

Charles Henry Davis: Photographer of Plainfield, New York, and Hoboken

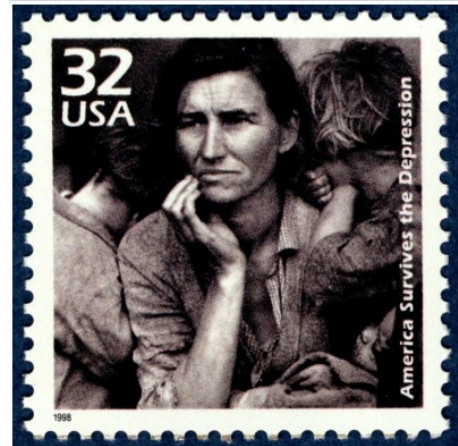
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Abstract: Charles Henry Davis (1855–1929), a photographer active in both Plainfield and Hoboken, New Jersey, and in New York City, had a nationwide reputation as a portrait photographer during his lifetime but has become an obscure figure today. This illustrated article details his life and work, including his early years as a telegrapher in Elmira; his early reputation as an innovative photographer in Plainfield where he founded the Plainfield Camera Club; his years in New York at the Davis & Sanford and Davis & Eickemeyer galleries where he photographed many celebrities; and his last period in Hoboken when he specialized in at-home portraits, exhibited his Pictorialist work internationally, was published regularly in photographic periodicals, and mentored his assistant Dorothea Lange, who became one of America's best known photographers. The paper concludes with a discussion of how Davis came to be omitted from most history of photography texts.

On a drizzly day in March 1936, Dorothea Lange (1895–1965), a native of Hoboken, approached a lean-to at a pea pickers camp in Nipomo, California. She was attracted to a lean, hungry-looking mother nursing a baby and surrounded by her other children. Lange took five photographs, taking a few steps closer after each shot. While the destitute mother asked no

questions, she seemed to sense that Lange meant her no harm. She detached the baby from her breast and brought her hand up to her face. Lange, instinctively recognizing from her training as a studio portrait photographer that the expressive hand was the key to the picture, made her final exposure that became known as “Migrant Mother,” the single most emblematic image of the Great Depression that has been reproduced innumerable times, including on a U.S. postage stamp in 1998.¹



Lange learned photography through attendance at the Clarence White School of Photography at Columbia University and then did apprenticeships with more than half a dozen photographers.² Her last was with portrait photographer Charles Henry Davis (1855–1929), before she left on an around-the-world trip in January 1918 that ended in San Francisco when she ran out of money. There she soon became a successful portraitist until the 1930s when she turned to the documentary work for which she became renowned. In 1960, Lange recalled her time with Davis:

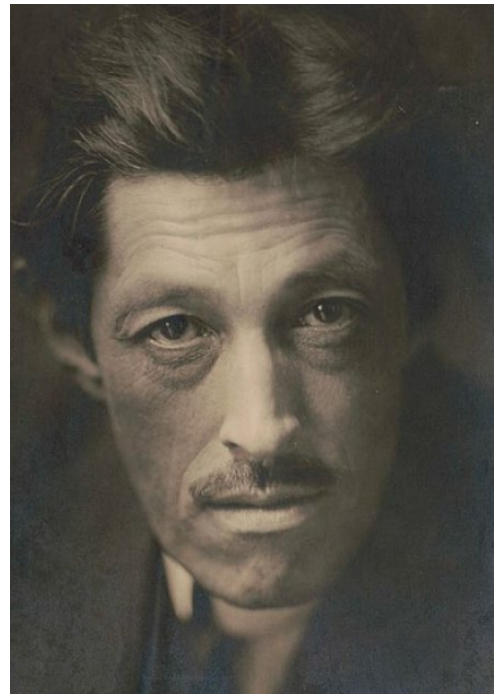
When you “pose the model” the head is placed, and then you hold it, and then each finger is positioned. The fingers were very important to him, and he said, “The knees are the eyes of the body,” so your knees and your fingers, and your head, were all posed and then he would induce the atmosphere, and then he’d photograph. Then he would start with the next one! And he taught me this. He used to love

¹ In part, Howard M. Levin and Katherine Northrup, eds., *Dorothea Lange: Farm Security Administration Photographs: 1935–1939, Volume I* (Glencoe, Illinois: Text-Fiche Press, 1980), 135–136.

² Linda Gordon, *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits* (London & New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 34–35.

to put on the gramophone, records from the opera. And I remember I learned to like “Pagliacci” in those sessions, because he loved it.³

In the interview quoted above, Lange had quite a bit more to say about Davis, not all of which was positive. She did not remember how she started working with him but stated that her mother knew Davis so it was perhaps through that connection. At the time, Lange was about 22 years old and Davis was about 62, and the older photographer treated her well. He regularly took her out to dinner at a restaurant called Lion D’Or and bought fine meals for both of them. But Davis didn’t think Lange’s negatives were good, and she thought his pictures were “very perfect and completely empty,” probably meaning that since they were all posed, they lacked spontaneity and individuality. She also said that “his work was dreadful,” but his customers and others thought otherwise.



Sadakichi Hartmann by Hubert Bros., 1913. Wikimedia Commons. Library of Congress. LCCN2004677354.

³ Dorothea Lange oral history, Suzanne Reiss, interviewer, University of California-Berkeley, 1960–1961, MSS 69/20 c, 45–56. <https://archive.org/details/documentryphoto00langrich/page/n13/mode/2up>. Subsequent references to Lange’s statements are from this source. Biographers of Lange who have used this oral history to recount her time with Davis include Linda Gordon, *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits* (London & New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 35; Milton Meltzer, *Dorothea Lange: A Photographer’s Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1978), 27–28. Some of Lange’s biographers repeat Lange’s error about the number of Davis’s marriages.

Writing about Davis in 1906 under his *nom de plume* Sidney Allan, Sadakichi Hartmann (1867–1944), one of the foremost art critics in the history of photography, deplored the stereotypical portraits produced by incompetent photographers beginning in the 1860s, when the public flocked to galleries to obtain inexpensive cartes de visite, and many camera workers untrained in art entered the profession. The result, complained Hartmann, was an “era of potted palms and *papier-maché* balustrades, peopled with beings posed in fearfully awkward attitudes, like manikins and wax figures, amid surroundings execrable in their ugliness, the faces purged of every characteristic note, presenting surface as smooth and unlike life like a china doll.” In Hartmann’s opinion, this situation changed in the early 1890s when Davis and some others appeared on the scene. His work conveyed ideals of “likeness, facial expression, naturalness of pose, grace of line, skillful lighting, and above all else, artistic handling.... Davis’s work became the fashion, and orders and money flowed to his studio from all sides, while his novel style, both of conception and rendering, at once so unique and original, excited the profound admiration of artists and discriminating persons all over the world.” Hartmann concluded by stating that Davis had maintained the quality of his work and that other photographers should emulate him.⁴ That Davis’s clientele included beautiful entertainers, other attractive men and women, and millionaires certainly was a factor in enhancing his reputation.

But when Lange knew Davis in 1917 and early 1918, his greatest successes were behind him. She described him rather uncharitably as “a broken-down fellow who’d had a great theatrical career in photography” and who was “a fellow with a good deal of self, well, more than self-confidence, he was prideful, very prideful.” Davis, according to Lange’s recollection, wore a

⁴ Sidney Allan [Sadakichi Hartmann], “The Ideal Average—Charles H. Davis,” *Wilson’s Photographic Magazine* 43 (1906), 7–10. Hartmann frequently mentioned Davis in his numerous essays, praising his craftsmanship. Harry W. Lawton and George Knox, eds., *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre: Selected Critical Essays on Photography and Profiles of Photographic Pioneers by Sadakichi Hartmann* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 330.

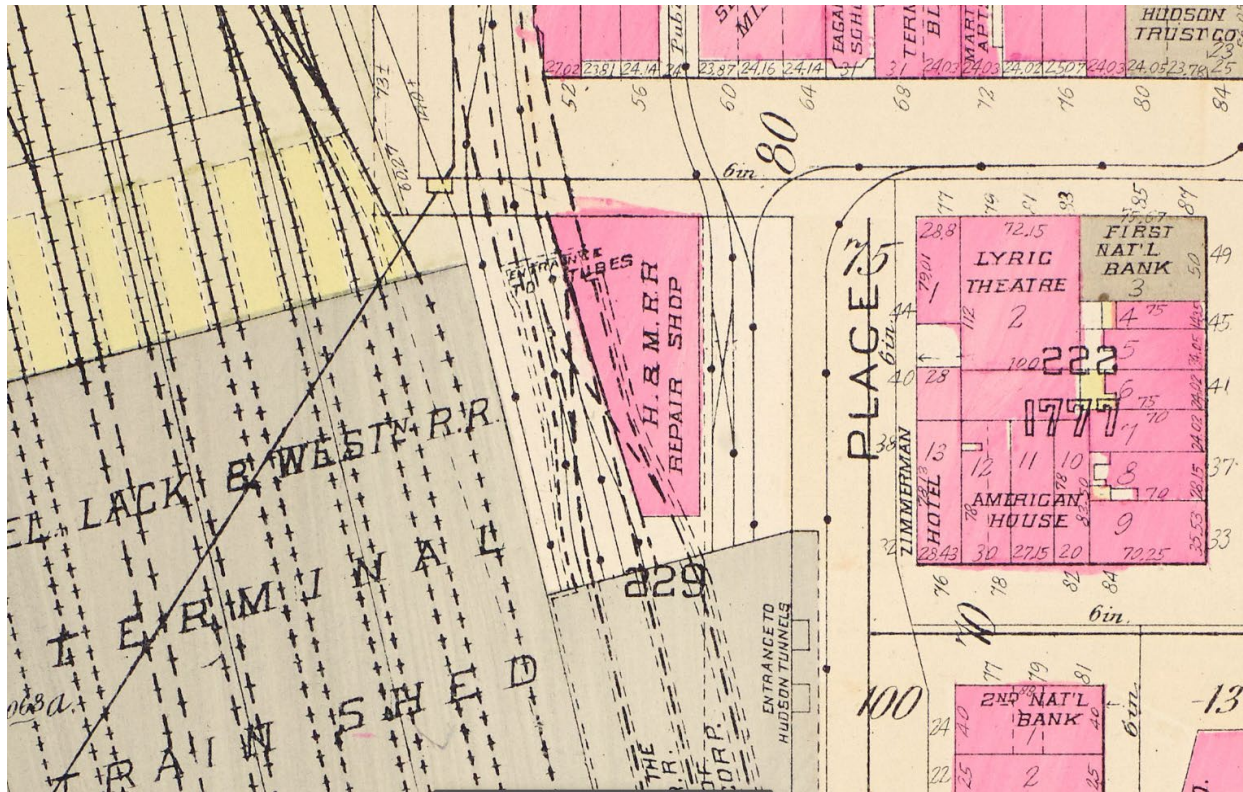
toupée “and he had neat, small feet, and a certain physical elegance about him. He wore a double-breasted gray vest,” and when one of his old customers from his heyday would come by, “he would pull himself all together.” Davis’s small feet matched his stature, for according to his passport application in 1894, he was 5 feet and 7 1/4 inches tall, had brown eyes, sandy hair, and a mustache.⁵

Lange explained that his third or fourth wife (actually his second) had sued him and took everything, “lock, stock, and barrel, and left him high and dry.”⁶ He found himself a little diggings downtown (i.e. in Hoboken), over a saloon, where I knew him. I can still remember the smell of the beer coming up through the floor.”

Actually, Davis was not as bad off as Lange, recollecting events that occurred more than forty years prior, would have had us believe. He was not broke, and his career had highlights after she knew him. In 1913 or 1914, he had sold his interest in Davis & Sanford, his sumptuous New York gallery at 246 Fifth Avenue, with an agreement that he would not do any more

⁵ Passport application, June 1894. Ancestry.com.

⁶ Some secondary sources on Davis reported he married Helen Maria Hinds in 1896, but that was another Charles Henry Davis (1865–1961), a professional engineer and business executive, and graduate, Columbia University, 1887, C.E. (Civil Engineering), who became a large donor to his alma mater and became known for his work to improve roads and promote world peace. Helen Maria was the first of his three wives. Alumni Federation Information Card and other biographical records, Columbia University Archives.



1923 Sanborn insurance map (detail), Hoboken. New Jersey State Library. Davis at 44 Hudson Place. New Jersey State Library.

photography in the metropolis and had gone off to Europe for an extended stay.⁷ In 1915, he took over the upper floors above a bar at 44 Hudson Place in Hoboken. The four-room studio, decorated with his numerous photos of celebrities such as the Goulds, the Vanderbilts, Andrew Carnegie, and Otis Skinner, was on the fourth floor and he lived below.⁸ While the location was certainly not as upscale as he had had on Fifth Avenue, Davis was conveniently located for many potential customers. He was next door to the Lyric Theatre on one side and the Zimmerman Hotel on the other and across the street from the Delaware Lackawanna & Western Railroad station, which was

⁷ Davis's obituary in the *New York Times*, May 17, 1929, 24, stated that he left Davis & Sanford in 1913, while the obit in the *Buffalo Evening News*, cited below, gave the date as 1914.

⁸ "Charles H. Davis, Photographer, Dies," *Buffalo Evening News*, May 17, 1929, 22, incorrectly states that he was at 68 Hudson Street, the location of the Variety Theatre. Davis's address is included in *Jersey Observer and Jersey Journal*, May 7, 1919, 9, and Hoboken city directories, 1918, 1922, and 1925. The building appears in Sheet 7 of the 1891 Sanborn insurance map, available at <https://static-prod.lib.princeton.edu/sc/aids/sanborn/ HUDSON/HOBOKEN.html>. This map shows the building as having five stories.

next to the Ferry Concourse, from which passengers ferried to Manhattan.⁹ According to Lange, Davis still had an assistant named Charlie who had worked for him in New York. She also recalled that when Davis entered his home, he would turn on every light, so he was not worried about his electric bill.

