolls of gaslit landscape paintings that were gradually revealed to the audience. John Banvard made two in the 1840s derived from his sketches made on raft trips on the Mississippi; more than 250,000 attended showings in Boston. Banvard advertised, probably with exaggeration, that his panorama that opened at Amory Hall in Boston in December 1846 employed “three miles” of canvas accompanied by his narration. Unlike Banvard, John Wesley Jones based his 1852 “Pantoscope of California, Nebraska, Utah, and the Mormons” on 1,500 daguerreotypes, now lost. Other artists

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid. Doremus also mentioned his enjoyment of dancing in other diary entries.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted from the July 1899 issue of the *St. Louis and Canadian Photographer* in C. Wesley Cowan, “Twenty-Five Years of Daguerreian-Era Images at Cowan’s,” *The Daguerreian Annual, 2019–2020* (Cecil, Pennsylvania: The Daguerreian Society, 2020), 22. Cowan reproduces a view of the vessel by Gorgas, a half-plate ambrotype now at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. See also Brown, 100–101.

also capitalized on the curiosity of urban dwellers willing to pay for scenes of the relatively undeveloped frontier with panoramas more than 1,000 feet long. Thus, Doremus's plan to sell stereographic views of "The Mississippi and Its Tributaries" was solidly in a tradition of image-making of the frontier.<sup>73</sup> He likely believed that there would be a market for scenic views among both dwellers on and along the river and back East.

The March 14, 1874, entry is the first mention in his diary of Doremus's floating gallery, so it is not known when he conceived the idea. The newspaper he cited stated that Doremus's boat would be 65 by 85 feet—a significant exaggeration—"large enough to carry his apparatus and his house and will start from below the falls early in the spring. Before he goes he will take a number of views of the scenery in this city and vicinity." Doremus noted that he intended to design this large vessel and use it to take views on each side of the river.<sup>74</sup> Minneapolis was a logical starting place for Doremus, for the Falls of St. Anthony nearby would have prevented him from beginning farther upstream.

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<sup>73</sup> Martha A. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 48–74. Landscape painting in the style of the Hudson River School was popular during this era, and artists such as Albert Bierstadt made large paintings of the American frontier based on his own photographs. In addition to landscapes, moving panoramas were also made during this period by Black antislavery activists, including the escaped enslaved men Henry Box Brown and William Wells Brown and freeborn daguerreotypist James Presley Ball, with scenes of servitude intended to advocate for emancipation. Aston Gonzalez, *Visualizing Equality: African American Rights and Visual Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 107–144.

<sup>74</sup> The article he mentions in his journal was published in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 13, 1874, 4. In [newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com), this paper is indexed as *Star Tribune*, but at the time, it was called the *Minneapolis Tribune*. *Stereo World*, 18. Beginning with this entry, the diary has been published almost entirely in *S&D Reflector* (Marietta, Ohio), 29:1–4 (March–December 1992), 30:1–4 (March–December 1993), available at <http://www.riverhistory.org/reflector.html>. This publication includes all of Doremus's entries concerning his Midwestern trips but omits a few written when he was back in New Jersey. A few choice excerpts from the journal, 1876–1878, were published in Pamela Eyden, "Life on a Floating Photo Studio," *Big River Magazine* (September–October 2006), 30–33. That magazine also includes Eyden's profile of the journal's transcriber, in "Ralph DuPae: Steamboat Photo Sleuth Extraordinaire," 55–56. Each of these publications contains reproductions of Doremus views not in the others.





**John P. Doremus. Floating gallery, St. Croix River, “The Mississippi and Its Tributaries” series, stereoview, 1874–1877. Kenneth H. Rosen Collection.**

Doremus contracted to have his vessel built by boatbuilder H. F. Walters, with whom he became friends. Walters likely worked from a diagram that Doremus had photographed and mounted on a stereograph card.<sup>75</sup> The diagram shows 11 rooms, not counting the W.C., with dimensions and room names varying somewhat from the finished boat. Doremus also had Walters build a “dingy” for short side trips, which he later called *Lady Annie*, after his daughter. On May 29, he penned the following description:

You enter first the Captain’s room, 8’ x 17’, where two doors on the left lead you to the toilet room [for personal grooming, not the W.C.] 8’ foot square, and the other a room 6’ x 9’ for the use of the proprietor [labeled Bed Room in the diagram with a clothes closet]. Folding doors lead into the [sky-light covered] operating room, 14’ x 20’, at the end of which is a door leading to the dining room and a private cabin 8’ x 14’, one door from which leads to a state room 6’ x 7’, with two berths in it. Another door leads to the kitchen 7’ x 14’ where two doors lead to a good sized pantry and store room. The other door leads to a silvering and toning room. [In the diagram, the silvering and toning room is labeled Darkroom and adjoined a small enclosure with the W.C.] Under all is the hull three feet deep, well ventilated by air shafts. We intend using the hull space for storage. The cabin is finished off with projecting roof handsomely

<sup>75</sup> Kenneth H. Rosen collection.

bracketed. The corners of the cabin are round in first class steamboat style. Inside are a profusion of mouldings [sic] on ceilings and sides of the different rooms. Each room is to be moulded and painted in different styles. The deck is 18' x 76'.<sup>76</sup>

While this detailed account suggests that Doremus had ample space on his floating gallery, which he named the *Success*, he found that he needed more. By October 1875, he had added several vessels to what he called his “flotilla,” including a flatboat, 15 by 45 feet, dedicated to printing, which was painted on the side with “Doremus’s Photographic Printing Gallery” and two smaller craft, one of which was the *Lady Annie*. At that time, photographs were printed in a printing frame in which paper coated with albumen (egg white), sensitized by floating on a bath of silver nitrate a few days before use, was placed under the glass negative. Then the sandwich was exposed to daylight. In this process, called physical development, exposure was continued until the image was fully visible. The back of the frame was hinged so that the photographer could check on progress as the image developed. When completed, the print would be fixed, typically in a bath of sodium thiosulfate, and then treated with a gold chloride solution that changed the tonality from brown to purplish brown and gave it more permanence. Because the paper used was quite thin and liable to damage, albumen prints were routinely mounted with an adhesive on card stock.<sup>77</sup> Although Doremus could do this work himself, he likely delegated these printing and finishing steps to one or more assistants when available. Doremus’s prints were processed carefully, as many of his stereoviews are found without fading, unlike those of some of his competitors. They also do not have the streaks caused by uneven coating of the glass negatives.

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<sup>76</sup> *Stereo World*, 19, which modernized the spelling of *moulding* to *molding*. Doremus wrote this description for a Mr. Ayres, Edward Anthony’s traveling salesman for the West for E. & H. T. Anthony. The description of the vessel is quite similar but not identical to that used by Doremus in his 1877 booklet, discussed below. In the diagram, the storeroom mentioned by Doremus is labeled “Printing Room.” As discussed in the following paragraph, Doremus soon acquired a separate boat for printing.

<sup>77</sup> James M. Reilly, *The Albumen & Salted Paper Book: The History and Practice of Photographic Printing, 1840–1895* (Rochester, New York: Light Impressions, 1980), 27–46, 92–94.

In one of his views taken in early October 1875 during a stopover at Wabasha, Minnesota, Doremus's flagship, the *Success*, the largest vessel, is seen with a skylight above the operating room and a model of a large camera on the roof. Next to it is the boat for printing, with a closed structure that has a window with two men visible inside. Tied up nearby are two rowboats, one of which is the *Lady Annie*, with a bow-to-stern awning featuring a scalloped edge.<sup>78</sup> This view is only one of a number that Doremus made of the *Success*.

Wabasha is on the Mississippi, south of where the St. Croix River joins it at Prescott, about 30 miles from St. Paul. Since this photo was taken more than a year after he began his journey, clearly Doremus had not progressed very far on his way to New Orleans. But he had been fully occupied. While Walters was beginning construction in 1874, Doremus began his Mississippi series of stereoviews with four different photographs at Minnehaha Creek of Minnehaha Falls, made famous in 1855 by Longfellow's poem, "Song of Hiawatha," about a mythical Indian brave who falls in love with the maiden Minnehaha.<sup>79</sup> On March 26, he left Minneapolis to return home to Paterson and prepare for his first river adventure. Returning at the end of April, he found his boat launched when he arrived at the work site on May 2. He had Walters build the cabin, and during the month was actively involved in finishing the project. He started taking portrait tintypes

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<sup>78</sup> Doremus stereoview No. 103, Doremus's fleet at Wabasha, Minnesota. Issued in Doremus's Fourth Series of Mississippi views. Available at Luminous Lint, [http://www.luminous-lint.com/\\_phv\\_app.php?p/J\\_P\\_Doremus/](http://www.luminous-lint.com/_phv_app.php?p/J_P_Doremus/). A close-up of this view showing the *Lady Annie* name on the edge of the awning is in [Editor], "The Doremus Diary: Dodging Sandbars & Log Booms," *The Palimpsest*, 73:23 (April 1, 1992), 82–83, available at <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest>. The dimensions of the boat used for printing are given in Doremus's booklet, *Floating Down the Mississippi* (Passaic: Passaic City Printing Office, 1877), reproduced in *S&D Reflector*, 25:1 (March 1988), 16. For the Wabasha visit, see Doremus diary, October 4 and 7, 1875, *S&D Reflector*, 29:2 (June 1992), 31.

<sup>79</sup> Minnehaha Falls was already a popular subject for photographers when Doremus visited. Among his predecessors and contemporaries who published stereoviews of the falls were John Carbutt of Chicago, later in Philadelphia; N. R. Fearon of Minneapolis, whose "Upton's Views of Minnesota and the Northwest" included an 1868 view of the falls by the Munger Brothers; St. Paul bookseller F. A. Taylor, whose "Stereographs of Minnesota Scenery" were often credited to photographers Huntington & Bartram; William H. Jacoby of Minneapolis; and Charles A. Tenney of Winona, Minnesota, who included the falls in his "Views of Minneapolis and Vicinity." Alone or with partners, Tenney issued more than 1,500 views of the area.

on board on July 5 and had quite a bit of business until July 20, when he finally cast off and floated down the Mississippi River to Minnehaha Creek. After landing, he and his party walked half a mile up the waterway and Doremus took more photographs at the falls, including one of his employee George Bush in American Indian costume; he published that one in “The Mississippi and Its Tributaries,” First Series, with 29 numbered stereographic views. Today, Minnehaha Falls is in a park surrounded by Minneapolis, but at that time it was outside the city, and Doremus wrote, “It seems so strange from the busy bustle of Minneapolis to the quiet of Minnehaha Creek where there is not a face to be seen all day.”<sup>80</sup>

After feasting and stocking up on catfish that weighed up to nine pounds, Doremus coasted down to Fort Snelling and then to Mendota while making tintype portraits, printing, and selling stereoviews. Occasionally, he made trips overland to Minneapolis and St. Paul for supplies. In August, he had the first of a number of trials when the *Success* got stuck on a sandbar below Mendota. To get more rope to free it, he and Bush rowed for hours in Doremus’s small boat to St. Paul and back. Doremus was learning that while there were pleasant interludes of drifting down the river, there would also be physically demanding and nerve-racking crises when the boat got stuck, sprung leaks, or collided with floating logs, boulders, and other craft.

On September 28, 1874, Doremus had his floating gallery towed from Prescott almost 52 miles up the St. Croix River to Taylor’s Falls by a steamboat, the *Nellie Kent*. At stops along the way, he took portraits in his gallery and photographed Stillwater, Minnesota, from a high vantage point.<sup>81</sup> Reaching Taylor’s Falls on September 30, he wrote in his journal:

I have done a splendid days work. Started this morning early with a couple of boys. Went across the river and up a high bluff, over rocks and through brush to the highest point and then what a view, the Dalles of the St. Croix River at my feet, the villages of

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<sup>80</sup> Diary, July 21, 1874, *S&D Reflector*, 29:1 (March 1992), 28. In the 1870s, Minnehaha was often spelled Minneha-ha.

<sup>81</sup> Reproduced in *ibid.*, 31.

Taylor's Falls, Minn. and St. Croix Falls, Wis. in plain view and not a leaf stirring. I took a dozen negatives before dinner and in the afternoon took some views above the landing.

From Taylor's Falls, on October 20, Doremus drifted down the St. Croix River to Osceola, Wisconsin. After operating there for a few weeks, he stored all his cameras, furniture, and other possessions at a drugstore, and on November 12 sailed on the *Nellie Kent* to begin his journey for a visit back home. He arrived in Paterson on November 18, 1874. Doremus must have had many stories to tell his family about his first season as a riverboat man. He also brought home several hundred dollars from selling portraits and stereoviews. Considering the total cost of building and outfitting his floating gallery, he was far from breaking even but not discouraged. On the back of his first two series of Mississippi stereoviews, Doremus stated that his investment was more than \$4,000, then raised the figure to more than \$5,000 on the versos of Series Three through Series Seven.<sup>82</sup>

When Doremus returned to Osceola on April 16, 1875, he found his gallery frozen to the bottom of the river and when he got it loose, the *Success* sprung a leak and local men kept it afloat with empty kerosene barrels. The next day, a steamboat towed it to the Osceola levee, where it was hauled out and repaired by May 1, when Doremus got it back in the water and started taking tintype portraits. He remained in Osceola, where he also made views of the town, until mid-May, when he had the steamboat *G. B. Knapp* tow him back up the St. Croix River to Taylor's Falls.<sup>83</sup>

Why would Doremus go north again when his stated intention was to go south on the Mississippi and head for New Orleans? While he did not give a reason in his journal, it is probable

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<sup>82</sup> On the back of Doremus's Second Series of Mississippi views, he stated, "The subscriber has built a Floating Photograph Gallery, at a cost, with its appurtenances, of over \$4000, intending to take views of the Mississippi, and its tributaries, from the Falls of St. Anthony to the Gulf of Mexico."

