

Golden Book Encyclopedia entry, “Daguerreotype,” 1959

(keywords: Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

THE DAGUERRETYPE: AN ARCHIVE OF SOURCE TEXTS, GRAPHICS, AND EPHEMERA

The research archive of Gary W. Ewer regarding the history of the daguerreotype

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DAGUERREOTYPE (da GER o type)

George Washington never had his picture taken. He had it painted many time, but he lived before the days of photographs.

The daguerreotype was an early kind of photograph. Instead of a film or a glass plate, a sheet of copper was used. It was coated with a mixture of chemicals just as films and plates are now.

The name “daguerreotype” comes from the name of the Frenchman who invented it. He was Louis Daguerre, who was born the year Washington became president.

Daguerreotypes were not very good pictures. People soon found way of improving on them. We owe the beautiful photographs we have now partly to Daguerre. (See INVENTIONS; PHOTOGRAPHY.)



[caption:] It sometimes took 30 minutes to take a picture in the early days of daguerreotypes.

[End of text.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

This encyclopedia was among the books the present editor possessed as a child. Fortunately, the text's assertion that "daguerreotypes were not very good pictures," did not make a lasting impression upon his young mind.

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