Lange was certainly correct that Davis took great care in posing his subjects, stating that “he would spend two hours and work with every fold,” integrating the sitter with his elaborate backgrounds, drapes, and carved furniture.¹⁰ In posing, Davis was recognized for his skill in positioning hands. In 1911, a newspaper feature on Davis commented on his expertise in this regard when it reproduced six of his portraits of women, each with flowers and each in a different pose. The accompanying text stated, “No beauties in the pictures, however, are quite comparable to the variety which the poses of the hand show. In every one of them this particular element has its value in the composition of the picture.”¹¹



Examples of good hands in portraits by Davis from *The Hands in Portraiture* (1918).

⁹ Sanborn insurance map of Hoboken, 1923, New Jersey State Library. Before 1895, the theater was called the H.R. Jacobs Theatre, which opened in 1873. By 1914, movies were screened there but vaudeville stars such as Jack Benny performed there until the 1940s.

¹⁰ Dorothea Lange oral history, 51. <https://archive.org/details/documentryphoto00langrich/page/n13/mode/2up>

¹¹ “Hands, Flowers, and Portraits as Well,” *The Sun* (New York), July 9, 1911, 2:6.

In 1918, Davis published a small book, *The Hands in Portraiture: A Clear Statement of the Principles Governing the Treatment of the Hands in Portraiture, Written by One Skilled in This Difficult Art*.¹² In his introduction, publisher John A. Tennant wrote that he suggested the book to Davis, whom he said “has been obsessed by the hands, and has given them the most careful attention in his work. His great facility in hand posing has been based upon constant study and observation of the hand in everyday life, and in the art galleries of this country and Europe, accompanied by assiduous practice in his profession.”¹³ Davis in his text advocated “an intensive course in acute observation of the hands” through practice in public spaces such as street cars and the railroad depot, as well as in the study of painting and sculpture. Naturally, the book was illustrated with “good hands” in portraits by Davis and “bad hands” in portraits by unidentified photographers. In 1919, Davis gave a lecture on hand posing at a photographers’ convention held at a Bachrach studio, illustrated with one hundred lantern slides. He began by showing hands in forty paintings, from Raphael to Murillo, and followed with sixty of his own photographs.¹⁴

As indicated by his book on hand posing, Davis was well versed in art history, but he also had an in-depth knowledge of other subjects, which must have served him well with a wide range of sitters. With a background in electrical and mechanical engineering, he had begun his career in telegraphy. Davis also was an artist, a published writer on photography, music critic, and an organist. But making photographs as an amateur became his passion in the 1880s, and he opened his Fifth Avenue portrait studio in the 1890s after he already had become celebrated for his amateur

¹² New York: Tennant and Ward, 1918. Issued as *The Photo-Miniature* 15:172 (October 1918). The generosity of Christian Peterson in sharing digital copies of pages from this book, as well as bibliographic citations about Davis, is hereby acknowledged with gratitude.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹⁴ *Jersey Observer and Jersey Journal*, May 17, 1919, 9. The article does not indicate at which Bachrach studio Davis lectured. Founded in 1868 by David Bachrach, the Bachrach firm had dozens of locations by the 1920s and is still in business as of 2024.

photography. Davis's stellar career, impacted but not terminated by his marital difficulties, merits further examination.

Davis Comes to Plainfield

According to his 1894 passport application, Davis was born on June 24, 1855, in Cortland, New York.¹⁵ Although other birth years before and after this year are found for him, 1855 is likely correct. Davis must have been born just after the 1855 New York Census was taken, as he is not included therein.¹⁶ Davis's father, P. Baron Davis, was an attorney born in Chenango County, and his mother, Elizabeth, was born in Westchester.¹⁷ The family moved to Mclean, Tomkins County, where they were recorded in the 1860 U.S. Census, but were back in Cortland by the next federal census in 1870, when Charles, 14, was listed as "in school." Although his parents moved to Groton in Tomkins County according to the 1875 voter list, by that time their son Charles had settled in Elmira, where in the 1874 city directory he and Rosewall G. Cargill were listed as Cargill & Davis, artists, at 134 W. Water Street.¹⁸ Each had other jobs: Davis worked as a telegrapher and Cargill was an organist, which is intriguing since Davis later played a big organ in his New York apartment.

¹⁵ Passport application, June 1894. Ancestry.com. The passport is consistent with June 1855 which Davis gave as his birth date in *Biographical Directory of the State of New York 1900* (NY: Biographical Directory Co., 1900), 99.

¹⁶ The New York 1855 Census listed P. Baron Davis, 39; Elizabeth, 32; and children DeForest B., 10 or 11, and James D., 6, both born in Cortland. On his grave marker, Davis's birth year is 1853, probably an error. Some of the other birth years ascribed to Davis are the result of confusion with other men with the same name. Davis also took years off his age as he got older. In the 1910 U.S. Census for Manhattan, Davis, living at 323 W. 80th Street, is recorded with age 49, when it should have been 55. At that time, he was living with his second wife, Ida (also found as Aida) L, 24, and a French butler, an Irish maid, and a Swedish cook. This census record is indexed erroneously under the surname Danis in Ancestry.com.

¹⁷ Another census return indicates that his father was born in Rhode Island and his mother in Massachusetts.

¹⁸ In the 1875 voter list, Davis's father, age 59, was listed as a farmer instead of as an attorney, his previous occupation. In the 1880 U.S. Census, Davis's parents and brother James, a house painter, were back in Mclean, living with a housekeeper, Carrie Stout, 18.

Davis became an expert telegrapher in Elmira.¹⁹ A newspaper article published forty years later mentioned him among four telegraph operators who staffed the news wire in the telegraph office in the 1870s.²⁰ In 1876, with coauthor Frank B. Rae, an electrical engineer, he wrote *Handbook of Electrical Diagrams and Connections*, which came out in a second edition in 1877.²¹ Despite its title, this book was mostly about telegraphy and contained many illustrations of equipment and wiring.

By 1878, Davis was living in Whitney Point in Broome County, New York. That year, he wrote a series of biographical articles about Thomas Alva Edison for the *Standard*, a Cortland newspaper.²² In 1880, he married Ida May Seely (1856-1907) of Elmira, described some years later as “a daughter of the late Absolom Seeley [sic], known as the pop and soda water man on East Hudson street, this city [Elmira] who was also a sister of Mrs. Raymond T. Jones, married to a wealthy lumber dealer of Buffalo.”²³ Clearly, Ida May came from an upper middle class family.

¹⁹ “Former Elmira a Faddist,” *Elmira Gazette*, July 29, 1903, page unavailable, states that he moved to Elmira in 1876 but as discussed elsewhere in this article, Davis is listed in the 1874 Elmira directory.

²⁰ *Elmira Star-Gazette*, February 18, 1918, 6. The office was located over the Bank of Chumung until March 1878 when the bank closed and the telegraph office moved to the first floor. The given name of all four operators was Charles. The others were Charles Minier, Charles Stagg, and Charles Lantry.

²¹ New York: The Graphic Company, 1876. Second edition, New York: Van Nostrand, 1877. Rae became a founding director of the Iron Telegraph Pole Company of San Francisco in 1878. *Sacramento Bee*, October 24, 1878, 3. A week later, he was described as electrician of the Pacific Division of the Western Union Telegraph Company. *Sacramento Bee*, October 30, 1878, 3. By 1883, Rae was the Superintendent of the Commercial Telegram Company in New York, according to his letter on company stationery to Thomas Alva Edison, November 23, 1883. Edison Papers, <https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/document/D8366ZAO#?xywh=-294,-12,1079,371>.

²² *Syracuse Sunday Times*, June 30, 1878, page unavailable. This source described Davis as “the accomplished telegrapher, now of Whitney’s Point.” Part 3 of the lengthy biographical articles on Edison begins in the Cortland *Standard*, June 18, 1878, 1, and is uncredited.

²³ *Elmira Star-Gazette*, February 18, 1918, 6. The 1880 marriage date is based on the 1900 U.S. Census for Manhattan, New York, which states that the Davises had been married for twenty years. They did not have children. Davis’s marriage should not be confused with that of another Elmira man with the same name, Charles Henry Davis (1850-1881) who married Belle French on March 28, 1878, at The Park Church, Elmira. This Davis was a bookkeeper, listed with Belle and a child in the 1880 U.S. Census for Elmira. Find-A-Grave.

The couple resided in Whitney Point where Davis was described as a dry goods merchant in the 1880 U.S. Census.²⁴

After a few years in Whitney Point, Davis and Ida moved to New Jersey. In 1885, he was listed in the city directory as a photographer working in New York and living in Plainfield on Ninth Street opposite First Place, at the same address as John B. Taltavall, an editor also employed in the metropolis.²⁵ Like Davis, Taltavall was very interested in telegraphy. Beginning in 1883, he published a semi-monthly journal, *Telegraph Age*, later *Telegraph and Telephone Age*. In 1893, Taltavall compiled and published a book, *Telegraphers of To-Day: Descriptive, Historical, Biographical*, which profiled many telegraphers but does not mention Charles H. Davis, who by that time was a portrait photographer.

Quite possibly, Davis worked for Taltavall in the 1880s, producing illustrations for his journal. In the *Directory of the City of Plainfield, 1887-88*,²⁶ Davis was described as an artist who worked in New York while living at 38 E. Ninth Street, a few blocks from his prior residence and very close to the current location of the Plainfield Public Library. Although his employment likely included photography, Davis considered himself an artist. Even after he opened his own portrait photography studio, he was listed that way in the 1900 U.S. Census.

Davis first came to public attention through newspaper coverage of the Plainfield Camera Club. The organizers of the club in the fall of 1887 were Davis, William Lyon Jr., and G. Harry

²⁴ In the 1880 U.S. Census, Davis is listed as 25, with parents born in New York. His wife Ida Mae was born in New York, as were her parents. Also in their household in 1880 were three women: two domestic servants, Mary Wood, 25, born NY, parents born Ireland, and Chloe Van Dyke, 55, Black, born Virginia, parents born Virginia; and De Etta Terwilliger, female, 21, dry goods clerk, born New York, parents born New York.

²⁵ *Plainfield City Directory*, 1885, courtesy, Sarah Hull, Plainfield Public Library. Davis' occupation of photographer in 1885 may seem surprising because later he stated that he became a professional in the 1890s when he established Davis and Sanford on Fifth Avenue. Likely he was referring to when he went into business as a professional.

²⁶ Page 42. https://www.digifind-it.com/IDIViewer/web/viewer.html?file=/plainfield/data/city_directories/1887.pdf

Squires, although Davis was later described as its founder.²⁷ Its constitution and by-laws were adopted in June 1888, and Oscar S. Teale was named president and Davis a member of the Executive Committee.²⁸ At a club meeting held on August 6, 1888, Davis shared photos that were awarded prizes at the national convention of professional photographers held in Minneapolis.²⁹ In early September 1888, the club held its first meeting in its new headquarters at 12 Park Avenue,

²⁷ Plainfield Daily Press, November 2, 1887, page unavailable; *Plainfield Courier*, November 22, 1892, 3, indexed in newspapers.com as *Courier-News* (Bridgewater, NJ). The latter source identified Davis as “the originator of the club.”

²⁸ *Plainfield Evening News*, June 8, 1888, 1.

²⁹ *Plainfield Evening News*, August 1, 1888, 1, indexed as *Courier-News* in Newspapers.com. This article was published before the meeting, which was held at the residence of Dr. H.H. Lowrie on Park Avenue.

equipped with an excellent darkroom. Although the main room had not been completely furnished,



Charles Henry Davis, "A Bud in the Apple Tree," *Philadelphia Photographer*, November 17, 1888.

it was "decorated with a number of beautiful photographs by noted professionals, for which the Club are indebted to C.H. Davis."³⁰

³⁰ *Plainfield Evening News*, August 31, 1888, 1.

In November 1888, *The Philadelphia Photographer*, edited and published by Flemington native Edward L. Wilson, featured Davis's photo, "A Bud in the Apple Tree," depicting a lass sitting on a thick limb in dappled sun and shade. Her head is in the top left quadrant, and her figure forms a diagonal that ends with her feet in the lower right. Her hat is pushed back, allowing soft light to illuminate her features without shadows. The girl is looking wistfully to the viewer's left, metaphorically suggesting that she is thinking about the past. Her left hand is raised, holding a mostly vertical thick branch, and her long fingers are prominently displayed. The branch bends near her head and ends in the upper right, creating another diagonal that balances the one extending from the top left to lower right. The subject's right arm is pleasantly curved downward, but unfortunately, her fingers are cut off by the limb, a compositional flaw that Davis probably rued when looking at this early effort in later years. Praising this work at length, Wilson commented that "the great charm of his picture is the thorough absence of pretension" and urged other photographers to follow Davis's example.³¹ While some photographers may have copied Davis by posing subjects outdoors, posing young women in trees did not become commonplace. As discussed below, Davis later specialized in photographing women in gardens and in their homes.

Wilson's editorial was followed by an essay by Davis, "The Elements of Beauty in a Picture." Davis explained, "the picture must possess inherent grace and repose in its composition; and, also, a certain artistic balance in its various points of interest. A proper arrangement of light and shade is equally necessary, but beyond and above all these things, if it is devoid of the indefinable something known to artists as 'feeling,' it will not rank highly as a success." He continued that while photographers "endowed with artistic tastes" have an advantage, others may get good results through "studious application and rehearsal of art principles." By taking great care

³¹ *Philadelphia Photographer* 25:334 (November 17, 1888), 1.

to assess all the lines and shapes in a composition as if it “will appear on a single plane,” the photographer will achieve success. But if after careful consideration, in a portrait for example, the camera artist cannot remove a flaw, it is better to reschedule the sitting than produce an indifferent picture. Here Davis quotes British photographer Henry Peach Robinson, who remarked, “the world is already flooded with indifferent pictures.”³² “Good enough,” wrote Davis, “never was, and never will be a winner.” Davis continued at some length with more advice and concluded with comments about “A Bud in the Apple Tree.” He had seen the branch a year before and recognized its potential. Because the sturdy limb was “at some height from the ground, it was difficult to seat and pose the model, but after patience and many trials, I was finally rewarded with the picture....”³³

Davis’s essay, with his emphasis on high-quality results, helps explain why Sadakichi Hartmann, in the article cited above, identified him as different from most other portrait photographers who were satisfied with what can charitably be called a “likeness.” Davis certainly was not the only one of his class; in the 1890s, high-end portraiture began to be offered in a minority of studios, then commonly known as “galleries,” around the United States. These professional photographers sought to distinguish their work, not only from the typical studios, but also from the growing number of amateurs taking snapshots with gelatin dry plate negatives that became popular around 1880 and hand-held roll film cameras, the first of which was the Kodak in 1888. When those who could afford it saw what results could be achieved by artists with a lens,

³² Henry Peach Robinson (1830–1901) wrote the popular photography manual, *Pictorial Effect in Photography* (1869), among other works, and was known for both the quality of his portraiture and for his genre scenes produced through photomontage techniques. Ellen Handy, et al., *Pictorial Effect, Naturalistic Vision: The Photographs and Theories of Henry Peach Robinson and Peter Henry Emerson* (Norfolk, Virginia: Chrysler Museum, 1994).