<sup>83</sup> Doremus's view of the *G. B. Knapp* on the St. Croix River, taken on August 17, 1875, is reproduced in *S&D Reflector*, 29:1 (March 1992), 30.

that he knew there was little or no competition upriver and he would do a good business, especially among those employed in the booming timber industry.<sup>84</sup> The natural resources of the United States were being converted into wealth by lumber barons such as Isaac Stephenson II of Wisconsin. Enormous swaths of the North Woods were being logged, just when the huge buffalo herds were being slaughtered farther south in the Plains. Thousands of lumberjacks converged each winter to cut down trees, and when the ice broke on the rivers, they floated logs downstream to sawmills in La Crosse, St. Louis, and smaller towns. According to the Wisconsin Historical Society: “The amount of pine harvested from the Black River Valley alone could have built a boardwalk nine feet wide and four inches thick around the entire world.” The “cutover” land with stumps and debris left behind in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan became a wasteland, some of which through great effort was converted into farms on ill-suited soil. The land became depleted decades later and resulted in widespread unemployment and poverty addressed by the New Deal.<sup>85</sup> If Doremus had an opinion on how clear-cut logging was impacting the environment, he did not record it in his journal.

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<sup>84</sup> Michael Nowak produced a stereoview called “In the Pines,” the only one of 75 views listed on the back that depicted lumbermen in situ. Although Jacoby, Nowak, Tenney, and Fearon offered views of some of the same scenic locations, such as Minnehaha Falls, as Doremus, these competitors probably did not market as many of the timber industry and St. Croix river scenes as did Doremus in the 1870s, but further research would be necessary to confirm this tentative conclusion. In 1886, Henry Hamilton Bennett, photographer of Kilbourn City (renamed Wisconsin Dells in 1931), Wisconsin, made about 30 stereoviews of lumber rafting at a time when the practice had already been largely replaced by shipping logs by rail. Like Doremus, Bennett also made views of small towns on the Upper Mississippi from high vantage points, including “Reed’s Landing,” probably Read’s Landing, Minnesota, near Wabasha. Carl Mautz, *Biographies of Western Photographers: Expanded and Revised Edition* (Nevada City, California: 2018), Supplement #1, Minnesota, n.p.; Sara Rath, *Pioneer Photographer: Wisconsin’s H. H. Bennett* (Madison, Wisconsin: Tamarack Press, 1979), 56–57, 170–171, 173; back labels with lists for more than a dozen stereographs by Jacoby, Nowak, Tenney, and Fearon, courtesy Kenneth H. Rosen and John Weiler, emails, May 2021.

<sup>85</sup> “Logging: The Industry That Changed the State,” <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS409>. In 1937, Russell Lee photographed the long-term impact of deforestation on the land and the people in Minnesota and Wisconsin for the Farm Security Administration. Mary Jane Appel, *Russell Lee: A Photographer’s Life and Legacy* (New York: Liveright Publishing Company, 2021), 110–113.

Not surprisingly, the *Success* was threatened by logs during its tow upriver. Doremus wrote on May 19:

The river was full of logs but having a barge in front of us we got along pretty well until we reached Franconia, Minnesota. When the barge was left [toward the middle of the river], we then had to catch it. The logs would come sideways and the boat felt as if it were on land being hauled over big logs for rollers. Then some would come endways and hit us, a terrible poke in the bow as though they would go clear through her but the one end would go down and the other up and away they would slide under us. They shook us pretty lively but things were pretty well stored and no damage was done except several ugly scars on the bow.

And on May 21:

The logs ran thicker than ever yesterday and today it seemed at one time that there was one continual raft on the river.<sup>86</sup>

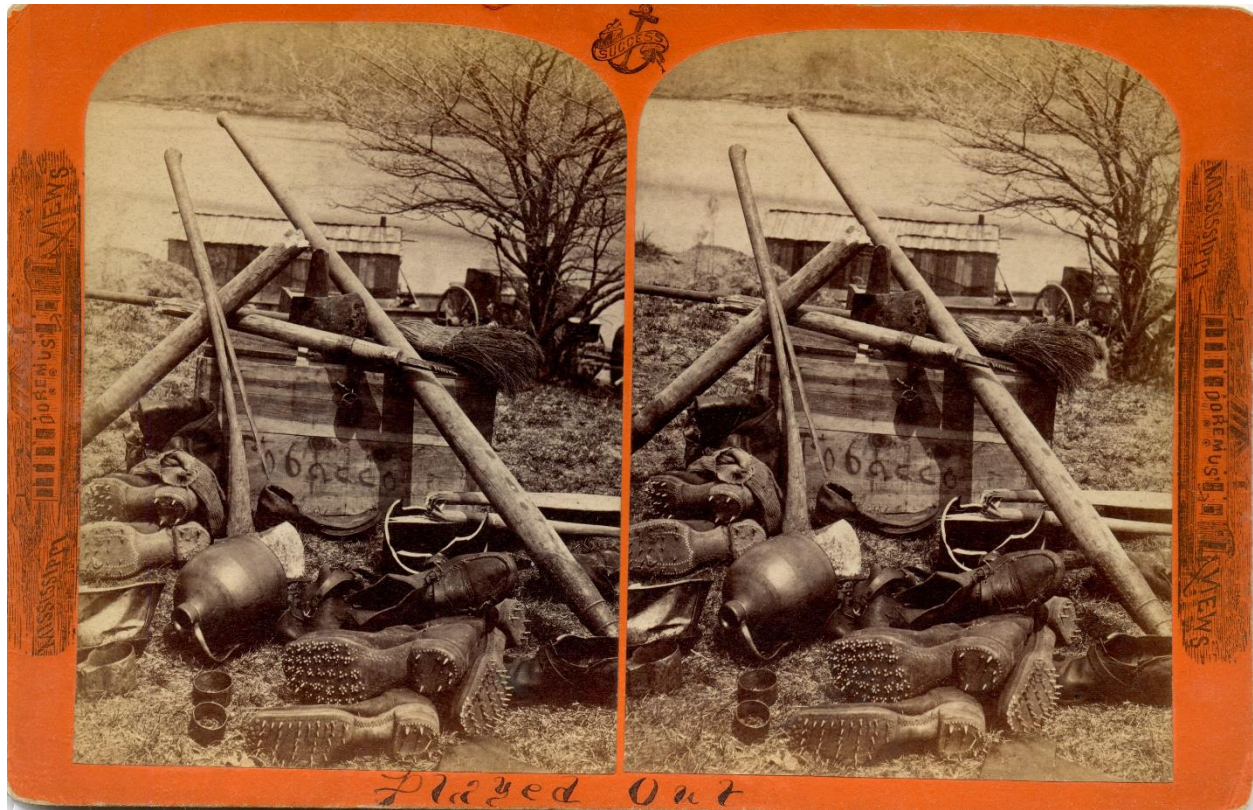
Doremus took many negatives of log drivers in May, including a view that shows men pushing logs off a sandbar with peaveys, their metal-pointed poles.<sup>87</sup> Knowing that he wanted a dramatic 3D effect when viewed in a stereoscope, he framed his view with two large logs in the bottom left corner, leading away from the bottom edge. The in-focus logs in the extreme foreground add to the 3D effect when viewed with a stereoscope. Excellent stereographers like Doremus knew that this compositional strategy would enhance their work in this format. Some of these photographs are in his Third Series of “The Mississippi and Its Tributaries.” He mounted the stereographs on red-orange cards that had a logo with an anchor and a ribbon, with the word *Success* at the top center. There are multiple variants of these and other views in Doremus’s first few series of Mississippi stereographs, often with repeating view numbers.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 29:2 (June 1992), 22.

<sup>87</sup> Doremus stereoviews of the log drive were issued as Nos. 59 to 66 in his Second Series of “The Mississippi and Its Tributaries.” Doremus’s No. 59, “River Drivers at work on the Log Jams” was published in *Stereo World*, 21. A similar view of men with peaveys is reproduced in *S&D Reflector*, 29:2 (June 1992), 22, but the caption did not provide the number.

<sup>88</sup> Email, Kenneth H. Rosen to author, May 6, 2021.



John P. Doremus, “Played Out,” Mississippi Views, Third Series, stereoview, 1875. Kenneth H. Rosen Collection.

Another in the Third Series, with a superb 3D effect, is No. 66, “‘Played Out.’ The remains of the River drivers’ equipment at the end of the cruise.” This photo shows a pile of boots, a jug, and long-handled tools, three of which form a triangle in the center of the frame, with a shack and the river in the background.<sup>89</sup> Here Doremus produced a composition comparable to a still life arrangement in a studio. Whether he found these objects this way or arranged them, we will never know. The spiked boots in focus in the extreme foreground add to the 3D effect when viewed with a stereoscope. Doremus must have used a small aperture on his lens to obtain maximum depth of

<sup>89</sup> Reproduced in *Stereo World*, 18.



field (sharp focus in foreground and background) and a longer exposure than if he used a wider aperture. Doremus knew that this compositional strategy would enhance his work in this format.

Among other images of logging, Doremus also photographed a log jam, river drivers at an outdoor dinner, and the cooks resting afterward in their wanigans, the shacks used for cooking or sleeping that were floated down the river. Another shot shows men carrying their batteaux (boats), which held from 10 to 20 workers, around the falls. Doremus noted that there were more than 200 men working on a big drive on May 28.<sup>90</sup> Photographs of laborers at their tasks were relatively uncommon in this era and anticipated the increased social documentary photography later in the century.<sup>91</sup>

On May 25, 1875, Doremus was joined by William Thompson and his wife, Mary, a couple from Riceville who he either had met or was recommended to him by his contacts there. William was “to learn the business and she to do the housekeeping,” for which Doremus paid her \$10 per month for the first three months and planned to give her a raise to \$15 per month for the following three months.<sup>92</sup> Previously, Doremus had noted that his quarters were in disarray with photographic supplies and food all piled helter-skelter, so he must have felt the need for a housekeeper. Since William was going to be taught photography, Doremus felt that his board would be sufficient compensation. His crew was further augmented on August 2, when he was joined by two young stepsisters from Iowa, Eugene (“Gene”) Ostrander and Lizzie Schoonmaker,

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>91</sup> John Wood, a pioneer in this genre, photographed workers during construction at the U.S. Capitol in 1860. Adrienne Lundgren, “John Wood: U.S. Capitol Photographer,” [http://loc.gov/item/webcast\\_9701/](http://loc.gov/item/webcast_9701/). For a history of social documentary photography, which became more widely known through the work of Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine in the late 1800s and early 1900s, see Maren Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890–1930* (Cambridge, et al: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 22. The names and comings and goings of all of Doremus’s many employees mentioned in his diary are not addressed in this article.

Dan Schoonmaker's daughter Elizabeth.<sup>93</sup> On September 1, he wrote "the girls passed the time pleasantly ironing, clearing up the pantry and doing numberless other things, singing and whistling as they worked."<sup>94</sup>

In the summer of 1875, Doremus gradually worked his way down the St. Croix and then the Mississippi. He stopped at quite a few towns in Minnesota and Wisconsin, photographing locals for their portraits and capturing views, often from high vantage points. His numbered stereographs from 1875, included in his Third and Fourth Series, include those taken in the communities of Taylor's Falls, Franconia, Osceola, Marine, Stillwater, Hudson, Red Wing, Wabasha, and Alma. He made excursions to add waterfalls and other scenic spots to his series, notably St. Croix Falls, Taylor's Falls, Vermillion Falls (dried up), Diamond Bluff, Lake Pepin, and Maiden Rock. Other photographs feature steamboats, a sawmill, and an "umbrella boat," one of many river craft that served as a kind of factory.<sup>95</sup> Sometimes he left the *Success* and traveled by horse team or rail. On September 18, he accompanied Gene Ostrander on her way home by train to St. Paul, noting in his journal, perhaps with future readers in mind, that she shared a room with a nervous obese woman, while he was in a room across the hall. Miss Ostrander left early for Riceville the next morning.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 29:2 (June 1992), 25. Daniel Schoonmaker's daughter Elizabeth (Lizzie) would have been 13 years old in 1875, based on the 1870 U.S. census (Jenkins County, Mitchell, Brownville, or Riceville Post Office, Iowa). There were two other Elizabeth Schoonmakers related to Doremus. One was Daniel's second wife, Elizabeth Schoonmaker. Daniel's first wife, Margaret, died in March 1870. In May 1875, Daniel married his second wife, Elizabeth (née Sherman), a Michigan native formerly married to Asa Ostrander. She is listed as 44 years old in the 1880 U.S. census (Jenkins, etc.). The Schoonmaker household in 1880 also included Sherman B. Ostrander, Daniel's stepson. The other Elizabeth was Doremus's wife, Sarah's, younger sister Elizabeth Schoonmaker, listed in the 1850 U.S. census (Passaic County, Paterson), as 11 years old. In part, *History of Mitchell and Worth Counties*, Iowa, 333.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>95</sup> A view of Hudson from a high vantage point by Doremus on July 7, 1875, is available in *S&D Reflector*, 29:2 (June 1992), 24. That issue of the journal also reprints his view of Maiden Rock, taken on September 21, 1875, on page 28. Doremus's Fourth Series, No. 92, "Umbrella Boat, Candy Bill, at Diamond Bluff, Wis.," is reproduced in *Stereo World*, 22.

