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# Renovating the image of the Western United States on the European stage: photographs and Western displays at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867

Jessica Talley Glassberg

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## Université Paris Cité

**École doctorale Langue, Littérature et Image – ED 131**

*Laboratoire de Recherche sur les Cultures Anglophones (LARCA), UMR 8225*

### **Renovating the image of the Western United States on the European stage : photographs and Western displays at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867.**

Par Jessica Talley Glassberg

Thèse de doctorat de langues et cultures des sociétés anglophones

Dirigée par Jean Kempf, François Brunet (†)

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Titre : Rénover l'image de l'Ouest américain sur la scène européenne : photographies et expositions de l'Ouest à l'Exposition Universelle de Paris de 1867

Résumé : Au printemps 1867, les États-Unis participèrent à leur première véritable exposition nationale à l'étranger. L'Exposition Universelle de Paris de 1867 arrivait à point nommé pour les États-Unis alors qu'ils entraient dans les premières années de l'ère de la Reconstruction. Le pays connaissait une période de reconstruction sociale et politique à l'intérieur de ses frontières, et l'exposition internationale de Paris fut l'occasion de reconstruire son image sur la scène mondiale. Alors que les États de l'Est américain exposaient une collection montrant leur capital culturel, les États de l'Ouest exposèrent une collection d'objets et d'images axée sur l'innovation agricole, les ressources naturelles et les caractéristiques géologiques de la région. Cette partie de l'exposition américaine fut l'occasion d'une promotion esthétique et idéologique de la nation tout entière en séparant le pays de son ancienne identité. Les exposants de l'Ouest mirent en avant les aspects les plus impressionnants du paysage et des ressources minières pour établir visuellement la richesse naturelle de la région. L'Ouest américain ne disposait pas d'un capital culturel qui lui permettait de rivaliser avec les peintures et les pianos, les décors élaborés et la sophistication que proposaient les exposants de l'Est et ceux de l'Europe, de sorte que les photographies des majestueux paysages de Californie et de la richesse minérale du Colorado devinrent les objets par lesquels la région put établir les bases d'une identité esthétique fondée sur des éléments géographiques. En explorant la présence et la couverture photographique élargies dans cette Exposition Universelle, cette étude analyse le contexte international et impérial dans lequel les images du Far West sont apparues. Cette thèse présente un moment d'affirmation non seulement de l'Ouest américain mais aussi des États-Unis plus généralement dans lequel le Far West a joué un rôle inattendu, façonnant une nouvelle esthétique qui s'est étendue à l'ensemble du pavillon américain et, au-delà, a influencé l'avenir de l'identité visuelle de l'Ouest américain.

Mots clefs : photographie, Ouest Américain, expositions universelles, histoire de la photographie, culture matérielle, Colorado, Californie

Title : Renovating the image of the Western United States on the European stage : photographs and Western displays at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867

Abstract : In the Spring of 1867, the United States participated in its first truly national exhibit abroad. The Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 presented a timely opportunity for the United States as it entered the early years of the Reconstruction era. The country was undergoing a period of social and political rebuilding within its borders, and the French international fair provided the occasion to reconstruct its image on the world stage. Contrasting with the more sophisticated cultural capital presented in the American displays from eastern states, the U.S. exhibited a collection of objects and images from the American Midwest and Far West that focused on the region's agricultural innovation, natural resources and geological features. This portion of the U.S. display augmented the American image aesthetically and ideologically, in a way that distinguished the country from its former identity. Exhibitors from the West looked to the most impressive aspects of the land and resources to visually establish the natural wealth of the region. The American West did not have comparable cultural capital to compete with the paintings and pianos, the elaborately designed décor, and the sophistication of Eastern and European exhibitors, so photographs of the majestic landscapes of California and the valuable mineral wealth in Colorado became some of the prominent objects by which the region established the foundations of an aesthetic identity based on geographical elements. By exploring the broader photographic coverage and presence at this Universal Exposition, this study exposes the international and imperial context in which the regional images from the Far West appeared. This thesis presents a moment of expression on the part of not just the Western U.S., but from the American organizers more generally, in which the Far West emerged in an unexpected role, shaping a new aesthetic that extended to the entire US exhibition and to the future of the Western American visual identity.

Keywords : photography, American West, World fairs, Universal Expositions, photographic history, material culture, Colorado, California

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## Abbreviations

BJP	British Journal of Photography
FSA	Farm Security Administration
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NYPL	New York Public Library
L & H	Lawrence & Houseworth
LOC	Library of Congress
SCP	Society of California Pioneers
SFP	Société Française de Photographie

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## Introduction

There are many reasons that Universal Expositions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century serve as valuable subjects of academic study. One of the overwhelming reasons, according to Pieter van Wesemael, was the intermediary function that they served “between high and low culture, between upper, middle and lower class, and between trade, industry, technology, science, and art on the one hand, and the layperson’s more direct world of experience on the other.”<sup>1</sup> The “universal” aspect of the fairs prevents any attempts at generalization, as their encyclopedic nature offered as broad an assortment of objects as possible. In their time, they served a popularly didactic function, in that they created, on many levels, a shared consciousness of a class or group. Studies such as this examination of the American West and its presence within the Exposition allow for the intercultural and international exchange of ideas to be examined via these exhibited materials. The information was conveying distinctive messages to the higher and lower classes, even via the same objects. The exchange of cultural, scientific, artistic, and commercial knowledge was taking place within both high and low culture, in the same venue, and the education that visitors received foreshadows the mass culture of the next century.

The ideological parallels shared by the institutional values of World’s Fairs and the American West compounded during this period. The fundamental core value of this period of universal expositions was, to put it simply, the pursuit of progress. Industrialism in Europe or Western American expansion, the progress that was flourishing was exhibited with its problems and its opportunities. These movements, on a popular level, engendered a naïve enthusiasm that was, according to Richard Hough, encouraged by the period of universal exhibitions culminating with the Paris Exposition of 1867.<sup>2</sup> This enthusiasm could be linked to an accelerated access to visual elements of an emerging mass culture. Universal exhibitions served as one of the primary international points of exchange and development for the photographic medium, during a period of

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<sup>1</sup> Pieter van Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight: A Socio-Historical Analysis of World Exhibitions as a Didactic Phenomenon (1798-1851-1970)* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2001), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Hough, ed., *Mid-19th Century French Photography* (London: The Scottish Photography Group, 1979), 5.

rapid development. Photography has been, François Brunet states, “heralded as a metonym of progress,” emerging during the second half of the nineteenth century, when “visual and material cultures of modernity” grew exponentially, particularly in the context of World’s Fairs.<sup>3</sup> As part of a growth of pictorial forms, international trade of images and illustrated press, the dawn of modern tourism, and the growth of sites for “cultural display and consumption,” Brunet states, American geography and photography were overlapping elements that grew in prominence in Victorian Europe beginning in 1867.<sup>4</sup> The Western American narrative, in the works of dime novels or films, and in all works really, is set on the edge of the advancing frontier, taking place on the edge of “continued progress of civilization.”<sup>5</sup> The Western frontier, with its mystery and promise, evoked many of the same ideas as the Exposition Universelle. The Exposition staged the elements of progress in a performative display of promise. Accumulating the works of all arts and industries, the explicit intention of the French organizers was to promote peace via international and cooperative progress.<sup>6</sup>

California and Colorado were the primary Far Western exhibits which combined photographs and materials to present strong visual and regional identities in Paris. The state of California already existed as an established Western idea, created by years of European exploration and literary accounts. The 1848 gold rush attracted Europeans to California en masse, and for the two decades leading up to the Exposition Universelle of 1867, a story of Western American prosperity and mayhem was shared by emigrants from many nations. In Paris, the image of California became more complex, less literary and more visual. The lives of California settlers were seen in more detail, and the lands in which they lived were exhibited in abundance and grandiose manner. The photographs and objects were presented to European visitors in a way that created an

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<sup>3</sup> François Brunet, “Showing American Geography Abroad in the Victorian Era,” in *Timothy H. O’Sullivan : The King Survey Photographs*, ed. Keith F. Davis (Kansas City, Mo. : New Haven, Conn.: Hall Family Foundation : In association with the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art ; Distributed by Yale University Press, 2011), 184.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Daryl Jones, *The Dime Novel Western* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press, Bowling Green State University, 1978), 127.

<sup>6</sup> “Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Rapports Du Jury International” (Paris : Imprimerie administrative de Paul Dupont, 1868), v, CNUM.

appealing sense of place, utilizing layered messages of economic and aesthetic value. The photographs of Colorado mining towns, with unique mountain landscapes and an opulent show of mineral wealth provided an early visual impression of Colorado for European visitors. These images were reproduced in French and American publications following the fair, increasing the distribution of these messages about the American Far West. Independently these displays told their own local stories, but together they initiated an aesthetic of the American West.

The Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 marked, according to historian Volker Barth, “the most consistent attempt ever made to literally create a world exhibition.”<sup>7</sup> The terms World’s Fair, Exposition Universelle, Universal, Great, or International Exhibition, among other translations are used interchangeably to describe these international showcases popularized during the latter half of the 19th century. Distinguishable from more specialized trade shows and exhibitions, the early international exhibitions with which this study is concerned are those which included both industry and art and began with the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 in London. The Exposition Universelle of 1867 was the second fair under the French Second Empire and received an estimated 11 million visitors over a span of eight months who came to see 50,000 exhibitors from 32 countries. The Imperial organizers attempted to include everything from everywhere in their nationally sponsored Exposition in which, for the first time, participating countries were required to organize and sponsor their own nationally curated displays. Nations from Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia came together in Paris for what was the largest international fair to date. The exhibitors encompassed industry, agriculture and fine art, as well as social organizations and cultural heritages.

The first four international exhibitions were influenced by a national rivalry of French and British interests, as alternating events were hosted in London and Paris. In contrast to the Exposition Universelle of 1855 in which the French expanded the inclusion of fine art but prioritized the race with British industrialization, this 1867 fair was formed around the Empire’s social doctrine, under

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<sup>7</sup> Volker Barth, “The Micro-History of a World Event: Intention, Perception and Imagination at the Exposition Universelle de 1867,” *Museum & Society* 6 (2008): 23.

economist Michel Chevalier and engineer Frédéric Le Play, which “staged industry and labor not only as economic values but as cultural facts, envisioned in socio-ethnographic terms if not as forms of spectacle.”<sup>8</sup> Constructed on the Champ de Mars was a giant elliptical Palace designed as a panoptical experience. Inside the Palace, the layout followed a double pattern, geographic and encyclopedic (**fig. 1.1**), in which the viewer could follow one of the elliptical rings to survey a category or theme or one could follow a complete national display if one went from inner garden to outer ring through a single country’s assigned wedge of space. This design, François Brunet suggested, resembled an illustration of Karl Marx’s theory of “commodity fetishism” introduced in *Das Kapital*, his critique of the political economy, written in 1867.<sup>9</sup> For an exhibition in which the welfare and improvement of labor, and thus humans, was a primary focus for the Imperial organizers, the products of labor were ubiquitous, reflecting Marx’s observation of the migration of economic value from the interpersonal relation to the commodity goods themselves. Around the Palace, the Champ de Mars had been transformed into a landscaped park (**fig. 1.2**), in which participating countries erected structures and pavilions. This innovation would be continued in exhibitions to follow. The Second Empire designed the Exposition to demonstrate the strengths of “a modernized but pacific nation, the success of its mixture of laissez-faire and social paternalism, the happy wedding of art and industry, and the preeminence of French taste.”<sup>10</sup> The Exposition was one of many aspects in which France’s own “modernization” encouraged commodity capitalism, social alienation, and deterred revolutionary actions; along with the arcades, department stores, and Haussmann boulevards. The Exposition format furthered the consumer culture experience into one that supported a public who conceived of themselves as “consumers and national masses, rather than as workers and internationalists.”<sup>11</sup> In line with Saint-Simonian projections of world industrialization, the Exposition was not just a show of nationalist competition, but it created a

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<sup>8</sup> François Brunet and Jessica Talley, “Exhibiting the West at the Paris Exposition of 1867: Towards a New American Aesthetic Identity?,” *Transatlantica : Revue d’Études Américaines*, no. 2 (2017): 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–2.

