

THE ROLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN CANADIAN PAINTING 1860-1900:
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE AND
A STYLE OF REALISM IN PAINTING

Ann Thomas

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the formative role that photography played in determining a style of realism in Canadian painting of the latter half of the nineteenth century. In order to support this thesis it was necessary to substantiate:

- 1) That photography was practised widely in Canada; seen as a model of visual authenticity and exerted a strong direct and indirect influence on the painter.
- 2) That there was a propensity toward realism in Canadian painting and that this realism embraced a literal and factual description of the object but was not rooted in the ideological or theoretical concerns of French Realism or German, English or American Realism.
- 3) That photography was instrumental in defining this style of realism in that it reinforced certain attitudes and provided a visual model of realism.

In order to situate the Canadian problem within a universal context, the various uses of the photograph in Europe and the United States are discussed and a number of individual responses of painters toward photography described.

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PREFACE

The photographic image has had an immeasurably profound effect on our sense of reality and fiction, our awareness of time, and as such has been the subject of an enduring curiosity throughout the writing of this thesis. In 1968 I was a student in a Canadian Art History course in which Professor J. Russell Harper linked the Canadian painters Henry Sandham, John Fraser and Allan Edson with the William Notman Photography Studio in Montreal in the 1860's and it was a link too tantalising and too unexplored to dismiss. There was an abundance of detail and a sense of objectivity in the paintings of these artists that not only suggested an underlying dependence on or respect for the photograph, but inferred a particular expression of realism.

The central issues in this thesis are the relationship between photography and painting and the formative role that photography played in determining a style of realism in Canadian painting. It has been written with the hope that a clearer understanding of how photography affected the painter perceptually and conceptually will illuminate some of the problems surrounding nineteenth century Canadian painting.

Not only am I grateful to Professor Harper for the initial inspiration of this thesis but for the assistance he has offered me as thesis advisor. The interest and help offered by Stanley Triggs, Curator of the Notman Archives

at the McCord Museum, Jim Borcoman, Curator of Photography
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whose generosity was unfailing.

CHAPTER I

PAINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY IN CANADA AND EUROPE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: GENERAL RELATIONSHIPS

William Henry Fox Talbot, the father of modern photography, described his camera lucida renderings as "traces on paper ... melancholy to behold."¹ Similarly, Nicéphore Niépce, the man attributed with the making of the world's first photographic image, was reputed to have been lacking in draughtsmanly ability. The frustrations and difficulties that Talbot experienced with the camera lucida motivated his invention of the Calotype, the first negative-positive process and Niépce's failure to produce accurate hand-drawn copies led to his inventing the Heliograph, a unique, positive and permanent image on a pewter plate.

Both Talbot and Niépce were scientifically oriented. Talbot had achieved some standing in the field of scientific research well before his publication of the Calotype process and Niépce had worked on various inventions and attained some success with one which improved the new lithographic process. Whilst part of the motivation underlying these photographic inventions was undoubtedly

¹William Henry Fox Talbot, The Pencil of Nature (reprint, Image: The Journal of the George Eastman House), p. 80.

scientific, part stemmed from the desire to produce an accurate representation of reality. The concern with mimesis was the prime motivation in the invention of the Daguerreotype. Jacques Mandé Daguerre differed from the aforementioned two photographer-scientists in that he was a painter by training. He later became a stage and opera set designer of considerable reputation. His unique, permanent copperplate images certainly owe their existence to an early interest in illusionism: a desire to make an accurate and lasting transcription of the external world. It was undoubtedly the image of reality cast on the ground glass screen of his camera obscura that inspired him.

It is evident that certain aesthetic and philosophic issues as well as scientific problems were fundamental to the development of photography. These aesthetic and philosophic concerns were Aristotelian in essence, a desire for an accurate and illusionistic representation of the external world. The nature and problems of representation have been the concerns of Western artists from early cave paintings to twentieth century art. Throughout this period of time the manner of representation and the significance of representationalism changed as affective conditions, such as social structure, philosophical and religious beliefs, changed. At no time was the disruption of this tradition as radical as in 1839 when the invention of photography was officially announced to the world. The photograph, unlike

any image which preceded it, offered a highly individuated, non-selective, precise and profoundly detailed image. The impact that this discovery had on the human psyche and on the development of visual art has, in the view of this writer, scarcely been realized and may never be accurately assessed. As Max Kozloff observed: "It is strenuous to imagine what it might have been like for people to live without samples of seized time, graven by light."²

With the advent of photography, history acquired a new sense of immediacy, as Linda Nochlin observes in her book, Realism. This increased consciousness of history led to a greater objectivity toward the present and would undoubtedly have incurred an attitude of increased self-consciousness. Before the invention of photography artists had employed a variety of mechanical apparatuses to assist them in drawing. Indeed, the semi-mechanical products of the camera obscura and camera lucida bear some of the basic characteristics of camera vision; non-selective detail and impassivity of viewpoint.³ For this reason they deserve

²Max Kozloff, "The Territory of Photographs," Artforum, Nov. 14, 1974, p. 64.

³The camera obscura was initially a darkened room with a small hole through which light rays penetrated and formed an inverted image on the wall opposite the hole. Its most popular form was a rectangular box with a lens at one end and a mirror at a 45° angle at the other to reflect and invert the image onto a ground glass plate on the horizontal top of the box. The paper was placed on the ground glass plate.

further study within the context of this thesis. The camera obscura was, like the camera lucida, a simple mechanical instrument that greatly assisted the artist in visually organizing the intricacies and complexities of the external world. It gave the artist a simplified and reduced image of the subject from which he could draw.⁴ This first drawing served as a base which could be further simplified or embellished, according to the desire of the artist. The principle of the camera obscura was discovered by the Arabs in the eleventh century. An apparatus was subsequently designed, like that used by Canaletto and Vermeer in the seventeenth century. By the nineteenth century a more refined version had been developed, the camera lucida. It was more portable than the camera obscura and adaptable to the needs of the army officer or traveller who wished to record the picturesque views of landscape or document the intricacies of topography. Talbot used the camera lucida when travelling in Italy in the 1830's; it was used in rendering Sketch made near Bellagio, 1833 (Fig. 1).

Several Canadian artists and European artists residing in Canada or travelling through North America made use of this instrument in the eighteenth and nineteenth

⁴The camera lucida was composed of a narrow brass rod from which a glass prism at eye level was suspended. The viewer-artist placed this instrument in front of the scene to be drawn and observed both the subject and the faint outline projected through the prism onto his drawing paper below.

centuries. James Pattison Cockburn (1778/9 - 1847), a British Army Officer trained at the Woolwich Academy under Paul Sandby and stationed in Canada from 1826 to 1832, made numerous drawings with the aid of this device. Basil Hall (1788-1844) a traveller in North America in 1827 and 1828, used the camera lucida. Cockburn's sketches were published as engravings in 1833. Hall's drawings were published as a small volume of etchings in 1830, entitled Forty Etchings from Sketches made with the Camera Lucida in 1827 and 1828. This album contains etchings made from camera lucida drawings of landscape, architecture and figures in landscape. The introduction of the album outlines the virtues of the camera lucida and stresses its particular usefulness for those unskilled in the art of drawing. As in the camera obscura drawings, these renderings display an arbitrariness of composition and an insistence on detail from foreground to distance which contradicts the pictorial principles of painting and drawing. There is no distortion of the familiar perspective schema of Renaissance painting.

It is interesting and fruitful to compare the works of Hall, an amateur, with presumably no training or, at least, no apparent talent in the art of drawing or knowledge of pictorial principles, to those of James Pattison Cockburn. Cockburn had extensive training in the art of watercolour painting and considerable experience in the practise of this art. Both Cockburn's Point a Pizeau,

Que. (Fig. 2) and Hall's Bridge Across Lake Cayuga (Fig. 3) reveal a linearity of style and a passive compositional ordering reminiscent of Sketch made near Bellagio (Fig. 1). It must, however, be admitted that the Cockburn and Talbot do share a somewhat more selective viewpoint. The drawings of Hall, Cockburn and Talbot are distinguished by an emphasis on unaccentuated line, which is to say, the traced lines are continuous and monotonous compared with the freer, sketchier and more erratic quality of line found in a free-hand drawing. Of the Hall and Cockburn, the latter was the more accomplished draughtsman and hence able to include figures of a relatively convincing nature in his drawings of street scenes in Quebec and rural scenes. Cockburn, with his knowledge of pictorial principles, frees the edges of his forms from a rigid linearity by his looser use of water-colour. It is the compositional angles of his drawings that betray the dependence of his drawings on the camera lucida. The compositional views of many of his drawings encompass an angle which extends beyond the range of the human optical system. In other words, such wide angle views would necessitate the turning of the viewer's head.

One striking quality of Basil Hall's drawings is the primitive proportioning of the figures which he, on occasion, inserts into a scene. They do not integrate with the rather uniform and mechanical outlines of the rest of the image but form a contrast with their rough, squat and

hesitant lines.

It is particularly in the camera lucida drawings of Basil Hall that two important deviations from the painterly pictorial convention are illustrated. Firstly, there is the arbitrary compositional framing: in other words none of the traditional devices employed by artists, such as repoussoir or colisse, were incorporated. Secondly, there is no ordering, selection or embellishment of the internal arrangement of forms. Thus the camera lucida, in the hands of an amateur like Hall, renders a totally unschematized image. In this respect it is not unlike a medieval rendering where all formal considerations are subservient to the didactic intention. In this case formal considerations are subservient to the mechanical control of the instrument. This total lack of manipulation of the picture space in the Hall drawings is almost as startling as the manner in which the proportions of the objects predict each other. There is no emphasis and no exaggeration. Furthermore, the perspective design and atmospheric controls of the painter which lend depth to the picture, are absent. The image made by the camera lucida is consequently flat and highly two dimensional. The picture plane scarcely enjoys even a subsidiary existence because it is so completely lacking in the tensions and illusionary elements encountered in a free-hand drawing. These qualities are well illustrated in Hall's Mississauga Indians in Canada (Fig. 4) and Framework.

of the Bridge Across the Congaree (Fig. 5).

Cockburn, by contrast, produces both accurate and pictorially conventional views. Mindful of picturesque arrangement, he places his camera lucida in front of a scene in such a manner that it articulates a more vital arrangement of forms. His images consequently have a less passive quality.

These characteristics of the camera lucida drawings herald some of the inherent qualities of the camera-made image. This arbitrary or mechanical aspect of the photograph is precisely the quality objected to by many nineteenth century critics in Europe and North America. It is also the quality that many twentieth-century photographic historians and critics have avoided acknowledging until recently. Max Kozloff wrote an article describing the "Era of Exploration" exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a display of documentary photographs commissioned by the Union Pacific Railroad, 1860-1885. He observes how the photographers, in making photographs primarily informational in purpose, looked at the landscape, "with a curiousness that did not realize as yet how to make them (the resulting photographs) intimate or melodramatic."⁵ He refers to these photographs as "viewing matter out there as having an intelligible purpose of its own." In other words, Kozloff suggests that these photographers showed the impassivity of the instrument and

⁵Max Kozloff, "Box in the Wilderness," Artforum, Oct. 1975, p. 54.

confessed to its mechanical origins rather than impose pictorial conventions of framing and composition.

Many Canadian mine and railroad survey photographs exhibit this same impassivity of viewpoint, as do the early Heliographic images of Nicéphore Niépce. Courtyard at Gras, 1826 (Fig. 6) shows a tonal arrangement of lights and darks that has been so highly simplified by the nature of the process used and the necessity of an eight hour exposure that it appears almost abstract. The low informational content of this image and the high degree of abstractionism recalls a statement by Talbot in The Pencil of Nature (1844).

The picture, divested of the ideas which accompany it, and considered only in its ultimate nature, is but a succession or variety of stronger lights thrown upon one part of the paper, and of deeper shadows upon another.⁶

The view taken by Niépce from his workshop window in 1826 shows a rather arbitrary compositional structure, which undoubtedly resulted from the limitations of experimental conditions rather than by conscious design. Nevertheless, it does emphasize this aspect of camera vision which differs so greatly from the highly selective and conscious aims with which painterly pictorial principles are applied.

The long exposure required for the making of this image caused an illogical pattern of light and shadow to be engraved upon the sensitized pewter plate. The soft shiny

⁶Henry Fox Talbot, The Pencil of Nature, p. 81.

surface of the pewter plate, possible imperfections in the chemical process and a deterioration of the image by age have unfortunately resulted in a picture which is extremely difficult to view. The rather coarse and grainy texture of the tonal pattern becomes particularly significant when placed alongside one of Seurat's paintings. The Naval Base at Port en Bessin (Fig. 7) for example, shares a simplification of form with the Niépce Heliograph and a tonal pattern composed of thousands of small dots. The compositional arrangement of the pointillist painting bears a likeness to the Heliograph in that it is a fragment of a scene that is depicted as opposed to a more panoramic type of view such as was favoured by painters of the pre-photography era. The internal compositional arrangement also shows a similar understated composition of forms that is often associated with the photograph. In this case it more likely derives from Seurat's classicism than from a photographic model. The element of understatement is evident in many Canadian paintings of the nineteenth century along with other influences of the photographic aesthetic. Note the high degree of detailing, consistency of detailing from foreground to distance and tonal gradation reminiscent of the photograph.

Realist, Impressionist and Academic painting were profoundly influenced in various ways by the metal Daguerreotype and the paper photographic processes; the Calotype, Woodburytype and Albumen. It might be argued

that photography was instrumental in the development of some of these artistic movements.

Realism was essentially linked to the movement of literary Naturalism, popular in France in the 1840's. It was also a visual response to the prevailing political ideologies of the time -- a factor equally influential in the literature of the Naturalist writers. In photography Realism found a precise visual standard of the high degree of verisimilitude which it sought to achieve. The camera, with its unselective eye, recorded both incidents of trivial and major import with the same degree of clarity. It exhibited the objectivity of Realist ideals. Furthermore, materialism, one of the major tenets of the Realist movement, was reinforced by the Daguerreotype and the various paper prints. In the photograph, as in the ideal scheme of realist thinking, the object was richly detailed and all the concrete realities of surface texture and subtle modulations of form were precisely described. There was neither an emphasis on line nor an exaggeration of form in the photograph that could identify the object depicted as anything other than that which it indeed was. This would have made a definite appeal to Realist sensibility.

It would be an exaggeration to state that photography revealed a new realm of pictorial subject matter to the Realist painter, for the type of subject matter explored by Charles Nègre in Chimney Sweeps, 1856 (Fig. 8) could well

have been influenced by Naturalism. Photography did, however, serve as a reinforcement to the democratic approach to subject matter advocated by the Realists. It assisted in the rejection of the conventional hierarchy of subject matter supported by the Academy. Paintings such as Manet's Execution of the Emperor Maximilian and examples by Daumier, Monet and Manet, dealing with the theme of death are, to some extent, indebted to photography. It is not only the instantaneity of vision and the documentary approach of Manet in the aforementioned painting that relates to the photographic image but the frank and unsentimental manner in which the moment of death is portrayed.

Impressionism can be seen to have grown largely out of the understanding that the photograph resolved problems of realistic representation and thus left the painter free to explore problems of colour and light on an aesthetic level. The depth and degree of technical exploration which took place in black and white photography at the time of the development of the Impressionist movement surpassed colour photography. The latter process remained very primitive and uncontrolled for the greater part of the nineteenth century and was thus regarded as somewhat deficient and untrustworthy in nature. This permitted the Impressionist painter to undertake a full aesthetic and scientific enquiry into the field of colour and optics without concern for territorial overlapping. Impressionism dealt with optical

and formal problems that lay beyond the limits of current photographic possibilities. Although Impressionism claimed an area of its own and conceded to the photograph the expression of the exact and solid image there was still a certain degree of formal and conceptual cross-pollination. Instantaneous movement, sharply angled and truncated views in Impressionist painting are two of the characteristics which Aaron Scharf has attributed to photography. There are very particular and individual uses made of the elements of the photograph by painters such as Manet, Monet and Degas. Once again, this is dealt with in Aaron Scharf's extensive work on the influence of photography on painting in Europe.

Some French Academic painters who praised the virtues of the photograph seized upon it as an informational source rather than as an object to inspire imaginative and new ways of thinking and painting. According to these academic painters the photograph was an object to be copied in much the same way as a plaster cast. It was not to be used as a point of departure for the creation of a new image. Students in the academies were encouraged to study the photograph for a correct understanding of light, shade and volume. They were also instructed to make use of the 'etude' a small photograph of the female nude made especially for the purpose of practising the drawing of the figure in the nude.

Once again it was a two-way relationship between

Academic painting and photography. James Borcoman's article "Purism versus Pictorialism" illustrates this well. The author points out that certain academic principles such as atmospheric perspective, or what was known as the "effect" in painting, came to be used by photographers toward the end of the nineteenth century.⁷ In fact, this treatment was not only considered desirable but deemed necessary if photography were to advance to a level where it could be worthy of being called art. This attempt to broaden and loosen the photographic image from its tight, particular and precise articulation of parts, continues in some instances into the twentieth century.