<sup>96</sup> September 18, 1875, *S&D Reflector*, 29:2 (June 1992), 28. Doremus also stopped in Masonic lodges in several towns he visited around this time.

Doremus also made frequent strenuous side trips in his skiff, which he purchased in Red Wing and named the *Lady Annie*, transferring the name from his dinghy. Usually he rowed or poled, but when the wind was favorable, he sailed. On October 13, he sailed in the skiff with Mary Thompson upstream from Alma, Wisconsin, to Wabasha. After selling \$10 worth of views, he “started back and arrived at Alma at seven after four hours of the hardest pulling I ever did in my life as the wind blew very hard against all the way.”<sup>97</sup>

As the season started winding down, Doremus was pleased that he had been able to send \$450 home, about \$9,000 in 2021 dollars. At Minneiska, Minnesota, Doremus left for Paterson on November 22, leaving William and Mary Thompson on board until he returned, with the proviso that Thompson could keep 50% of the income he received for pictures taken.<sup>98</sup> The *Success* was tied up on the Whitewater River, a tributary of the Mississippi.

During his winter break, Doremus probably printed and mounted his Fourth Series of Mississippi views. The series was numbered consecutively, and the last in the Fourth was No. 106, of a sawmill at Alma.<sup>99</sup> He left Paterson on February 8, 1876, and after a number of train changes, arrived in Riceville on February 20. Doremus still owned land in Howard and Mitchell Counties in Iowa and he sold two properties for \$800 and \$1,600, presumably to fund the upcoming season on the Mississippi.

Bringing along 15-year-old Will Schoonmaker, the son of Dan and brother of Lizzie, he returned on February 29 to the *Success*, which although locked in ice, was undamaged. On March

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<sup>97</sup> Lizzie left the next day after getting an urgent message to come home. On October 25, Doremus’s photographic assistant Andrew Veum left to start his own gallery in Wabasha. *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>98</sup> The Thompsons are not mentioned again in Doremus’s diary. During his winter break, Doremus made only two entries in his journal, on January 15 and 21, 1876, noting that he took some 14-by-17-inch negatives for a Mr. Ludlum in Pompton Down and others of a machine at “Danforth’s.” These entries were not included in the published versions of his diary. Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse.

<sup>99</sup> Views with backlists for the Second, Third, and Fourth Series may be seen at Luminous Lint, [http://www.luminous-lint.com/app/photographer/J\\_P\\_Doremus/C/](http://www.luminous-lint.com/app/photographer/J_P_Doremus/C/).

14, taking advantage of the frozen river, he skated up the Mississippi about three miles to Buffalo City, Wisconsin, and back. Despite very bad weather and raging floods, one of which was two feet deep above the icebound river and got into the *Wanegan*, which is what he had begun calling his printing boat, Doremus soon began taking portraits. As a result, he sent \$50 home by March 27. By March 31, both the *Success* and the *Wanegan* were afloat, but the latter soon began taking on water and he had to have it hauled out for caulking; it was not back in the river until June 11.

Doremus and Will Schoonmaker formed the entire crew in March and April 1876. They were kept very busy and had good appetites. On April 2, Doremus wrote in his journal:

I was cook today and I think we had a fine dinner. In the steamer [you] might have seen the potatoes with their smooth coats resting lovingly side-by-side with the onions in their white vests. Lifting the steamer, you might see the chicken in the pot, nice and tender. On the hearth stood the graham gems, of a beautiful brown all over, and on the table a dish of minute pudding of graham flour, a can of tomatoes, just opened, fresh butter, milk, honey, etc. Will and I don't starve any.<sup>100</sup>

As in the previous year, Doremus had the *Success* towed upriver, this time to Alma on April 19, 1876. From there, he made short trips in the *Lady Annie* or by steamboat, including several up Beef Slough. Beef Slough was the cutoff used primarily for the logging operations of the Mississippi River Logging Co., which connected the Chippewa River to the Mississippi. More than 200 men were employed to sort the logs and form them into rafts, which were then floated downriver. Doremus sold more than \$100 worth of views up the slough by May 29. On June 2, he and Will Schoonmaker unmoored the *Success* and started downriver back to Minneiska, which they overshot and, at the cost of nearly three decanters of whiskey, Doremus got 15 or 20 men to pull his craft back up to his former location. On June 11, he headed south with his entire flotilla and reached Fountain City, Wisconsin, where his floating gallery remained until June 24. After

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<sup>100</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 29:3 (September 1992), 13–16.

climbing a high bluff, Doremus took a view of the city with the river stretching off into the distance.<sup>101</sup>

While his operator Charles Howard took portraits on board the *Success* at Fountain City, Doremus was busy going up and down the river by steamboat or in the *Lady Annie* making riparian views.<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately, while he was in Trempealeau, Wisconsin, a raft ran into the *Lady Annie* in Fountain City and smashed it so severely that Doremus wrote on June 24 that it “was good for nothing.” On the same day, Dan Schoonmaker and his wife arrived for a visit and joined Doremus, their son Will, and crew as they floated down to Homer, Minnesota, and after a few days, to Trempealeau.<sup>103</sup> The Schoonmakers left on July 5 and on July 9, Doremus took a summer break and returned to his family in Paterson, leaving his operator to continue the portrait business.

Doremus made three entries in his journal while on this three-week visit home in July 1876. Although his wife, Sarah, had her widowed father and children to keep her occupied, she may have wondered why her husband was spending most of each year away.<sup>104</sup> Doremus never mentions in his journal whether Sarah had an opinion on this matter. In any case, a few days after he got home, he brought Sarah and his daughters Margaret (“Mattie”) and Annie to Rockaway, Long Island, where he and Annie went for a swim in the waves.

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<sup>101</sup> Doremus’s view of Fountain City is reproduced in Pamela Eyden, “Life on a Floating Studio,” *Big River Magazine* (September–October 2006), 31, [https://www.bigrivermagazine.com/Bigriver\\_Sept06.pdf](https://www.bigrivermagazine.com/Bigriver_Sept06.pdf).

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–17. Doremus had several different operators in June 1876. On June 19, he hired a Mr. Pughe from Red Wing, but “not liking his looks or ways,” paid him to get on the next steamboat. Another, whom Doremus called Mr. Pardee, could have been H. W. Pardoe, born in 1851 in Pennsylvania. He became active as a photographer in New Sharon, Iowa, by 1880, and subsequently had a gallery in Newton, Iowa, by 1895. Pardee/Pardoe was with Doremus, June 5–21, 1876. U.S. Census, Iowa, Jasper County, Newton; Carl Mautz, 294. Charles Howard, his unnamed sister, and her child, 12-year-old Mattie, were taken on board June 15, with Howard paid \$40 per month and the sister to keep house.

<sup>103</sup> Probably taken in June or July 1876, Doremus’s Fifth Series, No. 126, “View of Trempealeau, from the River,” is reproduced in *Stereo World*, 30:5, 24.

<sup>104</sup> Sarah’s father, Jacob D. Schoonmaker (1804–1877), began taking meals with the Doremus family on September 23, 1872, for which Doremus charged him \$3 per week. On May 1, 1873, Doremus loaned his father-in-law \$1,184 at 7% interest. Schoonmaker, whose wife, Harriet, had died in 1862, began boarding with Doremus in Paterson on November 29, 1873. Doremus diary, transcript, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse; “Jacob D. Schoonmaker,” Find-A-Grave.

Soon after this outing, Doremus took Sarah to Philadelphia for a week to see the great Centennial Exhibition of 1876, the first official world's fair held in the United States. John and Sarah would have visited many of the more than 200 buildings. They would have made a priority of examining the New Jersey Pavilion, and Sarah must have been particularly interested in the Women's Pavilion, with at least 80 inventions by women on display.<sup>105</sup> Doremus no doubt made contact with some of the many photographers working for the Centennial Photographic Company, which had the exclusive right to photograph the fair.<sup>106</sup> He also would have examined his own work on display in the Photographic Art Building, a 242-by-77-foot annex to the Art Gallery, one of the five principal buildings. Doremus exhibited a variety of work, including life-sized crayon portraits, CDV and cabinet card portraits, and 6-by-8 and stereoviews, mostly of the Upper Mississippi and its tributaries, in Wisconsin and Minnesota, described as "very fine work" by a reviewer.<sup>107</sup>

To assure ample light for viewing the American and foreign photographs on exhibit, the entire roof was glass. This exhibit was a major attraction for photographers from across the country, and Doremus was one of 136 U.S. photographers whose work was included.<sup>108</sup> As John

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<sup>105</sup> *Grounds & Buildings of the Centennial Exhibition: Authorized Visitor's Guide to the Centennial Exhibition* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co, 1875), 12, 14, 21. <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/visitorsguidece00webs>.

<sup>106</sup> Partners W. I. Adams, Edward L. Wilson, and William Notman operated the photographic concession at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876.

<sup>107</sup> "Photography in the Great Exhibition III," *Philadelphia Photographer*, 13:152, 227. The review is uncredited but likely by the editor and publisher, Edward L. Wilson.

<sup>108</sup> Doremus is Number 96 on the complete list of 287 U.S. and foreign exhibitors in *U.S. Centennial Commission International Exhibition 1876 Official Catalogue. Part II. Art Gallery, Annexes, and Outdoor Works of Art. Department IV - Art* (Philadelphia: John R. Nagle & Co., 1876), 140. The author wishes to thank Library Company of Philadelphia archivist Sarah Weatherwax for finding and sending to me the relevant pages from this rare book. Doremus was one of four photographers active in New Jersey at that time on this list. The others were Theodore Gubelman of Jersey City, John Reid of Paterson, and Gustavus Pach of New York, the founder of Pach Brothers, which operated branch galleries in Long Branch and Ocean Grove in 1876. In addition, camera manufacturer Augustus F. Semmendinger of Fort Lee exhibited "apparatus"; Alexander Beckers, listed as New York although a Hoboken resident, exhibited "revolving stereoscopes"; and L. D. Sibley & Co. of Vineland exhibited "stereoscopic albums."

H. Fitzgibbon wrote in *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin*: “. . . none, if at all possible, should miss seeing the beautiful display of the works of our art, and the ingenuity therein manifested by many distinguished artists, now on exhibition . . .”<sup>109</sup> Although Doremus was not among the photographers who won an award, he would have been honored to have been included in this prestigious exhibition.<sup>110</sup> Doremus and Sarah would have stayed longer in Philadelphia, but Sarah became ill and they returned to Paterson.<sup>111</sup>

Doremus left Paterson on July 24 and after several trains and overnight stays, met young Lizzie Schoonmaker in McGregor, Iowa, and returned with her to his gallery. On August 7, he and his entourage floated down the Mississippi to Trempealeau and then La Crosse, Wisconsin. Doremus commented in his diary that there were two other floating galleries in the area, one of which, Proctor's, he claimed was built in imitation of his. Proctor and Doremus became friends. Doremus passed Proctor in Bad Axe as he was being towed by a steamboat downriver. The conjunction of the Bad Axe River in Wisconsin and the Mississippi was the site in 1832 of the Battle of Bad Axe, when hundreds of starving Sauk Indians were massacred by U.S. troops and Sioux employed by them. That so-called “battle” concluded the Black Hawk War.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> July 1876, 211. Many photographers saw the exhibit when the National Photographic Association held its seventh annual convention at the Centennial grounds, August 15–17, 1876, when Doremus was back on the Mississippi.

<sup>110</sup> For an exhibit review, see Montgomery P. Simons, “The Grand Display of Photographs at the World's Fair, Philadelphia,” *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin*, 7:8 (August 1876), 241–243. John Carbutt, “List of Exhibitors in Photography and Apparatus,” *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin*, 7:11 (November 1876), 351–352, lists the award winners. After the exhibit, Julius Sachse of Philadelphia acquired all the photographs. Sachse's collection was donated to the Library of Congress by his granddaughter, Mrs. Marian Carson, in 1996. However, only one stereoview of Trempealeau, Wisconsin, from the Mississippi series is currently in the Library of Congress's catalog, available at <http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.09965/>. Marcy Silver Flynn, “Amateur Experiences: Julius Sachse and Photography,” *Pennsylvania History. Special Issue: History of Photography in Pennsylvania*, 64:2 (Spring 1997), 336.

<sup>111</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 29:3 (September 1992), 17, with Doremus diary entries for July 13 and 20, 1876.

<sup>112</sup> See “Description of the Battle of Bad Axe, 1832,” <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=1396>.