<sup>11</sup> Esther Leslie, “Walter Benjamin and Commodity Capitalism,” *Socialist Worker (Britain)*, June 8, 2006.

Utopia of abundance and luxury. Though the United States was but a second-tier player in this burgeoning bourgeois spectacle of commodities and wealth, Michel Chevalier expressed the intrigue in the recovering nation even in its weakened post-war state when he stated in his introduction to the Official French Jury Report on the Exposition, that American resources seemed inexhaustible and expressed certainty that the U.S. would become a leader of the world economy.<sup>12</sup>

The Exposition Universelle of 1867 in Paris presented a timely opportunity for the United States as it entered the early years of the Reconstruction era. The country was undergoing a period of social and political rebuilding within its borders, and the French international fair provided the occasion to reconstruct its image on the world stage. The international exhibitions of the era served as, according to historian Merle Curti, a “mirror for the changing attitudes of the rest of the world toward American civilization,” as well as a measuring rod for European and American technology.<sup>13</sup> Previous to the Civil War, the U.S. was an ascendant commercial presence on the international scene but by 1865, the moment of invitation to the French Second Empire’s fête, the young nation was in need of boosting investment, trade and immigration from European powers. The organizers of the U.S. commission were also interested in re-establishing its standing as a reunited nation, and the Exposition provided the chance to recreate its image into, as Walt Whitman stated, one “proportionate to [the] continent” and “its tremendous historic events.”<sup>14</sup> It was a moment of renewed existential confidence in the American political experiment, and the fair delivered an opportunity to prove both its legitimacy and the qualities which distinguished it from its European origins. Even more, the country was expanding and growing, particularly in the Western territories and states, and had land and resources in need of labor and settlement. As the first truly national exhibit abroad, the U.S. exploited the opportunity to change the dialogue concerning America, which had, most recently, speculated and anticipated its demise.

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<sup>12</sup> “Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Rapports Du Jury International” (Paris : Imprimerie administrative de Paul Dupont, 1868), t. 1, p. DXV, CNUM.

<sup>13</sup> Merle Curti, “America at the World Fairs, 1851-1893,” *The American Historical Review* 55, no. 4 (1950): 833.

<sup>14</sup> W. Whitman, *The Correspondence, 1842-1867*, ed. E.H. Miller, *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman* (NYU Press, 2007), 288.

Bowing to the existing economic and cultural hegemony of Europe, and especially France, the 1867 Exposition was an auspicious moment for the promotion of American agriculture, industry, and culture. It was a crucial opportunity for the U.S. organizers in the outfall of the Civil War “to combat predominantly negative perceptions of American culture, and to stake out a claim for the country as a land of opportunity, a recovering economic power, and a rejuvenated political culture, now emancipated from slavery.”<sup>15</sup> As the first international exhibition in which organization was entrusted, by the French Imperial Commission, exclusively to national governments, the ethos behind exhibition broadened from individually motivated commercial pursuits, to more curated nationalistic endeavors. For the U.S. exhibitors, who had only modestly appeared in the 1862 London fair due to the Civil War, this was by far the largest and most diverse display by the country to date within the international exposition format which debuted at the London Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851. Though organization was slow at first, a group of civic leaders, politicians and entrepreneurs from the East Coast, Louisiana, and a few Western states and territories eventually convinced Congress to appropriate funds aimed at creating a complete and national display, with the intention to evolve America’s international appearance from a nation on the brink of dismemberment to a positive national image more in proportion to the Republic’s space and ambitions in respect to international markets, public opinion, and taste. This resulted in an American assemblage which tapped the expanded territory of the Far West as part of a modernized and renovated aesthetic identity.

As this dissertation will reveal, in addition to the cultural capital of the Eastern American states, the United States exhibited a collection of objects and images from the American Midwest and Far West. This portion of the U.S. display augmented the American image aesthetically and ideologically, in a way that distinguished the country from its former identity. It introduced visual value which diverged from the established cultural hierarchy in Europe and the Eastern U.S. The curation of this display also renovated the pre-existing idea surrounding the American West in

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<sup>15</sup> Brunet and Talley, “Exhibiting the West at the Paris Exposition of 1867: Towards a New American Aesthetic Identity?,” 2.

Europe, which had developed primarily as a literary fascination with the Native Americans and an uninhabited West. In the context of what he calls an “American tradition,” some of the evolving values of this Western American region were those described by Floyd Stovall as “self-reliance, expansiveness, efficiency, and sometimes ruthlessness.”<sup>16</sup> Buildings from the Midwest, like the Illinois schoolhouse and farmer’s cottage, constructed in the park of the Exposition showed that “luxury in the new world was to be found in simplicity and space.”<sup>17</sup> But the Far West wasn’t confined to the modest and humble means of its development; exhibitors from the East and West looked to the most impressive aspects of its land and resources to visually establish the natural wealth of the region. The American West did not have comparable cultural capital to compete with the paintings and pianos, the elaborately designed décor, and the sophistication of Eastern and European exhibitors, so photographs of the majestic landscapes and the valuable mineral wealth in its soil became some of the prominent objects by which the region established the foundations of an aesthetic identity based on geographical elements. This was not, however, so much a result of an organized effort on the part of the Far West, or the Eastern American promoters who displayed their Western treasures. This was also not a distinct turning point for the Far West, which was undergoing a continuous period of development and expansion as population increased throughout the 19th century. Instead, this presents a moment of expression on the part of not just the Western U.S., but from the American organizers more generally, in which the Far West emerged in an unexpected role, shaping a new aesthetic identity that potentially extended to the entire US exhibition.

As Robert Rydell and Rob Kroes point out in their study of America’s presence at world fairs from 1869 onward: “After the Civil War, the united States became the United States.”<sup>18</sup> Just as “reconstruction was not automatic or natural,” this progression towards a modern and encompassing identity of the United States was taking place in a large way at the Champ de Mars, prompted at

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<sup>16</sup> Floyd Stovall, “Walt Whitman and the American Tradition,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 31, no. 4 (1955): 543.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen Weiss, “Americans in Paris: Two Buildings,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 45, no. 2 (1986): 164.

<sup>18</sup> R.W. Rydell and R. Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), 47.



least in part by the national cooperation required on a practical and motivational level.<sup>19</sup> With that said, representation was not equal, and outside of the Louisiana exhibition and some individual mineral and agricultural exhibitors from the American South, the United States representation was comprised primarily of Northern and Western exhibits, likely a symptom of the continued discord underlying the recent political schism. One letter from Commissioner General Nelson M. Beckwith (**fig. 1.3**), attempted to convince President Johnson to make a symbolic exhibit capable of promoting the recent events of the U.S. in an admirable light. In the context of the French Imperial Commission's focus on the amelioration of living conditions for the laboring classes, the letter suggested that the President submit a bale of cotton that had been offered to his Excellency as a "specimen of cotton from Alabama, the first produced by the free labor of the emancipated negroes, and presented by them to the exhibition."<sup>20</sup> While cotton from Alabama was exhibited, there is no reference to it being done in this symbolic manner. The Civil War and the greater social and racial issues of the country were cast aside, even as the U.S. promoted the image of a Republic and society incorporating racial diversity. There were Black waiters at the American restaurant, seen in Draner's illustrations (**fig. 1.5**, **fig. 1.6**) and in the comedic sketches, such as those by Cham (**fig. 1.6**); and referenced by Flaubert: "[At the Exhibition] one feels very far away from Paris, in a world that is new and ugly, a huge world which is perhaps that of the future. The first time I had lunch there, I thought the whole time of America and I felt like speaking Negro."<sup>21</sup> The complexity of American race relations was mostly obscured in the case of the Native American and the Chinese, but the African-American was marginally present, officially and in a performative manner. Sincere and symbolic gestures such as the Alabama cotton harvested by freed slaves, were excluded.

The fourth of its kind, the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 marked the second in Paris. The first four international exhibitions took place in London and Paris, beginning in the former with

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Nelson M. Beckwith, "Letter December 11, 1865, Beckwith to President Andrew Johnson," in *Official Papers Relating to the Conduct of the Legation of the United States at Paris: With Regard to the Commissioners for the International Exposition of 1867*, 1865.

<sup>21</sup> Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance*, ed. J. Bruneau, vol. III, Pléiade (Gallimard, 1988), 635–36.

the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, and has also been called the Crystal Palace Exhibition, or simply the Great Exhibition. National industrial expositions had taken place in France from 1798 through 1849 and were the precursors to the International Expositions. Just like the initial French Industrial Exposition of 1798, the Exposition Universelle of 1867 took place on the Champ de Mars. French industrial exhibitions date from the Revolution, and responded to three essential ideas. First, it was imperative at that time, by provoking a renaissance of the arts, to prove that the freedom of labor could produce as beautiful fruits as those that were made under the abolished régime, and thus remedy a decline of corporations. To remedy industry via the arts was an impetus to encourage improvement after a period that saw a decline in trades and the quality of fabrication. Then, with the founding of the Conservatory of Arts et Métiers, the effort was to revive the condition of the mechanical arts and to associate them to the liberal arts according to the ancient aphorism “beauty in utility.” Finally, it was important for France to unify the capital with the newly established territorial departments (of 1790), affirming the centralization and establishing the indivisibility of the republic above the regionalism of the provinces of the Ancien Régime. It was necessary to show that in the case that, within the interior of France borders had disappeared, in relation to foreign countries, that France could survive independently and that the spirit of invention would successfully meet, with only the products of its own soil, the demands imposed by a permanent state of war.<sup>22</sup> From the first fair and through the following national expositions under the Empire and the Restoration, the marriage of arts and industry was paramount. The minister François de Neufchâteau addressed a motivating purpose behind the initial national exposition in 1798 when he declared that the moment had arrived for France to escape the servitude of its neighbors’ industrial ambitions (alluding to the production of the most powerful arms for the British), by freeing itself through the arts.

