

**François Gouraud, "Invitation to exhibition in New York," 29 November 1839**

(keywords: François Gouraud, François Fauvel-Gouraud, Francois Gouraud, Francis Fauvel-Gouraud, William Sidney Mount, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

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Manuscript letter:

*Invitation by François Gouraud dated 29 November 1839.*

(Original line breaks preserved.) Use of material courtesy of The New-York Historical Society.

Dear Sir

As the friend and pupil of Mr. Daguerre, I came from Paris by the British Queen, with the charge of introducing to the new world, the perfect knowledge of the marvellous process of drawing, which fame has already made known to you under the name of the Daguerreotype. Having the good fortune to possess a collection of the finest proofs which have yet been made either by the most talented pupils of Mr. Daguerre, by the great artist himself, I have thought it my duty, before showing them to the public to give the most eminent men and distinguished artists of this City, the satisfaction of having the first views of perhaps the most interesting object which has ever been exposed to the curiosity of a man of taste, and therefore if agreeable to you, I shall have the honor of receiving you on Wednesday next the 4 Dec. from the hour of 11 to one o'clock inclusive at the Hotel Français No 57 Broadway, where this invitation will admit you.

I remain Sir

You mo. obedt servant,

Francois Gouraud

New York 29th Nov 1839

**[End of text.]**

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**EDITOR'S NOTES:**

Recipients of this letter include William Sidney Mount, Thomas Seir Cummings<sup>1</sup>, Philip Hone<sup>2</sup>, and Dr. J. S. Bartlett (editor of the newspaper, the *Albion*). Another likely individual was Lewis Gaylord Clark (editor of the periodical, the *Knickerbocker*). Additional information regarding individuals who received Gouraud's invitation would be welcome. Efforts by this editor to locate other copies of the invitation have been unsuccessful.

The invitation issued by Gouraud when in Boston (February 1840) was mechanically produced.<sup>3</sup> Although appearing as handwritten, the editor has had opportunity to examine various copies and it is evident that the letters are mechanically reproduced (with the

exception of some hand-corrections to the date. It may be that the New York invitations are similarly produced, but examination of other copies are needed to confirm.

Further information regarding Gouraud is found in Ron Polito, "The Emergence of Photography in Boston: 1840–1841 *The Journal: New England Journal of Photographic History* No. 164 (Spring 2005): 16–32. Polito's article is also reprinted in *Daguerreian Annual 2006* (Pittsburgh: The Daguerreian Society, 2007: 154–73.

1. See Thomas S. Cummings, *Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1865): 158. Cummings provides a transcript of his invitation which is essentially the same as the above. Strangely, however, Cummings' incorrectly transcribes Gouraud's last name as "Pamsel." Interestingly, in Cummings' obituary, it was written (of Cummings), "He made portraits in miniature of many distinguished persons, attaining all the celebrity that he desired until Daguerre's invention made his skill unfashionable." ("The Obituary Record: Thomas Seir Cummings," *New-York Times* 44:13,446 (26 September 1894): 4.
2. [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/M8390001\\_HONE\\_DIARY\\_1839-12-04.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/M8390001_HONE_DIARY_1839-12-04.pdf)
3. [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/S8400002\\_GOURAUD\\_BOSTON\\_INVITE\\_1840-03-04.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/S8400002_GOURAUD_BOSTON_INVITE_1840-03-04.pdf)

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