After reaching De Soto, Wisconsin, Doremus had his rowboat towed back up to Bad Axe and, accompanied by Will Schoonmaker, visited Proctor. But competition seemed to be an issue, for when he learned that the other floating gallery, Scott's, was ahead of him, he decided to keep going downriver and get past it. Although he did not see Scott again, he proceeded both on his own and with tows until he reached North McGregor, Iowa, later renamed Marquette. At North McGregor, he photographed the railroad bridge and other views in the area. Soon after, on August 23, in South McGregor, he was visited by friends from Riceville, and Lizzie Schoonmaker returned home with them.<sup>113</sup>

The next day, near McGregor, Doremus photographed Picture Rocks, a high bluff opposite the Wisconsin River. Two of these views are included in his Fifth Series. While there, a large group convened for a picnic and just as he was taking a portrait of those assembled, a heavy shower began. The picnickers proceeded to a cave for shelter, and Will Schoonmaker and Doremus headed for the boat, getting thoroughly soaked. On their way, he wrote: "A very tall tree blew down just as I passed it." Fortunately, he and Will were unharmed.<sup>114</sup>

As in the previous year, Doremus did not proceed in one direction in 1876 down the Mississippi; he sometimes paid steamboats to tow the *Success*, the *Lady Annie*, or both, against the current. In part, his motivation for this tactic was marketing. For example, on September 19, accompanied by a visiting nephew, Hiram Beam, he took a steamboat upriver to Glen Haven, Wisconsin, where he made some views and left notices that he would return, which he did with the *Success* on September 23. Doremus also traveled locally by rail after he got a pass in September

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<sup>113</sup> Doremus diary entries, July 30–August 23, 1876, *S&D Reflector*, 29:3 (September 1992), 17–19. Marquette is on the opposite side of the river from Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. The photo of the railroad bridge is reproduced on page 19 and is not listed on the back of Doremus's Fifth Series, although one view of McGregor found on page 20 is included. Scott's floating gallery was significantly smaller than that of Doremus. It is mentioned later in the diary transcript as owned by "Satt" on May 24, 1877, when Doremus saw him again. "Scott" is more likely correct. *S&D Reflector*, 29:4 (December 1992), 21.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.



for the Chicago, Dubuque and Minnesota Railroad, good to the end of the year. Despite his efforts, business was slow and on October 7, he laid off Charles Howard and his sister, leaving him with just Will Schoonmaker as crew.

On October 13, he visited Proctor again and traded him a tintype “gem” camera for a little boat, which the next day he put on a railroad car headed for Turkey River, Iowa.<sup>115</sup> He got off there and rowed to Cassville, Wisconsin. Both Turkey River and Cassville views are among his Sixth Series.<sup>116</sup> Other locales he photographed around this time included Victory and DeSoto, Wisconsin, and Clayton, Guttenberg, Glen Haven, Buena Vista, and Lansing, Iowa.<sup>117</sup> At Buena Vista, Doremus exchanged pictures for a tow downriver to Savanna, Illinois, which he reached on October 23.<sup>118</sup> After the *Success* got stuck on a rock for two days, Doremus was able to get her off and find a good spot near the landing. Soon he was taking views of the area, three of which are in his Sixth Series, including one from a high bluff.

Doremus left the *Success* at Savanna on November 14. Traveling by the *Lady Annie*, rail, and stagecoach, he reached Riceville, where he visited Mary and Will Thompson, who had been on his crew in 1875, and Dan Schoonmaker and family. On his way back on November 24, he paused in Sabula, Iowa, across the river from Savanna, where he photographed a pork slaughterhouse. That view was the last in his Sixth Series. A week later, the *Success* was frozen in

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<sup>115</sup> Gem tintype cameras, also known as multiplying cameras, typically had 9 to 15 lenses in order to take numerous small images on one prepared ferrotype plate, which would be cut up after processing. These tiny “gems,” about 1 1/2 by 1 inch, were usually mounted facedown on the back of a card the size of a carte de visite (CDV), with an aperture so the plate would be visible from the front. When so mounted, they were called ferrotype cards. Unmounted gems could also be stored in little albums with pocket pages of appropriate size. Tintypes larger than gems were also mounted as ferrotype cards with larger openings to accommodate the larger plates. For photos of gem cameras, see “Photo Gear History: With the Multiplying Camera, the More Lenses the Better,” <https://www.imaging-resource.com/news/2012/04/27/photo-gear-history-with-the-multiplying-camera-the-more-lenses-the-better>.

<sup>116</sup> Doremus diary entries, July 30–August 23, 1876, *S&D Reflector*, 29:3, 21. Anecdotal evidence concerning extant views suggests that Doremus sold many more of his first two series of Mississippi views than these later ones. Email, Kenneth H. Rosen to author, May 6, 2021.

<sup>117</sup> A view of Lansing that Doremus took on October 18, 1876, is in *ibid.*, 18.

<sup>118</sup> Doremus was towed by the *Iowa City*, which appears in a Doremus view in *ibid.*, 23.

the river. It sprung a leak and started filling with water until Doremus got it pumped out and plugged. As a precaution, he bought 13 empty kerosene barrels to put in the hold to keep the *Success* afloat should a similar problem recur. Doremus then left his boats and arrived home in Paterson on December 21. He had progressed down the Mississippi more than 200 miles during the 1876 season.<sup>119</sup>

After his return to Paterson, Doremus wrote a now rare promotional booklet, *Floating Down the Mississippi: A Work Descriptive of the Past and Proposed Journeyings of an Artist Engaged in Photographing the Magnificent Scenery Along the Father of Waters*, and had 1,000 copies printed. Measuring 4 by 5 3/4 inches, the text begins with a brief history of the Mississippi River and then provides a detailed description of the floating gallery, quoted from the *St. Paul Daily Press*, followed by a summary of his first three seasons on the *Success*.<sup>120</sup>

On February 23, 1877, Doremus arrived in Sabula with a new assistant, Alfred Pritchard, and it seems that Will Schoonmaker either had stayed on the *Success* or soon joined it. Since the boats were still icebound, Doremus went to visit relatives and friends in Riceville, which he reached on March 28. Accompanied by Lizzie Schoonmaker, whom he hired to do housekeeping at a token \$5 per month (about \$125 in 2021 dollars), Doremus arrived at his boat on April 12. He then went upriver by steamboat to Prescott, Wisconsin, where he bought a small new boat, and then with stops along the way to sell stereoviews, journeyed on north to Taylor's Falls on the St. Croix River, where he had photographed three years previously, arriving on April 30.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 23–24.

<sup>120</sup> Paterson: Passaic City Herald Office, 1877. Reprinted without the history of the Mississippi River in *S&D Reflector*, 25:1 (March 1988), 16. Now rare, only one copy is listed in WorldCat, located at the Missouri History Museum, last accessed March 2021. 1,000 copies: Doremus diary transcript, February 23, 1877, *S&D Reflector*, 29:4 (December 1992), 17.

From Taylor's Falls, Doremus rowed and drifted downstream in his small boat, stopping at Osceola, Marine, Hudson, Diamond Bluff, Red Wing, Wabasha, Beef Slough, Alma, Minneiska, Fountain City, and Trempealeau, selling more views at each stop.<sup>121</sup> On at least some occasions, Doremus must have been supplying dealers, as twice he sold a gross of views. None were purchased in La Crosse, but he had better luck in Lansing. He continued on to Clayton and Cassville, where on May 9, he caught a steamer, taking along his small boat, and got a good meal and a bed. Getting off the steamer near Dubuque, he rowed downriver and on May 10, visited Proctor's Gallery at Bellevue, then reached the *Success* that afternoon.<sup>122</sup> This downriver voyage of more than 140 miles in about two weeks, much of it rowed, indicates that Doremus must have been in excellent physical condition at that time.

Doremus got underway with the *Success* and his other craft on May 18, exchanging a tow by the steamer *J. W. Mills* from Sabula to Lyons, Iowa, for taking pictures. From there, he used favorable winds to travel a short distance down the Mississippi to Clinton, a town that later merged with Lyons, and then the wind blew him across the river to Fulton, Illinois. The wind often played a bigger role than the current in determining where his flotilla drifted. On some occasions, he had to lay up because he was "windbound."

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<sup>121</sup> In Doremus's view from a hill of Red Wing, reproduced in *S&D Reflector*, 29:2 (June 1992), 27, Lizzie Schoonmaker and her stepsister Gene Ostrander are seated in the grass. That journal has a Doremus view of the packet *Lion* in Big Slough on page 30 and a shot of Alma from across the river on page 31. A Doremus view of logs and works in Beef Slough near Alma is reproduced in *Big River Magazine* (September–October 2006), 32. Doremus did not record or advertise his prices at this time, but as previously noted, he had charged \$20.00 for two dozen stereographs in 1873. Prices for CDVs in the 1870s varied widely, from a typical \$1.50 per dozen to \$6 per dozen by certain high-end Boston and New York photographers. William C. Darrah, *Cartes de Visite in Nineteenth Century Photography* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: W. C. Darrah, 1981), 181.

<sup>122</sup> Doremus diary, February 23 to May 10, 1877, *S&D Reflector*, 29:4 (December 1992), 17–20. Doremus wrote incorrectly that Prescott was in Minnesota instead of Wisconsin. Prescott, Minnesota, is not on the Mississippi River. Doremus's view of Dubuque from the Shot Tower and the railroad bridge there across the Mississippi are the first views in his Seventh Series.

After taking some photos of the Clinton waterworks and railroad bridge on May 23, Doremus lost his Dallmeyer stereo lenses worth \$80 in the river. He offered a reward of \$5 and luckily got them back again.<sup>123</sup> Two Clinton stereoviews appear near the beginning of his Seventh Series, very likely his last numbered series of Mississippi views, although he also produced many unnumbered Mississippi views without a back label, some of which were made after the Seventh Series.

Doremus continued traveling on his floating gallery, and in May and June 1877 made photographs of Port Byron, Illinois; LeClaire, Iowa; and Rapids City, Illinois, where he made a view of a coal mine. Then at Davenport, Iowa, he got permission from the commander of the nearby Rock Island Arsenal to come back and photograph. Now a National Historic Landmark and still in use for manufacturing weapons, the Rock Island Arsenal was already very well known by the time Doremus visited. During the Civil War, it housed more than 12,400 Confederate prisoners.<sup>124</sup> Doremus's Seventh Series includes 8 views of Davenport taken in July and August, including 2 cathedrals and Griswold College, and 11 of the arsenal, among them the bridges to the island, the Commanding Officer's Quarters, and workshops.

Using a combination of tows and drifting, Doremus cruised down the river to Port Louisa, Iowa, where he was joined on September 7 by Proctor's gallery. They tied the boats together and "floated down in a big fleet" to New Boston, Illinois. Doremus and his crew enjoyed the social

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 20–21. Doremus wrote incorrectly that Lyons was in Illinois, rather than in Iowa. Stereographic cameras had two lenses. For an illustration, see Early Photography, [http://www.earlyphotography.co.uk/site/entry\\_C382.html](http://www.earlyphotography.co.uk/site/entry_C382.html). If a reader knows of an eighth or higher numbered series, please contact the author. Without a back label: Email, Kenneth H. Rosen to author, May 6, 2021.

<sup>124</sup> Lonnie R. Speer, *Portals to Hell: Military Prisons of the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997). At Davenport, Doremus also visited his niece Mrs. Ballou and her family. The George Eastman Museum holds a stereoview by Doremus of the interior of the Davenport Water Works and a view of the Rock Island Arsenal from the top of the storehouse, showing the entrance and the Mississippi River in the distance. Two Davenport bridge photos and an overview of Davenport by Doremus are in *S&D Reflector*, 29:4 (December 1992), 22–23. *Stereo World*, 27, reproduces another from Doremus's Seventh Series, No. 177, "Government Bridge from Davenport, Iowa, to Rock Island Arsenal."

interaction, for Proctor had a wife, four daughters, a son, and a hired hand. “We had a jolly time all afternoon and evening,” he recalled. On September 11, with a favorable wind, he had “a splendid run” of 27 miles to Burlington, Iowa. In Burlington, he photographed the bridge over the Mississippi and a view of the town, both included in his Seventh Series. Unfortunately, his employee James Williams, who had joined him on September 7, took off during the night of September 11–12, stealing a small boat, a large supply of food, and clothing. Despite Doremus’s attempts to have him arrested, he is not mentioned again in Doremus’s diary.<sup>125</sup>

From Burlington, Doremus took the *Lady Annie* downriver and arrived in Alexandria, Missouri, by September 29, 1877. At Alexandria, he took trains to points south to post displays of his pictures in advance of his arrival. While he was in Montrose, Iowa, his operator Al Pritchard took a quarter-plate (3 1/4 by 4 1/4 inches) group photo and when Doremus returned, he was served with a warrant by a constable, who said a disgruntled customer, Mrs. Frank Davis, complained that the photographer had been paid \$3 and she had not gotten her picture. Doremus found that the photo had just been finished, and handed it over, but had to pay court costs of \$2.50.<sup>126</sup>

Doremus now faced the most dangerous stretch of the river since he’d begun his adventures three years previously, the rapids near Des Moines, Iowa. He took on several rivermen, including a pilot, and started down on October 5. The *Success* got stuck on the rocks and the next day, with five men working for three or four hours, it came free and they rushed down to Keokuk, Iowa. At Keokuk, Doremus made three views, included among the last in his Seventh Series, one a magnificent shot of the Toledo, Wabash & Western Railway bridge.<sup>127</sup> From there, he reached

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<sup>125</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 29:4 (December 1992), 24. Williams purloined the original *Lady Annie*, which Doremus had started calling the *Mattie* after he purchased the newer *Lady Annie*.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 26. The photo was likely a paper print from a collodion glass negative, as tintypes could usually be finished before the customer left the gallery. Although Doremus only mentioned a photo, given the price, it is likely that several prints were ordered by Mrs. Davis.