The Champ de Mars had a symbolic significance, as Neufchâteau declared in his 1798 address, “the French astonished Europe by the speed of their military successes; they must set out

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Léon, “La Première Exposition Universelle de Paris 1855,” *Revue Des Deux Mondes (1829-1971)*, 1955, 49.

with the same ardor in pursuit of commerce and the arts of peace.”<sup>23</sup> The French philosophy behind expositions would evolve by the time of the emergence of the international exhibitions, though the pursuit of industrial enlightenment via the arts would continue as a common thread. The institution of the “exposition,” according to Mainardi, was a “powerful ideological weapon.”<sup>24</sup> Mainardi positions art and industry as traditional rivals, in the history of France, since “this dialectic between art and industry, the monarchy and the bourgeoisie, had a long history in France, extending back to the beginning of guild chronicles.”<sup>25</sup> This conflict was certainly still at play in the initial French Universal Expositions of 1855 and 1867, held under the auspices of the Second Empire, though under this Monarchy the isolationist motivation bowed to diplomacy. The French artistic hegemony which prevailed under the Imperial commission’s organization had progressed officially since the guild of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, whose regulations required that no foreign art may be sold in Paris unless it was examined by the *gardes du métier*, since most foreign art was often considered of inferior quality.<sup>26</sup> In spirit though, the Exposition Universelle of 1867 served to promote the preeminence of French taste. Taking place during the final years of Napoléon III’s reign, “it was considered a success by the regime, and was to be judged in retrospect a swansong of the Empire, seen as celebrating modernity as a mask for social exclusion, economic failure, military perils, and a deeper misunderstanding of the times.”<sup>27</sup> The emergence of the international exhibitions, according to Pascal Ory, did not happen by chance in London in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, built on the French national exhibition model; it was a symptom of the two neighboring nation’s competition of their two modernities, both economic and political, as well as their shared communion of the same new religion of progress.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Paul Léon, “La Première Exposition Universelle de Paris 1855,” *Revue Des Deux Mondes (1829-1971)*, 1955, 50. Translated by the author.

<sup>24</sup> Patricia Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire: The Universal Expositions of 1855 and 1867* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Brunet and Talley, “Exhibiting the West at the Paris Exposition of 1867: Towards a New American Aesthetic Identity?,” 2.

<sup>28</sup> Pascal Ory, “Les Expositions universelles, de 1851 à 2010 : les huit fonctions de la modernité,” in *Temps croisés I*, ed. Duanmu Mei and Hugues Tertrais (Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2010), 1.

The foundations of the International Exhibitions were built on the legacy of art and industry, and out of a historical legacy of institutional legitimacy. The validity of these two genres was not up for debate. However, the emergence of photography at the same time as the international exhibitions, positioned the new technology and art on the same social surface of display, though photography lacked the cultural understanding and the established structure to allow for a perfect reading of the medium's presence at the time. The emergence of the medium within the time-frame of the first international exhibitions represents its conflicting presence as an "overlapping component" within the modernization that was occurring. Unhampered by the monarchical or bourgeois authority that governed more established mediums, the photographic presence foreboded the democratization and popularization of commerce that heralded the Universal Expositions. Photography, a recent technological invention, emerged as a symptom of modernity, but as David Harvey clarifies, a necessity of modernization depends on elements that were already present in the existing condition, an idea initiated by Saint-Simon and embraced by Marx.<sup>29</sup> Photography evolved from this marriage of arts and industry, relying on the pictorial legacy of fine arts and the technological developments provided via science, enlightenment and industrialization. As a symbol of modernity, photography's rapidly evolving value in visuality and trade would exist as a reflection of society's change over the next era.

This study explores the visuality within this Exposition Universelle, in which photography and material objects were utilized to create and express national and regional identities. Beginning with the broader context of the Exposition, this text examines the larger presence of photography at the Exposition before focusing on the exhibitions of the Far West. The documentation, photographs, and records of the Exposition allow for a critical reading of how America, and other countries utilized this space. In the case of the American West, it offers an opportunity to examine that expression, particularly in respect to the international public. What can be seen on this international stage was an organized and concentrated group of symbols with which the American organizers

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<sup>29</sup> David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 1st ed., Book, Whole (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.

wished to represent the country. Regional disparities were blatantly clear, as well as a hierarchy of value concerning American states and regions, influenced by the political aftermath of the Civil War. The hope and promise of the American expansion westward was initiated in this visual phase. The specifics of the appeal of the Far West, it can be seen, were appropriately and efficiently communicated through objects and photographs. In the years immediately following the American government-organized exhibit at the Exposition Universelle of 1867, the American government expanded its sponsored expeditions of the West. The United States Geological Surveys enabled the extensive survey photography of the land of the American West. The appeal of the land, adventure, and economic promise of the Far West would shape the American image throughout the following decades. Its presence at the Exposition Universelle of 1867 presents a moment of interest in understanding one example of how that powerful Western identity came to be established.

The U.S. presence at the Exposition Universelle of 1867 has been a focus of research in specifically theme-based studies. The works of fine art have been one of few collections to date which has garnered thorough examination. Largely considered a “failure,” the U.S. fine arts exhibit was described with efficient clarity in Carol Troyen’s 1985 article “Innocents Abroad: American Painters at the 1867 Exposition Universelle, Paris.”<sup>30</sup> This study provides essential context when considering the broader contribution of American images. She found that despite the American artists’ inspiration by academic masters and their attempt for recognition in Paris, like the eponymous characters of Mark Twain’s novel (who visit the fair during their Great Excursion) they were still found to be “innocents abroad.” The American fine arts display was assembled by a committee composed primarily of New Yorkers who favored the Hudson River School, who despite their exclusive and regional makeup presented a selection of paintings (**fig. 1.7**) that were considered to be America’s most impressive achievements of the previous two years, a judgment that history, Troyen insists, has confirmed:

Realism was proclaimed their standard, yet their visions are now seen as retrospective and idyllic, perpetuating a mythic image of America - the pristine wilderness of the Rocky

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<sup>30</sup> Carol Troyen, “Innocents Abroad: American Painters at the 1867 Exposition Universelle, Paris,” *American Art Journal* 16, no. 4 (1984): 3–29.

Mountains, the arcadian perfection of the New England woods - that by 1867 was less and less credible. [...] The vast majority of works in the show illustrated the prevailing taste for literal representation, by which was meant clear and accurate (if deliberately positive) descriptions of American scenery and American life, and a style which demonstrated industry and craftsmanship, but which gave little evidence of the artist's hand or of his personality.<sup>31</sup>

The work of a more poetic strain of American painting (Elihu Vedder, William Page, John La Farge) was cast aside for this selection that tended toward native subjects and “revealed an aesthetic of technical achievement rather than imagination.”<sup>32</sup>

Patricia Mainardi’s analysis of the Second Empire Expositions exposes the multiple perspectives concerning the fine arts of the period, in a detailed panorama of the 1855 and 1867 Paris Universal Expositions, in their French political and cultural context.<sup>33</sup> Her book doesn’t consider the American presence, but her context of the “collision of art and politics” during the Second Empire period provides the essential companion scholarship to understand the aesthetic implications and reception of images at the fair. Her argument that the 1855 and 1867 Universal Expositions of the Second Empire “served as catalysts for the collision of art and politics which produced many of the institutions and attitudes which we still associate with Modernism” asks the same questions as this study, concerning the changes in aesthetics described by the term “modernism” and the examination of causation in those changes.<sup>34</sup> Just as her study uses the microcosm of fine arts at the two Second Empire Expositions, this dissertation asserts that the presence of the American West at the 1867 Exposition exposed a kind of internal point of reflection in Reconstruction-era United States, not responsible for, but evocative of an American aesthetic transformation that extended throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The cold reception of American paintings in 1867, primarily landscapes, and the critics’ reaction to them contrasts with the appreciation for the photographic landscapes of the U.S. exhibited by the Far West. The idyllic representation of American landscape paintings was rejected in favor of the unexpectedly aesthetic

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 7–13.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>33</sup> Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 1.

photographs of the American landscapes, which, in exchange for lack of imagination offered more literal information in return.

The American fine arts exhibit was found to be lacking an innovative American aesthetic, as Troyen argues, “[f]or most American critics, the 1867 Exposition merely confirmed their attitudes toward art, especially their taste for realism and their belief that art’s proper function was to illustrate treasured scenes of American life and landscape.”<sup>35</sup> Secretary of the Jury for Class I (Fine Arts), Ernest Chesneau was generally disappointed by the American artistic works considering the country which produced them: “most American landscapes are painted in a spirit of convention that is surprising in a nation that is supposed to have freed itself of so many other conventions.”<sup>36</sup> In his official report, he acknowledged the few noteworthy paintings that the New World managed to put forward, naming the landscapes of Church and Bierstadt, the genre pictures by Homer, Johnson, and George Cochran Lambdin, as well as Whistler’s singular “study of color” in the *The White Girl*.<sup>37</sup> Chesneau sets apart *Niagara* by Church and *The Rocky Mountains* by Bierstadt, applauding their “boldness of conception” in an otherwise unremarkable field. He named the genre paintings, *Confederate Prisoners at the Front* by Homer, *The Last Sleep* by Lambdin, and *Old Kentucky Home* (i.e. *Negro Life at the South*) by Eastman Johnson as interesting but not stylistically distinctive from the British genre works. Chesneau considered the American fine arts to be with the “schools of the South,” alluding to the geopolitically determined layout of the Palace.<sup>38</sup> Whistler, perhaps due to his years based in Europe, was the only American painter which exuded for Chesneau an individuality and boldness which elevated him above the mediocrity of the majority of artists providing the “struggle of a superior man against average taste” and a rare singularity evocative of a local or native style.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Troyen, “Innocents Abroad: American Painters at the 1867 Exposition Universelle, Paris,” 13.

<sup>36</sup> Ernest Chesneau, *Les Nations Rivaies Dans l’art* (Paris: Didier, 1868), 161.

<sup>37</sup> Chesneau, “Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Rapports Du Jury International” (Paris : Imprimerie administrative de Paul Dupont, 1868), 51, CNUM. Translation by the author.

<sup>38</sup> Chesneau, *Les Nations Rivaies Dans l’art*, 162.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 162–63.

The cultural critique of America went deeper. Critics of the 1860s used the phrase “American images,” as Philippe Hamon has shown, as a generic label for all kinds of images, American or not in origin, that manifested negative aesthetic values from circus shows to early Impressionist paintings. In this proto-critique of what the Frankfurt School would later call the culture industry, claims to commercialism, vulgarization, naivety, and effect became associated either metaphorically or by a loose causal link with “America.”<sup>40</sup> This anti-modern and anti-American sentiment was expressed by others, such as the Goncourt, as a result of the 1867 fair: “The Universal Exposition: the final blow levelled at the past, the Americanization of France, industry lording it over art, the steam thresher reigning in place of the painting – in brief, the Federation of Matter.”<sup>41</sup> While Victor Hugo, the Goncourt, Flaubert, and Baudelaire might have feared the arrival of some kind of “American Babylon,” the French and Imperial organizers encouraged the changes already occurring in Paris, the Haussmanian renovation and a growing commercialization.<sup>42</sup> Mainardi examines the fine art exhibitions at Second Empire Expositions through the political frame:

In the crucible of the Expositions, the force of politics in its larger sense, not simply the control of government, but the orientation of values, symbols and images, the maneuvering of certain perceived interests and norms, morality and behavior, were brought to bear on the world of art, hastening a process whereby art institutions were becoming “modern” by taking on the image of the ruling economics, capitalism, the ruling politics, democracy, and the ruling class, the bourgeoisie.<sup>43</sup>

While Mainardi studies the social, political, and economic forces which would have, in a Modernist reading, been considered external to the art world; these same forces will be examined in this study, as associated influences on the photography and visual representation of the Far West. Mainardi’s work serves as a valuable resource to understand Second Empire France more closely as it concerned art and the visual context for imagery. The Exposition of 1867 was not just an event of

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<sup>40</sup> Brunet and Talley, “Exhibiting the West at the Paris Exposition of 1867: Towards a New American Aesthetic Identity?”