³³ *Philadelphia Photographer* 25:334 (November 17, 1888), 2. See also Davis’s comments on his techniques for posing in “Artistic Portraits,” *Chicago Tribune* (August 20, 1892), 16.

they patronized these high-end photographers who took considerable time with each sitter and charged accordingly.³⁴

Davis exhibited “A Bud in the Apple Tree” in a Plainfield Camera Club exhibit in November 1888, held at its headquarters. The local paper praised it as “a bit of perfection.”³⁵ Davis also showed many other photographs, described as “enlargements by the bromide process, resembling crayon work; blue prints and silver prints.”³⁶ There were views, exterior and interior, of the Potter mansion,” which had been completed in 1887 for Charles Potter Jr. of Potter Press Works.³⁷ In addition, “there were portraits and landscapes, posings and studies. One photographic likeness was entitled, ‘The Reverie.’ A maiden reclines in an easy chair, her thoughts gone day dreaming . . . her book is neglected; and the blossoms gathered at her waist have escaped their fastening. . . .”³⁸

Davis framed these photos using “rough pine boards, stained with black walnut and decorated with cord and splashes of gilding.”³⁹ Influenced by what later became known as the Arts and Crafts Movement, which rejected highly ornamented framing, plain wide wood framing was innovative for photographic exhibitions in 1888.⁴⁰ By the early 1900s, they were going out of

³⁴ For a Philadelphia photographer who insisted on delivering only the best and would send home sitters if he felt “a little off” during a portrait session, see author, “Elias Goldensky: Wizard of Photography,” *Pennsylvania History* 64:2 (Spring 1997), 206-272. Also available at <https://journals.psu.edu/phj/article/viewFile/25383/25152>. See also <http://saretzky.com/elias-goldensky.html>.

³⁵ *Plainfield Evening News*, November 20, 1888, 1, indexed in newspapers.com as *Courier-News* (Bridgewater). “The Reverie” is not the same photo as Davis’s “A Reverie,” depicting a child at a table, published in *Sun & Shade*, June 1894.

³⁶ Bromide prints likely would have been silver gelatin prints, blue prints were cyanotypes, and silver prints probably refers to albumen prints. Hagley Museum & Library photograph conservator Laura Wahl, telephone call with author, December 2, 2024.

³⁷ *Plainfield Evening News*, February 1, 1887, 1. Potter, inventor and manufacturer of the Potter Printing Press, built his mansion at 427 West Seventh Street in Plainfield. It is no longer standing. Email, Sarah Hull, Head of Local History, Genealogy and Special Collections, Plainfield Public Library, to author, December 2, 2024.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *Plainfield Evening News*, November 20, 1888, 1, indexed in newspapers.com as *Courier-News* (Bridgewater).

⁴⁰ Christian A. Peterson, “American Arts and Crafts: The Photograph Beautiful 1895-1915,” *History of Photography*, 16:3 (Autumn 1992), 209-211; Victoria and Albert Museum, “Arts and Crafts: An Introduction,”

fashion; in 1904, in a review of a New York photography exhibit by Philadelphia portraitist Elias Goldensky (1867–1943), Hartmann stated that he was “not an admirer of lumber exhibits.”⁴¹ Thin wood frames were then becoming preferable, as seen in views of the Little Galleries of the Photo Secession at 293 Fifth Avenue, New York (known as “291”), directed by Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946).⁴²

Davis received further favorable publicity through his inclusion in the Third Annual Joint Exhibition of Photographs of the Society of Amateur Photographers of New-York [sic], the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, and the Boston Camera Club at the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, April 8–20, 1889. Davis had joined the Society of Amateur Photographers of New-York, founded in 1884, which in 1897 merged with the New York Camera Club to form the Camera Club of New York. He was one of 155 exhibitors who collectively displayed more than 1,200 photographs.⁴³ A reviewer wrote that Davis “had an exceedingly artistic exhibit. A portrait of a laughing lady was unique and very pretty.” Photographs of people smiling at this time were quite unusual and sure to attract attention. The reviewer continued to discuss two other photographs of women and then concluded, “We have seen very little professional portrait work that could surpass these pictures. The arrangement of the exhibit was also unique and particularly

accessed December 4, 2024, https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/arts-and-crafts-an-introduction?srsId=AfmBOop8nqbidYA596T2_ZvUhXk3nzUxvImyyy5pedV1xrq2U_kMF3B5.

⁴¹ “Exhibition of Photographs by Elias Goldensky at the New York Camera Club, February 10–27, 1904,” *American Amateur Photographer* (April 1904), 146–160, passim. By 1904, the organization was named Camera Club of New York, as explained below.

⁴² See, for example, the frames behind Stieglitz at 291 in William Innes Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977), 49. The gallery began at 291 Fifth Avenue and retained the name when it moved to 293.

⁴³ “Progress of Photography; Some Fine Amateur Prints Exhibited in Philadelphia,” *New York Times*, April 18, 1889, 2. Davis represented the New York organization in this exhibit.

artistic. The frame, without glass, was made of rough, undressed pine, with rope scroll work as a decoration, a very effective application of crude materials.”⁴⁴

From May 25 to June 6, 1891, at the Fifth Avenue Galleries, 546 Fifth Avenue, the Fourth Annual Joint Exhibition of the aforementioned organizations was held and included portraits by Davis.⁴⁵ Described as perhaps the finest photographic exhibition every held in the United States, it included both domestic and foreign contributors. More than 500 frames held more than 1,200 prints, and also on view were 300 lantern slides and nine transparencies. Although, unlike Stieglitz, Davis did not win a medal, his inclusion in this exhibit was certainly an indicator of his status as an accomplished photographer.⁴⁶ Davis drew attention to his display by including forty photographs in one frame and twenty cabinet cards in another.⁴⁷ Davis also exhibited several separate pictures, including “A Good Story” of a woman spinning while a friend sat reading nearby. His “Maiden Meditation” was illustrated in the catalog.⁴⁸

Davis did win a medal for a portrait at the Society of Amateur Photographers of New-York exhibition at the American Institute, September 30 to November 28, 1891.⁴⁹ A reviewer

⁴⁴ “Philadelphia Exhibition,” *Anthony’s Photographic Bulletin* 20 (1889), 304. Regarding the same exhibition, *The Photographic Times and American Photographer* 19 (1889), 212, noted, “Charles H. Davis makes an exhibit of excellent portraits, if treated in a somewhat unusual manner.”

⁴⁵ Although he had moved to New York and joined the camera club there, Davis was still a member of the Plainfield Camera Club. *Plainfield Evening News*, May 26, 1891, 1, indexed as *Courier-News* (Bridgewater) in Newspapers.com. This article also mentions that Davis was a former resident of East Front Street in Plainfield. Camera Club of New York Records, 1889–1983, New York Public Library. <https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archivalcollections/pdf/cameraclub.pdf>. In April 1891, Davis gave an address at one of the Society of Amateur Photographers meetings, attended by forty members. *Photographic Times* 21:500 (April 17, 1891), 189; *New York Times*, April 5, 1891, 8.

⁴⁶ “The New York Exhibition,” *Photographic Times* 21:506 (June 5, 1891), 270–272. Davis was not singled out for mention in this exhibition review.

⁴⁷ The term cabinet card, a photograph mounted on cardboard about 4 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches, was introduced in the 1860s to describe a larger version of the carte de visite that began to be produced in the 1850s. John Rohrbach, ed., *Acting Out: Cabinet Cards and the Making of Modern Photography* (Fort Worth & Oakland: Amon Carter Museum of American Art/University of California Press, 2020), 14–16.

⁴⁸ *American Amateur Photographer* 3 (1891), 261, 264. Davis was mentioned more briefly in an earlier review of this exhibition in F.C. Beach, “The New York Exhibition,” *American Amateur Photographer* 3 (1891), 222.

⁴⁹ “Amateur Photography,” *New York Times*, November 22, 1891, 14. The specific photograph that won the medal was not identified in this article.

commented, “The large collection of portraits and figure studies and studies in posing, by Mr. Charles H. Davis was particularly noticeable, and exhibited a variety and attractive quality that was very pleasing. The frame was rather too conspicuous for the pictures. Much of his work was similar to that shown at the spring exhibition.”⁵⁰ That year, Davis photographed the Board of Directors of the Society at his studio in Mott Haven in the southwest section of the Bronx. The group shot and individual portraits of the directors were printed on the menu cards at the Society’s first annual dinner.⁵¹

Davis’s success in exhibitions was probably a factor in his decision to open a portrait studio in New York. In 1892, he formed a partnership with Elias Starr Sanford (1861–1917), known as E. Starr Sanford, and they opened their gallery at 246 Fifth Avenue, New York, under Davis’s direction. This partnership lasted for about ten years.

E. Starr Sanford

Before joining with Davis, Sanford was a photographer at 57 White Street in his home town of Danbury, Connecticut, where he was born to Charles Huntington Sanford (1826–1886), who became a librarian, and Mary Emmons Sanford (1836–1909).⁵² In the 1880 U.S. Census for Danbury, Sanford was listed with his parents and siblings as an 18-year-old photographer. He

⁵⁰ F.C. Beach, “The Exhibit of Photographs at the American Institute Fair,” *American Amateur Photographer* 3 (1891), 446–447; “Awards at the American Institute Society of Amateur Photographers Exhibition,” *American Amateur Photographer* 3 (1891), 503. Davis was also praised in the same year for 30 lantern slides of figures, seashore subjects, and a view of Central Park, shown at a meeting of Society members. *American Amateur Photographer* 3 (1891), 462–463.

⁵¹ Report of meeting, March 7, 1891, “Society of American Photographers of New-York,” *American Amateur Photographer* 3 (1891), 155. The author has not determined if Davis did any commercial portraiture in Mott Haven.

⁵² Two Sanford cabinet cards with his street address in Danbury, circa 1890, are at Western Connecticut State University Archives. <https://archives.library.wcsu.edu/omeka/items/show/4829>. Sanford’s birth in Danbury is mentioned in an obituary, *The Sun* (New York), July 20, 1917, 7, as well is in his listing in Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/178959559/e_starr_sanford. Find-A-Grave can be used to trace Sanford’s ancestors back to Thomas Sanford (1608–1681), who emigrated from England to America in the 1630s. The Sanfords were in Danbury by the late 1700s.

married Emma Gray in 1884, and they had one child who survived, Charles Gray Sanford (1888–1942), and another who died in childbirth. In the 1886–1887 city directory for Danbury, he was listed as the manager of Folsom’s Photographic Studio at 197 Main Street for the “proprietress,” Sarah Elizabeth Folsom.⁵³ Her husband, Joseph Henry Folsom, had directed the gallery before his death on September 10, 1883, at the age of 42.⁵⁴ At some point subsequent to working for Mrs. Folsom, Sanford started his own studio on White Street.



After joining Davis in 1892, Sanford did very well financially and built a substantial stone mansion in Danbury with panoramic views, now known as Hearthstone Castle, but most of the time the Sanford family lived closer to New York in Belle Island, Connecticut, where Davis had a summer home.⁵⁵ In 1901, Sanford “retired” from Davis & Sanford and Davis

Cabinet card, c. 1890, by E. Starr purchased his half-Sanford, Danbury, Connecticut. interest in the Western Connecticut State University. Danbury Miscellanea Collection, MS 038. WCSU Archives, 7 Mar. 2024. gallery in 1902 or Accessed on the Web: 8 Dec. 2024.

⁵³ Ad for gallery in 1887 Danbury city directory, page 98, with “Mrs. J.H. Folsom, Proprietress.” Mrs. Folsom lived at 14 Liberty. [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com).

⁵⁴ Joseph Henry Folsom was born in New York State on May 29, 1841, to Benjamin and Martha Folsom. He and Sara had a daughter, Jessie Louise Lent. Folsom had exhibited at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 according to the back of a Folsom cabinet card seen with a reproduction of a medal from the Centennial Commission. Mrs. Folsom continued to operate a gallery until at least 1896, when it was at 248 Main Street. [findagrave.com](https://www.findagrave.com); Danbury city directories, [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com).

⁵⁵ Davis in Belle Island: *Elmira Gazette and Free Press*, June 16, 1904, page unavailable. Hearthstone Castle, with three stories, sixteen rooms and eight stone fireplaces, was placed in 1987 on the National Register of Historic Places. In that year, the last owners sold it to the town of Danbury. “Hearthstone Castle, Danbury, CT,”

1903.⁵⁶ In July 1903, Sanford sold his Danbury residence and purchased a building at 257 Church Street in New Haven with space for both his studio and living quarters. In October 1903, he opened at this location in New Haven, where his son was attending the Hopkins preparatory school with hopes of matriculating at Yale.⁵⁷

In March 1904, Sanford exhibited his work at F.W. Tiernan & Co., an art store in New Haven. A very favorable review in the *Morning Journal-Courier* mentioned that Sanford had been an art student “in this country and abroad” and that this education was evident in his work, which was “a departure from the general norm.” Sanford, according to the writer, gave special attention to the hands, the disposition of draperies, and the pose. The reviewer also visited Sanford’s premises, described as “probably the finest, most artistic and most modernly and perfectly equipped studio in New England.”⁵⁸ One could not have asked for better publicity.

Sanford probably remained an active photographer until 1914.⁵⁹ That year, on his way to see his son Charles Gray Sanford in Temple, Texas, the ship on which he was traveling was struck by lightning and he received a severe shock that impaired his eyesight and caused later complications that led to his death. He died while visiting his two surviving sisters in Katonah, New York, on July 18, 1917.⁶⁰

<http://www.bedardphoto.com/abandoned/stone/hearthstone/hearthstone-castle.html>. Hearthstone Castle is on Mountainville Road, where Sanford lived by 1892. In 1886–1888, he lived closer to the commercial district at 90 Deer Hill Avenue. Danbury city directories, ancestry.com.