<sup>127</sup> The bridge photo, taken by Doremus on October 10, 1877, is reproduced in *S&D Reflector*, 30:1 (March 1993), 23.

nearby Alexandria, Missouri, on October 11, where he contracted to have his boat hauled out for the winter break. Doremus and Lizzie left on November 13 for Riceville, to which they traveled by sleigh from Le Roy Post Office. After enjoying his visits there, Doremus departed on November 26 and, after several changes of train, arrived home in Paterson on November 30, 1877.<sup>128</sup>

Unlike previous years, Doremus spent a shorter period on his winter break. He left New Jersey on January 7, 1878, and returned to Iowa, where he enjoyed visits and dinner parties. Then with Lizzie and Will Schoonmaker, he journeyed to his boat in Alexandria, arriving on January 28. After having the *Success* caulked, they set off on February 26. On March 18, after a week at La Grange, Missouri, in which he did “a fair business,” he got a letter from a Mrs. Josephine W. Marsh that she was joining him, so he waited.<sup>129</sup> She arrived with her little girl the next evening and became a camera operator. He does not mention Mrs. Marsh again until May 17, when he recorded that he sailed with her in the *Lady Annie* to a point opposite Hastings, Illinois, where he picked up a Miss Rutie (or Rutia) Calloway to do housework for \$2.00 per week. As discussed below, Mrs. Marsh appears several times in his journal until 1880.<sup>130</sup>

In his diary for 1878, Doremus did not record taking any architectural or landscape photographs, nor portraits until May 17, when he made views for two local men.<sup>131</sup> One explanation is that there are significant gaps in his diary entries, sometimes comprising several

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<sup>128</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 29:4 (December 1992), 26–27. For the 1877 season, the *Success* had traveled 178 miles down the Mississippi. As noted in his diary on November 6, 1877, Doremus left his boat in charge of George S. LaDare, who, with his daughter, Blanche, had transferred from Proctor’s floating gallery on October 23.

<sup>129</sup> Lizzie and Will Schoonmaker stayed with Doremus until May 10, 1878. *Ibid.*, 26. On July 31, 1879, Doremus mentioned that Mrs. Marsh’s father lived in Saratoga, Iowa, and on September 9, 1879, that Mrs. Marsh had returned home to Saratoga. Thus, it is likely that Doremus had met Mrs. Marsh first on a previous visit to Iowa. Subsequent references reveal that Mrs. Marsh was not married. *S&D Reflector*, 30:2 (June 1993), 26–27. The first name of Mrs. Marsh and the name of her father, H. Wallace, were mentioned in *Howard County Times* (Cresco, Iowa), March 4, 1880, which stated that Mrs. Marsh was an operator in Doremus’s gallery.

<sup>130</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 30:1 (March 1993), 23–26; *S&D Reflector*, 30:2 (June 1993), 23. The next mention of Mrs. Marsh in his diary was February 1, 1879, when she received some money from home that she did not need and Doremus gave her a note for \$50 and on February 17, he sent home a money order for this amount.

<sup>131</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 30:1 (March 1993), 26.

weeks. But it could also be that he was making fewer such images. Only a handful of his Mississippi River photographs taken after 1877 (when he concluded his Seventh Series, probably his last), have been located. His few extant stereoviews from 1878 and later are not numbered, suggesting that his productivity in this genre had declined.

Aside from the change in his view-making, Doremus's activities on the Mississippi in 1878 had other differences and some similarities from previous years. As in the past, occasionally he had problems with his boats. Doremus now had two *Wanegans*, one big and one small. On April 10, his larger *Wanegan* ran aground, and after he and his crew spent nearly all day trying to get it going, the next morning he got it towed off by a steamboat. He also was adversely affected by large waves made by passing steamboats. On May 21, the *War Eagle* "came rushing along, broke the biggest spar and threw [sic] all three boats high on shore." Then on May 29, he wrote, "About midnight last night the *War Eagle* came up and sent such a swell as to fill the small *Wanegan* and send it across the bow of the *Success*. After trying to secure it, I went astern and found the big *Wanegan* gone. We had the *Lady Annie* but no oars so we took poles and went after it. We found it about a quarter of a mile down on a big drift pile. We secured it and rowed back."

Two days later, the *War Eagle* again went by and its wake significantly damaged the *Success*. Doremus recorded that he would have to replace the guard that went all around the boat. Accordingly, for most of the month of June, he was in Grafton, Illinois, getting the *Success* repaired. At Grafton, Rutie Calloway departed and Doremus took on a carpenter named Burton and his family, no doubt expecting that Burton's skills would prove useful. Sure enough, on July 2, the day after leaving Grafton, the steamer *Spread Eagle* went by, throwing his boats together and damaging the guard on the *Success*.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 25–27.

Despite these vicissitudes, Doremus brought his flotilla, which now included a smaller skiff he called the *Mattie*, after his daughter, down the Mississippi to St. Louis. The photographer remained in “The Gateway to the West” from July 25 to August 13, 1878, but did not make any entries in his journal during his stay. One could have expected that he would have photographed the very innovative and impressive Eads Bridge, completed in 1874. He likely also would have visited photographers such as the dean of St. Louis lensmen, John H. Fitzgibbon, and paid his respects at Masonic lodges.<sup>133</sup>

After St. Louis, Doremus resumed his journey southbound, following the Mississippi to St. Mary, Missouri, where he left for a visit to New Jersey on September 8. Apparently, he decided to take a break from the river in September instead of in the upcoming winter. On October 10, he wrote in his journal that he had “a pleasant visit” and was back on his boat.<sup>134</sup> The *Success* continued down to the vicinity of Rockwood, Illinois, where Doremus shot some views for a Mr. Glenendin, who picked up the photographer and his assistant Frank Diran with a wagon pulled by a team of horses. On the way back to the river, the horses ran away and the reins broke. Glenendin and Diran “partly fell and partly jumped out.” Doremus remained on the wagon for about half a mile on a rough country road. Then he got out over the back as the horses approached a steep downhill grade, hurting his back and tearing up his clothes. He wrote, “The horses, wagon and my things landed in a heap at the bottom of the hill. My new camera, worth nearly forty dollars, smashed as well as all my bottles, dark tent, etc.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Doremus’s St. Louis entries only mention arrival by tow and departure. *Ibid.*, 27. Fitzgibbon, who exhibited at the Centennial in Philadelphia, edited and published the journal, *Practical Photographer*. For Fitzgibbon’s obituary, see *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 8:87 (August 15, 1882), 10, [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8820001\\_FITZG\\_STL-GLOBE-DEM\\_1882-08-15.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8820001_FITZG_STL-GLOBE-DEM_1882-08-15.pdf).

<sup>134</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 30:1 (March 1993), 28. Doremus did not mention anything else about this trip to New Jersey. Due to changes in the path of the river, St. Mary is no longer on the Mississippi.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.* \$40 in 1878 would be about \$1,088 in 2021 dollars. The reference to the tent and bottles confirms that Doremus was still using the collodion wet-plate process to make glass negatives. His transition to gelatin dry plates is discussed below.



Fortunately, Doremus had other equipment and supplies on board and took in \$27 at Star Landing, now Starlanding, Missouri, from November 11 to 13, 1878. Later that month he did quite a bit of photography at Grand Tower, Illinois, notably landscapes of the scenic rock outcroppings, Tower Rock and Devil's Bake Oven. From Grand Tower, where he hired a 14-year-old girl with the unique name of Texas Tennessee Jeanette Ridge for work in exchange for board and clothes, Doremus was towed to Cairo, Illinois, the southernmost city in the state, at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. After he was passed by eight other floating galleries, he wryly commented on December 3 that his future prospects for portraits were not promising. Doremus continued on to Columbus, Kentucky. By December 28, his boats became locked in ice that cut a large hole in the *Lady Annie*. No doubt Doremus wished that he had gotten his little fleet out of the water, as he had the previous winter.<sup>136</sup>

The frozen river continued to threaten Doremus's boats in January 1879. His smaller *Wanegan* was carried off by the ice and, on January 2, he wrote that the ice was:

. . . pressing us onto the shore each night so that it took nearly all of each day to get it off and in trim again. Last evening the river was nearly clear and the weather moderate but about midnight there came a fierce north wind with snow driving us badly on shore and filling the river in front of us with drift ice which froze, hemming us in so that spars and windlass and blocks could not get us off as the ice froze as fast as we broke it loose. The water was shallow under the bow and stern of the boat and very deep under the middle and was falling fast. I knew if she remained there a few days she would break in two by her own weight . . .<sup>137</sup>

Doremus solved this problem by asking the captain of the *St. Louis*, the ferry that transferred railroad cars over the river, to break through the crust and tow him across to a safer location near a steamboat at Belmont Landing, Missouri. By early February, the river was clearer and the *St. Louis* towed Doremus back to Columbus. He took on additional crew, including a

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 28–30. Doremus's views of Tower Rock and the Devil's Bake Oven are reproduced on page 29.

<sup>137</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 30:2 (June 1993), 22.

family named Hays, to supplement Mrs. Marsh and the young Texas Ridge. On February 19, although the river was still full of floating bergs, they left Columbus and in one day traveled more than 50 miles downriver.<sup>138</sup> Continuing on, he reached Point Pleasant, Missouri, by March 1. At Point Pleasant, he made views of the “U.S. Engineers,” possibly the facilities used by Bissell’s Engineer Regiment of the West stationed there during the Civil War. Almost three weeks later, his gallery was in Tiptonville, Tennessee. Doremus and Hays then sailed the *Lady Annie* back up to Point Pleasant and sold more than \$20 of photographs. After several additional stops, the *Success* tied up in Memphis from March 26 until April 1, 1879. Unfortunately, Doremus did not record what he did there.

At some point during 1879, Doremus probably dispensed with his *Wanegans*, as they are no longer mentioned in his diary after his problems in January. It is likely that he had less need of them, as he was making fewer prints for stereographs as he traveled south. Moreover, a significant proportion of his portraits were tintypes that, as direct positives, did not require printing.

It is apparent that Doremus still was in no rush to finish his proposed journey to New Orleans. From Memphis, he had the *Success* and the *Lady Annie* towed back upriver more than 100 miles to Tiptonville. During his two-week stay, he visited the Masonic lodge.<sup>139</sup> He started south again on April 14 and did well making tintypes at small river towns along the way, reaching Randolph, Tennessee, on May 12. Planning an extended break, he turned the *Success* over to Mrs.

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 22–23. At Columbus, Frank Diran was replaced by H. B. Bruistar. Accompanied by his wife and five-year-old boy, Hays would learn the business and get 25% of orders he received through canvassing. Mrs. Hays got \$5 per month for housekeeping. Ibid., 23, entries for February 3, 17, and 19, 1879. Doremus took Texas Ridge to her sister’s for a visit in Tiptonville, Tennessee, on February 21, 1879. Texas eventually got homesick and Doremus bought her passage home on January 25, 1880.

<sup>139</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 30:2 (June 1993), 23–25. The editor of the *Reflector* commented on page 25 that Doremus erred when he wrote that both the *Success* and the *Lady Annie* were towed to Tiptonville, since in Doremus’s recent previous entries, he had only mentioned the latter. However, it is clear from subsequent entries that both boats were towed to Tiptonville. While in Tiptonville, Doremus, Mrs. Marsh, and “Gertie” (unidentified, but Doremus also mentioned a Gertie when he visited Iowa later that year) stayed overnight with a Mr. Cronars, five miles out of town, and “had a very pleasant visit.”

Marsh and Mr. Hays with several stipulations. Doremus was to supply the photo materials and they were responsible for their own provisions. Each would get 25% of the income from the photo business and Doremus would get 50%. This contract implies that both Marsh and Hays had learned how to take and finish photographs. The careful Doremus also gave a Mr. W. J. Chapman of Randolph a power of attorney to insure that the boat would not go below Randolph before he returned from a visit home.<sup>140</sup>

Leaving for the East on May 17, 1879, Doremus traveled by steamers, first downriver to Memphis, where he took passage back up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers to Evansville, Indiana, then on to Louisville, Kentucky, and from there to Cincinnati. In Cincinnati, he bought frames and other supplies and shipped them back to St. Louis, where he hoped to retrieve them on his return. Next he boarded another steamer headed to Pittsburgh, arriving on May 28. From Pittsburgh, he rode the rails home and arrived at midnight. Clearly, trains were the fastest way to travel at that time.

“Enjoyed myself at home very much,” wrote Doremus about his visit in Paterson. During his sojourn, he purchased more supplies and shipped them West. Traveling by train, he left New Jersey on July 14 and made stops along the way in Chicago and Dubuque. At Dubuque, he visited his sister, Sarah Beam, then traveled on to Riceville on July 24. As usual, he socialized with the Schoonmakers, friends, and others, including Mrs. Marsh’s father, who lived in Saratoga, Iowa, on July 31. Extending his stay, on September 9, Doremus saw Mrs. Marsh, who had returned home after a trip to Cincinnati.

Doremus only mentions one occasion when he made photographs during this period in Iowa, but that journal entry shows that he had a camera with him. On September 23, he “took some

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. Only one tintype portrait identified as from Doremus’s boat has come to the author’s attention. There is no indication where it was made.

negatives of Capt. Bennett's sorghum mill." Six days later, on September 29, he boarded a stagecoach bound for Cresco, Iowa, where he again met Mrs. Marsh, who gave him \$200 (about \$4,000 in 2021 dollars), presumably proceeds from the photo business. They traveled together to St. Louis, where Doremus bought her a steamer ticket to Randolph in order to rejoin the *Success*. He stayed on in St. Louis, locating some but not all of his freight sent from the East, and bought substantial other supplies, including \$40 of groceries, 1,000 feet of mounting board for photos, and a box of glass plates for making negatives. He got back to the *Success* at Randolph on October 15 and found all was well after his five-month absence.<sup>141</sup>

Subsequent to ten days in Randolph, Doremus and his entourage voyaged south and soon got into trouble. As they approached Memphis, a sudden gust drove his vessels into a nest of snags and then against a large upright sycamore that had fallen into the river. The *Success* sprung a leak and filled up with water in five minutes. Doremus and the crew got it into deep water and it "floated just even with the guards." A steamer towed the *Success* to a sandbar near a ship carpenter living on a boat.