<sup>41</sup> Edmond de Goncourt and Jules de Goncourt, *The Goncourt Journals*, ed. and trans. Louis Galantine (New York, 1937), 234.

<sup>42</sup> Notably, in a later edition of the *Journals des Goncourt*, Edmond changed the wording from a “Babylon of the future” to “an American Babylon of the future.”

<sup>43</sup> Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*, 2.



elevated visibility for photography, it was where the death of history painting “le style” was taking place, and within the French category of “le naturalisme,” genre took precedence over landscape, which was considered a road not taken by Mainardi.<sup>44</sup> It seems that photography, with its aesthetic structural heritage in fine art, co-opted this available space in the modern aesthetic at the Exposition of 1867, providing an unexpected and innovative expression of landscape. This was part of the emergence of modernism, particularly in the context of the state-controlled Exposition Universelle of 1867. Mainardi’s study, touching on neither the U.S. nor photography, acknowledges how “the points of stress and accommodation between art and politics, art and institutions [...] show the process whereby the rule of popular taste was substituted for the authority of Government and Academy.”<sup>45</sup> This process was perhaps the most powerful transition taking place at Second Empire Universal Expositions. The source of validation was shifting, and the democratic element that emerged from these fairs means that the jury’s choices only tell us so much about the reception of the public. Modernism and photography emerged as the result of the joined forces of capitalism, democracy, and the bourgeoisie.

Considering “art historians are virtually unanimous in placing the origins of Modernism in the Second Empire” and that following the downfall of the Second Empire in 1870 “the best artists no longer expected a career of government medals, honors and commissions,” photography and the institutional sponsorship of photographic work began to take up some of the *official* space previously granted to fine artists.<sup>46</sup> This movement in which photography “took on the popular, figurative duties previously arrogated to painting” freed the latter of realism and its limitations to innovate within the pure and abstract realm of the avant-garde.<sup>47</sup> Borrowing from Douglas Nickel and his interpretation of Jonathan Crary’s conceptualization of modernist history, photography and the fine or avant-garde arts were “overlapping components of a single social surface on which the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>47</sup> Douglas R. Nickel, Carleton E. Watkins, and Maria Morris Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins: The Art of Perception* (San Francisco, Calif. : New York, N.Y: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 22.

modernization of vision” was taking place, primarily in the evolving perspective of the observer.<sup>48</sup> The context for a discussion concerning “modernism” and of American visual culture within this period belies a discussion of the overlapping of photography and fine art within the social and political crucible of the Exposition Universelle of 1867. If modernism originated during the Second Empire, the popular emergence of photography and avant-garde art was taking place within and outside the walls of the Exposition, alluding to the rejected Manet, and the gallery he opened across the street from the Exposition. Much examination has been made of the avant-garde art presence, but this study/dissertation attempts to examine one example in which photography engaged in this evolution of the visual and the observer.

Annie Cohen-Solal positioned the “failure” of American fine artists at the Exposition as the starting point in an examination that attributes the American artists’ eventual redemption and evolution in part to the exchange of cultural energy with the French, as the center of Modern art world shifted from Paris to New York by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Cohen-Solal attributes American artists’ resurrection in the decades following the 1867 Exposition to their pursuit of mastery among the undisputed masters, the French. Her book, *Painting American*, tells a modernist narrative of the seventy or so years of transatlantic exchange following the 1867 Exposition which led to the eventual cultural independence of American artists, surpassing their French mentors, and displacing the center of the Modern art world across the Atlantic.<sup>49</sup> The most in-depth study of the American presence at the Exposition, outside of the fine arts, is Gary Van Zante’s book *New Orleans 1867: Photographs by Theodore Lilienthal*, which writes a history around Lilienthal’s photographic campaign of the city, produced expressly for the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris. In an unparalleled visual act of civic boosterism and city building during the Civil War and Reconstruction era, Lilienthal produced 150 large prints, a feat of urban photography and the “first-known photographic survey of an American city.”<sup>50</sup> The album was presented to the Emperor

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> A. Cohen-Solal, *Painting American: The Rise of American Artists, Paris 1867-New York 1948*, trans. Laurie Hurwitz-Attias, Borzoi Book (Knopf, 2001).

<sup>50</sup> Gary Van Zante, *New Orleans 1867, Photographs by Theodore Lilienthal* (London: Merrell, 2008), 7.

Napoléon III at the close of the Exposition, to remind the French of New Orleans' ancestral link to the French in hopes of reigniting the trade and antebellum commercial ascendancy it had previously enjoyed.<sup>51</sup> Van Zante provides a detailed examination of the topographical photographs that make up *La Nouvelle Orléans et ses environs*, which had gone neglected until the discovery of the single surviving portfolio, having undergone the fall of the Second Empire, the subsequent displacements of the imperial heirlooms, of which most were destroyed or seized during the Paris Commune of 1871. This rare collection of large topographical prints from the Reconstruction era serves as primary documents, part of a Louisiana presence at the Exposition, at which the South and Southeast were otherwise markedly scarce. Along with the cotton, sugar, tobacco, and the “portable cottage” from Louisiana, Lilienthal's album was sent to Paris to advertise the city on the world stage. Evidence of the New Orleans album rarely appears in Exposition records, and the study by Van Zante offers an in-depth examination of a relevant example of 1860s American photography particularly in the case of publicly sponsored survey work in a community setting.

This study and its corpus evolved from a more general survey of the American presence at the Exposition Universelle of 1867 in Paris. At the outset, my work consisted of researching the complete American contribution to the Exposition with particular attention to any apparent regionalism, as part of a larger exhibition project under the direction of the late François Brunet. What became clear, as that research evolved, was that the moment of 1867 marked a point of interest as it pertained to the American Far West. It also became subtly apparent that the growing visual appeal of the region and its geographical resources were entering a period of rapid escalation, and that this popularity was more than an element of regionalism. It became evident that this emerging aesthetic and regional identity had implications that stretched beyond its provincial terrain. The U.S. was still in the immediate fallout of a gruesome Civil War, and utilized the emergent quality of the Far West to revive some of its national image. At the Exposition Universelle

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

this regional element took on an outsized role within the American visual display and in illustrated publications for years to come.

Introductory research for this project took place at the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) campus in College Park, Maryland, where the documents pertaining to organization of the U.S. commission are archived. This collection provided the entirety of the original correspondence relevant to the American organization. The communication concerning the Exposition involved many individuals, the majority of which were located in the Northeastern region. From this communication one is able to identify a cultural hierarchy in which all decisions emanated from the political center of the Union. The organization reflected this protracted societal and cultural schism, as the intellectual capital of the country made the entirety of judgments concerning the country's preferred path of return to the international scene. This group actively sought out the exhibition of the Far West and its resources, part of an emphasized show of sovereignty over land formerly controlled by European powers, as well as a visual impetus for foreign immigration and investment. The NARA collection included the original applications from interested exhibitors, many of which provided crucial details concerning an American display that was sparingly photographed. Through the analysis of these applications and their accompanying documents, one is better able to understand who exhibited what, and where, inside a display that has conflicting written reports. One example of this was the photographic display by Alexander Gardner whose contribution was simply defined in the descriptive catalog of American objects as "Photographs."<sup>52</sup> It was unknown which photographs Gardner sent to Paris, though research would unearth further criticism concerning his images. A relevant question surrounded his mysterious presence, what did he exhibit and was it solely his famously macabre images of fallen Civil War soldiers? In fact, it was revealed by his application and installation documents, that the photographer exhibited solely Washington D.C. subjects. Rather than portray the feebleness of

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<sup>52</sup> United States and Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867, *Official Catalogue of the Products of the United States of America Exhibited at Paris 1867 : With Statistical Notices : Catalogue in English = Catalogue Français = Deutscher Catalog.*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Imprimerie Centrale des Chemins de Fer, 1867), 62.

American unity on the Civil War battlefields, Gardner exhibited a banal collection of strength; the portraits of prominent individuals, and wide views of American government buildings. Detailed sketches (**fig. 1.8, fig. 1.9**) show how the large, framed photographs should be installed and were included in the NARA application files, with each portrait and building named on the diagrams. I was then able to identify his display in existing Exposition photographs (**fig. 1.10, fig. 10.2**). Clarifying elements such as this, by way of the NARA documents, allowed for a major element of the American intention in Paris to be revealed, the organizers of the U.S. exhibit sought to avoid the subject of the War, and only few relevant objects, such as the ambulance wagon from the U.S. Army field hospitals would make their way to Paris. The internal communication concerning the American participation which can only be found within these NARA records provided the foundation of the analysis concerning the American display and how it came to its eventual composition.

The Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, California holds a considerable collection of original photographs, artifacts, and documents in its Special Collections including a number of albums of large prints from the Exposition, taken primarily by the official photographers under the authority of Pierre Petit: Auguste-Rosalie Bisson (Bisson Jeune), Charles-Louis Michelez, and Petit. There are also numerable cases of stereographs by Petit's official stereographers Léon & Lévy, including published stereo cards and a case of glass slides. The collection includes several rare contemporary publications, such as a small pullout volume (**fig. 1.11, fig. 1.12**) referred to as an "optical theater of the Exposition Universelle of 1867, Paris," which includes holes in the front for the viewer to look through and experience a three-dimensional spectacle of colorful drawings of the Exposition.<sup>53</sup> The Getty collection also contains an album titled *Album Hippique*, composed of portraits of horses (**fig. 1.13**) from the competition; the album is credited to Louis-Jean Delton and Antoine Samuel Adam-Salomon, pointing to either their capture off-site of the grounds or a conflict with Pierre Petit's unique concession of photography at the Exposition. A similar case exists with some other photographs, including a small album by A. Verroquier & Cie. Finally, the collection

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<sup>53</sup> A. Faisandier, [*Optical Theater of the Exposition Universelle de 1867, Paris*] (Paris: Lemercier, 1867).

includes an original entry pass for one week to the Exposition (**fig. 1.14**), including the necessary photograph and seal, and the individual's name. A full-size, mint-condition, hand-colored map of the Palace and Parc is also found in the Getty's Special Collections (**fig. 1.15, fig. 1.16**) along with a number of original publications dating from the period.