It is clear that the photograph did not influence the European painter in one single direction but affected his mind and imagination in a variety of ways. His reaction to the photograph was manifested in a variety of complex visual responses. The photograph led him both to new discoveries about space, volume and light and caused him to re-evaluate the artist's responsibility towards the recording and interpretation of nature.

In Europe, photography, by its presence alone, raised many profound questions about the function of painting. What value had themes of military heroism and religious

⁷ James Borcoman, "Purism versus Pictorialism: The 135 Years War. Some Notes on Photographic Aesthetics," Artscanada, Dec. 1974, Issue no. 192/193/194/195, Vol. XXXI, Nos. 3 & 4, p. 74.

martyrdom to a society in the throes of an industrial and technological revolution? Was it indeed necessary for the painter to struggle with problems of illusionistic perspective when a mechanical device was recording the features of the external world with such precision? Was photography art?

The emphatic denunciation of photography as art -- because of its mechanical nature -- was maintained until photographers started to manipulate the photographic negative and print in a variety of ways from 1860. This manipulation began with the shading in and blocking out of parts of the paper negative. This created the blurring of edges or "effect", referred to earlier in the context of the Academic influence. Increased highlighting was also obtained by a similar means. Combination printing, soft focus, scratching on the negative (to give evidence of the presence of the human hand and loosen up the precise outlines the camera recorded) and the use of non-silver photographic techniques were some of the manipulations that led to a redefinition of the photograph.

In Canada the impact of photography on painting was equally powerful but different in manifestation. In Europe photography was responded to in a variety of ways: for artists in the avant garde of stylistic movements, it provided new approaches to the expression of light, volume and space, and in some cases, served as a force against

which they could rebel. In the case of the more conservative artists, photography was to be competed with and for the realist artist, it provided a very exact standard to be copied. In Canada there was an untheorised and unself-conscious use of the photograph. None of the philosophical issues that were raised by photography in Europe were raised here. There was a more literal and practical use of photography in Canada, with very precise standards of photographic realism having been established by a rather conservative group of patrons. The issue of painting as fact or fiction was partly resolved by the appearance of the photograph in Canada. It helped to define existing but unemphasised attitudes toward the photograph. These attitudes appeared to favour the rendering of fact over fiction.

For the Canadian public and painter the photograph came to represent authenticity of experience and accuracy of information. These attitudes toward the photograph were transmitted to painting. In Europe we find Gustav Courbet using the photograph to make a didactic painting; Eugène Delacroix valuing it for the manner in which it broadened his painterly vocabulary and Manet using it for increased instantaneity and dramatic gesture. In Canada it is used in a more literal fashion. This led to a variety of uses of the photograph on a purely visual level as opposed to a philosophical or a conscious conceptual level.

CHAPTER II

NINETEENTH CENTURY CANADIAN PHOTOGRAPHY: A DOCUMENTARY TRADITION

The element of fiction cannot be entirely disassociated from the photograph in the nineteenth century. In Canada many photographers, including Montreal photographer William Notman (1826-1891) chose to re-create certain scenes in their studios rather than photograph them outdoors. The reasons for such a practise were necessitated by the technical problems and Canadian climatic conditions. Notman photographs such as Woodcutters, 1866, Notman Archives, and Campfire Scene, 1866, Notman Archives, might on first view impress the observer with the control of the tonal gradation which was a problem in outdoor scenes at the time. In photographs such as the Grindley Family, 1861, Notman Archives, the innocent viewer might be equally impressed with the relaxed air with which the subjects endured the snowy climate. These photographs were, of course, not reality transfixed but indoor simulations. Far from representing the reality of the Great Canadian Outdoors, they were taken in the studio which was staged with all the necessary props for campfire, logging and tobogganing scenes. The 'snow' was simulated by piled up pelts of Arctic fox fur and

Chinese White splashed across the negative.⁸ James Inglis, also a Montreal photographer, had a large water trough in his studio to create appropriate surroundings for boating scenes. His photographs of the Montreal flood of 1869 are, however, authentic.

The Marquis of Lorne, Governor-General of Canada (1878-1883) speaking at the opening of the new Art Association of Montreal Art Gallery in 1879, referred to the extreme popularity of photography in Canada. He also noted the acclaim with which Canadian photographs were received abroad, particularly those depicting winter scenes. These photographs, claimed the Governor-General, 'do give some of our friends in the Old Country the belief that it is the normal habit of young ladies to stand tranquilly in the deep snow, enjoying a temperature of 33 degrees below zero'⁹ The success which had been enjoyed by Canadian photographic entries to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, 1876, and the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886, was certainly that being alluded to by the Marquis of Lorne. A report on the Philadelphia Exhibition stated the following:

There are of course a number of branches of human art in which a country so young as ours cannot

⁸S. Triggs and J. R. Harper, Portrait of a Period, unpaginated.

⁹Marquis of Lorne, Records of the Founding of the Royal Canadian Academy, Vol. I, pp. 6-7.

hope to compete with the older nations of the world. This is especially the case with painting It may, however, be said that in photography the specimens exhibited by our artists were not inferior to any that graced the building.¹⁰

The press reviews of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, which came from various corners of the world, paid much attention to the Canadian photographic entries but made scarce mention of the paintings. "The photographs of sleighing and tobogganing (Park Club, Montreal) are very interesting"¹¹ Another review stated that:

Specimens of engraving, lithography, printing and photography are to be met with in various parts, and among the latter are two remarkable pictures -- a tobogganing scene and a snow-shoe club mustering for a tramp.¹²

Although the Canadian artist did not feel capable of competing with the older nations of the world in the field of painting, he appeared to have recognized the possibility of achieving an independent and unpatronized success in photography.

A close association existed between painters and photographers in Eastern Canada from the time of the establishment of the Notman studio in Montreal in the 1860's. Similarly, a community of artists and photographers

¹⁰ Report on the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, 1876, p. 22.

¹¹ The Colonial and Indian Exhibition: A Revelation of Canada's Progress and Resources, p. 35.

¹² Ibid., p. 36 (excerpt from the Leeds Mercury).

developed in Toronto in 1868 when John Fraser (1838-1898) opened a Notman branch on King Street. It was in this studio of Notman and Fraser on King Street that the first headquarters of the Ontario Society of Artists was established. Artists who associated themselves with the Montreal Notman branch, either by working as photographic assistants or through shared interests were: Alan Edson (1846-1888), G. Horne Russell (1861-1933), John Hammond (1843-1939), Otto Jacobi (1812-1901), Eugène L'Africain (1859-1892), James Weston (1815-1896), Edward Sharpe (act., 1870), Henry J. Sandham (1842-1910) and John Fraser (1838-1898).

In Toronto, painters such as Lucius O'Brien (1832-1890), Homer Watson (1855-1936), Frederick Verner (1832-1900), Horatio Walker (1858-1938), Robert Gagen (1847-1926) and George Agnew Reid (1860-1947) were amongst those who gravitated toward the Notman and Fraser studio. They did this either for reasons of employment or as members of the Ontario Society of Artists.

The close relationship between the painters and photographers in Montreal is evidenced in the catalogues of the Art Association of Montreal from its inception in 1860. The 1867 catalogue, for example, indicates that Alexander Henderson (act. 1865-1903) owned paintings by F. M. Bell-Smith (1846-1923); Bell-Smith was also a photographer. The 1867 exhibition included photographs by both William Notman

and Alexander Henderson; three volumes of Notman's Canadian Sports (1866) plus three unspecified prints; three volumes of Henderson's Canadian Views (1865). The Henderson album was entered in the Fine Arts display for the Dublin Exhibition of 1865.¹³ Canadian participation in the Fine Arts Section of this exhibition was almost entirely photographic and included a copy of Charles Way's (1835-1919) Canadian Scenery (1863-64) and photographs by J. B. Livernois (1831-1856) and Ellison (act. 1852-53).¹⁴

Many of the exhibitors of paintings in the Art Association of Montreal exhibitions were Notman employees: Charles Way, John Fraser and Henry Sandham among them. William Sawyer (1820-1889), James Duncan (1806-1881) and William Raphael (1833-1914) were other painter-photographer participants. Toward the end of the nineteenth century painters were called upon by photographers to compose photography juries. With the spread of amateur photography clubs around 1882, there was an increase in the number of photography exhibitions. The popularization of the medium resulted from the development of the dry-plate process and instantaneous cameras. One of the most prestigious of these clubs was the Toronto Camera Club which exhibited the

¹³Catalogue of the Dublin Exhibition, 1865, pp. 25-26.

¹⁴These albums and portfolios will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

works of well-known photographers, such as Edward Weston (1886-1958), Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) and Clarence Moore (1871-1925).¹⁵

Painters such as George Agnew Reid and Charles Manly (1855-1924) were invited to act as jurors for the Toronto Camera Club exhibitions. Manly accepted an offer to advise the members of this club on matters of composition and general pictorial design: an article in the Toronto Sunday World described the criticism session conducted at the Toronto Camera Club in January, 1901. The advice he gave was much in keeping with the principles of the Pictorialist school of photography; this movement, as it grew in popularity in the last decades of the nineteenth century, engendered a raging controversy in photographic circles. Manly implored the photographers whose work he was criticizing and advising, to avoid the mechanical and perfectionist qualities of the photograph. Instead of rich detail and precise edges, he informed them they should be achieving a breadth of form and simplicity of composition. The use of combination printing techniques were to be avoided. The reviewer described Manly's talk as 'exceedingly luminous', giving a sample of Manly's critical comments:

¹⁵Toronto Camera Club Catalogue.

The slide on the screen showed a nice bit of distance and sky in the upper left corner, with a great old fashioned house on the hill to the right. Below, occupying almost the entire lower half of the picture, was the most minute reflections (sic) of the upper half of the scene "The picture is too rich," drawled Mr. Manly, "we're getting too much for our money. If you cut out that, and that, and that, and that ... cut out all you can, and then cut out more."

... Mr. Manly ... found the work of the Toronto Camera Club "too perfect." Everything within view of the lens was portrayed with absolute correctness ... but was this multiplicity of detail a picture? He thought not.¹⁶

In his ~~stone~~ the reviewer went on to describe Manly's advice to the assembled group vis-a-vis technical knowledge and how it should be put to use. Manly advocated pre-visualization of a picture and discussed how foreground, background and light and shadow should be treated. On the subject of light, he was of the opinion that there should be only one strong source in a photograph. Any other highlights or shadows 'must be subordinated'. "Gather less detail" and "eliminate", he stressed.¹⁷

As great a variety of themes was undertaken by Canadian photographers as by Canadian painters. In cases of particular "scenic spots," it was sometimes a photographer who had first popularized the view and other times,

¹⁶"An Artist's View," Toronto Sunday World, Jan. 20, 1901, newspaper clipping (from Toronto Camera Club Files, PAC).

¹⁷Ibid.

a painter. In Quebec the Montmorency Falls, Murray Bay and the Eastern Townships were favoured by both. The most popular views for photographers in Canada were Niagara Falls and the Rocky Mountains, as they had been for painters in the preceding decades.. The large Spruce Tree in Stanley Park, Vancouver, not only attracted a Notman camera-man but appears to have also been the subject of Lucius O'Brien's painting entitled B. C. Forest, w.c., 1888, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 9). The painter, John Hammond and the photographer, Benjamin Baltzly (act. 1868-1871) formed part of the team that undertook the 1871 Canadian Pacific Railroad and Geological Expedition. In fact, the West was the destination of many artists and photographers during and after the laying of the Canadian Pacific Railway: among them, J. C. Forbes (1883, 1884), F. M. Bell-Smith, William Cruikshank (1848-1922), Marmaduke Matthews (1837-1913), Lucius O'Brien, A. P. Coleman (1852-1939), Robert Harris (1849-1919), Forshaw Day (1837-1903) (out West 1886-1888) and John A. Fraser (West, 1886). An interesting compilation of photographs and paintings of the West is found in the portfolios brought out by the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1890's.¹⁸ It consists of twelve gravure prints in this

¹⁸There is no available information on the exact date or purpose of publication of these portfolios and neither is the number of issues to a series known. Mr. Omar Lavallee, Chief Archivist for the CPR, first had his attention brought to the existence of the series of portfolios when Glimpses Along the Line of the CPR Mountain Series C was recently lent to the Archives.

album, one of which is from a painting by G. Horne Russell derived from a Notman photograph entitled Beaver Valley, Selkirk Mountains, 1892. Other prints are of paintings by Bell-Smith, J. Hammond and William Brymner (1855-1925).¹⁹

Both landscape views of the West and Indian photographs were popular in the nineteenth century. Photographs of Indian life in Canada provide us both with fine images of high aesthetic value and with anthropological evidence of a culture which had almost vanished by the beginning of the twentieth century. The photographs of H. L. Hime, who accompanied Henry Youle Hind on the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition in 1858, provide some of the most poignant of these images.

The mood of many of these photographs taken in the West is what may be described as 'austere' and very much in the tradition of the documentary photograph. The lack of interpretation enhances them and gives a rather unique strength. This is particularly true of the work of Hime, which in some instances reaches a level of sublime austerity and predate and surpass Charles Manly's expectations of the eliminated and simplified vision. Alexander

¹⁹The Notman Archives possesses another in the series, simply entitled Glimpses Along the Line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. These are gravures of landscapes and Indians from photographs by Henderson, Boorne and May (a Calgary based studio which photographed the Sarcee, Blackfoot and other Indian tribes of the prairies). There are other Boorne and May Indian prints which come from a yet unidentified C.P.R. portfolio.

Henderson was one interpretive Canadian landscape photographer who introduced a romantic and symbolic note into his work.

Portraits were an even more popular subject matter than landscape. The Buffalo Illustrated Express, Nov. 26, 1892, described the camera's particular appropriateness in taking portrait likenesses:

It (the camera) is the great painter of character, and we may rest assured that our physical eccentricities will not be left, as were our ancestors', to the charitable hand of the painter. Instead, the camera will hand down to future generations the relentless truth concerning us, and they will know beyond dispute all of our personal deficiencies The latter day Solomon may say of a truth that of "the making of many pictures there is no end," and the nineteenth century Job exclaim, "Oh! that mine adversary had let me take his photograph."²⁰

Whereas Nadar, Carjat and Braun, well-known French photographers of the nineteenth century have famous actors, actresses, writers and members of the French intellectual community, as subject matter, the majority of portraits by Canadian photographers, William J. Topley (act. 1894-1926), Samuel McLaughlin (1826-1914) and Notman showed politicians, governors-general, industrialists and royalty. In addition, there were thousands of portraits taken of the ordinary individual, undistinguished by birth or deed. The numerous

²⁰ Elizabeth Flint Wade, "Hints in Photography," The Buffalo Illustrated Express, Nov. 26, 1892 (files of the Toronto Camera Club).

albums of carte de visites and cabinet portraits housed in the McCord Museum, reveal myriads of both types of portrait; middle and upper class people and portraits of the celebrities: Sir John A. McDonald, Sir Hugh Allan, Sir Charles Tupper, Lord and Lady Dufferin, Prince Albert and the renowned opera star from Chambly, Marie Emma Albani. Portraits of members of the artistic community indeed exist, but not in the quantities found in the Nadar or Carjat collections. Such portraits in the Notman collections are of Adolphe Vogt and posed somewhat less formally -- John Hammond, William and John Fraser, Edward Sharpe, James Weston and Henry Sandham.²¹

Genre painting in Canada did not enjoy an equivalent popularity to that in England and similarly only one photographer here explored the realm of genre photography. This was James Esson (acq. 1875) of Preston, Ontario. He published Stereoscopic Gems in the '70's, a series of stereo cards on genre themes. The studio posed Notman photographs of Cariboo and Moose hunting might also be described under this category.

As the century progressed, so the city became an increasingly popular theme for both painters and

²¹ There is, in a modest way, a similarity between the manner in which Notman's portraits of artists reflect the small artistic community in Montreal and Toronto and the way in which Nadar and Carjat's photographs reflect the milieu of intellectual and artistic Paris of the latter decades of the 19th century.

photographers. In the last decades of the century it seemed as if the painter ceded this territory to the photographer, however, and paintings like Bell-Smith's Lights of a City Street, done in the last decade, shows a fragment of the city and not the entire cityscape. The cityscape with all its complex geometry of perspective and intricacy of detail came to be viewed as a more appropriate subject for the photographer.

CHAPTER III

DISSEMINATION OF THE PHOTOGRAPH

In addition to being used for expressive or social documentary purposes, the photograph was also put to the very practical use of illustrating books, periodicals and publicity brochures. One such publicity brochure was the C.P.R. publication referred to in the preceding chapter. In Europe there was a radical transformation in the book and magazine publishing field after the discovery of the photographic process. The reproduction technique and treatment of theme were two areas decisively influenced by the photograph. Significant publishing events of the 1840's were: Excursions Daguerriennes, Lerebours (1843), The London Illustrated News, (1842).²² The former was an album composed of engravings done from Daguerreotypes of exotic landscapes from all over the world. The latter was a weekly periodical describing various news events elaborately illustrated. The importance of the publishing of such works was significant and the influence on the visual image two-fold. It led to a greater range of subject matter and, when a photograph was used as

²² French photographers Moreau, Trémaux, Saltzmann and Nègre published albums of local and exotic interest within the next three decades.

the source for the illustration or as the medium of illustration, established the supremacy of the realistic, informational image.

