

**“Stereoscopes as are stereoscopes,” (in San Francisco) January 1854**

(keywords: Jacob Shew, William Shew, stereoscope, 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*

<http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org>

EWER ARCHIVE P8540005

---

Selected text published in:

*Pioneer: or California Monthly Magazine* (San Francisco) 1:1 (January 1854): 62.

The article appears within text under the header “Gossip with reader and correspondents.”

BLESSINGS on the Englishman who hit upon the idea of finding out why the most of us have two eyes instead of one. For to him, after all, are we indebted for the Stereoscope. Any one who has once looked through the little lenses, and then sits down and stolidly makes a bargain for a daguerreotype, must be an old foggy of the stalest stamp. The daguerreotype is a very flat and far-off suggestion of a friend, but the Stereoscope places the “said friend” actually before you. There he is—always excepting the actual flesh and blood. We know of but one respect, indeed, in which the daguerreotype has the advantage over the Stereoscope. If your lady have the former, she can (“not to put too fine a point on it,” and with an apologetic cough behind our hat) place the actual thing she has been looking at to her lips. But the Stereoscope will not admit of any such little attentions (pardonable, perhaps, if they be paid when one is all alone.) For she peers through the lenses and beholds a wonderful apparition behind them—a little solid gentleman; but when she looks over them, strange to say, he isn’t there. It is truly provoking. She takes another look, and there he is sitting as though he were actually before her, and (“not to put too fine a point on it” again) *holding still*;—the gloved hands are plump—the folds of the neck scarf are standing out, as though it were nature itself; and she can actually see ten or fifteen feet behind him—away somewhere to the further side of the room. She lifts her eyes peeps over the lenses again, and tries to catch him, but as quick as thought, he has vanished and in his place are nothing but two miserable little pictures of him, taken at different angles. The very philosophy of the thing—physics we should say—drives away the anticipated kiss, and the Stereoscope is—not laid down on to the table—but put to the eyes once more, that the fair one may at least take a *good long gaze* at—*all but*—the “dear kind soul” again. If the reader desires to see Stereoscopes as *are* Stereoscopes, he will find them at Shew’s Daguerrean Gallery on the corner of Sacramento and Montgomery streets. We can recommend them.

**[End of text.]**

---

**EDITOR’S NOTES:**

Three Shew brothers, Jacob, Myron, and William, were daguerreotypists in San Francisco. The historian John Craig informs that Jacob Shew was listed in 1854 at the corner of Sacramento and Montgomery streets and that both Jacob and William were in partnership for at least part of the year 1854.

It was stereoscopes from the Paris firm of Jules Duboscq (made after Sir David Brewster’s lenticular design) that caught the public’s interest during the 1851 Great

Exhibition in London. (Priority is generally given Sir Charles Wheatstone for being the first to demonstrate stereopsis with his 1833 mirror stereoscope.) In the United States, however, the stereo-daguerreotype was often fashioned after the patented design (1853) of John F. Mascher. For a description and illustration of Mascher's design, see *Scientific American* (New York) 8:37 (28 May 1853): 292.

#### **EWER ARCHIVE P8540005**

URL: [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8540005\\_PIONEER\\_STEREO-SHEW\\_1854-01.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8540005_PIONEER_STEREO-SHEW_1854-01.pdf)

Document author: Gary W. Ewer

Creation date: 2009-06-17 / Last revision: 2009-06-17

Citation information: *Pioneer: or, California Monthly Magazine* (San Francisco) 1:1 (January 1854): 62.

Prepared from: photocopy from an original volume. Also available from *Google Books*.

(<http://books.google.com/books?id=D0jOAAAAMAAJ>)

Original spelling/punctuation/grammar generally maintained without correction. Any in-text corrections are bracketed.

The *source text* is Public Domain and may be freely quoted. As noted below, this document is copyright.

If citing directly from this document, please reference the Ewer Archive number and provide the following citation credit:

Gary W. Ewer, ed., *The Daguerreotype: an Archive of Source Texts, Graphics, and Ephemera*, <http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org>

#### **THE NECESSARY DISCLAIMERS:**

The document creator has made every effort to insure the accuracy of the transcription. However, the information provided in this document is provided without warranty, either express or implied. The document creator will not be liable for any damages caused or alleged to be caused directly, indirectly, incidentally, or consequentially by the information provided by this text.

The document creator assumes no responsibility for accuracy of fact; the text is prepared "as found." Factual inaccuracies of the original text are generally **not** noted by the document creator. If this text is used in academic papers, accuracy should be confirmed by consulting original sources.

The document creator also assumes no responsibility regarding the correctness, suitability, or safety of any chemical or photographic processes that may be described by this text. Many of the chemicals used in early photographic processes are extremely toxic and should not be handled without a *thorough* knowledge of safe use.

The opinions expressed in this text are solely those of the original author and are not necessarily those of the Archive editor. Some texts may contain derogatory words. Any such word is certainly one that would not be used today. The words remain in the transcription, however, to maintain truthfulness to the original text.

© 2009, Gary W. Ewer. <http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org>

---