The French National Archives (Archives Nationales) contains an extensive record of the Exposition, including a large, digitized iconographical archive. The French documentation behind the construction, design, and execution of the Exposition can be found in this rich library, including the powerful photograph (**fig. 1.17**) of a man overlooking the future site of the Exposition Palace in its state of construction on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1866. Photographs follow the construction of the Palace, and a large number of interesting behind-the-scenes images exist in the depths of this easily accessed assemblage. The collection of photographs features of a large number of photographic portraits of French exhibitors (**fig. 1.18**) with their exhibition Class, address, and names with each image. The *Albums du Parc* include aesthetic layouts of photographs and diagrams of structures in the park of the Exposition, including one (**fig. 1.19**) of the American farmhouse from Illinois. The French National Archives collection has an accompanying 89-page methodical repertoire established by Christiane Demeulenaere-Douyere, historian and curator who has extensively published concerning the Exposition. This collection represents the most thorough and organized iconographical and documentary resource concerning the Exposition and reveals a concerted interest, on the part of the Imperial organizers, to visually document the entire process of the Exposition.

For the images and objects exhibited by the U.S., particularly by California and Colorado, the predominant displays from the Far West and the focus of my research, the local archives were essential. For Colorado, the collections at History Colorado and the Denver Public Library provided almost the entirety of the exhibited photographs and relative information. For California, the collection was sourced via various collections including the Getty, Bancroft Library, Online Archive of California, California State Library, Yosemite Library, Huntington Library, Société Française de Photographie, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, as well as auction records. For both California and Colorado, at least one or more photographs of the exhibit were discovered and identified from

the Cooper-Hewitt Album, a volume including a collection of the photographs taken by Petit of the American exhibit, which is archived at the Smithsonian Institute. From these images, along with textual records, it was possible to assemble the majority of photographs exhibited in the displays. The image of the Colorado exhibit was initially made known to me in personal communications with a fellow researcher who knew that the image existed in one of three surviving copies of the illustrated Colorado pamphlet published by Colorado commissioner Joel Parker Whitney. After sending me her old xerox copy of the photograph, I was able to identify it from the Petit photograph of the Colorado exhibit (**fig. 6.2a**), copies of which it and similar can be found in the Cooper-Hewitt album, the Getty, and the Denver Public Library.

Though some items were found at various other institutions, those were mostly few in number, and the above collections were essential in piecing together a visual understanding of the American exhibition. Through the work of the late François Brunet and Clément Pont from the Pôle Image department of the University of Paris, some of the photographs were built into a géostereoscope found online at <https://geostereoscope-expo1867.huma-num.fr>. The page features a map of the Palace and Parc from the Exposition, with archival photographs placed in their position within the map, with camera angle specified. This digital experience was created as a preliminary effort to simulate a three-dimensional visual experience of the Exposition.<sup>54</sup> This type of visual recreation of the Exposition was a prominent aspect of François Brunet's ambitions for an exhibition project. The early research work that I completed concerned the entire collection of objects and images that were presented by the United States. The process to understand how the exhibition might have looked and which objects deserved closer inspection was part of a group effort and required the extensive study of public domain publications from the period, some of which can fortunately be found in online sources. Many of the objects and artifacts that were exhibited have been lost, discarded, or no longer exist. Pictorial sources have survived in much larger number. A large quantity of the photographs that were exhibited have been found,

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<sup>54</sup> This project was created by a partnership of LARCA, and the Pôle Image of the University of Paris.

emphasizing the established importance of the imagery from this cultural event. The World's Fairs have produced some innovative, individual works, but most of the buildings, products, and natural artifacts they assembled—the Eiffel Tower notwithstanding—are now gone. Images, artworks and the documentary records of these events provide surviving evidence of a moment in time, in a context that provided a concentrated expression of its spirit.



## **Part 1. The United States at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867**

## Chapter 1. Post-Civil War U.S. on the International Scene

### 1.1 U.S. Public Organization, strategy, correspondence

The French Imperial Commission invited the United States to participate in the Universal Exposition of 1867 on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1865. The French Second Empire government under the control of Napoléon III “made it an absolute condition for the admission of exhibitors from any country that the government of such country should first accept the invitation and assume the responsibility of forming the exhibition of its section.”<sup>55</sup> This was a new requirement since prior to this event, participation was voluntary and on an individual basis for exhibitors; nations and state governments were involved only if they chose to be. This time the governments of participating nation-states would be in charge of selecting and sending the objects chosen to represent their country, enabling a political influence on the resulting representation. This added political and institutional element arrived at a revealing moment for the United States, for shortly after the invitation, on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1865, the ambassador to France, John Bigelow, was instructed:

To inform the minister for foreign affairs of France that President Lincoln regarded the proposed Exposition with great favor, as well because of the beneficent influence it might be expected to exert upon the prosperity of the nations, as of its tendency to preserve peace and mutual friendship among them; that what the executive government could do, by way of concurrence in the movement, would very cheerfully be done, but that as far as the President was able to proceed without special legislative authority.<sup>56</sup>

President Lincoln would not be able to proceed in any case, he was assassinated only ten days later on April 15, 1865. The country was still in the process of ending the Civil War and involvement was unsure. Discussion ensued on whether the U.S. would be able to participate, considering the disarray in which it found its public institutions, having just emerged from a violent rebellion. The correspondence reveals that despite some doubt, it was decided relatively quickly that the U.S. would request of Congress in its next session in December to enact a budget suitable to support a complete representation of the nation’s arts, industries and science, should the idea be passed by Congress in December of 1865. In the meantime, American organization carried on without an

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<sup>55</sup> William P. Blake, ed., *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1870), 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

official response to the Imperial Commission, though by April 17<sup>th</sup> a Commissioner General of the United States had been appointed, an American residing in Paris, Mr. Nelson M. Beckwith accepted the un-compensated position. In a letter written November 23, 1865, he made a strong argument for the U.S. to participate to the minister to France, John Bigelow:

No one is more sensible than yourself of the deficiency of exact information in Europe in regard to America previous to the rebellion, in a political, literary, and moral sense, in a physical, geographical, statistical, financial, industrial, scientific, and productive sense, and in every sense. It was obvious at every step, everywhere, and among all classes, and it suggested an incredible indifference, unaccountable to those not acquainted with the causes of such deficiency. The events of the last four years have made the United States more known than all the events of their previous history. Their magnitude, their resources, and their strength are now acknowledged. The strong impression produced is pleasing or unpleasing, according to the sympathies or aversions of classes and interests, but none deny the presence of a great power, and its advent is acceptable and hopeful to the masses of the numerous peoples [...] An exhibition of the products of America in the center of Europe, well selected, and complete enough to be national, showing the mineral and agricultural resources, the state of manufactures, the varieties and quantity of machinery, and the condition of the industrial arts in general, would, in my judgment, produce an impression of surprise analogous to that produced by the disclosures of the war.<sup>57</sup>

Beckwith acknowledged the inevitability of judgement against the U.S., obviously by those powers which were hoping for the failure of the Union. However, he insisted upon making an impression of United States strength as a statement to both those for and against the nation, particularly to contrast with the impression made by the near unraveling revealed by the Civil War. The new President Andrew Johnson supported American participation as well. In a letter to the Senate and House of Representatives dated December 11, 1865, he requested Congressional approval: "I commend the subject to your early and favorable consideration."<sup>58</sup> Mr. J.C. Derby, was appointed as the general agent of the U.S. government for the Exposition and he would be responsible for the selection of objects submitted by the people of the U.S. To support him in this matter he selected an advisory committee consisting of ten men, one appointed for each Group category of the Exposition. They were as follows:

William J. Hoppin – Group 1;

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 26–27.

<sup>58</sup> 1867 United States. Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, Joseph Florimond Loubat, and United States Department of State, *Official Papers Relating to the Conduct of the Legation of the United States at Paris: With Regard to the Commissioners for the International Exposition of 1867*, 2nd ed. (Paris: E. Brière, 1867), 9.

Charles A. Joy – Group 2;  
Richard M. Hunt – Group 3;  
Elliott C. Cowdin – Group 4;  
Samuel B. Ruggles – Group 5;  
Francisco W. Evans – Group 6;  
Fredrick Law Olmstead – Group 7;  
William S. Carpenter – Group 8;  
Thomas McElrath– Group 9;  
Charles L. Brace – Group 10<sup>59</sup>

This advisory committee took on much of the work of communicating to the public about the application and selection process as well as receiving and sorting the exhibitors' applications.

Though by early 1866 progress had been slow and there was doubt among the committee that a proper collection could be assembled given the situation in America at the time:

This is the first time that the Government has proposed to take part in a foreign exhibition ; hitherto the representation has been by individual effort and without system and has been in no sense national. It is now incumbent upon those having the matter in charge to take prompt, efficient and comprehensive action to insure a creditable display of the products and productive capacity of the United States, and if in consequence of the shortness of time or of inadequate appropriations it is found that the work cannot be properly done, it would be better for the nation to be excluded from the Exposition than for us to send forward a defective and partial exhibition which will be neither useful nor respectable, nor, in any proper sense, representative of the products of the country. The representation of the United States at the Exposition of 1867 that would be satisfactory to its Government and its people and worthy of effort and expenditures would be one that furnishes its representative products in each of the several classes, as set forth by the Imperial Commissioners, so far as they are known to exist in this country. In our judgment, even if the time were not short, there would be great difficulty in undertaking to obtain these products by an appeal for voluntary offers, but under present circumstances, and expressly in reference to that of time, it is not to be expected that such measures will effect [sic] the desired representation, and that, therefore recourse must be had to very different means in order to insure the end in view.<sup>60</sup>

By January of the next year, the leadership had been assembled and yet there was still doubt as to whether the United States would be able to gather a representation that was up to par. The delay the previous year resulted partially from waiting for Congress to convene to approve budgeting.

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<sup>59</sup> J.C. Derby, "Minutes of the Meetings of the Advisory Committee," n.d., Record 1193, NARA.

<sup>60</sup> Horatio Allen et al., "Advisory Committee to Derby," January 27, 1866, Record 1193, p. 8-11, NARA.

Nonetheless, the government, now under President Andrew Johnson, pursued assemblage of a group of objects that would revive America's reputation, following a period in which the country's demise was not just possible but hoped for by certain European powers. The U.S. engaged in an accelerated attempt to prove by its presence at the fair that the U.S. was destined to endure and flourish. The government engaged other top leadership including Secretary of State, William H. Seward. Most official correspondence concerning the organization of the U.S. at the fair took place between Agent J.C. Derby, Sec. of State William H. Seward, and Commissioner General N.M. Beckwith.

## 1.2 French and American relations

When the Emperor of France, Napoléon III, at the height of the Second Empire proposed the Universal Exposition it was an attempt to further improve and utilize the platform to provoke progress and allow France to shine in its own structure and design, to demonstrate to the world 'the power of France as a modernized but pacific nation, the success of its mixture of laissez-faire and social paternalism, the happy wedding of art and industry, and the preeminence of French taste.'<sup>61</sup> In 1865 as the preparatory discussions began, the U.S. was barely extricated from the Civil War. The U.S. reluctantly accepted the invitation to participate in what would be the first international exhibition to put the responsibility of organizing and transporting displays on the national governments, a change which U.S. Commissioner General Beckwith applauded in that representations would be "truly national, [...] universal and fairly representative of the country," and which would bring the countries "all in harmony with each other."<sup>62</sup> According to his letter, the desire for America to implement a nationalist quality to its exhibit was in direct response to the fractured impression left by the Civil War. As William H. Seward alleged in his letter to President Johnson on December 11, 1865, part of a report to Congress to encourage their passage of Exposition budget and approval: "The moral influence, moreover, of a just and liberal illustration of

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<sup>61</sup> Brunet and Talley, "Exhibiting the West at the Paris Exposition of 1867: Towards a New American Aesthetic Identity?"