⁵⁶ In part, David S. Shields, “Davis and Sanford,” *Broadway Photographs*, <https://broadway.library.sc.edu/content/rudolf-eickemeyer-jr.html>.

⁵⁷ *Morning Journal-Courier* (New Haven), July 22, 1903, 8, and October 5, 1903, 7. Sanford’s first ad in this newspaper appeared on October 3, 1903, 7.

⁵⁸ March 16, 1904, 5.

⁵⁹ An undated Sanford photo was published in *Press of Atlantic City*, November 16, 1915, 6.

⁶⁰ *The Sun* (New York), July 20, 1917, 7; *New York Times*, July 20, 1917, 9; Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/178959546/emma-sanford>. Sanford’s funeral was held at the Chapel, Wooster Cemetery, in Danbury. He was survived by his wife Emma Gray Sanford (1863–1937) and son Charles Gray Sanford, who died on December 14, 1942, at the State Tuberculosis Hospital in Tom Green County, Texas, and was survived only by his wife Lydia (Lochaby) Sanford (1889–1979). Find A Grave https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/41490185/charles_gray_sanford. E. Starr Sanford had six siblings, of whom

Davis & Sanford

Davis & Sanford inaugurated their new gallery at 246 Fifth Avenue, at the corner of 28th Street, in 1892, with Davis as president. To celebrate the opening, held April 7–9, the gallery mounted an exhibition of drawings by “eminent illustrators,” loaned by a leading publisher, the Century Company. Not surprisingly, Davis & Sanford also hung samples of their own photographs, some printed on gold-toned albumen paper and others on platinum. Montclair resident W.I. Lincoln Adams (1865–1946), the prolific editor of the *Photographic Times*, expressed appreciation for the well-lit “glass-room” for camera work,

the neatly furnished parlor, and “the pretty ladies ’boudoir.” He praised the partnership’s photographs and especially liked those of women and children with fine lighting effects. Lincoln preferred the albumen prints to the platinum, also called platinotypes. Introduced in the 1850s for printing from collodion glass negatives, paper coated with albumen (egg white) produced a very appealing purplish brown color when toned with a gold chloride solution. Platinotypes, which began to be manufactured in the 1880s, could be processed in a variety of tones. Unlike albumen,



Davis & Sanford, Mary Burr Thacher, 1895.
Yarmouth Historical Society. DPLA.

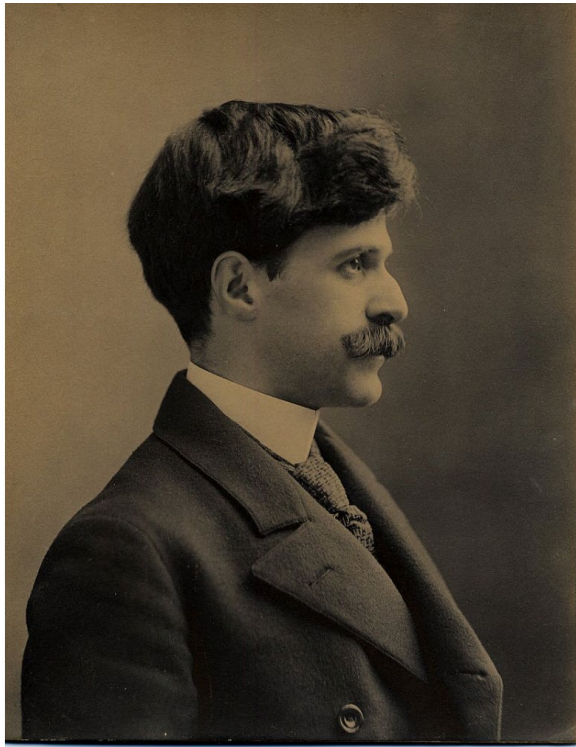
three survived him, Mary E. Sanford (1864–1938), Grace North Sanford (1866–1931) and Fred W. Sanford (1873–1918). Of the seven children of his grandparents, Charles Gray Sanford, who became a real estate dealer in San Antonio, Texas, was the only grandchild and he had no progeny.

which was glossy, platinotypes were matte and were much more stable than albumen, which lost contrast and yellowed as it aged.⁶¹

In September 1892, in order to market their services to wealthy clients, Davis & Sanford held a substantial exhibition in the show windows of J. Hersey Doane's jewelry store on Park Avenue in Plainfield. A local newspaper publicized the exhibit, noting that Davis was a member of the Plainfield Camera Club and somewhat misleadingly stated, "He and his partner have the reputation of being the finest amateur photographers in the United States...." when in fact Sanford had been a professional for at least a dozen years and Davis to some extent since 1888. It further stated that Davis had been employed as "a scenic artist, and many evidences of his skill adorn the interior of the most prominent New York theaters."⁶² If true, this helps explain what Davis had been doing for a living immediately preceding opening up the Fifth Avenue gallery.

⁶¹ *Photographic Times* 22:554 (April 29, 1892), 223; Constance McCabe, ed., *Platinum and Palladium Photographs: Technical History, Connoisseurship and Preservation* (Washington, DC: American Institute for Conservation, 2017); James F. Reilly, *The Albumen & Salted Paper Book* (Rochester, NY: Light Impressions, 1980).

⁶² *Plainfield Courier*, September 2, 1892, 3, indexed in newspaper.com as *Courier-News* (Bridgewater). Doane's is depicted in *Plainfield Illustrated 1895*, cataloged at <https://www.plainfieldlibrary.info/pdf/LH/Idx-PlainfieldIllustrated.pdf>, accessed December 7, 2024.



Davis & Sanford, Alfred Stieglitz, early 1890s.
Adirondack Experience: The Museum at Blue
Mountain Lake. P061456.

Although Davis & Sanford produced cabinet cards, many of their clients purchased mounted larger prints presented in a folder with the negative number penciled in so that the sitter could order duplicates. Below that was a rectangular box with “Davis & Sanford,” a heraldic shield with the firm’s motto, *Amat Victoria Curam* (Victory Loves Preparation), “Artist-Photographers, 246, Fifth Avenue, New York USA, By Appointment,” then another shield with a crown on top, and “HRH Eulalia.” Eulalia was Infanta Eulalia of Spain (1864–1958), the last surviving child of

Queen Isabella II of Spain and King Francisco. She visited New York in 1893 and was photographed by Davis & Sanford.⁶³ Under the box was “Miniatures on Ivory and Porcelain, Pastels, Fine Gold and Metal Frames in All Sizes Ready for Immediate Delivery, The Largest and Finest Assortment in New York.”

The firm obtained excellent publicity in 1895, when it obtained the exclusive rights to photograph the honeymoon trip of the Count and Countess de Castellane to the Hudson Valley.⁶⁴ In 1895, the quality of their work was also publicized nationally to other photographers through their study of a woman sitting in front of a burning fireplace, entitled “In the Gloaming,” which appeared as the frontispiece in the *American Annual of Photography and Photographic Times Almanac for 1895*.⁶⁵ Davis & Sanford were soon producing portraits for a variety of clients, including a young Alfred Stieglitz, portrayed in profile with a blank background.⁶⁶ More often, they included backgrounds with accessories. In his 1896 article, “Art Portraiture by Photography,” Davis recounted that after going to Europe for the previous two summers to see art, he was confirmed that his prior ideas regarding portraiture were correct. Unless a person had a face with unusual beauty or character, such as that of Stieglitz, who he does not mention, he did not favor a

⁶³ The portrait of Eulalia is available in Evangeline Holland, “Fascinating Women: Infanta Eulalia of Spain,” *Edwardian Promenade*, May 1, 2011. <https://www.edwardianpromenade.com/women/fascinating-women-infanta-eulalia-of-spain/>. Last accessed December 4, 2024.

⁶⁴ The French nobleman Boni de Castellane (1867–1932) married Anna Gould (1875–1961), the daughter of railroad magnate Jay Gould. David S. Shields, “Davis and Sanford,” *Broadway Photographs*, <https://broadway.library.sc.edu/content/davis-and-sanford.html>, accessed November 25, 2024. This source gave the year of the marriage as 1893. It was reported pending in the *New York Times* on February 28, 1895. <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1895/02/28/102449815.pdf>, accessed December 6, 2024.

⁶⁵ New York: Scovill & Adams, 1894. The same annual featured an important article on pages 27–28 by Alfred Stieglitz, “A Plea for a Photographic Art Exhibition,” in which he called for an end to the series of joint exhibitions in which Davis had participated, to be replaced with a more selective salon of art photographs without medals and prizes, in which acceptance “should be the honor.” Stieglitz then became one of the judges for the first Philadelphia Photographic Salon in 1898, held at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, in which Davis was not included. For the joint exhibitions and the shift to Salons, see Mary Panzer, *Philadelphia Naturalistic Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982).

⁶⁶ The permission by Adirondack Experience archivist Jenny Ambrose to reproduce this photo is very much appreciated by the author.

portrait of the head alone. “The body,” he wrote, “its pose, its form, and the garments, which always to a greater or less extent take on the individuality of the wearer, are of necessity important contributions to the likeness....” Pictures of heads, he averred, are not art. “More skill and knowledge are required in the arrangement of the hands alone than in the simple lighting and posing of the head, and vastly more in disposing of the gown and draperies of a lady. . . .”⁶⁷

Regarding accessories, Davis believed that they were usually necessary, if only to give an indication of the size of the person, although he noted that concessions had to be made for stout female sitters who wanted to look thinner, thin ones stouter, and tall ones shorter. He exhorted photographers who aspired to be artists to “study, study, study; observe closely, see everything, and see it before the negative is made, not afterwords. The hands must play their part, the poise of the finger its part, the lines of the drapery their part, and the *tout ensemble* must be full of grace.” In conclusion, he expressed his opinion that “the study of the beautiful is the line upon which the artist must develop, and the keener his perception of the beautiful becomes, the more he grows as an artist....”⁶⁸

A good example of the socialite portraiture of Davis & Sanford is their 1895 study of Mary Burr Thacher, the young daughter of the multimillionaire wool merchant, Henry C. Thacher.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ “Art Portraiture by Photography,” *Photo-American* 13 (February 1896), 101-102

⁶⁸ Ibid. Davis’s article is illustrated by “In the Swim,” by Bertha M. Lothrop (c. 1865–1932). This photo of a naked infant in a bowl holding a washcloth, likely chosen by the magazine’s editor, does not relate to Davis’s text. Lothrop was especially known for her candid shots of children but also did other kinds of work. She shared a studio with her father David, a photographer, in Riverton, New Jersey. At age 35, Bertha married widower Frederick W. Radell on December 6, 1905, and by 1910 the couple moved to Abington Township, Pennsylvania. She exhibited under the name Bertha Radell at the 32nd Annual Photographers Association of America Convention in Philadelphia, July 22-27, 1912.

⁶⁹ Mary Burr Thacher’s portrait by Davis & Sanford is at the Yarmouth Historical Society, available at Digital Public Library of America, <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:fx71cf08z>. *Boston Globe*, April 29, 1900, 17. Based in Boston, Henry C. Thacher (1829–1900), had a summer estate in Yarmouth that included Wayside, a private nine hole golf course, the first in Cape Cod. He and his wife had two sons and three daughters, including Mary. In 1901, Mary’s sister Caroline made national news by marrying, at age 40, her Italian music teacher, Gino Perera, age 28. *Boston Post*, June 1, 1901, 5; “Yarmouth’s Seven (Or More!) Golf Courses,” <https://www.hsoy.org/blog/2024/9/27/yarmouths-golf-courses>.

Attired in a white dress decorated with flowers, the elegantly dressed Mary sits with her body facing diagonally to her right and looks back into the lens. In her relaxed hands, she holds a large art magazine, opened to a picture. Behind her the dark top of the settee forms a lovely S-curve, and behind that is an out-of-focus painted background that is dark on the left half of the composition, just overlapping with the side of Mary's head. The lower right of the frame is filled by a large ornate vase. Mary is well integrated into a complex and tonally balanced composition with upscale accoutrements that imply her high social status.

Davis & Sanford's commitment to producing art through portraiture was emphasized in their advertising. A May 1895 ad in the *Buffalo Courier* stated, "The results achieved in Art Portraiture by Davis & Sanford, with the single exception of color, rival the works of the most renowned painters in Composition, Lighting, Pose, and Picturesqueness of general effect. Their Artist Proof Photogravure Process, which they control exclusively, their Photographs in ordinary finish and their large Carbon Portraits are unexcelled throughout the world."⁷⁰ More briefly, in the exhibit catalog for the Photographic Section at the 67th Annual Fair of the American Institute of the City of New York in 1898, one of their portraits was reproduced in the catalog with an ad that read, "Makers of Art Portraits by Photography." Their seven others were included among the hundreds of photographs by 135 photographers in this major show, in which they were invited to hang their work, listed in the catalog as "Non-competitive."⁷¹

By 1900, Davis was a member of the Camera Club of New York, and the Columbia Yacht, Colonial, Magnetic, Kit Kat, and National Arts clubs, as well as the American Society of

⁷⁰ Ad, *Buffalo Courier* (Buffalo, NY), May 8, 1895, 33.

⁷¹ *Catalogue of exhibits: the Photographical Section, American Institute, in connection with the 67th annual fair at the National Academy of Design, September 26th to October 8th, 1898* ([New York]: The Section, 1898), 15, 25. Davis & Sanford also exhibited at the Fifteenth Annual Photographers Association of America Convention Exhibition, New York, August 6–9, 1895, and the Second Annual Members' Exhibition of the Society of Amateur Photographers of New York, March 19–27, 1895.

Mechanical Engineers.⁷² He was doing very well financially and was living in a fine townhouse on the Upper West Side of Manhattan at 323 W. 80th Street. Built in 1897, this magnificent six-story Gilded Era residence is still extant. Situated on a 43x50 foot lot on the corner of Riverside Drive, Davis's home, 43x44, encompassed 11,670 square feet, with a private garage and a roof terrace with views of the Hudson River and New Jersey beyond.⁷³

⁷² *Biographical Directory of the State of New York 1900* (NY: Biographical Directory Co., 1900), 99. This source, with information no doubt provided by Davis, mentions that he was educated at the Cortland Normal School. Among others with the same name as the photographer, this directory lists Charles Henry Davis (1865–1951), the professional engineer who like the photographer was a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. That Davis is considered the father of American highways. “Chronology of the Life of Charles Henry Davis.” <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/davis2.cfm>, accessed December 4, 2024.