An album published by Pierre Trémaux shows an interesting use of both photographs and drawings from photographs. This album is similar to and follows not long after Lerebour's Excursions Daguerriennes. Parallèles Edifices Anciens et Modernes du Continent Africain dessinés et relevés de 1847-1854, was published serially in twenty issues every two months from June 1852 ca 1855 and was devoted exclusively to North African architecture. Illustrations were done from hand-drawn sketches and lithographs based on photographic images. Sometimes both the hand-drawn image and the original photographic print were included. As the series progressed in time so more lithographs from photographs appeared. The juxtaposition of the photograph and drawing made from the photograph provided an interesting opportunity for stylistic comparison. A study of the two images reveals that it was not only the informational accuracy of the photograph that was sought after by the artist who was drawing from the photograph, but also the rich tones and full volumes.

The Photographic Portfolio: a monthly review of Canadian scenes and scenery, 1858-60, was the earliest photographic portfolio to be published in Canada.²³ It was

²³Ralph Greenhill, Early Photography in Canada, p. 37.

followed by the publication of Notman's Photographic Selections, a two-volume publication, the first series of which appeared in 1863 and the second in 1865. The purpose of the publication was stated in the prospectus as being 'to foster the increasingly growing taste for works of art in Canada'. Both volumes contained photographs but primarily illustrated photographs of paintings, some of which were by Cornelius Krieghoff (1815-1872) and John A. Fraser. It also included photographs of engravings of old master works and seventeenth and nineteenth century Belgian and English painters, reflecting popular taste of the period.

George Monro Grant's Picturesque Canada; The country as it was and is, published in 1882, demonstrates the popularity of the photograph in book illustration and a growing patriotic interest in documenting Canada. Acknowledgement is given to the use of photographs in the Preface: "The Director of the Geological Survey and Dr. Robert Bell put at our disposal photographs for illustrating the Hudson Bay route."²⁴

An illustration of lumbering is derived from a photograph by Henderson (Fig. 10) and two other city views suggest derivation from the Notman photographs. Among the artists employed to provide illustrations were John Fraser,

²⁴George Monro Grant, Picturesque Canada; The country as it was and is, unpag. (Preface).

William Raphael, Lucius O'Brien and Robert Harris.

The photographs of surveyor and photographer, Humphrey L. Hime (1833-1903) served as a source for the chromoxylograph illustrations in H. Y. Hind's Canadian Red River and Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Expedition (1860).²⁵

In Canada the photographic image was widely disseminated by the publication of portfolios and albums of photographs and in The Canadian Illustrated News, a periodical styled after the London Illustrated News and established by George Desbarats in 1869. The range of imagery in the Canadian Illustrated News extends from carefully executed fashion drawings to quick sketches of a local boating regatta which was either drawn by 'our artist on the spot' or drawn from a photograph taken of the event. In almost every edition there appeared a reproduction of an engraving of a painting by a French Academic painter, English Academic painter or more rarely, an old master painting.

An artist employed by an Illustrated weekly could be called upon to perform a variety of tasks from that of being 'artist on the spot' to making drawings for the engraver. The job of 'artist on the spot' which Jackson, author of a book on the pictorial press, describes as involving risks tantamount to 'perils of the earth, air, fire and water ...'

²⁵H. L. Hime was the photographer who accompanied Hind on his expedition. R. Huyda, Camera in the Interior: 1858, Coach House Press, Toronto, C1975.

'deer stalking in the highlands ... risking his life in Afghanistan, Zululand' was seldom as exciting as it sounded. More often than not the sketch was made from a photograph or sketched from the imagination.²⁶

The pictorial press played a large role in transforming public taste as its accessibility was far greater than the more exclusive albums and portfolios. Mason Jackson described it as "no unimportant factor in diffusing the purifying and softening influences of art".²⁷ Well, may the influence of art be called 'softening' when the type of art being reproduced in the pictorial press was generally of a cheap, sentimental nature. These images were, however, not purifying.

Many self-respecting artists refused to work for these publications, feeling that it reduced their role to a purely commercial level. In Canada Robert Harris, when approached by the Canadian Illustrated News with an offer of employment, stated that he did not want to 'do a parcel of trash'. The drawings prepared for publication in this manner were sketchy. The requirement was that the artist work rapidly and correctly rather than either painstakingly or imaginatively. The artist who prepared the drawings for the engraver or lithographer often made crucial decisions about

²⁶ Mason Jackson, The Pictorial Press, p. 328.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 303-304.

a photographer or master artist's work. These decisions often involved the suppression of large areas of the image and the exaggeration or modification of details. In 1863 the role of the engraver came up for evaluation in the light of this very problem. George Thomas Doo, R. A. E. defended the engraver's right to enjoy membership privileges in the Royal Academy by stating that his chief value was his ability to select and refine a work of art.²⁸ The photographer, he declared, copied 'the vicious with the good' whereas the engraver could be discriminating.²⁹

The work of engraver William Leggo, employed by the Canadian Illustrated News and L'Opinion Publique, is relevant to a study of the Canadian scene. Both Leggo and his employer, publisher George Desbarats, were from families that were historically involved with the printing and publishing business.³⁰ In October 1869, the Canadian Illustrated News

²⁸ Aaron Scharf, Art and Photography, pp. 120-121.

²⁹ The extent to which an artist altered his work procedure in preparation for the photo-mechanical reproduction process depended largely on whether he was drawing from a photograph or graphite sketch and the nature of the final reproduction method. For many years the most popular method of reproducing both drawings and photographs was the simple wood engraving technique. This image rendered the information in line and denied any half-tone subtleties. From 1860 a great deal of experimentation with half-tone processes took place resulting in a process whereby a copy of a photograph could be directly transferred to the printing plate. The problems of uniting image and type were manifold but finally overcome.

³⁰ Peter Desbarats, Canadian Illustrated News. Introduction to 1969 facsimile reprint of first issue of 1869.

printed the first half-tone photographic image. It was the first magazine in the world to have accomplished this feat and reports of the event were enthusiastic both in Canada and Europe. Predictably, this first half-tone image was a portrait of a member of the English Royal family, H. R. H. Prince Arthur, a visitor in Canada at the time. Earlier, in 1865, Leggo had achieved international recognition for having patented a line-engraving process which accelerated and facilitated illustration reproduction enormously. This process was known as the Leggotype.

Several of the Canadian artists (whose paintings and involvement with photography will be discussed in this thesis) had works reproduced in the Canadian Illustrated News. A chromolithography by Sandham, based on a Notman photograph, Snow-shoe Party by Moonlight, was reproduced, as were landscapes by Frederick Verner (1836-1928), Robert Gagen (1847-1926). Both were employed by Notman's Toronto studio. Allan Edson, J. C. Forbes, F. M. Bell-Smith and Charles Way were others who had work reproduced in this periodical.

Photographs by William Notman, W. J. Topley, J. B. Livernois and William Sawyer contributed to the body of illustrations. Similar in format to the Canadian Illustrated News was the Dominion Illustrated which appeared in the 1880's. Both Notman and Henderson contributed

photographs to this publication.³¹ In August 1888, the magazine ran the following request, addressed to photographers:

We are anxious to procure good photographs of important events, men of note, city and town views, forest and farm operations, seaside resorts, mountains and prairie scenery, salmon and trout fishing, yachting, etc., from all parts of the Dominion, and we ask photographers, amateurs and professional, to show their patriotism, as well as their love of art, by sending us prints of such subjects as may enable us to lay before our readers, at home and abroad, interesting and attractive pictures of Canada.³²

Works by European Academic painters appeared in the Canadian Illustrated News from the outset. Emphasis was placed on the French rather than on the English artists. Gustav Doré, J. P. Laurens, Horace Vernet, Adolph William Bougereau were among the former and Clarkson Stanfield among the latter.

The influence that the illustrations in illustrated weeklies exerted on the painter was not necessarily direct or extensive but it formed a constant and thus strong

³¹Topley was also a frequent contributor. Photographs became especially popular with improvements in the photo-mechanical reproduction techniques of the 1880's. The Dominion Illustrated, for example, published landscape photographs by Henderson, Notman and Topley in its weekly issues of August, September and October, 1888. Many were photographs of the West by Notman and Henderson. It would seem that this was a period of renewed excitement about photography.

³²Dominion Illustrated News, Vol. I, no. 5, 4 August, 1888, p. 66. The same periodical was soliciting photographs of local and general interest one month later: "In these days of instantaneous photography, when Kodaks and other cameras are in everybody's hands and pictures of every kind so easily obtained" Dominion Illustrated, Vol. I, no. 2, 15 September, 1888, p. 162.

reference for those artists whose orientation was factual and illustrative. Those artists who earned all or part of their livelihood from working for these publications were particularly susceptible to this influence. A high degree of realism and easy readability, both in theme and style were major requirements for the illustrations.

CHAPTER IV

THE PAINTED PHOTOGRAPH AND THE PHOTOGRAPH IN PAINTING

"PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE SMALLEST TO LIFE SIZE
FINISHED IN INDIA INK, OIL OR WATER COLORS"
(Back of carte-de-visite of J. E. Hoitt's
Fine Art Gallery, Oshawa)

Painters in Canada who attempted to equal the realism of the photograph resorted to using the photograph as an aid in a variety of ways. The photographic print was used for direct and literal copying: for notational purposes -- obtaining some information or a basic idea of pose or proportion -- for painting over and for the making of composite photographs. Whereas the copying of the photograph entailed mechanical skill, the making of a painted composite photograph and the painted photograph required a combination of invention and copying. In the case of painted photographs decisions had to be made about the selection of colours and the opacity or translucency of the paint medium used. The degree to which the outlines and tones of the photograph were to be covered or left exposed was also a consideration.

A method which involved the use of the photographic negative proved popular in both Europe and North America. This process involved the projection of the photographic image onto a canvas prepared with a coating of light-sensitive

emulsion.

Examples of copying the photograph to accomplish otherwise insurmountable tasks are abundant. One of the earliest in Europe is David Octavius Hill's The Signing of the Deed of Demission (1843-66), a work which involved the portrayal of some four hundred and seventy-four likenesses. Hill relied extensively on photographs to aid him in this undertaking. The modus operandi for such works would have necessitated the squaring off of both canvas and photographs followed by the laborious task of drawing in the figures by following the pattern of the grid. It did not take very long for photographers to find a means by which the photographic image could be projected onto the canvas. They supplied the artist with either a temporary or permanent base upon which to work.

Methods by which the artist could procure an enlarged image on his canvas began to appear in the photographic journals of the 1860's. It was possible to project an image directly onto the canvas: formulae were advertised whereby the canvas could be light-sensitized and the image thus permanently but faintly affixed to it. The canvas was ready to be painted over. Painting onto a photographic image on canvas had advantages over painting on an albumen print. This eliminated the tell-tale layer of photographic paper and the true nature of the image could not be detected. Over-painting done on albumen prints which was then pasted onto a

cardboard or wood panel backing could, by contrast, be easily identified as painted photographs by the layer of photographic paper and they often developed chemical problems. These problems resulted from the generous amount of linseed oil required in applying the oil colour to a slightly resistant surface.

Two Canadian painters favoured the photograph on canvas technique. Henry Sandham and Edward Sharpe projected the photographic image onto canvas and created a work astounding in its high definition of detail.³³ They used this method when confronted with the task of making a painting of a skating party composite taken by Notman in 1870. The skating party was a particularly important Canadian occasion, Royalty was present with Prince Arthur one of the guests.

Both Sandham and Sharpe were employed by Notman as painters of studio backdrops and composite backgrounds. It is possible that either one or both of these artists would have worked on the original "Skating Party" composite, the whereabouts of which is unfortunately not known. A common practice of Notman was to photograph the finished composite. It is this 8" x 10" photograph of the original composite, ..

³³ Sharpe painted a considerable number of large photographic portraits in 1871. These are portraits of various Montreal dignitaries and appear to have been done in the same manner on an emulsified canvas. Unfortunately Sharpe's career was cut short by an early death (age 21).

The Skating Party, 1970, McCord Museum, which now survives.³⁴

In comparing the painting and the photograph of the composite the evidence of exactness with which the painting describes the original is overwhelmingly in favour of the method of copying by way of the light sensitized canvas. There is no evidence of a tell-tale grid and the dimensions of the painting correspond to a combination of one size of glass plate negative used by Notman at that time. The complexity of this image with over one hundred figures, many of which are clearly identifiable portraits of actual personalities, precludes the possibility of free hand copying.

Painting directly onto a photographic print was very popular amongst portrait painters who were desperately attempting to meet the voracious demands of the public for 'speaking-likenesses'. Formulae for the preparation of the photographic printing paper to receive colour were similarly advertised and debated in photography journals of the 1860's and 1870's and also described in books relating to the subject of photography and its techniques.

Heath, in A New Treatise on Photography, entitles a chapter, "How to Prepare Photographs for Colouring," and suggests that the photograph to be painted in oil be mounted on millboard or canvas which has been thoroughly soaked in

³⁴The painting measures $53\frac{1}{2} \times 37\frac{1}{2}$ inches (135.9 x 95.2 cm) which is probably the size of the original composite.

linseed oil or preferably megilp (a mixture of boiled linseed oil and mastic varnish).³⁵

Once this or one of the alternative preparation methods had been attended to, the photograph could be 'coloured in the regular style of portrait painting'. For those of limited or no artistic skill, there was a special method. The method suggested was that which required the soaking of the photograph in linseed oil and the application of colour on the reverse. This eliminated the problem of poorly applied colour and awkward brushstroke by the amateur or, at least, made it less obvious.³⁶

Confusion resulted from this situation and, as may be expected, many painters who initially protested against the use of the photograph resorted to using it. William Sawyer voiced his opposition to the painters' use of the photograph in the Gazette of 1872:

... Mr. Sawyer does not ignore photography as a valuable assistant, but will not tolerate the use of it as a foundation for an oil painting. The portraits of the ancient masters have lasted from century to century, because when they were executed paint was used with no stint and with no more oil than necessary to mix the colours. In the case of the semi-photograph pictures, the paint is thinly laid on with a great deal of oil

³⁵Heath suggests that the only necessary preparation for the application of water colour is the pasting of the photograph onto thick Bristol Board with Gum Arabic, p. 129.

³⁶Heath, A New Treatise on Photography, p. 130.

and it is a certain consequence that in the course of time the picture suffers by deterioration and finally becomes worthless at an early date.³⁷

Sawyer's objection was not founded on the problem of truth and originality in art but on a technical issue. The practice of painting over photographs required an excess of oil in the medium and, in his opinion, resulted in a deterioration of the canvas.

Samuel Hawksett and Joseph Dynes, better known as Canadian painters than photographers, opened a photography studio on St. James Street in 1861.³⁸ They advertised themselves as painters of portraits, miniatures and landscapes who would take photographs of all sizes and paint them in either oil or watercolour. This venture was short-lived.

Such unsuccessful attempts at establishing photographic studios were experienced by many portrait painters: feeling that their positions had been usurped by photography, they reacted by producing coloured photographs.³⁹ Dynes and Hawksett achieved a measure of success in this area and received a prize for the best painted photograph

³⁷"Mr. Sawyer's Art and Photographic Studio," The Gazette (Montreal), Vol. C1, no. 21 (24 January, 1972), p. 2, col. 7.

³⁸Elizabeth Collard, "A Forgotten Artist -- Samuel Hawksett," Canadian Antiques Collector, Vol. 3, no. 12 (December 1968), p. 16.

³⁹Ibid., p. 16.

at the Montreal Exhibition in 1863.⁴⁰

Charles Wain, an employee of Notman's Montreal studio, exhibited a work at the Art Association of Montreal Exhibition in 1867. It was described in the catalogue as a "photographic portrait (coloured)." Evidently this was either a painted photographic portrait which in no way attempted to disguise the photographic qualities of the print upon which the colour was placed or it was a work in which all traces of the photographic image had been smothered by heavy layers of paint.

Samuel Hawksett worked extensively in the latter method where he placed a heavy layer of colour over the photographic image. His Portrait of Madame Charles Leclair, n.d. (Fig. 11) is an example of the suffocating and heavy approach he took when attempting to make the photograph appear to be an actual painting. In this picture, the photographic image is completely obliterated by the dense skin of paint. The only evidence of the photographic source is the tell-tale layer of paper adhering to the canvas and certain surface characteristics which are associated with the painted photograph in general; rigidity of pose and hard-edge treatment of forms. The appearance of these

⁴⁰ A large painting entitled 'Rowing Scene' signed by Hawksett, has been revealed as a painted photograph. Like the aforementioned Sharpe portraits, this is housed in the Notman Archives, McCord Museum and will form the subject of further study by this writer.

qualities in the painting show that the artist has not observed the subject for himself. Furthermore, he has not understood the transition of tones as related to the planes of the face as they were recorded by the photograph. His Portrait of Young Wiseman, ca 1870, (Fig. 12) is, however, an example of the more subtle and gentle colour application he used when colouring a photograph.

