

Hannah Gentry

### Daguerreotypes: Capturing American History

At the Museum of Southern History, captured on a thin, silver-plated sheet of copper is the image of a grandmother and her granddaughter. Taken in 1855, the grandmother, Mary Warner Wilson, wears a long-sleeved dress with a scarf tied around her neck



was more than just convenience that made daguerreotypes sought after in America. Keyes argues

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Eventually, the demise of the daguerreotype arrived. Ambrotypes, a type of photograph qpi"ncuu"vjcv"ecp"dg"xkgygf"d{"tghngevgf"nki"jv."öfqokpcvgf"vjg"o"ctmgv"fwtkpi"vjg"[Civil Yctou] hktuv{"gctö"\*Eqffkpi"vqp"67+0"Fc iwgttgqv{rgu"hgmn"qww"qh"hcujkqp"cpf"nquv"vq"pgygt."ejgcrgt" methods. Though its popularity waned by the early 1860s, there are several daguerreotypes of uqnfkgtu"kp"wpkhqto"fwtkpi"vjg"Ekxkn"Yct0"Eqffkpi"vqp"urgewncvgu"vjcv"öuqog"oc{"jcxg"rtghgtgf" the superior qualities of the daguerreotype, despite the higher cost versus thg"pgy"hqtocvüö"\*68+0" Perhaps daguerreotypes appealed to American patriotism more because the quality mattered for a soldier trying to honor their country in an image. They must have seen in daguerreotypes a special quality that could not easily be replaced.

Daguerreotypes serve as an important time capsule of American history. Their influence and spread over the course of twenty years proved to be invaluable to what we know now about nineteenth-century life. As wars passed, buildings crumbled, and presidents left office, these images lived on. Being able to see the face of someone from the 1800s is remarkable. Mrs. Wilson and her granddaughter are remembered through their daguerreotype and their familial love can still be felt today. Photography has come a long way since, but without Louis Fciwgttgou"ocikecn"kp"xpvkqp"vjcv"uvctvgf"kv"cmn."jkuvqt{"okij"vjcxg"dggp"xcuvn{"fkhhtgppv0

## Works Cited

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