⁷³ Zillow real estate listing, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/323-W-80th-St-New-York-NY-10024/2107017213_zpid/, accessed October 23, 2024. The mansion was designed and built by architect Clarence Fagan True (1860-1928) in the Elizabethan Renaissance Revival Style. True, owner of the Riverside Building Co., designed many other fine residences on the Upper West Side in the 1890s and early 1900s. By the time it was up for sale for \$10 million in 2024, 323 W. 80th had been broken up into nine apartments with 31 rooms.



Davis & Sanford, "A Reverie," *Sun & Shade*, June 1894.

Davis & Sanford did genre studies, including "A Reverie" (1894), depicting a young child with both hands under his chin as he looks up from a book, and "A Young Artist" (c. 1890s), of a young girl painting thoughtfully while seated in a room strewn with pictures.

Many of their extant photos are of beautiful young women, some yet to be identified. The firm also photographed children, occasionally with parents, as in a portrait from 1892 or 1893 of attorney Austen George Fox (1849–1937) with his daughter Alice.⁷⁴ Fox sits in an ornate wooden chair with his legs crossed and Alice, in a white dress, stands next to him as they look at a book together. The background is blank, helping to focus attention on the relaxed figures. Portraits of fathers with daughters are uncommon in this era compared to mothers with a child.



During the years of their partnership, who actually took the photos at Davis & Sanford is often not clear, and it is unusual to find Davis's credit under them. In 1902, Davis purchased Sanford's interest, and although the name of the studio remained the same, Davis worked on his own for about three years until joined by a new partner.

Davis & Sanford, "Austen George Fox and daughter Alice," c. 1892–1893. Collection of the author.

⁷⁴ Author's collection. Austen George Fox graduated from Harvard Law School in 1871 and became a prominent attorney in New York, where, among other positions, he served as vice-president of the Bar Association of the City of New York in 1898 and as president of the Harvard Club in 1904–1905. His daughter Alice Fox (1885–1971) married Dr. John Carl Arpad Gerster (1881–1974), one of the founders of The American Cancer Society (originally, American Society for the Control of Cancer).



Davis photos on cover of *American Magazine Supplement of the San Francisco Examiner*, Sunday, March 15, 1903.

Five photographs of women “posed by Charles H. Davis” and credited to Davis & Sanford appeared on the cover of the *American Magazine Supplement of the San Francisco Examiner* on Sunday, March 15, 1903, headlined “The New Art Photography.” The attractive cover by artist Henry Brevoort Eddy (1872–1935) featured an arrangement of black and white photos with color graphics of flowers and two women, one of whom is drawing the shadow of a seated model lit by a candle. This publication evidences the national reputation Davis had acquired by the early 1900s.

A few months later in 1903, a visitor to Davis's townhouse came away with the impression of a well-off Renaissance man. Davis was described as living in a home filled with music, books, and pictures, a well-traveled raconteur who enjoyed sharing his hospitality. He had sold his yacht the year before and bought an automobile for \$4,000, equivalent to more than \$150,000 in 2024 U.S. dollars. While entertaining friends by playing on his organ, the sounds of automobiles on Riverside Drive could be heard through the open window and, as they passed by, Davis would identify them by their mufflers or rattles.⁷⁵

Davis's organ was in his impressive music room, which included a thirty-foot-long painting, "Spring," depicting "a long procession of dancing female figures playing on lyres and bearing offerings of flowers to their divinity. The coloring is delicate and harmonious with the soft pink of the wall hangings and the ivory and gold of the woodwork." The painting extended the whole length of the apartment, and the organ, installed at one end of the room, occupied the space from the floor to the very high ceiling. It was custom built and decorated for that space.⁷⁶

The Aeolian Company manufactured Davis's instrument in 1897 and it cost \$5,860, which is equivalent to more than \$222,600 in 2024 U.S. dollars. Although how long Davis owned it is as yet undetermined, it is quite possible that it was included in his sale of the building in 1911. The organ, known as Aeolian Op. 837, purchased in 1928 by J.E. Barbour of Paterson for \$8,875, was subsequently installed at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, R.C., in Huntington, N.Y.⁷⁷

Rudolf Eickemeyer Jr.

⁷⁵ "Former Elmiran a Faddist," *Elmira Daily Gazette and Free Press*, July 20, 1903, page unavailable.

⁷⁶ "Few Real Music Rooms," *The Sun* (New York City), February 27, 1910, 3:8. A photograph of the organ accompanies this article.

⁷⁷ "Charles Henry Davis Residence," NYC Organ Project List, <https://www.nycago.org/Organs/NYC/html/ResDavisCH.html>.

Davis's next partner was Rudolf Eickemeyer Jr. (1862–1932). A native of Yonkers, Eickemeyer began his involvement in photography as an avid amateur. During the 1890s, he exhibited internationally and won more than 100 medals.⁷⁸ Eickemeyer's highly respected work, including landscape, portraits, and genre scenes, was frequently published in photography magazines and annuals in that decade. In 1894, along with Alfred Stieglitz, Eickemeyer was one of the first two Americans admitted into The Linked Ring, the exclusive group of photographic artists based in England.⁷⁹ In the same year, he began working professionally as a portrait photographer at the Carbon Studio in New York City. In 1900, he joined the Camera Club of New York and had a one-person show there, which included a green-toned carbon print of a shipwreck off Barnegat Bay in New Jersey.⁸⁰ If not before, Davis and Eickemeyer likely would have met at this club. Also in 1900, Eickemeyer began working as Art Director for the Campbell Studio on Fifth Avenue, known for its high society portraits. There he took the now celebrated photographs of the lovely showgirl Evelyn Nesbit (1884 or 1885–1967), the lover of architect Stanford White.

⁷⁸ Turner Browne and Elaine Partnow, *MacMillan Biographical Encyclopedia of Photographic Artists and Innovators* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1983), 172-173.

⁷⁹ Margaret F. Harker, *The Linked Ring: The Secession Movement in Photography, 1892-1910* (London: Royal Photographic Society/Heinemann, 1979), 183, 186.

⁸⁰ It is likely that in the 1920s Eickemeyer sent his only print of this photo to Peter Henry Emerson in England, and no print of it is currently known. In 1933, Emerson awarded Eickemeyer a bronze medal for his pioneering pictorial photography and for this photo, but as Eickemeyer had died the prior year, it is uncertain if he was aware of the honor. Carl Fuldner, *Evolving Photography: Naturalism, Art, and Experience*, PhD. diss. (University of Chicago, December 2018), 291.



She subsequently married the wealthy Harry Kendall Thaw. The insanely jealous Thaw murdered her former paramour at the Madison Square Garden rooftop theater in 1906.⁸¹

Davis & Eickemeyer, Vera McCord, c. 1905–1908. Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.

⁸¹ Nesbit's life has been recounted in numerous publications, including her autobiographies, the first of which was *The Story of My Life* (London: John Long, [1914?]). She was also photographed by Gertrude Kasebier, whose photo, "Miss N," appeared in *Camera Work*, Volume 1, 1903. Nesbit is a prominent character in E.L Doctorow's novel, *Ragtime* (1975).

Eickemeyer was one of the first American photographers to publish monographs of his own photographs with half-tone reproductions: *Down South* (1900), *In and Out of the Nursery* (1900), *The Old Farm* (1901), and *Winter* (1903). Museum curator Keith F. Davis considered that these volumes “mark perhaps the first instance of a photographer marketing his work directly to the public in book form.”⁸² He also illustrated books by others with his landscape photographs.⁸³ In 1904, Eickemeyer won the gold medal for photography at the St. Louis World’s Fair. By the early 1900s, he was very respected in the world of photography.⁸⁴ Although Alfred Stieglitz did not invite Eickemeyer to become a member of his organization of pictorial photographers, the Photo Secession, in 1904 Eickemeyer joined the Salon Club of America, a rival group that had formed in December 1903.⁸⁵

In 1905, Eickemeyer purchased Sanford’s fifty percent interest in Davis & Sanford, and on December 7 the gallery was renamed Davis & Eickemeyer.⁸⁶ Their photographs of society women began appearing in New York newspapers in January 1906. Two more appeared in the Pictorial Section of the *New York Times* a few months later on May 20. One was of Miss Landon Rives with her dog. She was the sister of the American novelist, Princess Amélie Rives Troubetskoy.⁸⁷ Davis & Eickemeyer also continued the Davis & Sanford tradition of photographing Broadway

⁸² Keith F. Davis, *An American Century of Photography: From Dry-Plate to Digital. The Hallmark Photographic Collection. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged* (Kansas City, Missouri: Hallmark Cards, 1999), 32.

⁸³ Hamilton Wright Mabie, *Nature and Culture* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1904); Stanton Davis Kirkham, *In the Open: Intimate Studies and Appreciation of Nature* (San Francisco & New York: Paul Elder & Co., 1908).

⁸⁴ Mary Panzer, *In My Studio: Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. and the Art of the Camera, 1885–1930* (Yonkers, NY: Hudson River Museum, 1986).

⁸⁵ Gillian Barrie Greenhill (later Hannum), *The Outsiders: The Salon Club of America and the Popularization of Pictorial Photography*, PhD. diss. (Pennsylvania State University, May 1986), 23–24, 31–32, 140–141.

⁸⁶ “Davis & Eickemeyer,” *Yonkers Statesman*, September 23, 1905, 5.

⁸⁷ Several other photos on the same page were credited to the studio of one of their chief competitors in the high-end portrait market, Aimé Dupont at 574 Fifth Avenue. This Belgian-born sculptor and photographer had died in 1900 and his widow, Etta Greer Dupont, became the photographer at this gallery, which retained her husband’s name, for the next twenty years. “Aime [sic] Dupont,” *Broadway Photographs*, <https://broadway.library.sc.edu/node/736.html>.

celebrities, including Vera McCord (1877–1949), who later wrote, directed and produced the silent film, *The Good-Bad Wife* (1921).

After almost four years, Eickemeyer left Davis in 1909 and rejoined the Campbell Studio.⁸⁸ The name of the firm reverted to Davis & Sanford and continued under that designation until 1933, well after Davis had sold his interest in 1913 or 1914. Thus, photographs with the Davis & Sanford imprint are likely by Davis alone if dated to when he was *without* a partner in the two periods 1902 to 1905 and 1909 to 1913 or 1914.⁸⁹ Published photographs by Davis in the latter period include six of girls in “Photographs of Children in Natural Unstudied Poses,” published in *The Sun* in

⁸⁸ In 1909, Eickemeyer accepted Campbell’s offer to operate a new gallery in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Alfred S. Campbell (1840–1912), an Elizabeth, New Jersey, resident, had several successful photography-related businesses, including but not limited to printing tobacco card photos and stereographic views for mass distribution. His New York portrait studio, managed by others, specialized in theatrical personalities. Campbell was more of an inventor and entrepreneur than a photographer. David S. Shields, “Studios, Campbell,” Broadway Photographs, <https://broadway.library.sc.edu/content/studios-campbell.html>. Panzer, 98–99, gives the date of Eickemeyer’s departure from Davis & Eickemeyer as 1911, but more recently, Shields reported the date as 1909 in “Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr.,” Broadway Photographs, <https://broadway.library.sc.edu/content/rudolf-eickemeyer-jr.html>. Certainly, the gallery was under the name Davis & Sanford when a photo of two girls was credited, “Photo by Charles H. Davis, Davis & Sanford,” in “Pictures of Childhood,” *New York Sun*, August 14, 1910, 2.

⁸⁹ Like many other successful photographers, Davis had various assistants like the aforementioned “Charlie” working for him who might have handled some routine portrait sessions, although Davis probably would have approved any work they did before it was given to the customer.

1911. The accompanying article noted that “there is in none of these pictures the slightest suggestion that the subject has been posed. All are delightfully free from self-consciousness.”⁹⁰

Davis also continued to portray numerous theatrical performers such as Elda Furry (1885–1966),



Davis & Sanford, Elda Furry in profile, 1911, University of Washington Libraries. DPLA.

who became the famed gossip columnist under the pseudonym Hedda Hopper.⁹¹

⁹⁰ *The Sun*, April 16, 1911, 2:6.

⁹¹ Several 1911 photos by Davis of Elda Furry are at the University of Washington Libraries, available online via Digital Public Library of America.

Davis also photographed prominent men, such as Andrew Carnegie, on more than one occasion. Another client of Davis & Sanford was Carnegie's wife, Louise.⁹²



Left, Davis & Sanford, Andrew Carnegie, c. 1905. Library of Congress, 96515657. Right, Davis & Sanford, Louise W. (Mrs. Andrew) Carnegie, no date, Carnegie Mellon University. DPLA.

The Marital Troubles of Charles Henry Davis

⁹² Not illustrated here is another of Carnegie held by the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, dated 1908 [sic] during the years of Davis & Eickemeyer, although credited to Davis & Sanford. Digital Public Library of America.

The unfortunate ending to Davis's second marriage is relevant to his career, as it probably led to his relocation to Hoboken. As mentioned above, Davis married Ida May Seely in 1880, and although they did not have children, there is no indication in the press that their union was problematic. Ida died at home in New York City following a short bout of pneumonia on March 4, 1907. Following an at-home funeral, her body was brought to her mother's residence in Elmira, where a prayer service was held, and she was interred the following day at Woodlawn Cemetery.⁹³

A little more than a year later, on May 18, 1908, Davis married a wealthy 22-year-old, Ida L. Thomas, who used the given name Aida, after a one-month courtship.⁹⁴ The ceremony was held at All Angels' Church, an Upper West Side Episcopal edifice on W. 80th Street, a block away from where Davis had his substantial home near the corner of Riverside Drive at 323 W. 80th.⁹⁵ Described as pretty, "a linguist, a pianist of note and interested in the occult," she likely posed for the 53-year-old Davis after her arrival in New York from abroad in April of that year. She had visited Europe at length and, six months after their marriage, she returned there for several months to continue "her study of music and her research into the secrets of the weird cults in which she took a great interest."⁹⁶ Upon her return, they lived at Davis's home attended by three live-in servants.⁹⁷

⁹³ *Elmira Gazette*, March 4 and 5, 1907, pages unavailable.

