Edward Weston, “Daguerreotypes,” October 1926
(keywords: Edward Weston, Los Daguerreotipos, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

THE DAGUERREOTYPE: 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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DAGUERREOTYPES

They are documents, “family memories”, nothing more. They were made in the days before “artistic photographs,” and “light effects,” and theatrical “posing.” The photographers of daguerreotypes had not yet been classified “artists” sporting the classic floating tie and the rumpled and dirty hair. Fortunately the complicated work of silvering the sheets kept him busy. He was an artisan who dedicated himself to his work with simplicity and without ambiguities, without finding himself inhibited by the ambitions of his art. Because the technique of retouching was unknown, there was no way to make concessions to human vanity—the daguerreotypes were not lies. Although rigid, those photographs of our ancestors have a rigid dignity. Since the exposures lasted for minutes, they did not allow for calculated poses. In this manner we have inherited today the first epoch of photography, the most genuine, the most honest expression. An image chemically pure, strong and honest, and at the same time refined: the daguerreotype.

[End of text.]

EDITOR’S NOTES:
This editor would welcome information regarding the original publication.

The editor will state that a casual glance through any nearly any book written on the subject of the daguerreotype will disprove Weston’s limited view regarding “ambitions of . . . art” and the daguerreotype.

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