There are several known photographs painted by John Fraser.⁴¹ His technique was to overlay the watercolours on the pale photographic image as if it were a preliminary drawing. He respected the photographic image and did not deny the lines and tones it produced. Photographic line and tone speak for themselves, being visible under a very light and transparent layer of colour and demonstrate Fraser's sensitivity to the photographic image. The surface quality of the photograph is respected and the transition from it to the painted surface is not distracting. Examples of works by Fraser which are simply painted photographs and do not involve the obliteration of the source image are delicate portraits of Miss Mary McCord, 1869 (Fig. 13), Mr. Atwater, 1868 (Fig. 14), Mr. Greenshields, 1867 (Fig. 15) and Mr. William Notman Snr., 1868 (Fig. 16) and Mrs. William Notman Senior, 1868, (Fig. 17). In Portrait of William Theodore Benson, 1863 (Fig. 18) he takes a step beyond the simple

⁴¹These are housed in the Notman Archives of the McCord Museum.

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posed photographic portrait. This is a painted composite made from a Notman source-photograph. The subtlety of Fraser's handling of the painted photographic portrait distinguished his works from those of Hawksett.

Note the contrast between the Hawksett and Fraser portraits. In the Hawksett portrait we have an attempt to subvert the photographic image by applying a heavy veil of oil colour and in the Fraser we have witnessed the opposite; a respect for the integrity of the photographic image by a discrete rather than dominating use of colour. A curious image which relates in theme to Fraser's Portrait of William Benson is Baby Seated on Bear Rug, n.d. (Fig. 19), a Notman photograph painted by Eugène L'Africain. L'Africain was a Notman employee who, along with colleagues J. Horne Russell (1861-1933), James Weston (1815-1896) painted over photographs and used the photograph as a source for combination images.⁴²

In this portrait, Baby Seated on Bear Rug, L'Africain attempts to make an image in which both the authenticity of the photograph is respected and a painted surface fully acknowledged. He does this by leaving the figure of the baby relatively untouched by paint, only delicately highlighting

⁴²A large painted photograph by L'Africain is housed in the Notman Archives. Unlike his Baby Seated on Bear Rug, there has been no attempt to reveal the photograph in this work. To the contrary, a thick layer of paint and a large quantity of linseed oil has caused the photographic paper to peel off the canvas backing. This is an example of the deterioration Sawyer warned against in the statement quoted earlier in the chapter.

fold in the robe with white and adding almost imperceptible touches of the brush to the eyes, eyebrows and mouth and then painting in the table, edges of the bear-skin rug and background. The background image is somewhat ambiguous, leading one to believe that it is indeed a view out of a window showing figures in a Corot-like landscape.

The painting style is light and suggestive but the strength of the colour is such that it destroys any suggestion of depth. This technique results in a strange separation of parts but simultaneously gives the image an extraordinary strength.

The differing degrees to which the identity of the photograph is respected by these three artists, Fraser, Hawksett and L'Africain, becomes apparent when comparing their works. Whereas Hawksett attempts a full disguise of the photograph by pasting the photograph onto the canvas and then applying heavy, concealing layers of oil colour, Fraser touches the photographic surface lightly with subtle tones of water-colour which in no way suggest that it is anything other than a coloured photograph. Fraser and L'Africain's works both remain within the common photographic scale range. The circular image Portrait William Theodore Benson, measuring 3 inches in diameter (inside frame) and Baby Seated on Bear Rug, measuring $12\frac{1}{4} \times 15\frac{3}{4}$ inches (outside frame) exemplify this. Hawksett's Portrait of Mme. Charles Leclair is by contrast 36 x 27 inches. (91.4

x 68.6 cm), the size of a half-length life-size portrait. Fraser's portrait remains the more discrete image when compared with the work of L'Africain. Fraser's treatment of the surface is consistent. There is no area which is treated in the manner of an ordinary painting. L'Africain includes both the heavy, disguising painterly treatment of Hawksett and the gentle touch of Fraser. In the central figure of the baby, we note extreme delicacy of brushwork and colour application. The same kind of control and discretion observed in the Fraser can be seen here. The treatment of the background is the method Hawksett used; a heavy layer of oil colour. These are some examples of painted photographic portraits that indicate the variety of approaches and methods encountered in this process.

There are composite images by James Weston and George Horne Russell in which seascape and landscape are used as subject matter. A Notman photograph, Victoria Bridge From Steamer Filgate, 1884 or 1885, (Fig. 20) served as a source-image for a painting by James Weston, Charlottetown, P. E. I., 1886? (Fig. 21). The painting is only known through a Notman photograph. Weston painted over several city and architectural photographs by Notman. In the Charlottetown, P. E. I. painting he has borrowed from the photograph, copying figures standing on the deck of the steamer and the steamer itself but it is placed in an entirely different geographical setting.

George Horne Russell (1861-1933) has done much the same thing in Mounts Fox, Dawson and Donkin, from Asulkan Glacier, 1889 (Fig. 22) by using two source photographs, combining them and painting over the composite. The source photographs are Mounts Fox, Dawson and Donkin, and Dawson Glacier, Notman, 1889 (Fig. 23) and Asulkan Glacier, Glacier Park, B. C., Notman, 1889 (Fig. 24). Again we know the painting only through a photograph.

The practice of combining two negatives in a single print was common among photographers. This practice required skill in dodging and masking techniques so that the combined images would be convincingly integrated. In this case no attempt has been made by Horne Russell to soften the edges where the two images meet so that the viewer is confronted with a scene which to some extent resembles a stage set. The quality of light in the two separate source photographs has not been translated accurately in the painting of the photograph so that foreground and background have very little spatial distinction. Certain features such as the softened edges of the distant angles of the mountain peaks in the photograph have been sharply delineated in the painted combination. The result is an image of overall flatness.

A painted photograph, Mammoth Spruce Tree, Stanley Park, 1887 (Fig. 25) is another example of a Horne-Russell and Notman collaboration. The source-image or unpainted photograph (Fig. 26) which served as a base has been slightly

altered in the painting; the single figure of the man leaning against the base of the tree-trunk has been transformed in the painted version to two figures, a man and woman, of somewhat smaller scale. The trunk of the tree has also been thickened by connecting it with the trunk of a tree to the right in the original source photograph.

These are examples of the painters' very direct and practical use of the photographic image and the variant forms that this usage took. The use of the photograph was not always this direct and was often used more selectively. In many ways it is this more subtle and often undiscernable use of the photograph that is most interesting because it touches on unconscious influence as opposed to direct and conscious imitation. For many Canadian artists the photograph provided a new concept of realism and it was for reasons of further exploring and developing this concept that they turned to the study and use of the photograph.

The artists who regarded the photograph as a tool which would aid them in their understanding and rendering of 'reality' were attracted to the manner in which the camera was able to reduce and freeze the image, thus making it easier to grasp and transcribe the objects and relationships between them in the external world. While artists like Fraser, Hawksett, L'Africain and Horne-Russell used the photograph in the manner already described, others used it less directly and in a notational manner. In this way

it served as an aide-memoire rather than an object to be copied. European artists such as Corot, Manet and Degas used it in just such a fashion.

The field of portrait painting was particularly prone to public demand for photographic likenesses, in Canada and Europe. Both Van Deren Coke and Scharf have dealt exhaustively with the plight of the miniaturist and painters whose gagne-pain was the portrait. With the growing popularity of the photographic portrait, the portrait painter suffered a loss of financial and social status. Frequently these dispossessed artists resorted to colouring photographs, establishing their own photography studios or took to working directly from photographs in order to appease the public's appetite for verisimilitude.

In Canada Robert Harris employed Notman's cabinet photographs as a notational aid never copying strictly from them but leaning heavily on their details.⁴³ His sitters included government officials and as a result he was more often than not able to find Notman cabinet portraits from which to work, Notman having served much the same clientele.

Of all the Canadian painters whose works related in

⁴³A large painted photograph, Missie Sheila MacFarlane, 1898, done by the emulsified canvas method, is said to have been executed by Robert Harris. (See notes attached to copy photo in Notman Archives). If this is so, it reveals that this artist not only used photographs as a source but painted on them. This particular example was displayed as an advertisement in Notman's window.

some manner to the photograph, Harris is probably the most interesting because his letters serve as a record of the frustrations experienced by the portrait painter painting for a photo-happy public. His writings reveal very precisely what it was that the Canadian public perceived in photographic portraits and wanted transcribed in the painted portrait. It was factual accuracy and nothing less!

Early on in his career Harris claimed that much of his success as a portrait painter could be attributed to the fact that he did not work from photographs. In the light of his successive writings this insight becomes both ironical and tragic revealing much to us of the painter's personality and the pressures to which he succumbed.

I put it (success) down to not having worked from photos at all. I told everyone here when I first came that I would not paint from photos, as it is mean, inartistic work, though it pays and I've kept my word.⁴⁴

In 1880 he wrote a letter to his mother stating that he was unable to 'please sitters who want portraits that look like photographs'. Despite the annoyance he experienced he never refrained from complying with the public demand as evidenced by letters to friends and relatives requesting photographs:

⁴⁴ Moncrieff Williamson, Robert Harris 1849-1909, an unconventional biography, p. 71.

I only want the head and shoulders. Find out from some of his friends what is the best picture of him (Lieutenant-Governor Joseph Howe). I suppose Notman is sure to have photos.⁴⁵

Letters from clients affirm the frequency with which Harris indulged in this practice. A letter from A. Campbell refers to the photographs for which his daughter posed and required by Harris for use in painting of her portrait.

Harris' was clearly not an isolated case. Lucius O'Brien wrote to Harris when the latter was contemplating a move to Toronto in reply to a request for advice. It read:

Toronto is the best art centre in Canada, at present, and there are more artists here than anywhere else, and we have no lack of portrait painters or rather colourers of photographs.⁴⁶

O'Brien's distinct tone of disapproval may or may not have had any relationship to Harris' practice of using the photograph. There is no record of any animosity between them; nevertheless, one wonders as to the nature of Harris' response. Harris saw the problem as symptomatic of both Canadian taste and Colonial taste in general. In 1880 he made this statement:

The trouble here in portrait painting is one which is (common) in all new countries; they think pictures are better the more they are like photos, so it is hard to get people to sit.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 27.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 60.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 78. This letter followed a portrait commission of Mr. Baird's wife. "The people who want portraits are those who know nothing of art;"

Of Harris' involvement with photography, Moncrieff Williamson has written the following:

Harris never enjoyed working from photographs, although he would make use of them as an aid to memory; how could a portraitist achieve the empathy that is the essence of true portrayal without drawing directly from the human figure?⁴⁸

It is just this tight line that Harris often walks, some of his portraits displaying a rather belaboured and rigid appearance and lacking the empathy to which Williamson refers. His portrait of Sir Hugh Allan, 1885, National Gallery of Canada is admirable in the measure of technical control it displays but it lacks the insightful gentleness of his portraits of members of his family and young children, such as Bessie in her Wedding Gown, 1885 and Mrs. Maurice Nolan Delisle, 1885, Private Collection, Jennie Stewart, 1886 (Fig. 27).

The demand for photographic realism was particularly emphatic in the field of portrait painting. A series of letters in the Public Archives reveal how exacting and tedious some of Harris' sitters could be in their demands for literal pictorial truth. In one instance Harris was commissioned to paint Lord Aberdeen, Governor-General of Canada (1893-1898) in his McGill LL.D. gown. During the course of the sittings for this portrait, Aberdeen was awarded a new gown which appeared, particularly to Lady

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 22.

Aberdeen, to be of a slightly different shade. Consequently, Harris was sent the new gown to scrutinize and he was informed in an accompanying note by Aberdeen, that it was hoped that Harris' subsequent rendering would be found "sufficiently accurate so that no one may suggest that you (Harris) have been unorthodox." Harris dutifully changed the colour of the gown only to be requested to restore it to its former shade. Although the portrait was admired as a 'faithful and natural' likeness of Lord Aberdeen, Lady Aberdeen informed him by letter, it was regretted that,

... you (Harris) should have altered it from the original. People always ask at once, "What gown is that? And the fact remains that there is no such gown existing."⁴⁹

Portraits were painted largely to meet the demands of a middle and upper-middle class and conservative society in English-speaking Canada and Harris as chief portraitist for this milieu had to suffer their attitudes. One is appreciative of the frustration Harris experienced when fulfilling commissions whose imaginative reach was at best conservative. Yet one is surprised that in painting portraits of friends or self-portraits, he does not deviate radically from the realist approach.

A comparison of Harris' portrait of Otto Jacobi, 1892, National Gallery of Canada (Fig. 28) and Sir Hugh Allan,

⁴⁹Letter, Lady Aberdeen to Robert Harris. Album of Harris Correspondence in the P. A. C.

1885, National Gallery of Canada (Fig. 29) shows that although there is greater formality in the treatment of pose and finish in the latter, in both he searches out details and creates a crispness of outline. In an attempt to faithfully record the contours of the sitter's features, the control of form and tone is relentlessly severe. There is no softening of edges or suppressing of tone for the purpose of flattery or conveying mood.

Harris was not comfortable with the photograph whereas Thomas Bakins, an American painter and photographer, was both comfortable with the information it offered and even seemed to share very deeply the sense of order, solidity, time and light intrinsic to the photographic image.

An incident which occurred in 1876 involving J. C. Forbes' use of a photograph in painting a portrait of the Earl of Dufferin demonstrates the touchy question of ethics in regard to the use of the photograph by painters. The portrait had been submitted and accepted into the Canadian Fine Arts Department at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. Forbes appears to have been less than honest about this and it was only under the scrutinous eye of John Fraser that Forbes' unethical conduct was revealed. Fraser, Superintendent of the Photography Department, spotted the portrait and identified it as having been copied directly from a Notman and Fraser cabinet photograph. His reaction is most pertinent since it reveals the extent to which painting from

a photograph was raised from a problem of stultification of the imagination to a serious ethical problem. In Fraser's judgement of a work of art, the principle criterion was not aesthetic but moral -- good or bad, it should at least be honest. This letter, one of the few by Fraser, touches deeply on one of the concerns of this thesis. It underlines the pressure placed on the artist to conform to standards of photographic realism and the moral opposition to the painter's use of the photograph.

Addressed to the Canadian Commission in charge of the exhibition, it read as follows:

Gentlemen,

As a member of the firm of Notman and Fraser of Toronto it is my painful duty to protest against your hanging or allowing to be hung or publicly exhibited in any way a life size portrait of his Excellency the Earl of Dufferin painted by J. C. Forbes from a Cabinet photograph taken copyrighted and published by us in Toronto. We respectfully submit that painting the picture without our consent and sending it to Phila. (sic) to be exhibited in the fine arts dept. (sic) as a portrait painted from life is an act unworthy of Mr. Forbes and ~~must if~~ I am compelled to make the circumstances known through the press vitiate the integrity of the Art Display from Canada in the eyes of the world and bring contempt on the Ontario Society of Artists more especially -- I therefore most respectfully ask you to interfere in the interest first of Canada secondly of Art which should at least good or bad be honest and thirdly in our interest as Citizens although we have a legal remedy.⁵⁰

Through photography the public had become trained in "likeness-seeing," as Herkomer, the English Academician and

⁵⁰Letter, Fraser to the Hon. Canadian Commission, April 25, 1876. (PAC RG 72, Vol. 3, no. 252 $\frac{1}{2}$).

portraitist, expressed it. It must have been an arduous task to equal their expectations.

Forbes had probably spent many long, painful and creatively draining hours assiduously copying the portrait of Lord Dufferin. He possibly would have been more open about the derivation of his image had the Fine Arts Department provided a category for painted photographs, as was often the case in provincial art exhibitions. Instead he attempted to pass it off as a work entirely of his own creation.

One suspects that many such incidents occurred despite the fact that the ethically acknowledged practice was to write, "after a Daguerreotype" or "after a photograph by ..." on the back of a painting done in such a manner. Many portrait painters chose not to draw attention to this fact. Theophile Hamel (1817-1870), a Canadian portrait painter from Quebec, was reputed to have used the photographic image fairly frequently.⁵¹ He acknowledged this in his portrait Cecile Bernier, 1858 by his inscription "T. H./ d'apres un Dag[uerreotype]."