⁹⁴ New York City Vital Records, Marriages, Certificate Number 9165.

<http://nyc.gov/html/vitalrecords/marriage.shtml>, accessed January 26, 2012. Although the press stated that she was from Nashville, in the 1900 U.S. Census, Ida, thirteen, was living with her father Eli Thomas, her stepmother Annie, and four siblings on a farm in rural Jones Cove, Tennessee, between Knoxville and Asheville. *Note bene*: The marriage of Charles H. Davis to Helen M. Hinds in Manhattan, November 19, 1896, Certificate 18739, pertains to another Charles H. Davis, one of a number of men with the same name.

⁹⁵ The building on the corner next to Davis's is 80 Riverside Drive. Davis was listed consistently in New York City directories at 323 but when he sold the townhouse in 1911, the *New York Times* stated erroneously that it was at 823 on the northeast corner of Riverside Drive. "Buyers for Private Dwellings," *New York Times*, July 29, 1911, 12.

⁹⁶ "Decree for Mrs. Davis," *New York Tribune*, November 12, 1912, 5.

⁹⁷ According to the U.S. Census, the servants were Jules Carns, 27, from France; Rose Dolan, 23, from England; and Matilda Peterson, 68, from Sweden. Davis was listed as 49 years old, reducing his real age, which was 55. Ida L. Davis was 24, born in Tennessee. In the 1900 U.S. Census, Davis reported his age correctly as 44.

The couple separated in September 1910. Aida, reportedly suspicious that “Charley” was not always faithful, asked a former business associate of Davis, Frederick C. Alden, who worked for the city water department, to let her know if he saw her husband “do anything wrong.” On December 11, 1911, Alden and a friend, Jack Degnam, a New York Central Railroad official, were dining at the Hotel Belmont and saw Davis enter, carrying a small suitcase and, accompanied by a blonde, check in as “Charles H. Meyer and wife, Albany.” Apparently, the pair were not satisfied with the room, emerged shortly, and traversed across the street to the Grand Union Hotel, followed by Alden and Degnam. There Davis registered as “Charles H. Brown and wife” and stayed for at least 1.5 hours after which time Alden and Degnam departed the lobby.

Aida L. Davis immediately filed for divorce and the matter was tried by referee Manfred W. Ehrich, who recommended a divorce decree, but New York Supreme Court Justice Alfred R. Page refused to grant it and ordered that the testimony be given again. Possibly the judge was suspicious that the evidence was staged since at that time adultery was the only basis for divorce in New York.⁹⁸ Before the new hearings, Aida’s attorney, Welton C. Percy, appealed to the Appellate Division, which reversed Page’s decision and ordered the divorce on October 25, 1912, ten months after Aida began the proceedings. When the final decision was reached, Davis was in London and Aida in Paris.⁹⁹ Davis had already sold his home on W. 80th Street in July 1911.¹⁰⁰ How much of his assets Davis turned over to his ex-wife has not been determined, but clearly, he

⁹⁸ Di Long, “Divorce in New York from 1850s to 1920s,” MA Thesis, University of Georgia, 1913. https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/long_di_201312_ma.pdf, accessed December 10, 2024.

⁹⁹ *New York Times*, October 26, 1912, 19; *Evening World* (New York City), November 9, 1912, 2; *New York American*, November 10, 1912, 36; *New York Tribune*, November 12, 1912, 5; “Former Tennessee Belle Divorced: Wins New York Suit on Appeal,” *Weekly Times-Democrat* (New Orleans), November 15, 1912, 17.

¹⁰⁰ “Buyers for Private Dwellings,” *New York Times*, July 29, 1911, 12. The buyer was Dr. H. Everett Russell, a pediatrician. The home was described as a “five-story American basement dwelling.” A recent photo indicates that there were four floors above the street level.

had enough left to establish a new home and studio in Hoboken, where he joined the Elysian Camera Club.¹⁰¹

Charles Henry Davis in Hoboken

Dorothea Lange did not mention that, by 1918, Davis was well known in Hoboken and beyond for home portraiture. As explained by Christian Peterson, one of the few recent authors who has mentioned this photographer, “Davis exemplified the professional photographer who by the 1920s had branched out into home portraiture.”¹⁰² Endeavoring to provide home services when he had a fourth story walkup studio made financial sense, but the practice was not foreign to Davis since he had done outdoor portraits such as “A Bud in the Apple Tree” in the 1880s, anticipating the growing popularity of home portraiture in the following decade. In the May 1918 issue of *The Camera*, a magazine for amateur photographers, Davis published an article, “Home Portraiture,” accompanied by fifteen photographs of women. According to Davis, the home portrait should be

¹⁰¹ Davis’s membership in the Elysian Camera Club, founded in 1902, is mentioned in “Exhibit at Elysian Camera Club’s Rooms,” *Jersey Observer and Jersey Journal*, November 9, 1922, 6, on the occasion of his exhibition, November 11–30, 1922, at the Club, located at 307 Washington Street, Hoboken.

¹⁰² Christian Peterson, “Home Portraiture,” *History of Photography* 35:4 (2011), 379. This article reproduced an untitled 1921 Davis photo of a woman in a garden on page 380.

“devoid of artificiality of every kind, which means all sorts of unnatural and unusual effects, artificial lightings, [and] ‘put in backgrounds’” and without

“falsity and foolishness.”¹⁰³



Charles Henry Davis, “A Family Group,” *The Camera*, May 1918.

Davis explained that he used an 8x10 camera for at-home portraits, in part because it encouraged customers to order larger prints resulting in a higher profit. After a lengthy digression lamenting how some of his customers had taken his prints to other photographers for copying, Davis continued with details on his technique. For indoor work, he did not usually use a reflector, which many photographers still employ to illuminate a backlit subject sitting by a window,

nor did he find it necessary to augment the illumination with electric light. Rather, he carefully selected a location that provided suitable lighting and background. Sometimes he placed subjects near mirrors so that both sides of the face were visible. Two of the accompanying portraits depict women reading a book or magazine. Regarding backgrounds, Davis occasionally would move distracting objects or furniture or hide them with a screen found in the household, but he criticized other photographers who brought black cloths to obliterate all the “familiar and generally loved objects in the home.” Nor did he resort to replacing backgrounds through retouching negatives, a practice he characterized as “sinful.” Davis waxed wroth about photographers, some on Fifth

¹⁰³ *The Camera* 22:5 (May 1918), 237. The text is on pages 234, 237, 238, and 241. The illustrations are on the cover and unnumbered pages. Available via Google Books at https://books.google.com/books?id=iLUaAQAAMAAJ&newbks=0&printsec=frontcover&pg=PA225&dq=the+camera+may+1918&hl=en&source=newbks_fb#v=onepage&q=the+camera+may+1918&f=false.

Avenue, who added “dreadful” landscapes, columns, and other artificial backgrounds to their photos after a sitting.¹⁰⁴

Davis devoted the second half of this article primarily to comments regarding his illustrations, some of which were made outdoors. He explained, “For young children or nervous people I believe in working out-of-doors” for the unstated reason that his exposure times would be shorter, stopping any movement and preventing blur.¹⁰⁵ One example is “A Family Group,” in which a mother sits outside holding an infant with two little girls nearby, one standing on a bench that raises her above the others. The figures, dressed in light clothing, are arranged in a triangle and stand out from the dark background of the garden. While photographing *en plein air*, Davis preferred overcast days to avoid strong shadows on the faces. In other pictures, some women stand near a door while others are depicted in a garden, alone or with another woman. A few carry flowers or a basket of greens.

Most of the photos accompanying this piece are of unidentified women, likely either middle class married homemakers or unmarried girls. The illustrations do include a portrait of the poet Amelia Josephine Burr (1878–1968), sitting at her desk with her hands clearly in view, and another a close-up of silent film star Alice Joyce (1890–1955), known as “The Madonna of the Screen,” which Davis had made much earlier in his New York studio, provided to show that he could achieve similar lighting in his at-home portraiture.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 238.



Charles Henry Davis. Left. "Miss Amelia Josephine Burr," Right. Miss Alice Joyce. *The Camera*, May 1918.

Davis averred that his “clientele prefers this kind of work” and concluded with an exhortation that photographers act as artists and aspire to creating work that adds beauty to the world. Even while acknowledging that professional photographers need to produce work in order to live, “it is the part of wisdom to try to elevate and improve one’s product and not degrade it.”¹⁰⁶



Charles Henry Davis, “Miss B,” *The Camera*, January 1920. 24.

For Davis, the women he portrayed were not just customers but models whom he used to create photographic art.

Davis’s major feature in *The Camera* in 1918 was not his last. The January 1920 issue of the magazine carried twelve of his recent photos, all of the same young woman, “Miss B,” in a remarkable display of the photographer’s versatility in working with one subject. The young woman is seen indoors and out and is smiling in some of the photos, including several

with her collie.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 241.

In an accompanying uncredited article, the writer, likely the editor Frank V. Chambers (1861–1940), commented, “He gets novelty and variety in his presentation by the exercise of artistic taste and judgment, by skillful arrangement and disposition of accessories and adaptations of pose to surroundings. . . while the likeness is in every case preserved . . . the



OTIS SKINNER AS
"COL. PHILIP BRIDAU"

CHARLES H. DAVIS

From the One Man Show at The Camera Club, New York.

Charles Henry Davis, "Otis Skinner as 'Col. Philip Bridau.'" *The Camera*, January 1922.

expression is varied, bringing out the individuality and accentuating the mood and temperament of the person with a lifelike variety." He continued, "There is nothing in the least bizarre or sensational, but a quiet reserve and naturalness which is delightful to contemplate." Chambers was clearly a fan of Davis. He concluded by noting that Davis had recently "received high honors at the last Royal Photographic Society (RPS) exhibition, and was elected a member of the Society."¹⁰⁷ In the August issue, Chambers published Davis's "The Mirror," depicting a smiling young woman looking in a full-length mirror, from the 1919 RPS exhibition, as

well as eight others.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ *The Camera* 24:1 (January 1920), 21. The Sixty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society was held October 13–November 29, 1919, in Bath, England. Davis also exhibited in the Sixty-Fifth Annual, September 20–October 30, 1920. Other group exhibits including Davis after his move to Hoboken included the Fourth Annual Pittsburgh Salon of Photography, March 1–31, 1917; International Exhibition of the London Salon of Photography, September 13–October 11, 1919; XXIIIe Salon International D'Art Photographique, October 6–21, 1928, Paris, France; and Andra Internationella Fotografiska Salongen, October 19 - ?, 1928, Stockholm, Sweden. Photography Database, <https://photographydatabase.org/>.

¹⁰⁸ Davis also had three photos published in the July 1920 issue of *The Camera*, including "The Inquisition" of two women conversing outdoors, that was hung in the Twelfth Annual Scottish National Photographic Salon in Glasgow, December 20, 1919–January 24, 1920. Two more Davis photos appeared in the November issue that year.

Sixteen more photos by Davis from his one-man show in October 1921 at the Camera Club of New York were published in *The Camera* in January 1922. Fifteen were of women and one portrayed actor Otis Skinner, made up for his role as Colonel Philip Bridau, a character in Honoré de Balzac's *The Black Sheep*. The photos of women included portraits, including several with mirrors, and dancers similar in style to those in Arnold Genthe's *The Book of the Dance* (1916), featuring Isadora Duncan and others who performed in loose-fitting outfits or none at all. Although Davis did not include any nude dancers, the subject of his "La Dance Russe" wore an almost completely transparent white veil that clearly revealed her figure. Quite different from the others reproduced in the magazine was "Trees," depicting a moody landscape with the small figure of a woman next to a towering tree with a seacoast in the distance, accompanied by a quote from New Brunswick native Joyce Kilmer's poem, "Trees" (1913).¹⁰⁹ Note that all *The Camera* magazine reproductions were in black and white while most of these original prints were sepia toned.¹¹⁰

Davis's exhibited photography fell within the parameters of Pictorialism, as exemplified by the Pictorial Photographers of America, the organization founded in 1916 by Clarence H.

¹⁰⁹ *The Camera* 26:1 (January 1922), 13; *American Photography* 15:12 (1921), 668. Other exhibitors at the Camera Club of New York at this time included Nickolas Muray (1892–1965), whose "Glee" of a nude dancer was reproduced in *American Photography* 15:12 (December 1921), 665.

¹¹⁰ Some of the prints reproduced in *The Camera* are in the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Digital copies of sixteen RPS prints available through Getty Images are almost all in sepia tone.

https://www.gettyimages.com/search/2/image?family=creative_editorial&phrase=charles%20henry%20davis



"TREES"

CHARLES H. DAVIS

"A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair."—JOYCE KILMER.

From the One Man Show at The Camera Club, New York.

Charles Henry Davis, "Trees," *The Camera*, January 1922.

White. Davis exhibited with this group at its annual show in 1921.¹¹¹ Pictorialism, initially described as "pictorial photography," was defined by Alfred Horsely Hinton in his book, *Practical Pictorial Photography* in 1898, as "personal and individual expression" rather than merely an imitative visual record.¹¹²

Such art-motivated work became popular among amateur photographers in the 1890s. They preferred pleasant subjects such as portraits of attractive youth, well-weathered old faces, and landscapes. Some, but not all, preferred soft focus. They avoided images that brought to mind social problems like child labor, poverty, and slums.

In printing, many preferred to avoid glossy albumen or gelatin prints. Like most other of his Pictorialist contemporaries, Davis sometimes used titles for his photographs that would seem very old fashioned a century later. In these works, Davis wanted the viewer to look beyond the literal description of the depicted woman's features and tell a story. Examples from *The Camera* between 1918 and 1922 included "An Ingenué," "Enchantment," "The Line of Beauty," and "The Passing Glance." A young girl outdoors holding a vase became "Wild Flowers" and a young lady looking at a picture magazine illustrated "The Quiet Hour." Another, "Beware!," featured a woman leaning

¹¹¹ Pictorial Photographers of America exhibition, New York, October 31–November 30, 1921. Davis's work was not included in Arthur Wesley Dow, et al., *Pictorial Photography in America 1921* (New York: Pictorial Photographers of America, 1921), published with some of the exhibited photographs. Photography Database, <https://photographydatabase.org/>.