For several days, while Doremus was most of the time prone by an unspecified illness, a team of men worked to raise the boat up, put it on an angle so the leak could be exposed, and pumped it out. It was fixed on November 1 and they were on their way. Perhaps because Doremus still did not feel well, they continued past Memphis for 85 miles and, except for anchoring at night, did not stop at any towns until they reached Friar's Point, Mississippi, on November 15.<sup>142</sup> They did such a good business that they stayed until December 27, when they floated about 80 miles in

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 26–27. Note that since Doremus bought glass plates for negatives, he was still using the wet-plate collodion process in 1879.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 29. In early December, Hays and his family left Doremus, and Hays established his own photograph tent about 15 miles from Friar's Point. To augment his crew, Doremus hired two men there and another in January. By the end of the year, Doremus had traveled about 360 miles down the river since leaving Columbus, Kentucky, in February.

24 hours to a spot a few miles upriver from Concordia, Mississippi. Now a ghost town, Concordia in 1879 was a busy river port for shipping cotton, despite losing half its population that year from a yellow fever epidemic.<sup>143</sup>

Doremus then had the *Success* hauled to a landing at a little town he called Laconia, Mississippi. Although there is no community named Laconia in Mississippi today, there is a Laconia on the Arkansas side of the river. After adding four men to his crew, including Ed Lower, a young musician, Doremus gradually moved downriver in early 1880, reaching Terrene Landing, north of Rosedale, Mississippi, on February 10. Business was good, so he stayed until February 24. On February 22, the *Success* was crowded with customers and Doremus let Ed Lower take their portraits. One “pretty tight” patron, John Underwood, was not satisfied, and Doremus recalled:

. . . Underwood brought them to me on the bow of the boat and began making a fuss about them. He finally threw them into the river and hit me a couple of blows on the head. I did not strike back but ran him off the boat landing on all fours. He was dressed in the pink of perfection in light cloth and it did not help his clothes any. He got on the boat again and seemed sorry so I commenced brushing his clothes when all at once he commenced striking me on the head with a keg and his fists. I then pitched him over the hog chains between the boat and the shore, landing him on all fours in the water. He crawled out and commenced abusing me and at last threw a can at me. I then jumped for him and drew blood the first blow, and if the man who was with him had not got between us, I would have given him a big licking. He seemed pretty well tamed so I let it go at that.

On the next day, Doremus wrote that Underwood had obtained a loaded gun and was going to use it on him, but the Southerner’s friends took it away and fired off the ammunition.

Doremus departed Terrene on February 24. On board was a new cook, Annie Thomas, an African American whom he hired to replace Texas Ridge, who had gone home on January 25.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 30; “Concordia: One of Bolivar County’s First Settlements,” *Bolivar Bullet*, 1:9 (November 1, 2002). [http://bolivarbullet.com/Bullett-11\\_1\\_2002.htm](http://bolivarbullet.com/Bullett-11_1_2002.htm). Little remains today of Concordia other than its cemetery.

<sup>144</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 30:3 (September 1993), 24–25. In addition to Annie Thomas, Doremus had three Black crewmen who had joined him on January 6, 1880.

By March 22, he had reached Mound Landing, Mississippi, in the vicinity of Arkansas City, where the following day, he photographed the flooded streets, noting that the only way to get around the town was in boats. He was now in a region with preponderately Black, formerly enslaved residents, who may have felt encouraged to board the *Success* because by then Doremus had four African American employees. He commented in his journal on April 3 about these customers. One sitter, he wrote, “would not take his picture because it did not look sorrowful enough. He wanted to be taken grieving for his wife.” He also noted: “They often take their pictures to the looking glass and look alternatively at the picture and at themselves to see if the likeness is good.”<sup>145</sup> Possibly, it was the first time some of these people were photographed.

One of the potential problems concerning Doremus was that at this point the Mississippi was bounded by levees and he could actually look down on towns as he passed. He worried that if there were a break in a levee, his boats would be sucked in. This is in fact what happened on April 19, 1880, south of Greenville, Mississippi. As the *Success* was drawn into the opening, Doremus got out the anchor and sent some of his crew to Arkansas City in the *Lady Annie* to get a tug, which arrived the next day. Doremus concluded, “It was a narrow escape.” The tug towed Doremus’s fleet to Gaines Landing, Arkansas, about ten miles north of Vicksburg. While there, a spring romance culminated in Ed Lower and Mrs. Marsh going to Greenville for the day on April 27 to get married, accompanied by Doremus.<sup>146</sup>

After Doremus dropped the happy couple off on the *Success*, he continued downriver in the *Lady Annie*. His stops along the way included the Concord Plantation in East Carroll Parish, Louisiana, where he was “very hospitably entertained” by part-owner Clark N. Hall. On April 30, at Vicksburg, he shipped the *Lady Annie* on a steamboat back to the *Success*. After a few days

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 27.

highlighted by visits to local photographers, Doremus boarded the huge side-wheel steamer *J. M. White*, which held the speed record for the run from Vicksburg to New Orleans. During his two-day stay in New Orleans, Doremus may have made his stereoview of a streetcar with Washburn's photo gallery among the storefronts. Doremus departed on the *Louisiana*, bound for New York, and arrived on May 12, 1880.<sup>147</sup>

Doremus had "a very pleasant time at home" but did not record any details in his journal. He started back to Iowa on July 13 and reached Riceville on the 17th, where he made the usual rounds of visits, including to land he still owned in the area. Apparently, his tenant, W. F. Doolittle, was not doing well and Doremus took the land back on August 14. He then rented it to one Charles Haring, who paid Doremus with four young horses, two for the Doolittle property and the other two for rent on another.

Doremus left Iowa on August 31 with Lizzie and Will Schoonmaker and, traveling by steamship, landed on September 3 in Louisiana, Missouri. Before departing, he collected freight he had shipped from New York and Paterson and bought additional supplies. They arrived at his boat on September 10. The *Success* headed downriver again on the 15th and reached Vicksburg on the 22nd. Mrs. Lower (the former Mrs. Marsh) had been very sick but was recovering. She and her husband, Ed, left Doremus at Vicksburg on good terms and headed for Yazoo City, Mississippi, where they intended to start a business there or in the vicinity. Mrs. Lower had been with Doremus for about two and a half years.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid. Hall was a 25% owner of this plantation, according to *Mendenhall v. Hall, et al.* (1890), <https://law.resource.org/pub/us/case/reporter/US/134/134.US.559.html>. *J. M. White*: <http://www.museum.state.il.us/RiverWeb/landings/Ambot/TECH/TECH11.htm>. The New Orleans stereoview, which is in the Kenneth H. Rosen collection, is undated and has a red-orange mount with "Mississippi River and Vicinity" and Doremus's name. Whether Doremus made other views in New Orleans has not been confirmed.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 27–30.

Doremus stayed in Vicksburg until October 18 and got permission from the mayor to photograph the city. The weather was very hot and Doremus wrote on October 12: “I have sweat more today than I can remember doing in my lifetime.” During his stay, his African American cook, “Aunt Sally,” set forth for her home and Doremus replaced her with a young woman of color later that month. Before departing Vicksburg, Doremus had the *Success* put in “floating dry dock” for repairs at a cost of more than \$100 (about \$2,475 in 2021 dollars).<sup>149</sup>

Doremus and his crew continued south and a week later both Lizzie and Will Schoonmaker came down with fever and Doremus wrote that he was busy taking photos all day of African American children. On October 27, the *Lady Annie* was smashed by a coal tug and Doremus ordered another one made. His new cook got sick and Doremus sent her home. Writing at 7 p.m. on October 28, Doremus wrote that Will and Lizzie were asleep and that he had “a long dull night before me . . . I must say it is lonesome. Will and Liz are better and I hope will be about soon.” But their recovery took longer than he had hoped. On October 31, he continued in this mournful vein:

Will and Lizzie are getting better and I have struggled alone until now, three meals a day to be carried to each besides drink, medications, oranges, lemons, lemonade, etc. Three beds to make, my own meals to cook, wood to collect and saw and split, pictures to take, my own courage to keep up which is the hardest of all. It has been stormy the last four days or I don't know how I would have stood it as the storm keeps away customers.<sup>150</sup>

Will and Lizzie must have been quite ill, for they were not up and around until November 10, and Doremus commented that they remained very weak. By then, he had taken on board several additional people, including a Mrs. Nellie Stith, who “came to learn photographing” on November 3. From Point Pleasant, Louisiana, with a favorable wind, Doremus put up a sail and navigated the

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 30. Doremus did not mention in his journal in what format he photographed Vicksburg, and no examples have been located by the author.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 30–31.



*Success* upriver about a mile to Davis Bend, from which he went down the alternate channel of the Mississippi to Palmyra Landing. Davis Bend was the site of the 5,000-acre Hurricane Plantation that had been owned by Jefferson Davis's brother Joseph, who was influenced by the utopian socialism of Robert Owen. Davis once had 350 enslaved people, whom he called "servants," with an unusual degree of autonomy, including their own court. In 1867, as a result of financial troubles, Davis sold the property to his former "servants," who were running it as a cooperative when Doremus stopped nearby. Quite plausibly, some of the residents of Davis Bend became his customers.<sup>151</sup>

At Carthage Landing and in a much better mood by November 23, Doremus wrote, "A beautiful, pleasant, and sunshiny day. Have enjoyed myself very much." On the next day, he wrote, "Had a high old time last night, or rather yesterday evening, with Capt. James Smith and the whiskey. It is hard to get away from the hospitality of these southerners." Smith was captain of the *Bettie Gilbert*, which had towed the *Success* to Carthage Landing.

Doremus hired the *Bettie Gilbert* again to tow him back upriver on December 4 to Point Pleasant, from which he floated to St. Joseph, Louisiana. There he sold the skiff he had bought in Vicksburg for a profit, and purchased another boat that he equipped with a building to live in, a photographer's tent, and what else was needed for an auxiliary floating gallery.<sup>152</sup> Ed and Mrs. Lower came back and left on this vessel on December 21, while Doremus was docked at Rodney Landing, Mississippi, about 30 miles northeast of Natchez. The Lowers agreed to keep 40% of the

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 31; Neil R. McMillan, "Isaiah T. Montgomery," <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/55/isaiah-t-montgomery-1847-1924-part-I>. Montgomery was the son of Benjamin Montgomery, who, as an enslaved man, played a major role in running the plantation when Davis owned it, and continued in this role after he sold it. Davis Bend, previously bounded on three sides by the Mississippi, had become an island by the time Doremus was there in 1880.

<sup>152</sup> It is unlikely that this craft was the *Flora*, another Doremus floating gallery that is discussed below, because it was described as "new" in 1886.

receipts and furnish their own food. Doremus remained in Rodney Landing until after the year 1880 ended.<sup>153</sup>

In early January 1881, Doremus floated the *Success* down to Natchez, where he bought groceries on the 11th. He left the same day and anchored about 20 miles downriver on a sandbar. At this location, Doremus wrote that his crew member Max Hoffman, who had joined him in November, “shot a goose with my big revolver.” This is the first time in his diary that Doremus mentioned keeping a loaded gun on board. Doremus shot another one himself the next day.

Stopping at small towns and making portraits, by January 28, Doremus was at Bayou Sara, Louisiana, where Hoffman got off. The next day, Doremus reached Waterloo, Louisiana, which no longer exists. Leaving the *Success*, he headed downriver alone in the *Lady Annie* and was gone for a month, stopping at more than a dozen places, mainly to assess future prospects. On February 21 he landed at Baton Rouge, by far the largest. He went to the post office and visited the mayor and the wharfmaster, who informed him that the wharfage fee was \$200, prohibitively high for Doremus’s small business. From Donaldson, Louisiana, Doremus took the 200-foot steamer *City of Yazoo* back upriver to Waterloo Landing, arriving at his boat on February 25, 1881.<sup>154</sup>

Doremus rode the *Success* downriver and on March 15 stopped at West Baton Rouge, where he and Will Schoonmaker took the *Lady Annie* across the river to Baton Rouge to pick up a big basket of mail. Around this time, he made another of his few published views on the lower Mississippi, a shot of the grand packet *John W. Cannon* underway with a large plume of smoke.

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 31–32. Rodney later became a ghost town after the Mississippi changed course and Rodney was no longer on the river.

<sup>154</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 30:4 (December 1993), 16–17. In 1884, the levees at Waterloo broke and most of the town was destroyed. What remained was burned by arsonists in the 1890s.