Hamel is not known to have used Notman photographs. He does not appear to have had any direct connection with photography as did Dynes and Hawksett but was a painter who served a large section of the Quebec public around Quebec City. He retained a strong sense of individuality in his

⁵¹R. H. Hubbard, Antoine Plamondon: Theophile Hamel, p. 40.

works even when working from a Daguerreotype. His portrait of Cecile Bernier is not a slavish imitation but, rather it is a painted image which in pose, relationship to surrounding space and execution of forms, relates to the Daguerreotype. At the same time it communicates the human, psychological reality of the sitter very strongly. The viewer is not confronted with a mechanically copied image but is brought to share the emotional and formal qualities which Hamel, extracted from the Daguerreotype. This work by Hamel illustrates that a portrait painted from a photographic source could indeed retain vitality and achieve likeness.

CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC AESTHETIC

Many painters, in addition to recognising the mimetic value of the photograph, were attracted to the purely aesthetic qualities of both the Daguerreotype and the paper print. In some cases it was the wealth of visual information, the textural variety and strong volumes expressed in the Daguerreotype that caught the attention of the painter; in other cases it was the delicate gradation of tones and diffused luminosity of the Calotype. Robert Sobieszek stresses the importance of distinguishing the pictorial qualities of the Daguerreotype and the photograph:

The Daguerreotype is marvellously precise in details, but the picture is fairly small in scale and the surface highly reflective. The early paper photographs are capable of sensitively rendering effects of light and mass more delicately than the Daguerreotype.⁵²

Few painters have spelled out their responses to the photographic image as precisely as Eugene Delacroix. His appreciation of the Daguerreotype as a perceptual and conceptual tool for the painter is made clear in his Journals. In these he talks of the precision with which passages of light and dark are recorded and of the emergence of minute

⁵² Robert Sobieszek, "Historical Commentary," French Primitive Photography, unpaginated.

details which might otherwise be unnoticed by the human eye. Delacroix advocated a selective and critical use of the Daguerreotype, urging artists not to become enslaved 'like one machine harnessed to another machine'.⁵³

Whereas the Daguerreotype revealed a wealth of detail and exactitude to the painter, other photographic processes offered a more subtle luminosity and gradation of tones.⁵⁴ These paper processes include the Calotype, the Woodburytype and the Albumen print.⁵⁵

The photographic image provided the painter with the opportunity to increase and give new meaning to his stylistic vocabulary. The use of artificial light by photographers in the 1850's is seen by Scharf as directly affecting the handling of light by certain painters. He ascribes the elimination of middle tones in the works of Daumier and Manet to the influence of photographs made by Nadar in the 1860's. In these photographs of the catacombs and sewers of Paris, Nadar used a magnesium light and created images which are dramatic in the strong juxtaposition of lights and darks.⁵⁶

⁵³ Aaron Scharf, Art and Photography, p. 90.

⁵⁴ Robert Sobieszek, "Historical Commentary," French Primitive Photography, unpaginated.

⁵⁵ The Calotype is the term applied to the salted paper process used by W. H. Talbot. The term salted paper print is used for the positive-negative photographs made in France.

⁵⁶ Aaron Scharf, Art and Photography, p. 37.

Light was not the only pictorial quality to be re-examined or extended as a result of the photographic image. The entire formal vocabulary and syntax of painting was made subject to re-evaluation and redefinition with the appearance of the photographic image. Before turning to examples of Canadian paintings which illustrate the influence of the photographic aesthetic, it is necessary to describe some of the formal properties associated with the photographic image.

A very basic distinction between the photograph and the painting is the mechanistic nature of the former in contrast with the manipulative nature of the latter. It is the ordering and controlling of form and space that attests to the mechanistic and manipulative qualities of an image.

Camera obscura and camera lucida drawings are forcible examples of the degree to which the camera produced image can be mechanistic.

This problem is explored by Sobieszek in a paper dealing with the relationship between photography and the theory of Realism in the Second Empire.⁵⁷ He focuses on the attitude taken by painters and photographers toward theme and he also describes the position of photographers, Realist painters and critics on the mechanistic nature of the photograph. He summarizes Disderi's assessment of the situation:

⁵⁷ Robert Sobieszek, "Photography and the Theory of Realism in the Second Empire: A Re-examination of a Relationship," One Hundred Years of Photographic History, pp. 146-147.

Disderi is actively dissociating the so-called art of photography from the mechanistic process and placing the art within the human artist, the photographer.

If the photographer can only choose what nature gives him to choose from, then the real art of photography is in the choice.⁵⁸

Any discussion of the influence of the photographic aesthetic on painting must take into account both the element of mechanistic description and the element of artistic choice in the photograph.

In Canada the influence of the photographic aesthetic derives from a variety of photographic processes; the Daguerreotype, paper prints, combination photographs, composite photographs and painted photographs. The difference between the European painter and the Canadian painter influenced by the photographic aesthetic is fundamental. The European painter, in general, shows a selective and self-conscious attitude and the Canadian painter adopts a more imitative and literal attitude. The painted photographic composite was a particularly popular photographic image in Eastern Canada in the nineteenth century. Like the combination photograph in which two negatives were merged, it required certain basic mechanical skills such as cutting out the separate images and then combining them in a successfully integrated composition.⁵⁹ In composite photographs

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 151.

⁵⁹Ralph Greenhill, Early Photography in Canada, p. 37.

the figures constituting the group were photographed separately in the studio, cut out and composed on a painted background. The composing of the separate images in a combination print took place under the photographic enlarger or in the printing frame.

A non-painterly integration of the figure with the setting frequently results from both the composites and the combination print. In the photograph of the composite the essential isolation of the figures is less evident because of the dominance of the photographic surface and hence elimination of the painted surfaces in the original composite. In addition to uniform surface, uniform tonality results from the elimination of juxtaposed sepia tones of the photograph and grey tones of the painted areas.

There is a distinct lack of integration between the figure and background in Henry Sandham and Edward Sharpe's painting, Skating Party (Fig. 30). The figures only appear to be integrated with each other and the surrounding space because they are participating in a crowd scene. The insistence on outline and detail from foreground to background creates a collage-like relationship. This precludes the tonal/linear integration prescribed by the pictorial principles in use from the Renaissance period to the end of the eighteenth century. The Skating Party also describes a different concept of movement in that the figures whilst portraying a very vivid and distinct action, appear static.

The sense of potential movement, found particularly in Baroque and Romantic painting, is completely denied here. The emphatic outlines of the figures and detailed treatment of the costume tend to isolate the figures and freeze the movement. (See Fig. 31 for source photograph).

Bell-Smith's Return to School, 1884, London Public Library and Art Museum, (Fig. 32) is strongly reminiscent of the photographic composite in that it shows a distinct isolation of the figure from the background. The figures have a solidity and crispness of edge that is not reiterated anywhere in the treatment of the background. The transition from figure to surrounding space is sudden and bears the same unrelatedness found in the composite photograph where the treatment of the background is loose and unstressed. The figures are grouped in a procession which thrusts itself diagonally from centre to left in the background. Within this procession the figures are rather haphazardly grouped but are consistently detailed from foreground to distance. There is no real attempt to create a convincing space around the individual figures or clusters of figures and this lack of space reinforces the collage-like appearance of the painting. Furthermore, the particularisation of the faces suggests a strong awareness of the photograph. The illumination is general and even. As a result the details are enhanced and insistent rather than suppressed.

Spatial illusionism undergoes radical changes in the

photographic composite. Depth is not created by way of carefully articulated planes nor is tonal suppression used to establish the position of the figures in the background.

There is a startling juxtaposition of the precise tones and edges of the photograph with the loose forms of the painted areas in the composite where the photographed figures are cut out and pasted onto a painted background. The background or environment which the figures occupy, be it landscape or interior, is treated as it would be in a naturalistic painting; linear and atmospheric perspective are used and the diminishment of form occurs as is natural to the laws of perspective. The figures, however, are often not photographed with the same regard for naturalism or perspective laws.

The figures, which constitute the greater part of such images, do not diminish in clarity from foreground to background. The slightly diminishing scale of the figures from foreground to background is often just sufficient to create the illusion of a very shallow spatial recession. The maker of photographic composites often regarded the factual illusionism of the photographic image to have been sufficiently persuasive so that no more than two major spatial planes needed to be established. The tableau of figures establish one plane and the background setting the second. This results in restricted depth.

Taking aesthetic considerations into account, Horne Russell's Mounts Fox, Dawson and Duncan from Asulkan Glacier

exhibits definite characteristics of the photographic composite. In its combination of the two images it illustrates the type of spatial compression described in the preceding paragraph. Foreground and background are united in the manner of two stage flats. Nowhere is there evidence of using conventional painterly devices to effect transition from foreground to background such as suppression of detail, muted tonality and blurred edges. There is no gradual integration of planes and the detailing of the foreground is as intense as in the middleground and background.

The fundamentally practical or commercial function of photography in Canada, as exemplified by the works coming from the Notman studio, determined a relatively conservative photographic aesthetic. This conservatism is nowhere more clearly shown than in the handling of light. Moderate and even illumination is favoured over dramatic spotlighting, particularly in the case of portraits or figure studies where the control of light was possible. Highly contrasting lights and darks undoubtedly forced a sacrifice of detail incompatible with the aims of the commercial portrait.

This unambiguous use of light where the primary concern is the illumination of details rather than the creation of mood is particularly evident in the composite photograph and the combination photograph. In fact, most Notman photographs fall into this category. Light remains an even and consistent factor in the cabinet portraits, landscapes and

architectural views unlike some of the Henderson landscapes which, in their exaggerated contrast of lights and darks create a strong romantic mood.

The dynamics of composition in a photograph clearly differ from image to image. The fundamental difference in the composition of a painting and a photograph is, however, that in the photograph the basic arrangement of forms is determined by nature and not painterly convention. There was a consciousness of pictorial schema by the painter and an attempt to use or be guided by the compositional schema of pre-nineteenth century painting. The photographic composition is further distinguished from the painting by the distance at which the figure is placed from the foreground. In unposed photographs the relationship of figure to foreground is often haphazard but also frequently determined by the focal range of the lens used. If the photographer wanted the figure and essential parts of the setting to be in sharp focus this would preclude a great distinction of space between the two.

Technical limitations create photographs in which the figure does not dominate the setting by virtue of scale. The composite photographs of Robinson and Rejlander can be viewed as attempts to overcome the problem of the figure in the photograph. These images notwithstanding, the photograph of the nineteenth century is seldom dominated by the scale of the human figure. Even though the technology

dictated a certain distance between the figure and immediate foreground, there appears to have been a willingness on the part of the photographer to allow the figures or objects to express their own particular intimacy with their surroundings.

It is very often this intimacy which fails to be communicated when the painting is directly translated from the photograph. It is, after all, this fragile and inimitable composition of parts; the delicate relationship between lights, darks, scale, line and form that often does not survive restatement in another medium. In Canada the photograph was more frequently copied because of its informational value than for aesthetic experimentation. Henry Sandham's Hunters Returning with the Spoil, 1877, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 33) suggests the use of the photograph although no evidence of a source-photograph exists. There are many indications that suggest the influence of the photograph. These are: treatment of space, the evenly dispersed yet artificial quality of light which illuminates visual particulars rather than bleaches out detail, the inserted appearance of the figures and their middle-distance relationship to the picture plane. The photographic appearance of this painting is further reinforced by the insistent detailing of figures and background alike and the absence of pictorial devices to create depth and volumetric form. The movement of the figures is circumscribed by outline rather

than by the creation of interior modelling of the figures. The mood of the painting is informational rather than anecdotal for equal attention is paid to the accurate and full description of both figure and landscape.

Similar treatment of the figure is found in Blair Bruce's (1859-1906) Phantom Hunter, n.d., Hamilton Art Gallery (Fig. 34). The subtle gradation of tones is reminiscent of the photograph and in this case, because some detail is suppressed, creates a tangible quality in the figure.

Two paintings by Paul Peel (1860-1892) involve the use of the photograph. One, The Artist's Palette, ca 1890, National Gallery of Canada (Fig. 35) can be interpreted as a pastiche of painting and photography. The second, Portrait of a Young Boy, n.d., London Public Library and Art Gallery (Fig. 36) makes use of both a source photograph (Fig. 37) and the photographic aesthetic. Summer Day, 1884, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton (Fig. 38) in contrast to these two works has no source photograph but does show the influence of the photograph in the handling of light and in the relationship of figure to background. The shadows cast on the ground by the figure and onto the figure by the hat are solid enough to have been observed from a photograph. Alternatively, it is a painting that results from a vision which was strongly aware of the tangible reality with which the camera can record the sharp plays of light and dark.

The figure in Summer Day has a quality of isolation similar to Hunters Returning with the Spoil and Phantom Hunter.

The total treatment of the figure is more tonally solid than the background. It has a firmness of outline and sense of mass that is not evident in the treatment of the background.

A similar treatment is found in George Reid's Forbidden Fruit, 1889, Art Gallery of Hamilton, (Fig. 39). If Muriel Miller Minor's description of Reid's staging of the scenes for many of his paintings is authentic, we can assume that this painting had no source-photograph but was painted from the boy model posed in the hayloft with his book. It would not be fair to assume that this painting was done either in the manner described or based on photographs. Both were, however, practices of his teacher at the Pennsylvania Academy, Thomas Eakins and there were few pupils who escaped the overwhelming influence of this powerful personality. Before travelling to Philadelphia to advance his studies, Reid had shown an interest in photography by applying for employment in the Notman studio in Toronto.

Spotlighting of the figure in Forbidden Fruit recalls the photographic aesthetic perhaps even more than the sharp silhouette treatment of the figure. The figure-setting relationship in this painting indicates the influence of the photographic composite, although the strong contrast of light does not. Reid has used the type of lighting employed in

photography studios but he dared to suppress details in a manner that is encountered in very few, if any, Notman photographs.

Whereas Reid dares to spotlight and cast areas into deep shade, he never uses photographic light or photographic realism to achieve the pictorial vitality or psychological intensity as did his teacher. Eakins involved himself deeply with the concepts that the photograph offered, creating paintings in which the preciseness of spatial arrangement and light distribution were intrinsic to the very life of the painting. Before moving away from the discussion of the influence of the composite print, one further point relating to the composite print must be made. The paintings of Cornelius Krieghoff (1815-1872) and James Duncan (1806-1881) are both aesthetically and thematically linked to this type of photographic image. Krieghoff's Tracking the Moose, South of Quebec, 1865, Public Archives (Fig. 40) (reproduced in Notman's Photographic Selections, 1865, plate 30) and Duncan's A View Near Montreal, n.d., Public Archives, (Fig. 41) show a similar figure-background relationship to that found in the paintings of Sandham, Bruce, Reid and Peel. It is possible that these paintings were done from photographic composites since Krieghoff worked extensively on the painting of carte de visites and Duncan once operated a photographic studio. The approach in these paintings is not as precise as encountered in previous examples. There is a loose and almost

insubstantial treatment of the figures. Nevertheless, the treatment of movement and the spatial situation of the figures, in the middle distance, recalls the photographic composite. Two water colours by Sandham that make reference to the aesthetic of the composite and deal with the exact type of theme of the photographic composite are Tobogganing Winter Scene in Montreal, 1885, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 42) and Snowshoeing, n.d., National Gallery of Canada (Fig. 43). A Notman and Son photographic composite, The Spill, 1889, (Fig. 44), McCord Museum, provides a fine comparative example of Sandham's tobogganing painting. The two works show an almost identical compositional arrangement; the figures bear much the same proportional relationship to each other and to the foreground plane.

William Raphael's Bonsecours Market, 1880, collection of Peter Winkworth, (Fig. 45) does not relate in theme to the photographic composite and ultimately adheres more to painterly principles. It forms a contrast with the aforementioned works in this respect. Raphael is purported to have opened a photography studio in Montreal with E. Taber and in the last years of his life pasted photographed figures onto his canvases and painted over them.⁶⁰ This was not the practice in this painting but the features which do link it to the composite are the relationship of the figures to the

⁶⁰S. Goelman, "Luminism in Canada," unpublished manuscript.

foreground plane and the isolation of the figures closest to the foreground plane from the setting and the other figures which create the background. These figures in the background are treated in conformity with the painterly principles in that they diminish in clarity as they recede into the distance. The proportion of the scale of the figures to the architecture is more of painterly inspiration than photographic. The scale of the buildings is that which is found in a painting rather than in a photographic composite. In a photographic composite the buildings would be reduced in scale so as to give greater focus to the figures.

CHAPTER VI

LANDSCAPE PAINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

The photograph played an influential role in the painting of landscapes. Here it was the influence of the unmanipulated photographic image rather than the combination or the composite photograph. The exactitude of detail and uniformly smooth surface observed in Forshaw Day's On The Nouvelle River, 1881, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 46), are not the only qualities which suggest the influence of the photographic aesthetic. In addition there is a compositional relationship between this painting and the photograph; the lack of arrangement of the landscape according to the canons of pictorial convention in naturalist painting. Furthermore, there is no manipulation of space by the traditional means of establishing depth or planar recession through repoussoir or colisse. The emphasis on detailing is maintained from foreground to background. The precision with which the foliage and rocks are rendered is fastidious. So precise and fixed are these forms that the photograph, with its special ability to make a single instant in time eternally present, is recalled. Although many Canadian painters of the latter half of the nineteenth century combined a high degree of visual realism with an essential romanticism, Forshaw Day

does not sacrifice detail or suppress information in favour of mood.