¹¹² Anne McCauley, *Clarence H. White and His World: The Art & Craft of Photography, 1895–1925* (New Haven & London: Princeton University Art Museum/Yale University Press, 2017), 14.

against a mirror and smiling seductively. He entitled three of his photographs of two women conversing outdoors as “Gossip,” “Other People’s Affairs,” and “The Inquisition.” But for some of his published portraits of young women he gave simply their first names, such as Dorothy, Elinor, Maury, Ruth, and Virginia B.

Except for Otis Skinner in character, men barely make an appearance in these exhibition prints, except in “The Day is Done,” in which a couple is seen from the back in a landscape, with the man’s arm protectively around the woman’s shoulder, while the presence of a man is just implied in “The Toreador Passes,” in which a woman looks out a window. While Davis was publishing these photographs, young Modernists like Charles Sheeler (1883–1965) and Paul

Strand (1890–1976) were showing work that was often untitled except for location or name of object.

By 1920, Davis’s exhibited oeuvre was still in an earlier style that he had helped pioneer in the 1880s. Perhaps that is why Lange thought his work was “dreadful.”

By 1921, Davis’s finished professional photographs were presented in a folder, 11 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches, on which was printed, “A Photograph by Charles Henry Davis, Specialist in Portraits Made in Homes and Gardens.” In one example, a bride named Irma sits by



“OTHER PEOPLE’S AFFAIRS”

CHARLES H. DAVIS

From the One Man Show at The Camera Club, New York.

Charles Henry Davis, “Other People’s Affairs,” *The Camera*, January 1922, 4.

a window holding a bouquet. Irma is posed in profile looking to her right with her shoulders angled slightly

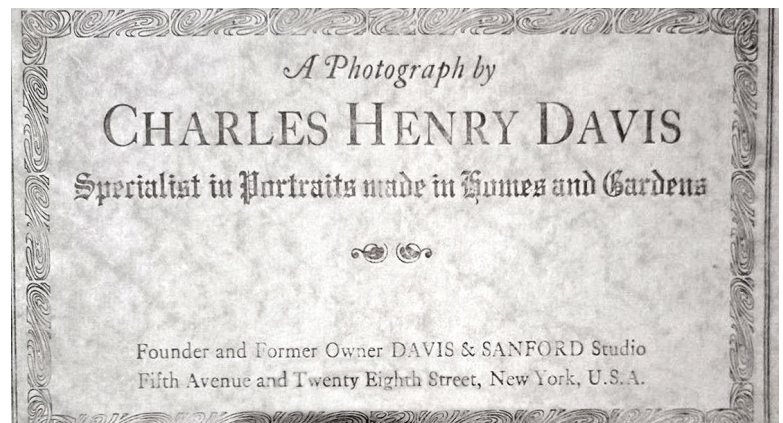
and the lower half of her torso facing the camera. Her white wedding dress and veil merge

with the white curtains so that there is a soft glow about her figure. Her white, gauzy floor-length train angles off to the lower right, forming a diagonal that complements the diagonal of the upholstered window ledge on the left, with both diagonals leading upwards to the figure of the bride. Davis initialed and dated this photo 1921.¹¹³

¹¹³ The photo is inscribed “With love to cousin Ines.” Author’s collection. Other than postmortem photos and those taken by itinerant photographers, at home portraits by professional photographers were uncommon before the 1890s, when the practice was popularized by Mathilde Weil (1872–1942) of Philadelphia, among others. Gillian Greenhill Hannum, “Philadelphia’s Forgotten Plein-Air Portraitist: Mathilde Weil,” *Nineteenth Century* 3:1 (Spring 2015), 3-12. <https://victoriansociety.org/upload/NC-35-1.pdf>.



Charles Henry Davis, Bride named Irma, 1921.
Silver gelatin print. Label from folder. Collection
of the author.



Although Davis was specializing in at-home portraiture, he likely also did some in his studio. In 1928, his portrait of John A. Tennant (1868–1957), a close-up of his head and shoulders with a blank background, likely was done in the studio as it is perfectly lit.¹¹⁴ In Davis’s masterful portrait, Tennant’s body is turned 45 degrees away from the camera, and his head is turned back with his eyes looking just off camera to the viewer’s right. His face and leading shoulder are in focus and the back of his head out of focus, resulting in an intimate portrait. Davis knew Tennant well and included his friend in his last will and testament.¹¹⁵ Tennant had featured Davis’s individual portraits of operatic soprano Mary Garden (1874–1967) and four other young women as editor of the *American Annual of Photography 1909* (See page 147), published by Tennant & Ward in 1908, as well as one by Davis in the 1908 and two in the 1910 *Annual*.¹¹⁶ Tennant also published a monthly, *The Photo-Miniature*, from 1899 to 1935. Each issue comprised a small book on a different theme, and one of them was Davis’s *The Hand in Portraiture* in 1918.

Davis’s portrait of Tennant (page 148) is one of his last known photographs. In April 1929, he had an operation for gallstones. Although he seemed to be recovering well, a few weeks later his heart failed, and he died on May 16 at French Hospital in Manhattan.¹¹⁷ His funeral was held at the prestigious Campbell’s Funeral Parlors and Davis was interred near his first wife Ida May Davis at Woodlawn Cemetery in Elmira. Although obituaries stated his age as 67, he was actually 73 years old according to his death certificate. *The Jersey Observer*, describing Davis generously

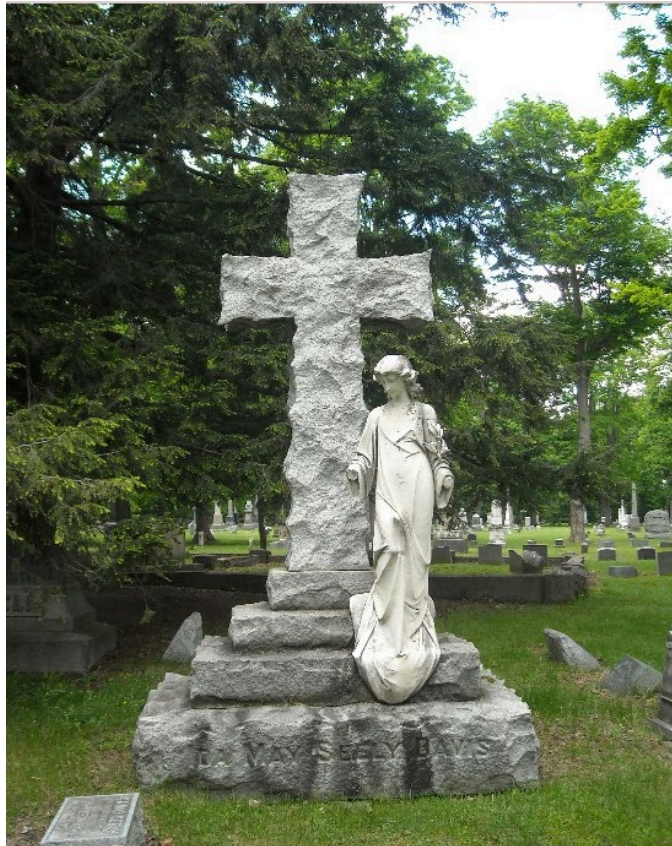
¹¹⁴ A print of this photograph is at the George Eastman Museum.

¹¹⁵ “Hudson County Surrogate’s Court, in the Matter of the Estate of Charles Henry Davis,” New Jersey State Archives, I 21696.

¹¹⁶ For the portrait of Mary Garden, Davis is credited personally as “of Davis & Eickemeyer.” The print is initialed CHD and dated 1908 under the image. Davis is not listed in the index to the illustrations in the 1910 *Annual*. His works follow pages 44 and 152. Two Davis photos also were published in the 1912 *Annual* for which the editor was Percy Y. Howe.

¹¹⁷ New York Municipal Records, Death Record, May 16, 1929, age 73, Certificate 13920.

as “one of the most famous photographers of all time,” recalled that his last studio was in the



Ida May Seely Davis funerary monument, Woodlawn Cemetery, Elmira. Charles Henry Davis is interred nearby. Find-A-Grave.

Terminal Building at 68 Hudson Street, where he had four small rooms “almost hidden by portraits of such men as Andrew Carnegie, [pianist and composer Ignacy Jan] Paderewski, members of the Vanderbilt and Gould families, Virginia Beardsley, noted New York dancer, and others too numerous for mention.” The *New York Times* recalled that he had also been an assistant music critic for the *New York Post*.¹¹⁸

Davis’s estate was appraised at about \$24,000, equivalent to approximately \$443,000 in 2024 dollars. While most of his assets were in bank deposits and stock, he had an Oakland coupe automobile valued at \$50, photographic equipment worth \$853, and furniture and personal effects

appraised for \$1,506.¹¹⁹ His will of January 17, 1929, was prepared at the office of attorney John

¹¹⁸ *Jersey Observer* (Hoboken), May 17, 1929, page unavailable; *New York Times*, May 17, 1929, 24; *Buffalo Evening News*, May 17, 1929, 22. The inventory of Davis’s estate included photographic equipment “at studio at 70 Hudson Street.” “Hudson County Surrogate’s Court, in the Matter of the Estate of Charles Henry Davis,” New Jersey State Archives, I 21696.

¹¹⁹ The Oakland Motor Car Company began in Oakland County, Michigan, in 1907 and was acquired by General Motors in 1909. GM produced several Oakland models, including the Touring Car, Sedan, and the smaller two-passenger Coupe. “Oakland Motor Car Company,” <https://www.classic.com/m/oakland/>, accessed November 27, 2024.

A. Tennant, the same friend who had published his photos in annuals and magazines, and *The Hand in Portraiture*.¹²⁰

Davis had more than a dozen beneficiaries, and he went into considerable detail about bequests. Two single women, each described as a “dear friend,” were major beneficiaries. To Miss Gianna Elizabeth Hedrick, of Alderson, West Virginia, he left \$3,000, his automobile and accessories, his Royal typewriter with desk, and a wardrobe trunk. Miss Olive Schreiner of Albany, New York, got \$1,000, his books on music and sheet music with a revolving bookcase, and his gilded piano bench. He bequeathed \$500 to his brother James D. Davis of McLean, New York, and the same sum to his nephew Harry Snell Davis of Detroit. Regarding his other nephews, Davis left Charles Davis Jones of Buffalo his furniture, silverware, china, glassware and other household items not specifically bequeathed to others. To his nephew Glenmore W. Davis of Detroit, he forgave his debt and “nothing else, because of his failure to show any evidence of gratitude.” Another nephew, Raymond T. Jones, Jr. of Buffalo, received Davis’s silk rug, 9 x12 feet, from his studio. In other small bequests, Davis left his largest pair of binoculars to Major H. Morton Jones of Tonawanda, New York; his ornamented library table and three chairs to Frank Hall of New York City; and \$300 to Nora (Mrs. E.O.) Smith of Grand Concourse, New York City.¹²¹ To his “old friend and associate” “Tom” Alfred B. Tweedale of Hoboken he left most of the contents of his studio, including his 8x10 portrait camera with accessories, darkroom equipment, most of his negatives, sample photos, and other items. John Vigue of Flushing, New York, received several smaller cameras with accessories, and Davis’s personal clothing at his studio. Davis bequeathed a

¹²⁰ “Hudson County Surrogate’s Court, in the Matter of the Estate of Charles Henry Davis,” New Jersey State Archives, I 21696. Davis’s executor was The American Exchange Irving Trust Company, New York. More than 80% of Davis’s net worth was in 275 shares of Irving Trust Company capital stock.

¹²¹ Major Jones may have been related to Davis’s nephew Raymond Jones. The 1920 U.S. Census for the Bronx lists Nora Smith, 37, with her husband, E. Osborn Smith, 56, real estate, and mother-in-law Emily C. Smith, 72.

long list of items to John A. Tennant, including but not limited to a Graber photograph and type printing machine; a printing press with type and other accessories; a safe; another trunk filled with silverware, etc.; his books other than on music; his 6 x 13 Gaumont stereoscopic camera with lenses and accessories, along with stereoscopes, stereoscopic negatives and positives; a motion picture camera with lens and accessories; and a Victrola record player with his record collection. The remainder of his estate, after bequests, he left to the aforementioned nephew Charles Davis Jones.¹²²

Charles Henry Davis in Retrospect

Davis was but one of many photographers in his era regularly published in photography magazines and annuals in his day but whose names are largely forgotten. In Davis's case, the name of the firm he founded, Davis & Sanford, continues to exist and is well known for its line of tripods. Currently, Davis & Sanford is a brand of the Tiffen company.¹²³ Yet most of those familiar today with Davis & Sanford tripods have no idea that Davis and Sanford were photographers, not equipment manufacturers.

In the 1890s, Davis developed a national reputation through photography magazines, photography annuals, and newspapers that reproduced his work. After his move to Hoboken, his coverage in the press declined, but during the last phase of his career he exhibited internationally and his photos were reproduced and widely distributed in *The Camera* magazine.

¹²² "Hudson County Surrogate's Court, in the Matter of the Estate of Charles Henry Davis," New Jersey State Archives, I 21696.

¹²³ After going out of business in the 1920s, Davis & Sanford was re-established as a tripod manufacturer in 1930 and eventually was taken over by the Tiffen Company, which continues to sell tripods and monopods under the Davis & Sanford brand name. Tiffen's Davis & Sanford products are available at <https://tiffen.com/collections/davis-sanford?srltid=AfmBOoo0QXh6CRSiMwGLzbpRqq1TbWcW8X8Fnshl4ggg4xdus87VP9AY>.