<sup>62</sup> Blake, *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867*, 26.

the vitality and progress of this nation, at such an international gathering, so soon after a great civil war, ought not to be over-looked in the consideration of this subject.”<sup>63</sup> The participation of America in international exhibitions reflected, according to Merle Curti, an “expansion of American patriotism and enterprise” which took place throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>64</sup>

While the Second Empire officially remained neutral during the American Civil War, French discourse and the opinion of Napoléon III concerning the young United States was not. As a symptom of his imperial interests in Mexico and Latin America the French Emperor was eager to assist the rebellion, but ultimately Bigelow and the Emperor’s foreign ministers managed to prevent him from directly engaging on the side of the Confederacy.<sup>65</sup> Along with the British ambassador Charles Francis Adams, the two managed to keep France and the United Kingdom from intervening on the side of the South, even if Queen Victoria did furnish the Confederate Navy with the CSS Alabama, with plans to build the South additional ships. One way in which Bigelow managed this was by publishing via Hachette an octavo volume delivering a clear explanation of the United States and its resources titled *Les États Unis en 1863 (The United States in 1863)*. His work managed to find its way into the hands of not only the press, but of influential ministers serving Napoléon III. Ultimately the French ruler was convinced that the value of commercial trade with the Union outweighed the benefits of cotton exports from the Confederacy, which the Union blockade had cut off starting in 1861. Cotton shortages from the southern states resulted in the “cotton famine” of French textile mills in 1863. The Union was the primary importer of French porcelain, silk, wines, watches and pottery while furnishing an essential amount of the country’s wheat and potash.<sup>66</sup> More generally, some Europeans called the Civil War the ‘American question’ and in France particularly the ‘war of secession.’ It was much more than a battle of North versus South, rather it involved

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<sup>63</sup> Beckwith, “Letter December 11, 1865, Beckwith to President Andrew Johnson,” 10.

<sup>64</sup> Curti, “America at the World Fairs, 1851-1893,” 833.

<sup>65</sup> “John Bigelow and Napoléon III,” by Poultney Bigelow is an enlightening examination of the intricacies of European Politics of the 1860s and how John Bigelow played a role in preventing European intervention in the American Civil War.

<sup>66</sup> Stève Sainlaude et al., *France and the American Civil War: A Diplomatic History*, Book, Whole (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 140–58.

European powers and young Latin American nations concerning issues of “diplomacy, commerce, and geopolitical strategy.”<sup>67</sup>

According to Phillippe Roger “the Civil War was America’s big comeback onto the French ideological scene.”<sup>68</sup> His perception was that the French accorded a disproportionate amount of interest in the Civil War by way of press and public opinion, in relation to how much was at stake for them compared to more serious developments taking place in Italy, Germany, and Russia.<sup>69</sup> The French had plenty of more worthwhile European events to be absorbed in, he goes on to state “France’s focus on the American war seems to be a distraction of those intelligent citizens’ attention, a serious error in judgment, and a bad investment of public interest, which was diverted from such important issues as Prussia’s growing power.”<sup>70</sup> The growing threat of war with Prussia, caused the realization of the Exposition to be questioned throughout its construction and preparation.

Bridging the Atlantic with an international event in the American conflict, Roger presents the interesting example of the Civil War battle of the *CSS Alabama* vs. *USS Kearsarge* in the port of Cherbourg in 1864. The Battle of Cherbourg positioned the British built, Confederate sloop-of-war *CSS Alabama* against the Northern navy *Kearsarge*, after the *Alabama* arrived to undergo repairs in France following a successful commercial run, having out-run or sunk Northern blockade ships. To quote Roger, “The *Alabama*’s fate was entwined in the tangled pro-South politics of England and France, which were more ostensibly than authentically neutral.”<sup>71</sup> The battle, also known as the sinking of the *Alabama*, would be illustrated differently by the French and American publications. The most common American depiction shows the two ships facing off, out at sea, far from European eyes, “stems pointed as though they were about to harpoon each other.”<sup>72</sup> On the French side, the first image published of the battle was an engraving by Louis Le Breton in the June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1864,

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., xi.

<sup>68</sup> Phillippe Roger, *The American Enemy: A Story of French Anti-Americanism*, trans. Sharon Bowman, Book, Whole (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 70.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 68.

edition of *L'Illustration* (**fig. 1.20**) that is thought to have influenced the most well-known image of the battle among its contemporaries, the oil painting (**fig. 1.21**) by Édouard Manet. The painting created a much more dramatized view of the battle, portraying the sinking *Alabama* in the foreground, seemingly in a theatre under the gaze of a French audience, a premonition of the South's impending loss. Roger uses the example to bring illustration to the layered French ideology concerning the American Civil War. The painting is less about the battle, and more about the French mindset, as Roger states it is merely a representation, not a so-called “documentary” painting as it was sometimes described. It isn't showing us the battle, it is showing us, he says, “imperial France's facial expression.”<sup>73</sup>

The French fascination with the “Guerre de Secession” was a miscalculation that anticipated an end to the American nation. “French diplomacy was aiming for the breakup of the American federation—a breakup that could only be advantageous for France. A dream was born: that of a long... North American war, a deadlock with no winner that would bleed the country dry.”<sup>74</sup> In addition to bringing America into a kind of international news spotlight the War, according to Roger, helped to encourage a *vision* of America, rich with many new ideas, expectations and opinions.<sup>75</sup> How disappointing it must have been then, when two years after the end of the conflict and the reunification of the country, the war was almost completely absent at the Paris Exposition.

The primary display from the Civil War was from the sanitary commission, organized by the Surgeon General which revolutionized on-site emergency care during warfare. Neither the powerful artillery engineered for modern warfare, nor the photographs from the battlefield, would be shown in Paris. Only positive, forward-looking aspects of the war were shown, such as the ambulance and portable medical innovations. The sanitary commission was one of the three organizational achievements for which the U.S. received a grand prize; the other winning objects included a portion of the transatlantic cable and the Chapin/Pacific Mills award for harmony in labor relations.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 73.



Another near absence in the U.S. exhibition was that of the Native people. Tours of Indigenous people had been coming to France since 1827, part of entrepreneurial endeavors of David Delaunay and George Catlin.<sup>76</sup> While there is much correspondence among the organizers discussing plans and hopes of bringing a group of 25-30 Indians, it seems that the plan was decided against. The press expected a Native American presence and published anecdotes describing anticipated experiences.<sup>77</sup> The one case that has left a trail includes a tale of a “U-Ta-Wa-Un” who was described as the son of the Chief of the Callapoose tribe (unknown), dressed in multi-colored feathers and armed with a spear and a tomahawk. The description in *Le Monde Illustré* described his presence with “We-no-na,” a woman from the same tribe who had been in Paris for an extended time as part of an American circus troop.<sup>78</sup> Many illustrations and references of the Indians have been located, though they are only peripherally relevant. In fact, these Indians were not sent as part of the American delegation but rather were part of the “Great American Circus” which was a private commercial entity and owned by Jim W. Myers. The circus began touring Europe in 1867 before building a permanent building in Paris near Place du Chateau d’Eau.<sup>79</sup>

One of the only prominent examples of Native American reference in the American delegation was John Quincy Adams Ward’s sculpture, *Indian Hunter*, seen exhibited at the Exposition (**fig. 1.22**) and now located in New York City’s Central Park. Ward’s sculpture was among those of the period that answered the call for uniquely American subjects produced by American artists, differentiating them from Europe. The portrayal of an indigenous boy and his dog in an Arcadian scene represented a contrast to the oppressive reality of the reservation system established by the U.S. government. This was the rare example of a work at the Exposition in which a Native American subject was portrayed in a naturalist manner, symbolizing a pre-colonial sovereignty by the indigenous peoples. Modeled after subjects in the Dakota Territory during an

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<sup>76</sup> Tangi Villerbu, *La Conquête de l’Ouest: le récit français de la nation américaine au XIXe siècle*, Histoire (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007).

<sup>77</sup> Gabriel Richard, ed., *L’Album de l’Exposition illustrée. Histoire pittoresque de l’Exposition universelle de 1867*, publiée par G. Richard (Paris: imp. de C. Schiller, 1867), 28.

<sup>78</sup> Camille Etiévant, “Les Indiens à Paris,” *Le Monde Illustré*, July 27, 1867, 52–54.

<sup>79</sup> Dominique Jando, “James Washington Myers,” Article, *Circopedia.Org*, accessed July 8, 2021, [http://www.circopedia.org/James\\_Washington\\_Myers](http://www.circopedia.org/James_Washington_Myers).

1864 trip, Ward's *Indian Hunter* was the outlier in a U.S. delegation that promoted a vision of the U.S. represented by a renovated set of symbols. These symbols replaced the indigenous people who had for many years represented the history and appeal of America. Instead, the U.S. commissioners assembled a representation in which the lands where indigenous people had lived for centuries and the resources of those lands were presented as new, expansive, and conquered.