Similarly, Allan Edson's Mount Orford and The Owl's Head from Lake Memphremagog, 1870, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 47), shows an insistence on detail, uniformity of surface texture and a viewpoint which in composition does not stress the foreground. This suggests the influence of the photograph rather than the influence of the composite photograph. A comparison of this painting with Henderson's photograph, Oiseau Rock, Deep River, (Fig. 48) or Orford Mountain and Lake (Photographic Views and Studies of Canadian Scenery, 1867) (Fig. 49) shows a compositional layout, a precise rendering of forms and a quality of light similar in both. The area of focal dominance in the Edson painting is, by intricacy of detail and strength of illumination, the middleground. Light is manipulated here in much the same manner as a spotlight in a photography studio, the forms of specific areas suppressed under normal lighting conditions are illuminated and brought forward. The softer treatment of the clouds and the suppression of detail and tone in the background detract from the sharper, more photographic delineation of foreground and middleground. This introduces a note of romanticism to the painting.⁶¹ In the Edson

⁶¹The following chapter will deal with the conflict between visual realism and romanticism in Canadian painting as affected by the photograph.

painting one is conscious of the photographic aesthetic in the strong literal descriptiveness; the stopped moment in time and the compositional objectivity. If a source-photograph was used for the making of this painting, there is no evidence of mechanical copying; rather it suggests a lively integration of photographic qualities; the precise sense of time, focussing of light. There is not the sense of slavish imitation or what Delacroix described as 'one machine harnessed to another'.

Another landscape painting in which the dominant feature is the accumulation of detail is Mower Martin's Summer Time, 1880, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 50). Despite the tendency to sacrifice exactitude for a somewhat ambiguous mood, in the treatment of the rocks on the right where a generalization of form occurs, there is a meticulous delineation of foliage, high detailing of the shoreline of the river and precise surface textures.

The Roger's Pass by John Fraser, n.d., National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 51) demonstrates a strong influence of the photograph despite the broader and more general treatment of forms. The equal attention paid to foreground and background and the rather arbitrary composition of the view is reminiscent of the photograph. The handling of brush-stroke, although looser than in the Edson, is nevertheless, quite firmly controlled. This loosening up of brush technique suggests a deliberate attempt on the part of the

artist to inject vitality into the work and deny the rigidity or mechanical quality of both outline and surface that is frequently associated with the photograph.

Two water colour paintings by the same artist, Mountain Landscape, Yale B. C., n.d., National Gallery of Canada (Fig. 52) and The Roger's Pass, 1886, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 53) show the same influences of the photographic aesthetic discussed in relation to the oil painting, The Roger's Pass. They are also significant in that they show how tightly the medium is controlled in the service of photographic veracity. A comparison of these two water colours with Lucius O'Brien's Grand Manan, n.d., National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 54) reveals the non-structural use of the brushstroke by Fraser and the lack of fluidity in the handling of the medium. Areas of the mountain formation are 'filled-in' as if an outline were already in evidence and the painter restricted by its limits. On the other hand, the painting by O'Brien shows a modelling and structuring of the forms of the mountain as evidenced in the detail of Grand Manan, (Fig. 55) and The Roger's Pass, (Fig. 56). In contrast to Grand Manan which suggests a first-hand observation, The Roger's Pass suggests an experience of the scene through the photograph or under the influence of the photographic aesthetic. The flat, 'filled-in' treatment of the volumetric forms could be attributed to working from a small scale photograph or enlarged hand-drawn sketch. Working

through such a process the artist might then experience an absence of information that necessitates an arbitrary 'colouring-in'. An undated water colour by Fraser, Scottish Highlands, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 57) is similar in both format and palette to the aforementioned two water colours by Fraser. It differs, however, in its handling of structure and as such, introduces an interesting note to the debate on Fraser's possible use of the photograph. The painting of the hill formation is so loose and uninformative of structure that it surpasses the Canadian views in this respect. The rigidity of outline is not as strongly evident and the entire work has the appearance of hovering between a looser treatment and a more rigid, photographic approach. Had Fraser worked from photographs and become dependent upon them for summarised information, the occasion to work directly from nature must have presented certain profound problems, specifically scale and the problem of realism. His painting, In the Rocky Mountain, n.d., National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 58) is a combination of strong, simplified style and accurate photographic detailing. From the foreground to the middle distance, the treatment of minutiae is insistent but the mountain in the background is more volumetric and more generalised in the treatment of surface features. This dichotomy of style recalls a statement made by Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock in describing the relationship between Albert Bierstadt's works and the stereoscopic view:

Indeed critics have often observed, without being able to explain, that The Rocky Mountains appears to have been two paintings in one: the photographically exact foreground contrasts markedly with the vast, misty panorama of mountain peaks in the far distance. The explanation is simple. Exactly such an effect would have been achieved by viewing a scene through a stereoscope: the foreground would leap toward the eye, the spectator would feel plunged into space, the middle space would seem compressed and background appear as a series of flat planes against a deep sky.⁶²

The experience of space described by Lindquist-Cock is not the same as that experienced in the Fraser painting but what is suggested is that the fusing of the two distinct approaches would have resulted from an exposure to a variety of photographic imagery.

The manner in which the photograph organized and fixed the seemingly countless and chaotic details of nature seemed just short of miraculous to the nineteenth century landscape painter; no less impressive to the portrait painter was the manner in which the photograph objectively and precisely fixed the features of the human face. The expressive potential of the photograph vis-a-vis the portrait was less appreciated than the camera's ability to record the immobile attitudes that the human face can assume. It was the replication of every wrinkle, line and mole that the photograph recorded that intrigued the majority of portrait painters. It has already been noted that the demand made by sitters for

⁶² Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock, "Stereoscopic Photography and the Western Paintings of Albert Bierstadt," Art Quarterly, Vol. 33, no. 4 (Winter 1970), p. 371.

painted portraits was very exacting in terms of realism. The degree of realism sought was most often that of the photograph. In many cases the portrait painter complied with the wishes of his clients, reluctantly or otherwise, and resorted to whatever means available to meet their expectations. Robert Harris, as noted, grudgingly borrowed and worked extensively from Notman photographs. His portrait, Otto Jacobi, 1892, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 28), shows an objective and impassive treatment typical of many photographic portraits. There is no known source-photograph and it is quite possible that it was painted without photographic aids. It does intimate that Harris was influenced by a consistent use of the photograph. A painting which was largely influenced by, if not based on, a Notman photograph is his portrait, Sir Hugh Allan, 1885, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 29). It has crisper edges and more controlled brush technique than the Jacobi portrait. Harris' interest in recording the appearance of the sitter overwhelms any desire to portray any psychological insight. He has made no attempt to eternalise, mystify or romanticise the portrait of this man by suppressing detail or blurring edges. The face is highly particularised and individualised. It appears as if captured by photographic flashlight.

CHAPTER VII

IMAGES AND ATTITUDES OF REALISM

Realism, as a philosophical issue, has concerned itself primarily with the problem of whether an external world exists independently of our perception or whether such a world exists only because of our perception. As one writer on this subject pointed out, it is possible to see all art as being a product of this concern by virtue of the fact that the artist, either by attempting to represent reality or by rejecting it, affirms his involvement with it.⁶³

There are philosophers and art theoreticians who advocate that the problem of representation is fundamental to all art and others who take the position that it is by no means fundamental to all art and others who take the position that it is by no means fundamental to the making of all art and is only really one area of exploration undertaken by the artist. It is clear that realism is a complex term which cannot in any way be used categorically unless it is defined according to the philosophical, stylistic and cultural implications. In the seventeenth century in Holland there were periods when realism was emphasized. The styles of

⁶³Erwin Rosenthal, The Changing Concept of Realism in Art, p. 11.

realist painting vary. Some were concerned with the purely visual and literal description of nature. Others were concerned with conceptual issues of a very particular temporal and spatial nature. The term realist was first applied to painting in the seventeenth century. It was an attempt to define the nature of works of certain landscape painters of that century. These works were distinguished by a very exact individuation of form and particularisation of space. In addition, they showed more than a simple, naturalist interest in defining detail and precisely expressing proportion and space. Carl Chiarenza has made interesting observations about the relationship of this style of painting to photographic vision. In a recently published essay he wrote:

We can, I think, isolate the essential characteristic of vision shared by the seventeenth century Dutch painter and the nineteenth century photographer. It is best described as that quality of still-life that pervades Dutch art, to which the French term nature morte could never be applied. It is a moment of time captured and held still -- even as it shimmers with life and living atmosphere -- to be studied, to be shared immediately.⁶⁴

Photography and seventeenth century Dutch painting share an intimacy of vision and a discreteness of expression. All that they share with French Realism is an objectivity of vision. French Realism of this period has a crude concreteness which contrasts with either the more delicately detailed

⁶⁴ Carl Chiarenza, "Notes on Aesthetic Relationships Between Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting and Nineteenth-Century Photography," One Hundred Years of Photographic History, p. 21.

character of seventeenth century Dutch painting or photography. Evidently photography lent support to the objectivity and materialist principles upon which French Realism was founded but did not serve as a direct model.

Canadian painters, working in a realist vein, shared a highly developed sense of factualism with their American counterparts. There is not, however, the consistent attempt of the Americans to link the phenomenological experience of the object, such as light and weight, with the visual facts in a tightly defined time/space boundary. The American preoccupation with factual and material exactitude is seen by Barbara Novak as being part of a long tradition of realism in American painting.⁶⁵ Combined with this was a sense of spatial precision and photographic light that came to full flower in the second half of the nineteenth century and was manifested in the paintings of Winslow Homer (1836-1910), Thomas Eakins (1844-1916), Fitz Hugh Lane (1804-1865) and Martin J. Heade (1819-1904). Novak sees photography as a conceptual tool which American artists used in their exploration and recording of reality. This conceptual linking of photography with painting is nowhere else so much in evidence as in American painting of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

All the Canadian paintings discussed have favoured the

⁶⁵ Barbara Novak, American Painting of the Nineteenth Century, p. 235.

anti-fictional approach. One re-emphasizes the informational approach which dominates in Sandham's paintings, Skating Party and Hunters Returning with the Spoil. Similarly, his water colour paintings of tobogganing and snow-shoeing scenes reflect a factualist approach. This same approach is evident in the works of Allan Edson, William Raphael, Paul Peel, John Fraser, George Reid, Mower Martin and John Forbes. These works still insist on the recording of fact rather than on the expression of the fictional, although not as strongly as in the Sandham paintings. In both selection of theme and in the objective recording of fact, many Canadian painters of the latter half of the nineteenth century display a basic realist position. It is not the Realism of Courbet. The approach taken toward the expression of material substance is altogether too low-key and non-ideological to be called Realist. This point can be illustrated by comparing Robert Harris' Fathers of Confederation, 1883, with Courbet's Burial at Ornans, 1849. Although both share an objectivity of vision, the Canadian work has a neutral tone and lacks the brutal irony of the Courbet. Whereas in the Courbet painting an ironic twist or ambiguous meaning was intended to be read from a seemingly straight forward image, Canadian realist painters did not involve themselves with such complex philosophical issues. They were not interested in the deeper meanings or concerned about the philosophical or theoretical implications of painting. They concentrated on the problem of

recording appearances as truthfully and unexaggeratedly as possible rather than dealing with ambiguous and subtle issues as to the nature of appearance and reality.

Another major difference that exists between French Realist painting and Canadian Realist painting of this period is stylistic in nature. It cannot, of course, be entirely separated from the conceptual foundation. A comparison between Sandham's Cliff and Boats, 1872, and Courbet's Bay with Cliffs, 1869, illustrates this difference. Whereas Courbet makes a strong textural distinction between the various objects and elements, Sandham suffuses the textural identity of the object and elements. In the Sandham, one does not distinguish the separate material realities of rock, sand, wood and water but remains only conscious of the thickness of the paint and direction of the brushstroke. Despite the fact that these two paintings have a similar theme and are equally objectively recorded, Courbet emphasizes the material nature of the objects in his paintings more clearly. The generalized treatment of texture and light in the Sandham painting recalls English genre of narrative paintings of the latter half of the nineteenth century. In Frank Holl's No Tidings from the Sea, 1870, Royal Collection, (Fig. 59), a genre work, and Sir William Quiller Orchardson's Le Mariage de Convenance, 1883, Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, (Fig. 60), a narrative piece, the material realities of the objects are subsumed by the stress on the story-telling qualities.

No such subjection to the narrative takes place in Canadian painting. Even in works such as Mortgaging the Homestead, 1890, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 61), by George Reid, and The School Trustees, 1886, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 62), by Robert Harris in which the narrative is high, the object is not subordinated to the narrative. The dramatic intensity of the narrative is not acquired through suppression of the material realities of the surrounding objects. Both object and narrative gesture are given equal weight.

Canadian painting cannot be accounted for under European categories and neither can it be entirely divorced from them. It must be seen as a complex synthesis of stylistic features having their roots in European traditions and flowering under a very particular set of cultural circumstances.

Robert Hubbard uses the term 'realism' in describing both individual painters and periods of painting in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The meaning he applies to Realism or any of the variants of realism referred to in the preceding pages is not made clear. Of landscape painting in the 1870's he says: "The style of landscape painting at this period may be termed National Realism, a progression from the Romantic Realism of the sixties."⁶⁶

⁶⁶ R. Hubbard, "Confederation Period in Canadian Art," Art Quarterly, Vol. 30, W. 1967, p. 200.

John Fraser and Henry Sandham are referred to by him as Factual Realists and reference is made to the influence of photography on Sandham, particularly in his Hunters Returning with the Spoil.

The Realists did not support photography as a bona fide art form but it is clear that they shared a common objectivity and respect for detail. If photography did not directly inspire a democratic attitude toward theme and stylistic precision, it could not help but reinforce any such existing attitudes. Photography suggested new themes and forms to painters and it also introduced a new dimension to the illustration of articles in newspapers, weekly and monthly periodicals and other fiction and non-fiction publications. The photographic reproduction of old master paintings created significant changes in art history by replacing the iconographic with the formal-analytical approach.⁶⁷

Book or magazine illustration material could be based on either sketched or photographed copy after the introduction of the photo-mechanical reproduction techniques. In the case of certain techniques, such as the early wood-engravings based on photographs, illustrations from a hand-drawn or photographed copy image were indistinguishable.

The photograph was considered more authentic than the drawing and eventually lead to the supremacy of the photograph

⁶⁷Aaron Scharf, p. 122.

over the drawing in news illustration of the latter part of the century.

Contemporary reviews of exhibitions provide interesting attitudes toward the photograph. In some instances the photograph is used as a standard of positive appraisal; not only was it considered as desirable for magazine illustration but also as a model for realism in painting. In other cases the photograph was seen as being altogether too rigid and detailed for a painter to imitate. Critic Carl Fuller, who wrote exhibition reviews for the Gazette and The Ottawa Evening Journal in the 1880's and 1890's, commented on the photographic qualities of J. C. Forbes' painting, Portrait of Sir John A. McDonald, n.d., National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 63), "... a portrait laboriously correct in every detail -- painfully correct, indeed almost photographically so"⁶⁸

Although there is no actual documentation to support the belief that this full-length portrait of Sir John A. McDonald was copied from the photograph, the pose, style and props surrounding the figure are highly suggestive of this practice.⁶⁹ The laboriousness with which the surface of

⁶⁸Carl Fuller, The Gazette (Montreal), April 25, 1890, no page no. Newspaper clippings R. C. A. file, P. A. C.

⁶⁹It was noted earlier in this thesis that J. C. Forbes was accused by John Fraser of having painted a portrait of Lord Dufferin from a Notman and Fraser cabinet photograph and subsequently submitting it to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, 1876. This portrait of Sir John A. McDonald lends ample support to Fraser's accusation.

face, figure and every detail of costume is covered, suggests the hand of the copyist. The certainty and uniformity of brushstroke is that of the copyist rather than that of the painter working from life. Equal attention is paid to the details of hair, clothing and flesh, all of which acquire, through lack of spontaneity, a remarkably uniform texture. This lack of selectivity and emphasis was not governed by the requirement of Realist ideology to give equal attention to all things but rather the non-selectivity here derives from an imitation of photographic realism where equal stress is a feature. This is the work of a copyist struggling to replicate the facts and surface anonymity of the photograph and not the work of the painter who, impressed by the factual triumphs of the photograph, has tried to intensify its qualities. Any desire that might have been felt by either Harris or Forbes to present the psychological reality of the sitter is entirely subordinated by the compulsion for visual truth. It appears that the quality of visual objectivity attributed to the photograph was adopted by both these painters as a criterion of absolute artistic and moral value.