The clarity of the smoke and the stopped movement of the steamboat strongly suggest that Doremus used a gelatin dry-plate negative for this view.<sup>155</sup>

Like virtually all photographers who began working in the 1860s, Doremus had used collodion to make negatives and ferrotypes. Familiarly known as the “wet-plate process” because the glass or metal plate had to be exposed in the camera while still damp from the sensitizing solution and then developed before it dried, it provided very detailed results when the subject was stationary, but it had some disadvantages. Before use, as discussed above, the glass plate had to be coated with the sensitizer in very dim light, so when he was off his boat, Doremus brought along a tent.<sup>156</sup> After exposure in the camera, the plate needed to be developed in a chemical bath in the tent and fixed before being taken out in the light. If working alone in the field, Doremus was rather limited in the number of photographs he could take per hour, so he often had an assistant to help carry the camera, tripod, tent, bottles of chemicals, and other paraphernalia. Naturally, photographers using collodion hoped for a more convenient process.<sup>157</sup>

The gelatin dry plates introduced in the late 1870s overcame collodion’s disadvantages.<sup>158</sup> It was more sensitive to light, enabling stop-action photographs, came ready to use in a box, and

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<sup>155</sup> Reproduced in *ibid.*, 18, credited to Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse.

<sup>156</sup> Although Doremus did not provide details in his journal about his tent, it is likely that it was a portable darkroom, such as Carbutt’s Portable Developing Box on a tripod introduced in the 1860s, which was covered with a cloth with armholes and a yellow window. Since Doremus recorded an incident when someone “upset” his dark tent, it probably was on legs. Carbutt’s apparatus, which, fully equipped, weighed 18 to 20 pounds, sold for \$35. Competing versions were also available in the 1860s and 1870s. See William Brey, *John Carbutt on the Frontiers of Photography* (Cherry Hill, New Jersey: Willowdale Press, 1984), 12–14.

<sup>157</sup> A few photographers used a “dry-collodion” process, but as it had its own difficulties, it was not widely adopted. The dry-collodion method chiefly involved the addition of a substance like glycerin to slow down the drying process and the negative still had to be developed while damp.

<sup>158</sup> Invented by Richard L. Maddox in 1871, gelatin dry plates began to be manufactured in the U.S. in 1878 by Albert Levy of New York. By the end of 1880, there were several manufacturers, including John Carbutt and George Eastman, and the quality of the plates had improved. A committee appointed by the Professional Photographers of America reported in January 1881 that the exposure time for the gelatin dry plate was one-tenth that of collodion and the quality was the same. The only disadvantage was that the cost for a prepared plate was higher than using plain glass and chemicals to make negatives. (Both collodion and early gelatin negatives were insensitive to red, which would print as black.) As more photographers adopted the new negative, the price came down. Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 370–371.

did not have to be developed immediately after exposure. The photographer could load negatives into plate holders at his home base, go out, photograph all day, and develop the negatives at night. The need for the traveling camera worker to carry bottles of chemicals and a tent was eliminated. After most photographers began using gelatin dry plates, the only collodion application that persisted was the ferrotype, because the coated iron plate could be processed and presented to the customer in 15 minutes or less. By the early 1880s, gelatin dry plates had become widely adopted by professionals, who often advertised their work in newspaper ads and on the backs of their cabinet cards as “instantaneous photographs” because the exposure times were shorter than with collodion.<sup>159</sup> The change from collodion to gelatin, as historian Reese V. Jenkins of Rutgers concluded, “set in motion fundamental product, production, marketing, and organizational changes that affected the entire industry” and led to the next major development, gelatin-coated roll film.<sup>160</sup> While Doremus did not record in his journal that he had switched to the new technology, his view of the smoke-spewing *John W. Cannon* provides persuasive evidence that he did.

Much of Doremus’s photography in the field around this time was for private clients. On March 15, 1881, near Manchac, Louisiana, Doremus exposed negatives of the inside and outside of the sugarhouse of Mr. Von Phul at Hollywood Landing. He continued downriver in the *Success*, touching down among other places at the now forgotten Forlorn Hope, Louisiana, on March 28, and reached St. Gabriel, Louisiana, by April 4. He remained in the area for the month of April, doing well in both the view and portrait business. His outdoor work included the sugarhouse and residence of a Mr. Williams, for which he was paid \$41 (about \$1,057 in 2021 dollars). At his next stop near Bayou Goula, Louisiana, he got \$25 for unspecified outdoor work. Drifting another mile

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<sup>159</sup> By the 1880s, cabinet cards, usually 4 1/4 by 6 1/2 inches, had surpassed the smaller CDVs in popularity for portrait photographs.

<sup>160</sup> *Images & Enterprise: Technology and the American Photographic Industry, 1839 to 1925* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 67.

downriver, he stopped again on April 29, when he photographed the Henry S. Duffell residence, the Woodstock Store, and made portraits. Then he went in a buggy to photograph for a Dr. Ballard, who owned 500 acres with more than 150 bridges. On the next day, after floating on the *Success* for another few miles, he disembarked to take pictures at a large plantation owned by the McCabe brothers.<sup>161</sup> The results of these jobs for businessmen and plantation owners in Louisiana may still exist but have not been located. As contrasted with his views in the Upper Mississippi, when he captured points of interest that were marketable as stereographs, most of his non-portrait work in Louisiana was for individuals, and the small number of prints delivered may explain why they are so scarce today.

Leaving the *Success* at Edgard, Louisiana, on May 17, 1881, Doremus traveled by train about 20 miles to New Orleans. After an interview with Dr. Grand, Secretary of Grand Masonic Lodge of Louisiana, he was admitted to the lodge. Back on his boat on May 20, he was pleased to learn that his staff had taken in more than \$30 while he was gone. After arrival, he only rode the *Success* a bit farther downriver to Carrolltown. Deciding that was close enough to his stated goal of New Orleans, on June 4, he paid \$100 to Captain George Clark of the towboat *Jay Gould* to drag the *Success* from Carrollton more than 800 miles upriver to Cairo, Illinois.<sup>162</sup>

The trip took two weeks because the *Jay Gould* was slowed by also towing a showboat, *The New Sensation*, which Doremus visited en route, enjoying “some good music and singing.” He also invited its owner and his wife over for dinner on the *Success*. It was a fine trip in most respects except one day it was 102 degrees in the coolest room on his floating gallery. On June 19,

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 19. At his stop six miles above Bayou Goula, Doremus was joined by Mrs. Lower’s sister, Mollie Calvert, who was picked up in Bayou Goula by Mr. Stith, presumably the husband of Mrs. Stith, and Will Schoonmaker in the *Lady Ann*. Except for the photo of the *John W. Cannon*, examples of the outdoor work mentioned in this paragraph have not been located by this author.

<sup>162</sup> An undated Doremus view of the *Jay Gould* in an unknown location is reproduced in *S&D Reflector*, 30:3 (September 1993), 29.

shortly after leaving Cairo, Doremus was awakened from a sound sleep by a crash and learned that his craft had been smashed by a towboat; that accident required substantial repairs. Doremus continued downriver to Kiniswich, Missouri, where Lizzie Schoonmaker headed home for Riceville and Doremus boarded a series of trains and arrived in Paterson on June 30.<sup>163</sup>

Doremus, typically, did not record much detail about his visit at home in New Jersey, except to note that it was a “quiet time.” He went with his wife, Sarah, to New York a few times, and once went to Brighton and Manhattan Beach by steamer and rail.<sup>164</sup> No doubt, he would have been interested in how his sons Harry and Leonard were doing with the photo business in Paterson. By 1879, they had been calling the 218 Main Street gallery “Doremus Brothers,” located next door to their uncle Cornelius Doremus, who in the firm Doremus & McKiernan, sold stoves and house furnishings at 220 Main. An 1881 newspaper ad for the Doremus Brothers’ branch gallery in Passaic stated: “Photographers and dealers in picture frames, easels, albums, chromos, brackets, etc. . . . Babies’ Pictures in half the usual time.” In 1884, Harry left the partnership and Leonard continued at 218 Main until 1888, when he moved to 240 Main.<sup>165</sup>

His family visit ended, John P. Doremus left for the West on August 2. He stopped in Dubuque to see his sister, Sally Beam, and arrived in Riceville on August 9, 1881. On August 15, Dan Schoonmaker drove him to Cresco, Iowa, from which he took trains to St. Louis. After a couple of days, he entrained for Crystal City, Missouri. Fortunately, he “found everything all right” with his boat. While he was gone, Mrs. Stith had done very well and Doremus sent a \$50 money order home. At the end of August, Doremus began moving the *Success* up and down the river,

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<sup>163</sup> *S&D Reflector*, 30:4 (December 1993), 19–21.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>165</sup> Harry left Paterson with his parents and sisters to live in Iowa, probably in 1884, as discussed below, and then returned to Paterson. Leonard had a long career in photography before his death on November 14, 1927, and burial at Cedar Lawn. His son, Walter P. Doremus, worked in the business by 1895. Ad: *The Item* (Passaic), September 10, 1881, 4. Leonard H. Doremus death: U.S. Presbyterian Church Records, [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com).

using the wind to go upstream. In mid-September, the steamer *Jay Gould* towed the *Success* back to Cairo. There Mrs. Stith left for her home in Vicksburg and Doremus came down with “malarial fever.” Tied to another boat carrying Mr. Newton Walters and his wife and sister, he continued downstream about 11 miles and anchored. On September 27, 1881, he made his final entry in his journal:

It is now half past eight. Wind blowing too hard for us to move, dull and cloudy. Walters is on shore with his boat for greater convenience in getting firewood, etc. I am so weak I can hardly move and my heart is way below zero. All alone. I got my solitary breakfast, too weak to do anything more. The time drags heavily. Tuesday night we pulled out about 3pm and stopped about dark, just above the eddy at Columbus, Kentucky.<sup>166</sup>

### **Last Years in Iowa and New Jersey**

Whether Doremus started another journal is unknown, and information about his subsequent life is limited. Apparently, he took the *Success* down the Mississippi again to Louisiana. By November 24, 1882, he had tied up at the Plaquemine landing below Baton Rouge.<sup>167</sup> It is likely that the *Success* stayed in the area for some time and then headed south. By March 1883, Doremus and his boat were at Donaldsonville, Louisiana, about 20 miles as the crow flies from Plaquemine.<sup>168</sup> From there, he brought the *Success* to Gretna, across the river from uptown New Orleans. On May 17, 1883, he paid for an ad for one week in the *Times-Picayune*:

FOR SALE. — DOREMUS’S FLOATING Photograph Gallery, containing twelve rooms, now at Gretna, above the Jackson street ferry. Apply on board or at S.T. BLESSING’S, 87 Canal street.<sup>169</sup>

As evidence of his subsequent activities suggests, Doremus likely found a buyer. That summer, he was in Mitchell County, Iowa, near Riceville. The *Mitchell County Press* on August

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>167</sup> *Weekly Iberville South* (Plaquemine, Louisiana), November 25, 1882, 2.

<sup>168</sup> *Donaldson Chief* (Donaldsonville, Louisiana), March 10, 1883, 3.

<sup>169</sup> *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), May 21, 1883, 4.

16 stated that he was “commencing the erection of the largest set of farm building[s] in the county” and had hired an architect named Russell to design his house.<sup>170</sup> In 1884, he built an addition to the Hathaway store as a photography gallery staffed by Doremus and his son Harry. Doremus continued to operate this photo studio intermittently in Riceville until 1886.<sup>171</sup> Although examples of his photographs in Riceville may exist in local family collections, only one CDV portrait has been seen by the author and none have been identified at the historical societies of Mitchell County, Howard County, the State of Iowa, or other repositories. One possible reason is that in July 1901, almost all of downtown Riceville was destroyed in a fire that consumed 52 buildings.<sup>172</sup>

Doremus was joined in Iowa for about two or three years by most of his family.<sup>173</sup> According to the 1885 state census in Jenkins Township, Mitchell County, John P. Doremus was a 57-year-old photographer living with his wife, Sarah, 55; and children Harry T., 30; Emma J., 24; and Annie, 14. His son Leonard stayed in Paterson, where he was directing the Doremus Gallery.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> *Howard County Times* (Cresco, Iowa), June 5, 1884; *Mitchell County Press*, August 16, 1883, 3, col. 1, available through Community History Archive, <https://osage.advantage-preservation.com/>; Paul C. Juhl, “J.P. Doremus and His Floating Photograph Gallery, *The Palimpsest*, 73:2 (Summer 1992), 67. Juhl generously provided helpful information in emails to the author, May 2021. Lori Mark, a volunteer for the Mitchell County Historical Society, spent considerable time locating Doremus references for me in the *Howard County Times* and other local sources but did not find any Doremus photos in the society’s archives. She suggested that I check with the Howard County Historical Society, and its president, Barbara Prochaska, kindly searched there but did not find any Doremus photos. Riceville is in both Mitchell and Howard Counties.

<sup>171</sup> *The Riceville Recorder*, September 1, 2011, in “125 Years Ago - 1886,” quoted a newspaper stating, “Mr. Doremus has returned to Riceville and reopened his gallery, at which place he may always be found ready for business.”

<sup>172</sup> “The Riceville Fire,” *Howard County Times* (Cresco, Iowa), July 25, 1901. Only a restaurant, a store, and a bank survived the flames.

<sup>173</sup> *The Iowa Plain Dealer* (Cresco, Iowa), September 17, 1885, stated that Doremus and his family arrived “about three years ago.” However, the *Howard County Times*, September 17, 1885, commented, “The Doremus family are [sic] making preparations to leave the West and make their permanent residence in the East. They have only been with us a little over two years and we are sorry that it seems best to them to go away.”

<sup>174</sup> Not present in the 1885 Iowa state census was Harry’s wife, Jennie (née Van Scoy), listed in the 1880 U.S. census in Paterson. In 1885, John P. Doremus rented out part of a building in Iowa for an ice cream parlor. *Mitchell County Press*, August 13, 1885, 4.