### 1.3 French illustrated press and the American Far West

French illustrated press was an influential source publishing the image of the American West in the 1860s. This period of popularization followed a twenty-year dip in the presence of the American West in French geographic periodicals. From 1840 to the 1860s the American West's presence declined in the pages of the *Nouvelles Annales de Géographie*, which according to Tangi Villerbu was caused by a waning phase of that publication's relevance as well as a delayed revolution necessary within the French Geographical Society. The transition of this publication from one that regularly included geographer's travelogues into one responding chiefly to the institutionally scientific and colonial (commercial) demands of the genre within France, caused an interruption in providing a venue for the dissemination of Far West geography in France. The *Nouvelles Annales* would disappear in 1871, leaving only the *Bulletin de Société de Géographie* as a scientific medium for publicizing the geography of the Far West, which concentrated on the Asian and African colonial interests of France and marginalized the interest of the Americas.<sup>80</sup> This shift marked a popularization of the genre to come, in which the American Far West would find new recognition. The modernization of the printed geographical media stemmed from a motivation to vulgarize the subject and resulted in the appearance and success of publications such as *Le Tour du Monde* and *Revue des Deux Mondes*. The *Tour du Monde* was created, according to Tangi Villerbu at the intersection of two histories, that of the relaunch of French colonial pursuits and the media

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<sup>80</sup> Villerbu, *La conquête de l'Ouest*, 79.

revolution symbolized by Louis Hachette.<sup>81</sup> Created out of a partnership of Hachette with Édouard Charton, creator of *Magasin pittoresque* and *L'Illustration*, the pair launched *Le Tour du Monde* in 1860 without governmental support.<sup>82</sup> This popular take on geography was appearing amidst Hachette's already established effort in travel guides. Hachette insisted on several objectives for this publication including "human adventure," a picturesque vision of visited countries, and to put the stories into the hands of the largest possible audience.<sup>83</sup> The American West travelogues would appear often in the magazine's run between 1860-1914, with the entirety of the articles published between 1860-1886. The chart "Voyages in the American West published in *Le Tour du Monde* between 1860 and 1914" (**fig. 1.22**) lists the years in which voyage reports on the American West were published by the magazine, with a concentration between 1860 and 1876. Beginning in 1867 with the extended publication of Louis Laurent Simonin's trans-American voyage following the Exposition Universelle of 1867 and in the company of Western American guides such as J.P. Whitney of Colorado with whom he became acquainted at the Exposition, the following years of Western American articles from that voyage would include illustrations made from Western American photographs exhibited at the Exposition Universelle of 1867. The travels of Simonin, Hayden, and Tissandier indulged in what Villerbu characterizes as a contemporary exploration of the strange marvels of the continent, changing from the pre-1866 period in which published accounts tended toward a nostalgic return to the region's heyday, characterized as the Gold Rush and the first explorations of the plains, or the interior south-west. As seen in Villerbu's chart the years in the "year of publication" and the "year of voyage" columns come to a closer relation, though Simonin's 1867-1868 transcontinental voyage would be published in sections through 1874, with many of those illustrations referenced in later chapters of this document, it remained thoroughly contemporary. This period of popularization marks a traceable trend from the exposure

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 80.

of the renovated image of the American West at the Exposition Universelle and its reproduction via channels stemming from that display into international publications.

## Chapter 2. Materiality and the Ideological Gateway of the West

### 2.1 American motivation: Immigration and expansion

With the absence of Native Americans and Civil War-related objects, the U.S. was pivoting toward a new identity. The correspondence of the advisory committee provides many examples of their clear intentions concerning the image of America to portray on the world stage including the Advisory Committee's letter from January 27, 1866: "Your communication of the 19<sup>th</sup> inst. informing us that upon consultation with prominent citizens interested in the growth and development of the 'resources of our country' we have been designated as a committee to aid you in the selection of proper articles for exhibition in Paris in 1867."<sup>84</sup> Measures were insured that the committee would insure a "credible display of the products and productive capacity of the United States."<sup>85</sup> They described their responsibility to select the proper articles for exhibition in Paris, that would promote the growth and development of the resources of the country. Rep. Nathaniel Banks of Massachusetts made a convincing speech in the spring of 1866 for the promotion of American participation and appropriation of liberal funds: "it is in our power to represent the social and political character of the country in such a way as to attract the attention of other nations...and thus place before the world an enlarged view of the condition and the prospect of American civilization."<sup>86</sup> This "enlarged view" was expanded primarily in that it promoted the added geographical and ideological territory of the West, and tapped into the imagination already created for Europeans by Fenimore Cooper's established setting.

Among the many countries who exhibited at the Exposition, there were diverse incentives and goals. For France some of the major motivations were to prove the supremacy of French taste and the success of its social paternalism. The U.S., a country in a much different state of affairs, approached the opportunity with contrasting objectives. The U.S. was not just interested in proving its legitimacy and prosperity, but also in growing its population through European emigration. With

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<sup>84</sup> Allen et al., "Advisory Committee to Derby," January 27, 1866.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Nathaniel P. Banks, *Speech of Hon. N.P. Banks, of Massachusetts, upon the Representation of the United States at the Exposition of the World's Industry, Paris, 1867* (Washington, D.C: Mansfield & Martin, 1866).

the expanded territory of the West, it was a major priority for the organizers and exhibitors to ignite in its European audience a possible intrigue in migrating to America and particularly to the Far West. This was a sensitive subject since it was, on the part of the French, not a welcome idea to have their people lured away to America. Some of the early correspondence between U.S. organizers stated explicitly how this was a goal of American displays and should be considered in their design. A member of the advisory committee, Professor Joy, wrote in his December 6, 1865, letter to J.C. Derby: “I would confide to the committee a mission of a somewhat private character, viz: the duty of disseminating knowledge of our country for the purpose of encouraging emigration.”<sup>87</sup> Commissioner General Beckwith framed immigration as one benefit of a U.S. participation to Mr. Bigelow in his letter from November 23, 1865:

Emigration of the productive and industrial classes from Europe to America is an acknowledged source of prosperity, and has long received the encouragement of the [U.S.] government [...] We can participate in the benefits resulting from this, and I do not think it chimerical to suggest that an American exhibition, well selected and really national, viewed merely in its economical aspect, is desirable, and would return to the treasury by increased immigration and augmented revenues, more than its cost, however liberal the provision of Congress.<sup>88</sup>

Concerning the West, Chairman Samuel B. Ruggles travelled to the West to encourage excitement and participation, and at one such meeting Col. Rowland, who represented several states and territories from the West, confirmed that “the important bearing of the Exposition upon emigration was fully appreciated,” confirming interest for his concerned region to participate for this and other reasons.

By the next year, Beckwith had changed his tone. Politically the U.S. could not explicitly elicit immigration and Commissioner General Beckwith made it known in his September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1866 letter from Paris:

I need hardly say, that in a country, where emigration is looked upon with disdain, direct efforts to promote it by a foreign [commissioner] would be regarded as a perversion of the object or the occasion of the Exhibition; and as the press is under strict surveillance, printed matter cannot be circulated without permission; any efforts of this kind without such permission would only result in producing a disagreeable situation for those making the attempt. But the way now opened presents the means of circulating the most important

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<sup>87</sup> Blake, *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867*, 86.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

information of a kind wanted by the emigrating class and at the same time avoiding the inconvenience alluded to. Solid statistical facts, without the emigration comments being sectorial [sic], and published by the authorities themselves, will be used by the people and receive their confidence, and such information may be safely left to the readers for its import and influence as far as it concerns their interests.<sup>89</sup>

Beckwith stated that he writes the letter discreetly, as a piece of unofficial correspondence, and that it is obviously not his business “to volunteer advice to state emigrant agents.”<sup>90</sup> He wanted to prevent any avoidable diplomacy missteps that could fall back on him as the Commissioner and primary diplomat in discourse with the French Imperial Commission. Given that the U.S. would inevitably be promoting emigration, it was made clear that it would be done covertly, but that it must not be done explicitly. In the same letter he requests that an object be added to the catalogue for exhibition: “the constitution or a synopsis of the Constitution of the United States, brief, clear, and plain for the common people of Europe.”<sup>91</sup> His motives for influencing a European emigrating class with subliminal philosophical and economic messaging would evolve throughout the exhibitor selection process. For example, in notes concerning the Illinois farmhouse constructed in the park of the Exposition, proposed text for an accompanying pamphlet was “disapproved by Mr. Beckwith on account of the emigrational features etc.”<sup>92</sup> The description of the farmer’s residence didn’t include particularly explicit invocations to emigration, but rather the entirety of the text made such a detailed and compelling case that it was struck down by the Commissioner General. The text included mentions of “160 acres of unoccupied land donated to each actual settler of the country” under the Homestead Act and this simple but adequate house which was “within the reach of all industrious and prudent occupants of the American country” were not subtle in intention, even if they were merely facts which Beckwith had previously approved in their inevitable influence.<sup>93</sup> The description of the farmer’s house was not about architecture. It was broad notional message encompassing the opportunity, land, and prosperity afforded by labor in the American West.

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<sup>89</sup> Nelson M. Beckwith, “Paris, September 22, 1866, Private Letter to Be Read to Sec. of State,” September 22, 1866, Record 1193, NARA.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> “United States Farmers Residence,” n.d., Record 1184, Folder 5, NARA.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

Appealing to a European public, the text made moving to the American West and Midwest sound expedient and simple, with railroads soon connecting every area of the country in which “a good farm is within reach of every person desiring land for tillage and occupancy.”<sup>94</sup> The description fell directly into the morally motivated category defined by the French organizers in Group 10, Class 93 - habitations designed to ameliorate the conditions of the working classes. In the case of the Illinois farmer’s house, the structure was connected to notions of space, growth, and heightened reward for their labor; a visual symbol of the economic and democratic American values. In the final paragraph, the author brings in broader notions of freedom, equality, and promise: “It is also submitted that a donation of a farm of superior land in a country where homes like *this one* [sic], are easily secured with the blessing of a free education and equal privileges for all, furnishes one of the explanations of this *unexampled prosperity* [sic].”<sup>95</sup>

The implementation of messaging tools at this Exposition included such material objects as the Illinois farmer’s house, which alluded to larger and more immaterial ideas including opportunity and the prosperity available in the open land of the American West. The U.S. organizers, both national and regional, made comments expressing how the Exposition was valuable as a method to promote immigration and invite capital, and as stated by Missouri governor Thomas C. Fletcher: “increase the confidence felt abroad, in our ultimate financial ability.”<sup>96</sup> The dissemination of information and materials was a strategic, if covert, operation on the part of the U.S. organizers, with long term objectives.

## 2.2 A New Western image in the making

The representation of the American West in Paris in 1867 marked a turning point—or at least a moment of complexification and diversification—in French (and European) perceptions, owing to

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Missouri, General Assembly, House of Representatives, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Missouri at the Regular Session of the Twenty-Fourth General Assembly* (Jefferson City: Emory S. Foster, 1867).



several factors that include the dawn of a mass visual culture. This shift could perhaps be characterized, very broadly, as a transition between what had been an *idea* or a *myth* in Henry Nash Smith's sense and a more concrete, materially and territorially based set of representations, evoking some differences between various regions of the West. French perception of what had long been called, very vaguely, "the West," had long been very diffuse, not geographically specific. It had been largely shaped by the influence of major writers and artists—from Chateaubriand and Tocqueville to Delacroix—working in the Romantic tradition and primarily concerned by the motif of the "Vanishing Indian," which according to Tangi Villerbu's synthesis formed the core of a "French narrative" of not just the West but the American nation. Above all other influences, Villerbu stresses, the fictional world created by James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* offered to cultivated Europeans a seductive and compelling aesthetic framework for the history and even the geography of the American West, to the extent that from 1830 on "all discourse on the West produced in France bears the mark of Cooper."<sup>97</sup> *The Last of the Mohicans* and its companion volumes served to construct an aesthetic idea of "the West" and, by extension, "America," that was the base for all later representations and grew into an early culture industry in the following decades.<sup>98</sup> Along with French and European iconography, visits and performances by Native Americans in Paris had helped popularize the "Mohican" and other "Indian" figures as Parisian staples. It was this well-established French narrative, centered on the doom of the "noble race" at the hands of Anglo-imperialism, that the displays from several Western states and territories came to modify in 1867.