The realism encountered in W. G. R. Hind's Self-Portrait, n.d., B. C. Archives, (Fig. 64), referred to earlier in this thesis as having possibly been derived from a Daguerreotype, is less formal and static than that of the Forbes painting. Despite the fact that the painting appears

to have been done from a Daguerreotype, it retains a vitality of line absent in the painting by Forbes. Hind's self-portraits show a personal propensity for detailing and preciseness unlike the Forbes portraits, which appear to have resulted out of an ambition to satisfy public demands for exactitude. These qualities of exactitude are lacking in Hind's paintings of Indian life and are replaced by a rather crude handling of form but the will to realism remains. There is no attempt to romanticize the scene or mystify the experience. It is as if, in the depicting of certain subjects, Hind's sense of magic or 'otherness' was so stirred that his objectivity and technical control faltered.

Photography was not the sole factor that established a standard of realism for the Canadian painter; both the press and public exerted pressure of a similar nature on the painter. The reviewers of exhibitions of paintings frequently used the term 'realism' as a favorable descriptive adjective. Reviews seldom went beyond a brief descriptive catalogue of what comprised a particular exhibition, leaving the art historian very little understanding of what constituted 'good' or 'bad' painting at that time.

Two reviewers, Carl Fuller (mentioned earlier) and Moss, who wrote respectively for The Gazette (Montreal) and the Ottawa Evening Journal in the 1890's, did attempt to introduce a note of critical evaluation into their writings. The reviews of the fourth annual R. C. A. exhibition were

described in Jones and Dyonett's History of the R. C. A. A.:

The exhibition is pictured as having been enthusiastically received by the public and altogether a good showing, but both writers are critical of the choice by artists of very ordinary and unstimulating subject matter; the entire lack of historical or imaginative interest. The jury is accused of an excess of a most admirable quality -- kindness of heart.⁷⁰

An unidentified critic reviewing the 1892 Royal Canadian Academy of Art exhibition remarked that Wyly Grier's Portrait of a Physician was 'a realistic painting of high merit'. T. M. Martin's contribution to the exhibition was also praised for its realism: "The sky is most beautifully painted, the fur of the dog and deer crisp and hairlike."⁷¹

Showery Day in Passe des Mont de St. Urbain, a painting by John Fraser, is described as 'somewhat defective' in its expression of space. Possibly what the reviewer was attempting to describe here was the sense of compression discussed earlier and at some length in the chapter dealing with the aesthetic influence of the photograph.

Brymner and Sherwood's entries were described as 'realistic and natural'. Almost every work singled out for mention was thus described, indicating that realism was a principle criterion of positive judgement in the evaluation of paintings.

⁷⁰ Jones and Dyonett, History of the R. C. A. A., 5: 9.

⁷¹ Ottawa Journal, 1892, R. C. A. A. Scrapbook of newspaper clippings, Public Archives of Canada.

An allusion to the appearance of artificial lighting in painting is made in the Ottawa Journal in a review of George Reid's Foreclosure of the Mortgage. The same reviewer describes it as being reminiscent of a 'closing scene of a drama in a well-equipped theatre'.

Earlier, The Free Press carried a review of the Royal Canadian Academy exhibition held in the Supreme Court. This exhibition was evidently a preview of the Canadian entries to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition of the same year, 1886. The water colour paintings of Henry Sandham were reported to have been 'full of the characteristic crispness and motion he knows well to impart'.⁷² A. R. Stevenson, writing on the Indian and Colonial exhibition in the Magazine of Art, however, draws the attention of the reader to the 'poor construction' of Sandham's figures.⁷³

It was not the Realism of Courbet, with its stress on the didactic and social function of art or the narrative realism of English genre, narrative or Pre-Raphaelite painting that is reflected in Canadian painting of the latter half of the nineteenth century, rather it is the realism offered by the photograph with its impassivity, its literal descriptiveness, non-selectivity and high degree of objectivity. There is not the same desire on the part of the

⁷²The Free Press, Ottawa, February 4th, 1886.

⁷³A. R. M. Stevenson, "Canadian Art," The Magazine of Art, p. 519.

Canadian painter to emphasize the concreteness of the object as perceived in a particular time-space relationship as in American painters, especially in the works of Eakins, Heade and Lane.

APPENDIX

Although claiming that the greater part of the corpus of Canadian painting of the latter half of the nineteenth century was realist in direction and that this attitude of realism was formed largely by photography, the influence of Academic painting must not be overlooked.

In 1853, on the occasion of the Paris Salon, Frédéric Henriot remarked that although there appeared to be, at a superficial glance, a great many styles at the exhibition, there was in fact a fundamental similarity. He felt that the influence of photography created this substantial link and generally resulted in a greater realism in painting style. Through this influence he felt a significant connection could be made between the works of Courbet and the Academic painters. The Academic ethos centred largely around the nature of theme. From the seventeenth century, a strict hierarchy of subject matter was imposed upon the Academic painter which precluded the painting of commonplace themes. Subjects such as tobogganing, boating or a simple study of a woman sitting at a piano are themes found in Canadian painting during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The theme of Canadian painting does not reflect the historical or mythological interests of English or French

Academic painters. Canadians picture scenes and events evidently drawn largely from the English-speaking middle class experience. The Europeans painted scenes of gladiatorial battles, Turkish baths, Artemis or Apollo in the manner of the Academic painters or depict scenes of death, revelry in bars, brothels or nudes. The Canadian painter chose themes such as the building of the Victoria Bridge, Queen Victoria, ice-hauling, tobogganing and school children. There is an apparent absence of the traditional Academic theme in Canadian painting of the latter half of the nineteenth century. There are many young painters who did train under Academicians. The 1880's and 1890's witnessed a steady flow of painters to the studios of Bouguereau, Gerome, Robert Fleury, Laurens, Julians, Colarossi, etc. Allan Edson studied with Pelouse; John Fraser with Topham and Redgrave, before coming to Canada; Peel studied with Gérôme, Lefevre, Eakins; Robert Harris with Legros and Bonnat. Furthermore, the year 1888 witnessed the arrival of Benjamin Constant in Montreal. He came to Montreal as a guest of Sir George Drummond, the important Montreal collector and patron of the arts whose purchase of Gabriel Max's Raising of the Daughters of Jarius was a well-published fact in the newspapers of the day.⁷⁴

In addition to this direct exposure, Canadian painters

⁷⁴Moncrieff Williamson, Robert Harris: An Unconventional Biography, p. 77.

had limited contact with Academic painting through the occasional loan or annual Royal Academy Exhibition. English Academic painters, such as Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the English Royal Academy, George Watts and J. Millais, were represented in the 1887 Royal Canadian Academy exhibition. George Watts painted both sentimental genre and fine portraits, Carlyle and Ellen Terry among them. These two paintings were derived from the photographs of English nineteenth century photographer, Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879).⁷⁵ Leighton came to appreciate it after attending a lecture on Muybridge's photographic experiments. Millais' paintings, both Pre-Raphaélite in style and narrative in nature, did not seem to have any discernible influence on Canadian painting of the period.

Canadian painters whose works were exhibited alongside those of Leighton, Millais and Watts were John Fraser, J. C. Forbes, Eugène Hamel, Lucius O'Brien, William Raphael, Henry Sandham and Homer Watson.

A Canadian painter whose oeuvre does include the exotic themes of Academic painting is Paul Peel. Several of his works, such as Arab Market, show both the substance and the style of French Academic painting. His Tired Model, 1889, After the Bath and Devotion, 1881, National Gallery of Canada, (Fig. 65), are expressive of the strong sentimental

⁷⁵ Aaron Scharf, p. 32.

appeal associated with English Academic painting.

German painter, W. Leibl (1844-1900) makes a very powerful statement about material realism in Women in the Church, Kunsthalle, Hamburg, 1878-1882, (Fig. 66). The most striking element in this painting is the strength with which the textures are described. Each element is given its own tangible, textural reality. The contrasts of texture and detail are consciously sought out and unambiguously expressed. This painting by Leibl forms an interesting contrast with Peel's Devotion. Peel's work aspires neither to Leibl's precision of description nor to his honesty of emotional expression. A very general paint texture and arbitrary brushstroke dominates the surface of the painting and very little attention is paid to the spatial or tonal relationships in the foreground and background.

Selection of theme is one aspect in which Canadian painting of this period differs from Academic painting. John Fraser chose to paint a scene of Gaspe fishermen and beach-goers rather than Leda and the Swan. Canadian painters did not choose themes with heroic overtones.

Alexandre Gabriel Descamps' Bird Shooting, 1859, and Sandham's Hunters Returning with the Spoil, 1877, deal with a similar theme. The Canadian painting, in contrast to the French Academic painting, is documentary rather than dramatic. It does not show dramatised or exaggerated movement. The figures are grouped in an orderly procession of

three and depicted at the moment of walking home through the woods. The poses held by the figures in this painting are highly reminiscent of those encountered in Notman posed photographs. Desamps, however, chose a more dramatic and greater variety of poses which create a mood of activity and excitement. The lighting is less even in the French painting and strong cast shadows and extended spaces between the figures strengthen the dramatic note.

A comparison of a painting by Thomas Couture (1815-1879), Romans of the Decadence, 1847, or Jean Leon Gérôme (1824-1904) Slave Market with academically trained painters such as Harris, Reid, Brymner, Gagnon or Cruikshank, reveals that Canadian painters were never seriously involved with exotic and heroic subject matter. In intensity of sentimental expression, Canadian painting and European Academic painting are but distant relations.

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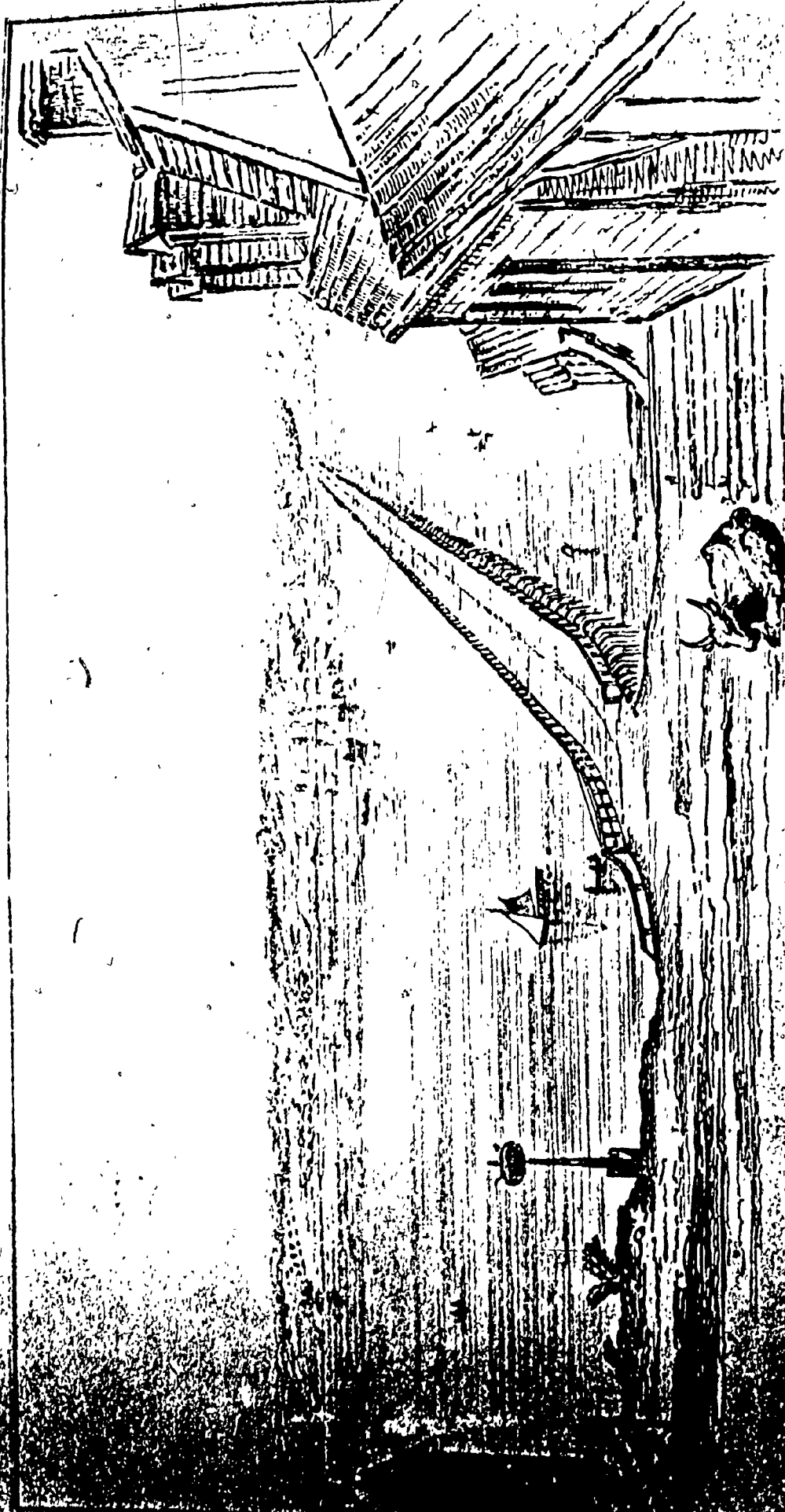
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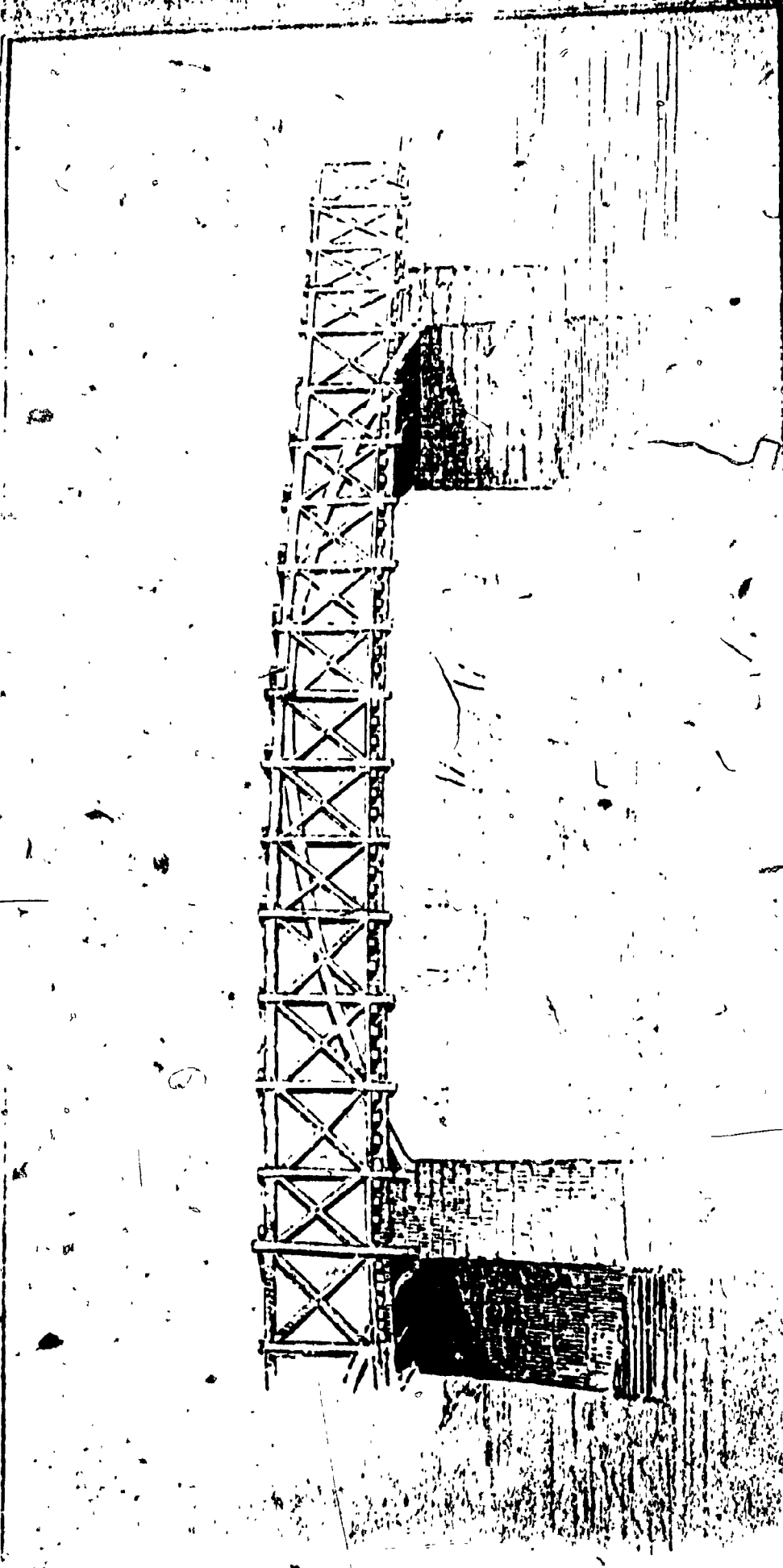
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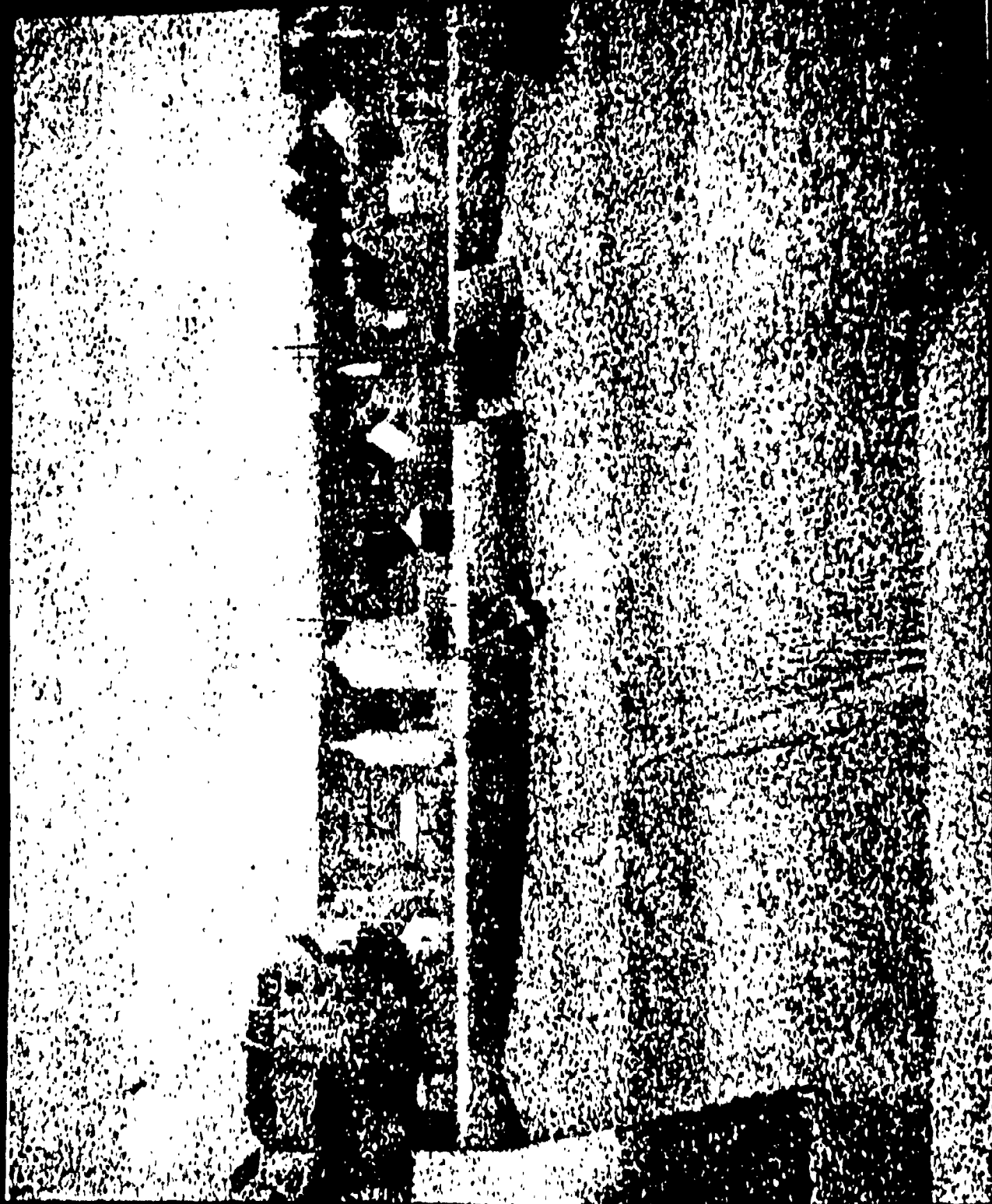
MISERABLE INDIANS OF CANADA.