The Mississippi, with its floating stores and traveling shows, its sights and sounds like the unforgettable steamboat whistle, and the people who lived on and along it, had become an irresistible attraction for Doremus. In early June 1884, he left Riceville for an excursion to New Orleans.<sup>175</sup> He named his new boat the *Flora*, which was similar in appearance to the *Success*.<sup>176</sup> He was on his floating gallery again in the South the following winter, returning to Riceville at the end of May 1885.<sup>177</sup> The *Iowa Plain Dealer* reported on September 10, 1885, that he was leaving at the end of the month to “take views of the Mississippi River on his floating gallery.” That month, the same newspaper stated that his family was returning to Paterson and renting out their “mansion.”<sup>178</sup> In August 1886, he sold this home near Riceville to a buyer who intended to move it to town for a hotel.<sup>179</sup>

Likely on the *Flora*, Doremus arrived in Plaquemine, Louisiana, on or shortly before March 20, 1886, after an absence of two years, and stayed for about a week.<sup>180</sup> He then continued downriver and docked at Donaldson by May 1. On May 8, the *Donaldson Chief* reported:

Doremus will leave Donaldsonville with his Floating Photograph Gallery the latter part of the coming week, not to return again before next fall, hence parties desiring to have work done in his line should call on him at once. His boat is a large, new craft, provided with every facility for executing photography in the best style of the art. It is now at the levee

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<sup>175</sup> *Howard County Times* (Cresco, Iowa), June 5, 1884.

<sup>176</sup> *Flora* may have named after Doremus’s great-niece, Florence Bradley, born in 1883. Florence’s parents were Margaret, daughter of Doremus’s sister Rachel (Mrs. Robert) Smith, and Frederick R. Bradley. Two views of the *Flora* are available online at Kunst Camera, <https://kunst-camera.livejournal.com/3817.html>. One shows a small boat tied alongside. A vintage Doremus photograph of the *Flora*, taken at Donaldsonville, is at the Ohio River museum, Marietta, Ohio. Among painted signs on the boat is one that reads, “Family Groups Taken at Their Homes.” Another Doremus photo taken at Donaldsonville in 1889 is also at this museum, depicting the Eugene Robinson Museum and Theater boats. An interior view, about 6 by 8 inches, of the Eugene Robinson Floating Palace band onstage, is at the J. Paul Getty Museum, available at <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/49343/john-p-doremus-stage-and-band-of-eugene-robinson's-floating-palaces-american-1874-1890/?dz=0.4297,0.4297,0.32>. *S&D Reflector*, 30:4 (December 1993), 22.

<sup>177</sup> *Iowa Plain Dealer* (Cresco, Iowa), May 28, 1885.

<sup>178</sup> September 17, 1885. The house was rented out to Charles Arnold.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, August 12, 1886, 5; September 16, 1886, 5; and October 14, 1886, 1. The buyer was R. T. St. John of Osage, for \$8,300, about \$235,803 in 2021 dollars. Doremus also sold a lot to Anna T. Arnold for \$600 in October.

<sup>180</sup> *Weekly Iberville South* (Plaquemine, Louisiana), March 20, 2, and March 27, 1886, 2. The newspaper unfortunately did not mention the name of the floating gallery, but Doremus had the *Flora* by May of that year, so it is likely that it was the *Flora*.

just above the steamboat landing, a safe and convenient locality. Prof. Doremus takes photographs by the new dry process, and guarantees the finest work at low prices.<sup>181</sup>

Note that Doremus now had a “new craft,” indicating that the *Flora* was not likely the boat Doremus had outfitted as an auxiliary floating gallery to be used by the Lowers several years earlier. Doremus returned again to Plaquemine in February 1887 on what the *Weekly Iberville South* described as his fourth visit. For a dozen cabinet cards, he charged \$3, and for CDVs, \$1.50 per dozen. The newspaper did not mention a price for tintypes, so perhaps he was no longer making them.<sup>182</sup>

In the late 1880s, occasional newspaper references suggest that when he was not in the South, Doremus was in Paterson, although he retained some investments in Iowa.<sup>183</sup> Doremus’s adventurous life ended when he died suddenly of acute gastritis on January 6, 1890, in Sunnyside, Leflore County, Mississippi, an unincorporated community about 18 miles north of Greenwood and not near the Mississippi River.<sup>184</sup> Doremus was buried there, but on March 2, 1891, he was reinterred in the Doremus family plot at Cedar Lawn in Paterson. His wife, Sarah, who was living in Paterson, was his sole beneficiary, with his estate to be divided after her death among his four surviving children, Harry, Leonard, Mattie (Mrs. Hudson Parmley), and Annie Doremus. As executors to enforce his will, Doremus designated his son Leonard and Will Schoonmaker. His estate, consisting of loans, camera equipment, mortgages, and bank accounts, including nearly \$5,000 in Osage and Riceville banks in Mitchell County, Iowa, was valued at \$16,792 (about

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<sup>181</sup> *Donaldson Chief*, May 1, 1883, 3, and May 8, 1886, 3.

<sup>182</sup> February 12, 1887, 2, and February 19, 1887. The earlier article stated that he charged \$2 per dozen for card pictures (CDVs) and the second carried a correction.

<sup>183</sup> Juhl, 67; *Morning Call* (Paterson), April 26, 1887, 5.

<sup>184</sup> *Paterson Daily Press*, January 8, 1890; Juhl, 67.

\$485,000 in 2021 dollars).<sup>185</sup> Sarah died in Paterson in 1898 and was interred with her husband at a spot marked by a substantial monument.<sup>186</sup>

## Conclusion

The trajectory of John P. Doremus's life from his beginnings in the painting business to becoming a nationally known photographer showcased at the Centennial Exhibition epitomizes an American success story achieved through ambition, determination, overcoming adversity, and taking advantage of opportunities. Doremus's youthful employment as a painter enabled him to invest in cheap land in rural Iowa and subsequently establish his photography business in New Jersey to ride the wave of prosperity for photographers made possible by the Civil War and "cartomania." His judicious expansion in Paterson to a second gallery, his effective management of employees, including women, and assistance from his two sons enabled him to prosper and develop the capital to invest in the next phase of his career, a floating gallery on the Mississippi River that he optimistically named the *Success*.

Overcoming numerous challenges, Doremus dealt effectively with crises when his vessel was threatened by ice, floods, rapids, rocks, floating debris, wakes from huge steamboats, and collisions with other craft. On the Mississippi, as he had in Paterson, he hired, trained, and managed staff, including white and African American men and women, as well as his brother-in-

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<sup>185</sup> Will, recorded in Book N and proved April 11, 1890, and Inventory 3444 P, Passaic County, New Jersey State Archives. The inventory includes a balance of \$482 still owed Doremus for a boat on the Mississippi River that he had sold.

<sup>186</sup> Cedar Lawn to author, telephone, April 18, 2021; photograph of monument, Find-A-Grave. The monument in Section 8, Lots 478 and 479, has birth and death dates for John P. (July 21, 1827–January 6, 1890), Sarah (January 18, 1830–September 6, 1898), Harry (August 18, 1854–January 26, 1892), and Martha (February 17, 1863–September 28, 1914). The plot also has markers for at least two of John and Sarah's children who died young, Ella (1853–1854) and Cornelius (1860–1870). By 1900, after the death of her son John, Martha (Mattie) had separated or divorced from Hudson Parmley and resumed her maiden surname Doremus, so that is how she is listed on the monument. Martha also had two other children with Parmley, who was probably the Hudson M. Parmley, born January 1858, listed as a photographer in the 1905 New Jersey census for Paterson, married, wife not present. Parmley had his own photo gallery in Paterson from 1888 to 1891. Leonard was interred nearby in Section 8, Lot 480, on November 14, 1927, and rests there with his wife and two children.

law's children and other teenagers. Some of those who learned the business from Doremus in both New Jersey and in the Midwest became photographers, including women, who at that time comprised a small percentage of all photographers. Along the river, he made portraits in small towns not serviced by established galleries and produced excellent stereographic views of scenery, towns, steamboats, bridges, and other subjects.

In addition to his extant work, Doremus's legacy includes his business in Paterson, continued in his absence and after his death principally by his son Leonard H. Doremus, who had his own fruitful and long career in Passaic County. The detailed information available about the life of a photographer in his diary, perhaps unique among nineteenth-century New Jersey lensmen, is another of his significant legacies.<sup>187</sup>

## Addendum

### Second Lieutenant William J. Ward, Co. E, 25th Regiment

By Joseph G. Bilby



**John P. Doremus, 85 Main Street, Paterson. 2nd Lt. William J. Ward, Co. E, 25th Regiment, New Jersey Volunteers, carte de visite, circa 1865. New Jersey State Archives. Recto and verso.**

<sup>187</sup> Although not a diary, Theodore Gubelman wrote a detailed memoir after his retirement. See author, "Photographers of the Civil War Era: Theodore Gubelman of Jersey City," *New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Winter 2021, 209–225. With Joseph G. Bilby. <https://doi.org/10.14713/njs.v7i1.228>.

In August of 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 militia to serve nine months. New Jersey's share of the levy was 10,478 men. Along with this quota came regulations for a draft stipulating that all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 45 be registered for a drawing to be held on September 3, 1862, should quotas not be filled by volunteers by that date.

State and local officials did not want to impose a draft on voters, so they did their best to raise volunteers, using bounties to garner recruits. Rendezvous camps were established in Newark, Trenton, Beverly, Freehold, and Flemington, and recruits poured in, motivated by bounties and newspaper assertions that they would not see field service but be used to garrison rear-area forts. One recruit in the 25th New Jersey Infantry wrote his father: "I go where I can get the highest bounty."

The town of Orange offered \$200 to potential volunteers, approximately \$5,200 in today's money. Although a few men were drafted in a town that did not offer a bounty, most of the men in the New Jersey nine-month regiments were volunteers. By September the state had created 11 such regiments, the 21st through the 31st. As militia, the men in these units could elect their officers and the officers elected the colonel who commanded the regiment, which did not necessarily provide the best leadership.

The 25th New Jersey infantry was organized at Camp Cadwallader in Beverly, with five companies, A, C, E, H, and K from Passaic County; three, F, G, and I from Cape May County; one, D from Cumberland County; and one, B from Atlantic County. William J. Ward, an Irish-born 22-year-old millwright and Paterson resident, enlisted as a sergeant in the 25th's Company A on September 1.

The weapons issued to the 25th, imported by a somewhat shady arms dealer, were atrocious. They were obsolete French flintlock smoothbore muskets that had been hastily converted to the percussion system and poorly rifled. Thus armed, Sergeant Ward and his comrades left New Jersey for Washington on October 10, 1862. Initially assigned to the defenses of the capital, the regiment's weapons were inspected by ordnance officers, condemned, and replaced by Austrian Lorenz rifles, a vast improvement.

Sergeant Ward, for some undisclosed reason, was reduced in rank to private on October 10. After two weeks on guard duty, the 25th was reassigned to the Army of the Potomac and, following an eight-mile march in a blinding snowstorm, joined the First Brigade of the First Division of the IX Army Corps. As General Burnside began his move against Fredericksburg, the regiment crossed the Rappahannock River on December 11 and camped in the town's streets. On the morning of December 13, the Union assault on the Confederate positions beyond the town began. At 4:30 p.m., after the failure of a series of attacks, the 25th's division was ordered forward—and stopped cold by heavy fire. The regiment lost 6 men killed, 61 wounded, and 18 missing in its futile charge. The division withdrew and the following day recrossed the Rappahannock and settled in at a miserable winter encampment at Falmouth, highlighted by the arrival of the paymaster and Mrs. C. H. Powers, president of the Paterson Florence Nightingale Society, who distributed clothing and food. The troops said, "God bless her." On December 30, now Private Ward was transferred to Company E and promoted to second lieutenant.

In February, the 25th and its division headed by ship to Newport News, Virginia. Their time there proved a pleasant interlude, as there were plenty of "sutler shanties" and the merchants were well stocked with food and minor luxuries. Cans of fruit preserved in alcohol caused a few problems and led to the regiment's adjutant being dismissed for "drunkenness." Packages of food

and clothing arrived from home, arousing envy in a nearby Vermont regiment. A private responded that “Jerseymen are always well provided for.”

On Saint Patrick’s Day in 1863, the 25th was ordered to Suffolk, Virginia, to protect against a Confederate advance. On arrival they were put to work improving local defenses. The regiment was uniquely qualified for this mission, as its commander, Colonel Andrew Derrom, was an architect, and many of his men were skilled mechanics from Paterson.

The 25th made two reconnaissance in force probes across the Nansemond River. In the first one they captured 120 prisoners. In the second they encountered opposition and lost 2 men killed and 13 wounded. One of the dead was Chaplain Francis E. Butler, who was shot while bringing water to the wounded. He was the only New Jersey chaplain to die in the war.

After building a five-acre “Fort New Jersey” near Norfolk, the 25th left Virginia for home on June 10, 1863. They sailed up the Delaware to Beverly and were mustered out of service by June 20.

His military career at an end, Lieutenant Ward returned to Paterson, where he had his CDV image taken by photographer John D. Doremus and married Mary E. Garrison. By the 1880 census, Ward was still a millwright. The couple had two children, William and Ella, and were living at 8 East Main Street in Paterson. Ward passed away on April 19, 1909, and was buried at Laurel Grove Memorial Park in Totowa, New Jersey.

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*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 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam, 1966–1967. He is the 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 more than 400 articles and 21 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.*