By the time Davis died in 1929, many books on photography had been published, but most were about technological progress, not photographers. Among those few volumes that focused on photographers, Davis was not included in Charles H. Caffin, *Photography as a Fine Art* (1901), with chapters on Gertrude Käsebier (1852–1934), Alfred Stieglitz, Clarence H. White (1871–1925), and others who became members of the Photo Secession.¹²⁴ Nor was he profiled in *With Other Photographers*, Ryland W. Phillips' 1910 volume with chapters on leading professional portraitists such as Mary Carnell, Elias Goldensky, Frances Benjamin Johnston, Pirie Macdonald, and Rudolph Dührkoop.¹²⁵ Another omission for Davis was Sadakichi Hartmann's *Landscape and Figure Composition* (1910), which reproduced several landscapes by Eickemeyer, among many other illustrations.¹²⁶

As the centennial of photography approached, Beaumont Newhall at the Museum of Modern Art was tasked with curating an exhibition about the first century of the medium. This 1937 exhibition led to Newhall's *History of Photography* textbook, which was published in four editions with revisions over four decades.¹²⁷ For the period when Davis was most active, the 1890s to the 1910s, Newhall relied heavily on the photographers published in *Camera Work*, the quarterly edited by Alfred Stieglitz from 1903 to 1917.¹²⁸ *Camera Work* featured photographers who were members of the organization founded by Stieglitz, the Photo Secession, and Stieglitz also promoted these camera artists at 291, the Photo Secession's gallery on Fifth Avenue.¹²⁹ Several of these

¹²⁴ Charles H. Caffin, *Photography as A Fine Art* (Reprint, New York: Amphoto, 1972).

¹²⁵ Ryland W. Phillips, *With Other Photographers* (Rochester, New York: Eastman Kodak, 1910). Some of the plates in this book could be mistaken for work by Davis.

¹²⁶ Sadakichi Hartmann, *Landscape and Figure Composition* (New York: Baker & Taylor Co., 1910).

¹²⁷ Beaumont Newhall, *Photography, 1839–1937* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1937); Beaumont Newhall, *Photography, A Short Critical History* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938); Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1949, 1964, 1978, 1982).

¹²⁸ Marianne Fulton Margolis, ed., *Camera Work. A Pictorial Guide. Alfred Stieglitz* (New York: Dover, 1978).

¹²⁹ Among more than fifty books on Stieglitz, see for example, William Innes Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession* (Boston: New York Graphic Society/Little Brown, 1983.) Whether Davis visited 291 has not been found but seems very likely.

photographers had had their work hung in the Philadelphia Photographic Salon of art photography in 1898 and its successors in 1899 and 1900.¹³⁰ As Roger Hull explained in an illuminating essay on Eickemeyer, photographers included in *Camera Work*, in which selected photographs were carefully reproduced in gravure and mounted on special papers, were emplaced where they would be found by future scholars, while the work of Davis, Eickemeyer, and others like Elias Goldensky, crudely reproduced in halftone on magazine pages, was displaced and lost to history.¹³¹

Newhall's successors as authors of history of photography survey texts, such as Helmut Gernsheim, Michel Frizot, Robert Hirsch, Mary Warner Marien, Naomi Rosenblum, and others also did not mention Davis and most omitted Eickemeyer.¹³² Apparently, these authors concluded that photographers who were well known in their own day but have gone out of fashion among collectors and gallerists did not merit inclusion in histories and biographical encyclopedias.

¹³⁰ William Innes Homer, et al., *Pictorial Photography in Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy Salons, 1898-1901* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1984). Note that while some members of the Photo Secession were wealthy amateurs, others like Gertrude Käsebier, Eva Watson-Schütze (1867–1935), and Edward Steichen (1879–1973) made a living as portrait photographers, and Clarence H. White was a photographic educator. Barbara Michaels, *Gertrude Käsebier. The Photographer and Her Photographs* (New York: Abrams, 1992); Tom Wolf, *Eva Watson-Schütze: Photographer* (New Paltz, New York: SUNY-New Paltz, 2009); Edward Steichen, *A Life in Photography* (New York: Doubleday, 1963); Marianne Fulton, ed., *Pictorialism into Modernism: The Clarence H. White School of Photography* (New York: Rizzoli, 1996).

¹³¹ Roger Hull, "Emplacement, Displacement, and the Fate of Photographs, in Daniel P. Younger, ed., *Multiple Views: Logan Grant Essays on Photography, 1983-89* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 185. See also Gary D. Saretzky, "Elias Goldensky: Wizard of Photography," *Pennsylvania History* 64:2 (Spring 1997), 206-272, available at <https://journals.psu.edu/phj/article/viewFile/25383/25152>; Mary Panzer, *In My Studio: Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. and the Art of the Camera 1885-1930* (Yonkers, New York: Hudson River Museum, 1986).

¹³² Davis also was not included in Turner Browne & Elaine Partnow, *Macmillan Biographical Encyclopedia of Photographic Artists & Innovators; Over 2000 Leaders in Photography from the 1800s to the Present* (New York: Macmillan, 1983), which did profile Eickemeyer, 172–173, as did Keith F. Davis, *An American Century of Photography: From Dry-Plate to Digital. The Hallmark Photographic Collection. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged* (Kansas City, Missouri: Hallmark Cards, 1999). Neither Davis nor Eickemeyer are mentioned in Cecil Beaton and Gail Buckland, *The Magic Image: The Genius of Photography From 1839 to the Present Day* (Boston: Little Brown, 1975); Michel F. Braive, *The Photograph: A Social History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1966); Michel Frizot, ed., *A New History of Photography* (Köln, Germany: Könemann, 1998); Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, *The History of Photography 1685-1914* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969); Nathalie Herschdorfer, *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Photography* (London, UK: 2015); Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A Social History of Photography. Second Edition* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009); Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History* (New York: Prentice Hall/Abrams, 2002); Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography. Revised Edition* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984, 1989); Lynne Warren, ed. *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Photography* (New York: Routledge, 2005); and Lee D. Witkin and Barbara London, *The Photograph Collectors Guide* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1979).

Stieglitz gradually came to reject the soft-focus sentimentality and sepia-toned prints that characterized much of Pictorialist photography in favor of Modernism with its emphasis on abstraction and neutral black-and-white, sharply focused prints. Although Stieglitz began as a Pictorialist, by the 1920s, he and some of the next generation of photographers like Paul Strand and Edward Weston (1886–1958) were photographing “the thing itself” in sharp focus and not creating work that evoked scenes from the past or pleasant reveries.¹³³ In 1923, Weston, who began his career as a Pictorialist, wrote that for him, pictorial photography was “illustrative photography,” and it had been years since he had “left the genre field.”¹³⁴ Those photographers who continued to ally themselves with Pictorialism came to be scorned by those like the influential Stieglitz, Newhall, and Ansel Adams (1902–1984).¹³⁵ Consequently, Charles Henry Davis, as well as his second partner, Rudolf Eickemeyer Jr., has thus far been omitted from most histories of photography.¹³⁶

¹³³ “The thing itself,” from an entry, March 10, 1924, in Edward Weston’s Daybooks, published in 1966, became well known: “For what end is the camera best used? . . . The answer comes always more clearly after seeing a great work of the sculptor or painter . . . that the camera should be used for a recording of life, for rendering the very substance and quintessence of the thing itself, whether polished steel or palpitating flesh.” Quoted in “Quintessence of the Thing Itself,” <https://henrimag.com/?p=10574>, accessed November 27, 2024.

¹³⁴ Peter C. Bunnell, ed., *A Photographic Vision: Pictorial Photography, 1889–1923* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1980), 207, from John Wallace Gillies, ed., “Statements by Professionals,” *Principles of Pictorial Photography* (New York: Falk Publishing Co., 1923).

¹³⁵ Adams referred to late Pictorialist William Mortensen (1897–1965) as “the anti-Christ.” Bess Lovejoy, “The Photographer Who Ansel Adams Called the Anti-Christ,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 4, 2014. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/photographer-who-ansel-adams-called-anti-christ-180953525/>, accessed November 30, 2024.

¹³⁶ The author expresses his deeply felt appreciation to Gillian Hannum and Mary Panzer for their comments on a draft of this article.

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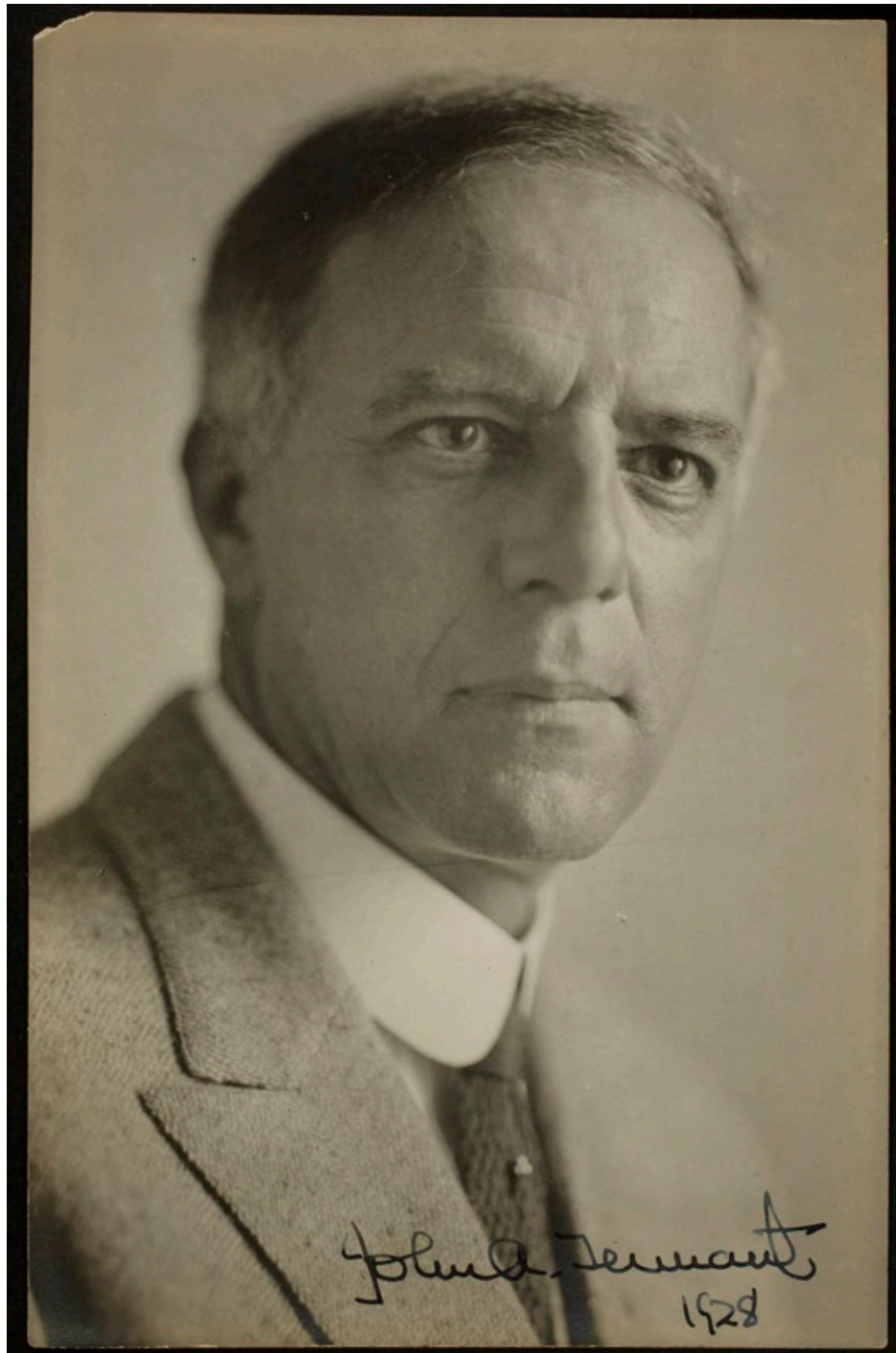
CHD 1908...

To Mr. Davis, with all my
Admiration for his master work -
Mary Garden.

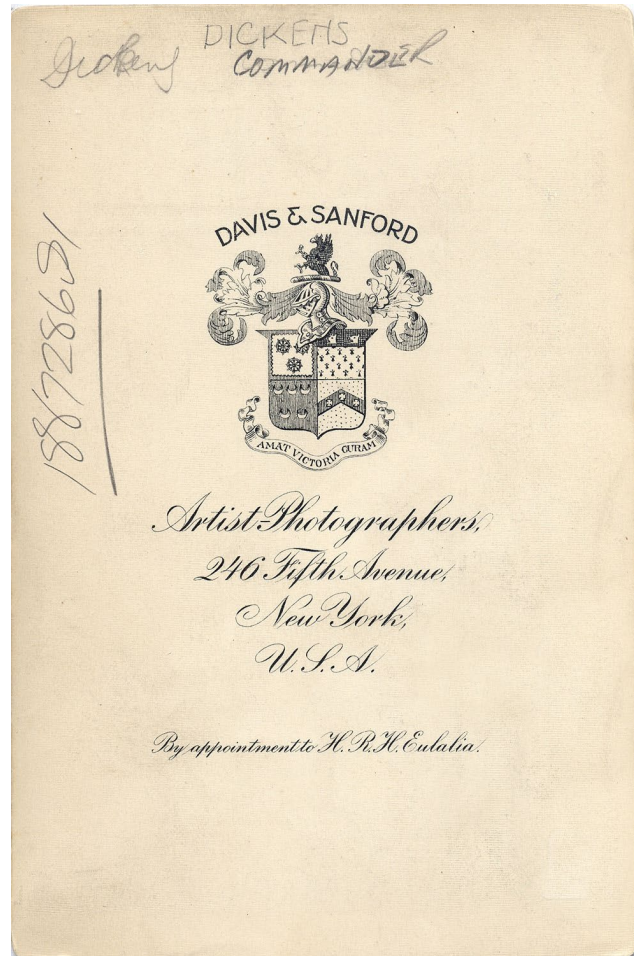
MARY GARDEN

Copyright 1908, by Charles H. Davis, of Davis & Eickemeyer, N.Y.

Charles Henry Davis, of Davis & Eickemeyer, Mary Garden, 1908. *American Annual of Photography* 1909. Soprano Mary Garden (1874–1967) became an opera star in Paris and New York in the early 1900s. Born in Aberdeen, Scotland, she moved with her parents to the United States at the age of nine and, after a stellar career as a diva, returned to Scotland for the last three decades of her life.



John A. Tennant by Charles H. Davis, 1928. George Eastman Museum.



Davis & Sanford, New York, Lieutenant Commander Francis W. Dickens (aka Dickins, 1844–1910), cabinet card, c.1895. Collection of the author. Born in New York, Dickens graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1864. After service as a naval officer, Dickens became Instructor in Mathematics at the Academy in 1878. Dickens then rose to Rear Admiral, serving in the White House during the Spanish-American War. It was Dickens who informed President McKinley that the USS *Maine* had sunk in Havana harbor.