TRUSS BRIDGE AT THE RIVER MOUTH, CALIFORNIA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE













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3. SAMUEL HAWKSETT
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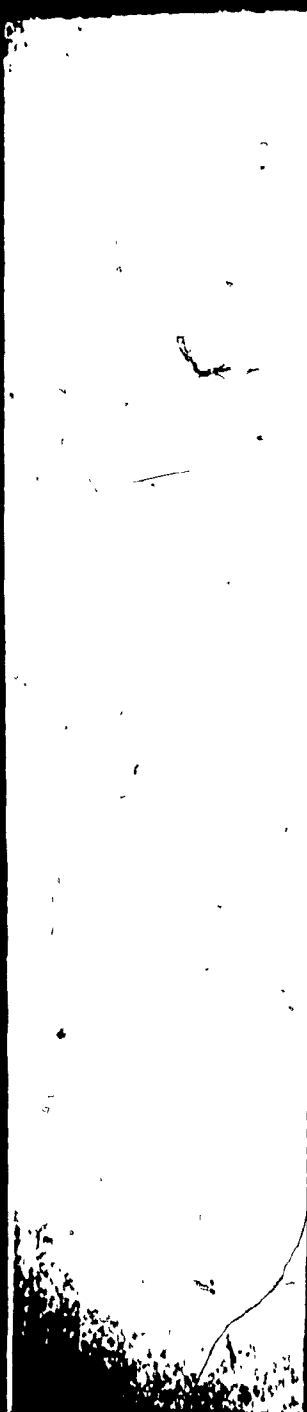












1600-VICTORIS BRIDGE FROM ST. LAMAR PLAZA
P. 17, 1944, 5 PM. MONTANA

WILLIAM NOLMAN, C. 1944, 5 PM. MONTANA









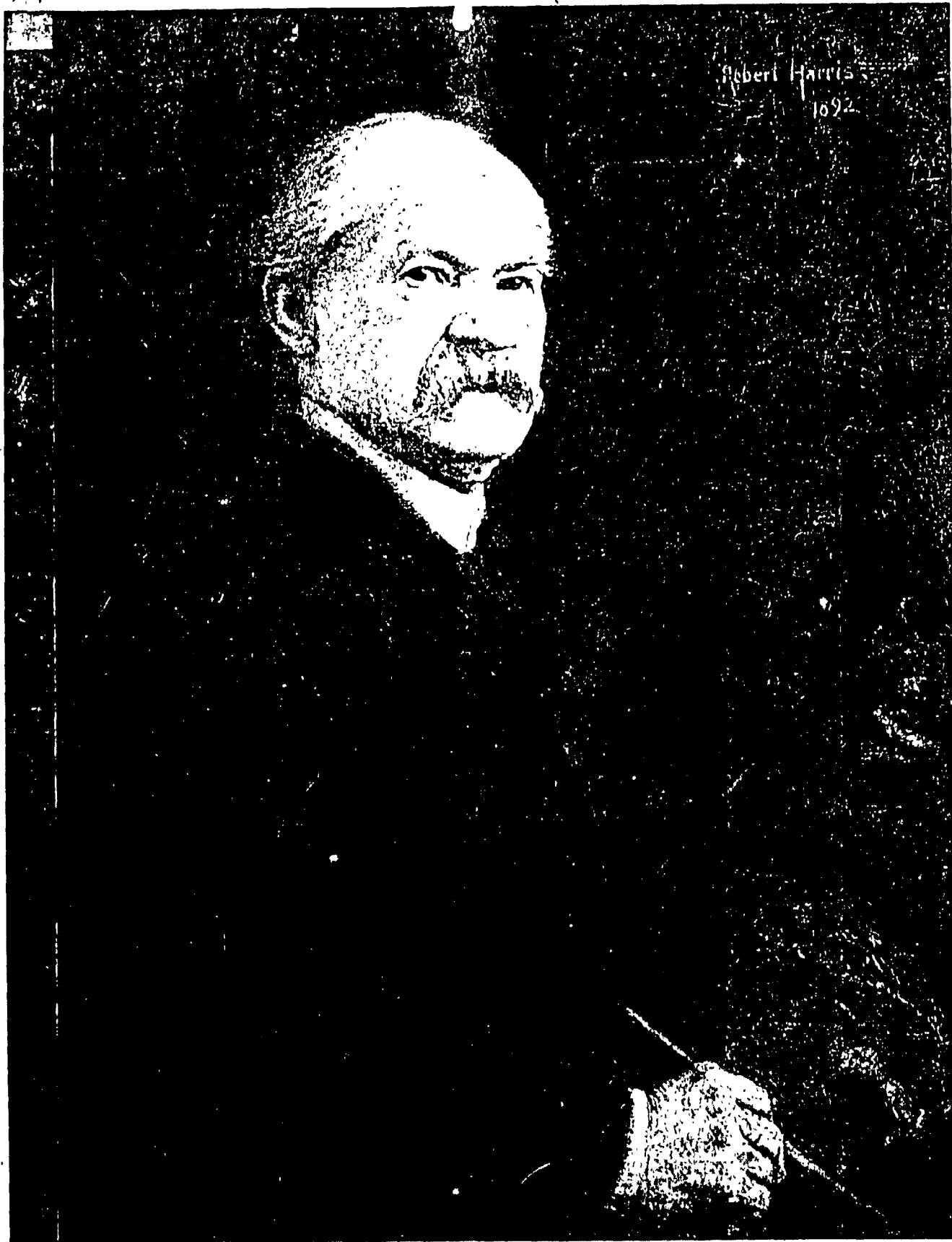




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Robert Harris
1892



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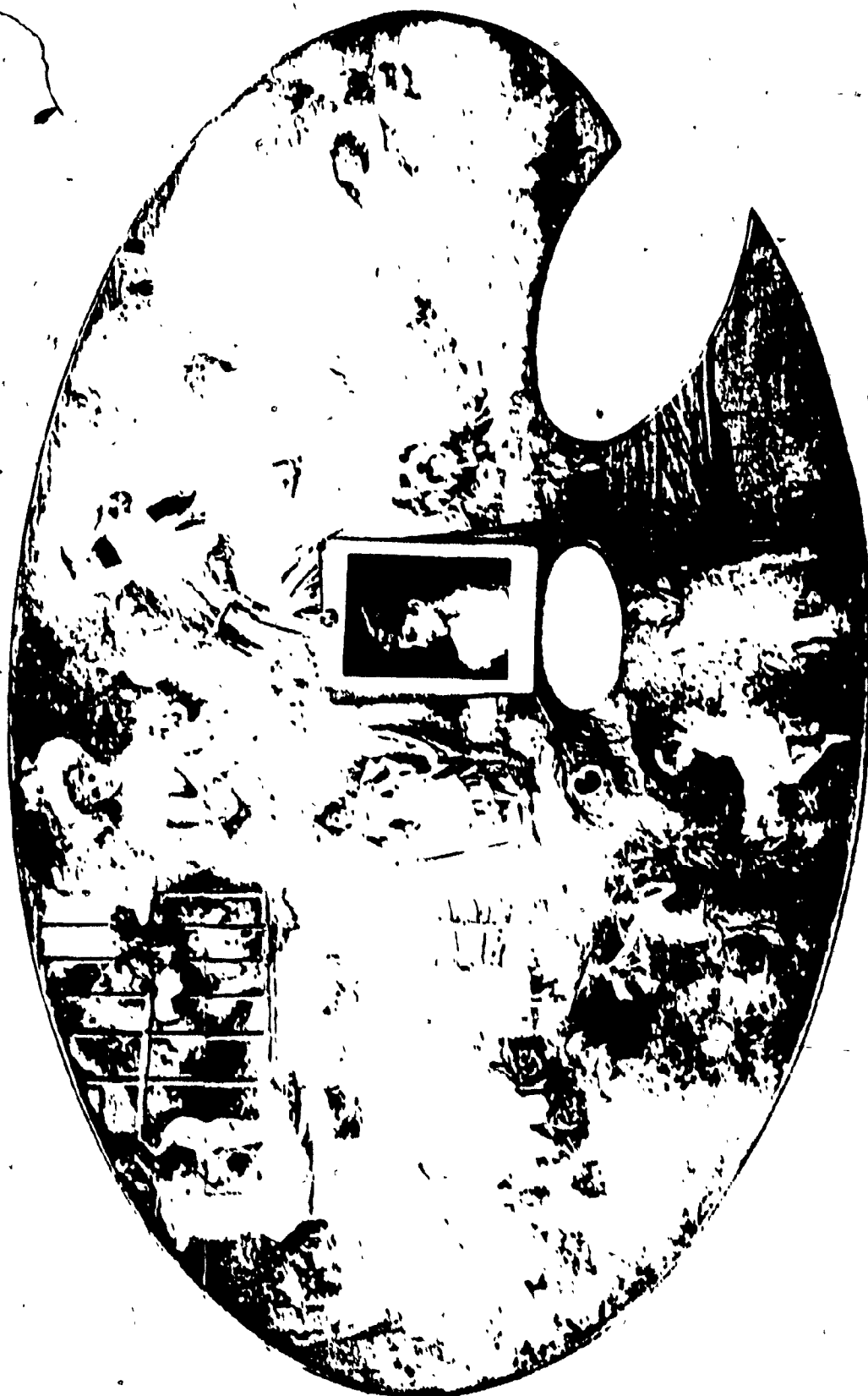












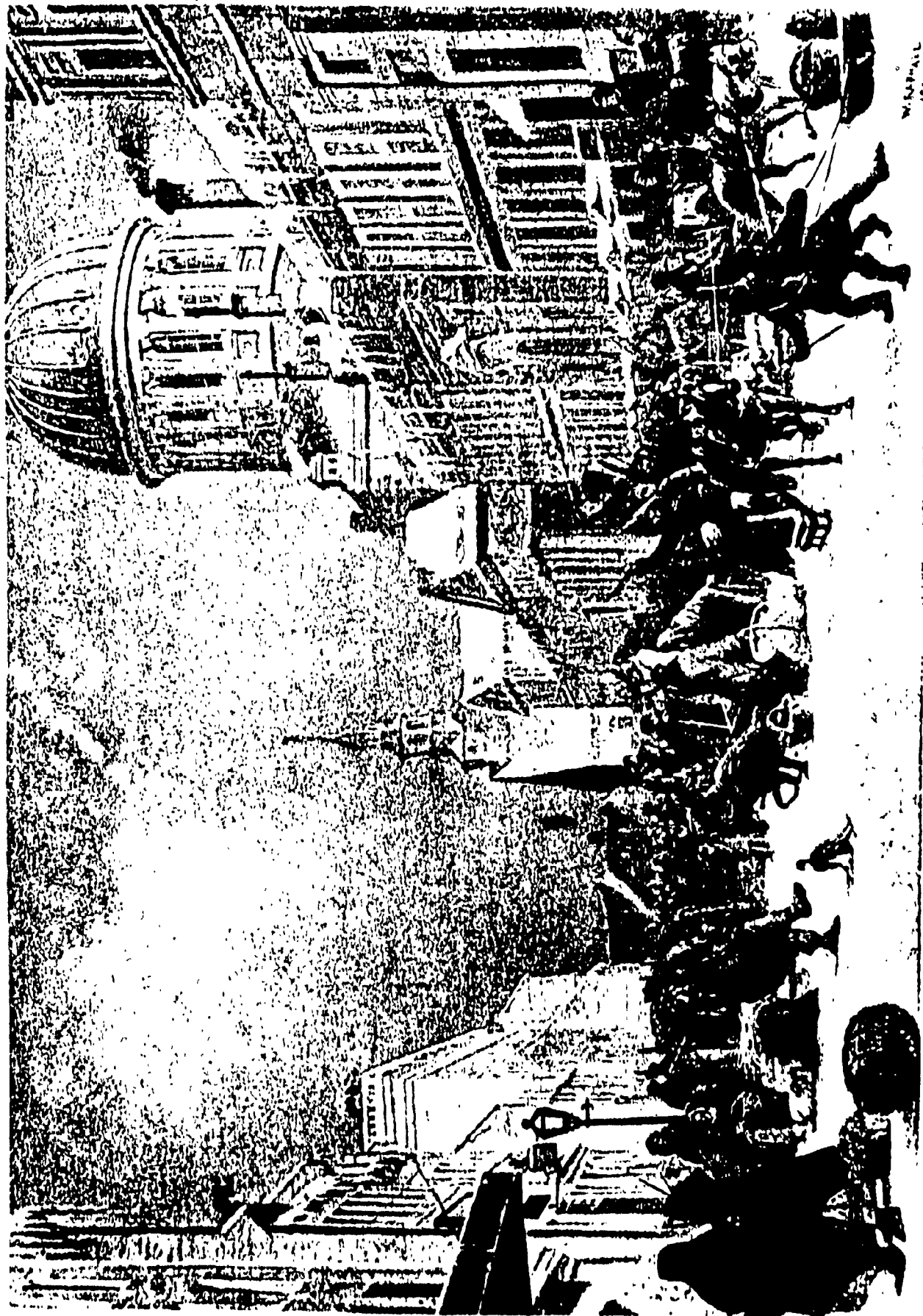








FIG. 26. The Spill, Mount Royal park, Montreal, 1880









Ocean Rock, Deer River, Upper Ottawa.



































