

Review of Vance's daguerreotype views of California, 18 October 1851

(keywords: Robert H. Vance, lost daguerreotypes, three hundred daguerreotypes, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

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FINE ARTS.

A COLLECTION of Daguerreotypes on exhibition at 349 Broadway, taken by R. H. Vance in various parts of California, is well worth a visit. The views are some three hundred in number, and were intended to be taken to the World's Fair; but from an interruption to the Artist's work, from one of the San Francisco conflagrations, they could not be got together in time. This is to be regretted, for they would have proved of decided attractiveness, not merely in the gratification of curiosity, but from their artistic value. They embrace several extended panoramic views of San Francisco, its harbor, and the adjacent islands; connected street views, where the signs may all be read, taken both before and after the fire in May; sketches of the mining villages; of the miners themselves, in the midst of the utensils; fine groupings of forest and extempore habitations; with many remarkable views of the native Indians, in the amusements, domestic life, and the glory of their chiefs. These are particularly valuable studies. Others, of old Spanish buildings are remarkable as evidence of the value of this art to the traveller. There can be no more thorough or accurate presentation to people at a distance of California life than this. It is well worth the hour's study. A series of outline, or lithographic engravings of this series, would be of the highest value.

[End of selected text. All content related to photography herein provided.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Other reviews of Vance's exhibition of California daguerreotypes are: "Mr. Vance's California Views," *Photographic Art-Journal* (New York) 2:4 (October 1851): 252-3;¹ "Vance's California Views," *United States Magazine, and Democratic Review* (New York) 29:161 (November 1851): 480;² "Daguerreotype Panoramic Views in California," *Daguerreian Journal* (New York) 2:12 (1 November 1851): 371.³

A pamphlet catalogue accompanied the exhibition of views: Robert H. Vance, *Catalogue of Daguerreotype Panoramic Views in California* (New York: Baker, Goodwin & Company, 1851). The catalogue includes 131 entries; many entries are for multiple-plate views.⁴

The "World's Fair" mentioned refers to the 1851 exhibition at the London Crystal Palace, also referred to as "The Great Exhibition of 1851." An earlier mention of Vance's intent to exhibit in London is found in Mattakeesett (pseud.), "Late from California," *Spirit of the Times* (New York) 21:10 (26 April 1851): 114.⁵

The exhibition was not well publicized. This author is aware of very limited runs of advertisements appearing in two newspapers: the *New-York Tribune*, and the *New-York Times*.⁶

Additional information regarding Vance and his collection of California daguerreotypes is found in Delores Kilgo, "Vance's Views in St. Louis: An Update," *The Daguerreian Annual 1994* (Pittsburgh: The Daguerreian Society, 1994): 210–2; Peter Palmquist, "The Sad but True Story of a Daguerreian Holy Grail," in Drew Heath Johnson and Marcia Eymann, ed., *Silver & Gold: Cased Images of the California Gold Rush* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998): 43–73; Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: a Biographical Dictionary, 1840–1865* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000): 559–566.

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510002_VANCE_PHOTO_ARTJOURN_1851-10.pdf
2. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510004_VANCE_US_MAG_DEMO_REVIEW_1851-11.pdf
3. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510001_VANCE_DAG_JOURN_1851-11-01.pdf
4. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/F8510001_VANCE_CATALOGUE_DAG_VIEWS_1851.pdf
5. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510021_VANCE_SPIRIT-TIMES_1851-04-26.pdf
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