An ensemble of objects and pictures that was by far the most concrete presentation of the West—including the Midwest, the Rocky Mountain area, and the Pacific Coast—in Europe to date, these displays offered a shift from a primarily intangible idea of a generic "West" to a much more physical identity. As Villerbu stresses, the shift resulted primarily, in 1867, from "the self-expression

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<sup>97</sup> Villerbu, *La conquête de l'Ouest*, 98–100.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

[of the US] offered to foreign gazes.”<sup>99</sup> This organized representation followed the norm of World’s Fairs in that it was primarily material: the West was presented by way of “industrial and artistic objects, photographs, and agents of its development,” detailed in the following chapters. This was a concerted decision on the part of American organizers, and one that clearly looked to the future: as Villerbu writes, while “American exhibitors could have easily continued to pander to the European fascination with Native Americans and the exoticism attached to the American past,” they chose “to portray the West with a forward-looking vision”.<sup>100</sup> Western exhibitors utilized the stage of the Exposition to present a new, reformed Western aesthetics, built not on a romanticized history but on geography and above all on natural resources.

To be sure, this new aesthetics included images of Western landscapes. These landscapes, however, were no longer stages for a Romantic drama of (Indian) nature vs. (Euro-American) civilization, nor its later, Buffalo-Bill-like, evolution into a theater of lawless violence on the frontier; rather they served as pictorial contexts for the objects, both raw and finished, that formed the core of the Western exhibits. Photographs, rather than paintings, were the primary exemplars of this evolving, forward-looking vision of the West. While the more developed and populated Eastern states promoted their fabricated goods and works of art, Western exhibitors took to boosting—selling an idea combining wilderness and economic promise through the exhibition of natural resources and photographs. These early instances of Western boosterism in Paris arguably participated in forming a groundwork for a new aesthetics of the West, later to be combined with the older “Indian” motif in the mass spectacles of Buffalo Bill and the Western film. Before concentrating on the two most prominent Western displays, those of Colorado and California, I introduce this argument with other westward-looking exhibits that earned praise and recognition by displaying material achievements as aesthetically significant objects.

The material presence of the American Midwest was an ideological gateway to the geographically-represented Far West. Prominent visual displays included the locomotive and

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

architecture of the Midwest. The exhibits of the Grant locomotive “America” and the objects from Illinois including a pre-fabricated schoolhouse and farmer’s cottage were material representations of movement west, a doctrine of self-reliance, and promise of Western opportunity and prosperity. Just as the Far-West exhibited evidence of the potential in its natural resources, the American Midwest’s visual presence served as a pathway to that development both structurally and symbolically.

### 2.3 The material appeal of the Midwest

The first item is the “America” locomotive by the Grant Locomotive Works of Patterson, New Jersey, a machine that may have been designed with the Paris Fair in mind, but was destined for Western travel and was put in service after the Fair on the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Company, linking Chicago to Omaha in 1869. The locomotive was located in the annex of the Exposition, and was a proud symbol of Western life:

Let us go out to the annex, for our best exhibition is out of the way in the path, occupying a plain oblong wooden building adjoining a similar annex of Great Britain. On entering you are struck with the immense size and perfect finish of the locomotive America and tender from the Patterson works, New Jersey. There is no machine in the whole palace to equal it. The European machines are of an entirely different construction, consequently this is a great novelty. We are proud of our locomotive.<sup>101</sup> – *Daily Eastern Argus*, April 16, 1867.

In Paris, the American engine was met with high praise and a gold medal.<sup>102</sup> In the description published by the semi-official *L’Exposition Illustrée*—penned by an A. Malespine, apparently an American agent in Paris in the 1860s—the locomotive was lauded as an example of American practicality and as a feat of decoration: “it is a monster and it is a beauty; a hell and a jewel.”<sup>103</sup> Mechanically the “America” exhibited no major innovations, but it was adapted to the rough Western terrain. It was lighter, more flexible, and faster than European engines; it had fewer points of contact with the track and its set of small front wheels enabled it to negotiate sharper curves; its

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<sup>101</sup> G., “The Great Exposition-Dreary Opening-Poverty of the American Department,” *Daily Eastern Argus*, April 16, 1867, Readex.

<sup>102</sup> James M. Usher, *Paris Universal Exposition; with a Full Description of Awards..* (Boston: Nation’s Office, 1868), 110.

<sup>103</sup> A. Malespine, “L’Annexe Des Etats-Unis,” in *L’Exposition Universelle de 1867 Illustrée*, vol. 2 (Paris: Bureau d’abonnements, 1867), 396–97.

wheels of cast iron were hollow; it featured a powerful headlight and a “cow-catcher” that also served as “snow-plough;” and its cab was a fully-closed and outfitted cabin, decorated with panels of precious woods, from which all operations of the engine could be commanded. The publication *Visits of an Engineer to the Exposition of 1867* (*Visites d’un Ingénieur à l’Exposition de 1867*) published a detailed diagram (**fig. 2.1**) of the America’s technical construction. The journal stated it had the most striking appearance because of its diversity of colors, from the shine of all the well-made and admirably polished pieces.<sup>104</sup> The locomotive and tender can be seen installed in the annex (**fig. 2.2**) in one of Pierre Petit’s photographs covering the United States exhibition. The mechanical features associated themselves readily with imaginations of difficult terrains, long distances, rough encounters, popularized by narratives of travel in the Wild West. Zooming in allows a closer view of the details of Grant’s silver locomotive with the American flag visible at the rear. What made the America truly iconic was its extraordinary amount of ornamentation, which, according to one testimony, made it “a poem in iron and silver.”<sup>105</sup> It was entirely plated in “German silver,” a copper alloy with a glistening gray appearance—and, according to the American commissioner, “a surprise to continental minds ... imbued with exceedingly plain ideas on the subject of locomotive ornamentation.”<sup>106</sup> In a photograph from the Rock Island Lines (**fig. 2.7**), one can make out a portrait of General Grant and the Arms of the Republic painted on the side of the tender. Beyond such complacent eulogia, there was enough contrary opinion to ridicule the America’s excess of decoration, making it a classic example of contradictory perceptions generated by the Expo—as well as by American engineering fashions of the Victorian era.<sup>107</sup> Other testimonies, however, suggested that European opinion was not insensitive to this demonstration of what might be called an environmental aesthetics, in the shape of a sophisticated machine whose

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<sup>104</sup> C.A. Oppermann and Paris) Universal Exhibition (1867, *Visites d’un Ingénieur à l’Exposition Universelle de 1867: Notes et Croquis, Chiffres et Faits Utiles. Atlas*, *Visites d’un Ingénieur à l’Exposition Universelle de 1867: Notes et Croquis, Chiffres et Faits Utiles. Atlas*, v. 1 (Baudry, 1867), 469.

<sup>105</sup> Anthony J. Bianculli, *Iron Rails in the Garden State: Tales of New Jersey Railroading* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2008), 21.

<sup>106</sup> William S. Auchincloss, “Report upon Steam Engineering,” in *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870), 12.

<sup>107</sup> John F. Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900*, new ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), 155–59.

appeal was partly derived from association with a specific (and exotic) natural terrain. In shaping French perceptions of the West, the America had three major characteristics. It was an American invention and a work of boosterism, not a French appropriation; but it drew popular curiosity. It was perceived as “gaudy,” but also as functional, perhaps an attempt to compete in the field of aesthetics even though American objects were known for their singular utilitarian quality. Finally, as later iconography would make plain, it embodied the economic and social appeal of the new lands.

The locomotive was immediately reproduced as a symbol of the West. The exhibition location in the annex can be seen in Petit’s photograph (**fig. 2.2**) in which the silver machine’s true size and appearance were captured. A drawing published by *l’Exposition Illustrée* (**fig. 2.3**) depicts a scene of observers surrounding the locomotive, while the critique by A. Malespine admired the machine’s size and detailed adaptation to the travel in the American West. Malespine referenced its enormous stature in subtle allusion to the giant sequoias of California when he stated “at first sight, this immense machine produces a kind of stupefaction. One realizes that we’re in a country where everything is colossal, from the machine to the tree, the marvels of industry as much as the marvels of nature.”<sup>108</sup> In acknowledgement of the genius of the cow-catcher and snow-plow installation at its nose, Malespine referenced the necessity of the tool in a place where “long, lonely open land traversed only by the railroad” and the rails were open to the wild; untamed animals, weather and nature that could fall upon the route.<sup>109</sup> The locomotive itself was apparently, meant at least partially for show; the aesthetics were of utmost importance for Grant Locomotive Works and the locomotive included no mechanical innovations outside of the “hardened steel rollers under the slide valves.”<sup>110</sup> Apparently the distinction of the “America” was to be found in its finish.<sup>111</sup> As an aesthetic symbol of Western progress, the “America” presented a modernized idea of travel in the Far West.

Malespine described the luxuries and comforts found on the train as one traveled “interminable

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<sup>108</sup> Malespine, “L’Annexe Des Etats-Unis,” 397. Translated by Glassberg.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> John H. White, “Grant’s Silver Locomotive,” *The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society Bulletin*, no. 104 (1961): 55.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

solitudes, in a place where that which one calls a city is a group of three cabins.”<sup>112</sup> The “America” as a symbol of movement and modernity in the West was described in publications after its popularity at the Exposition Universelle of 1867, where it was the first American locomotive ever exhibited at a European Exhibition. The March 29th, 1867 edition of the British journal *Engineering* mentioned the locomotive’s arrival at the Paris Exposition, while the July 26th, 1867 issue included an illustration of the locomotive (**fig. 2.4, fig. 2.5**) with its ornate decoration and “America” titling. Garnered with a gold medal and a prominent presence in its ability to “out-Yankee the Yankee engines themselves” according to Zerah Colburn, the Grant locomotive invited the Paris Exposition Universelle audience into the imagination of Western landscape and travel.<sup>113</sup>

This industrial machine, the locomotive “America” was transported to Paris, all 27,000 kilos of its iron and silver; the reproduction of the image of the engineering feat contributed to a symbolical value achieved within Erwin Panofsky’s theory of “iconology.”<sup>114</sup> The locomotive represented what Panofsky describes as this “something else,” though it was not a work of art, the machine captured the imagination of the public in a way that surpassed an attention to industrial accomplishment. A harbinger of Western expansion, the locomotive’s thematic presence at the Exposition found enhanced agency as the transcontinental railroad would be completed only two years later. The circulation of the machine’s image with its “America” title, made it a symbol of Western progress, a visual incarnation of the exotic form and practical function that the Far West represented for the European imagination. While images depicting the imposing stature of Western space and nature were displayed in the American section, the locomotive embodied “order, beauty, and purpose.”<sup>115</sup> Mid-nineteenth century America had found a way to reconcile the pastoral with progressive ideals and this must have been instrumental in convincing a European audience of American potential and appeal, even in the immediate years following the Civil War. In his

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<sup>112</sup> Malespine, “L’Annexe Des Etats-Unis,” 398. Translated by Glassberg.

<sup>113</sup> Design Council, *Engineering*, v. 4 (Office for Advertisements and Publication, 1867), 64.

<sup>114</sup> Leo Marx, “The Railroad-in-the-Landscape: An Iconological Reading of a Theme in American Art,” *Prospects* 10 (1985): 77.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

iconological reading of the railroad's presence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century American landscape, Leo Marx addresses the paradox presented: "[...] the aggressive conquest of wild nature, or 'progress,' was widely regarded by Americans as a means to an ideal end: the achievement, in a new kind of society, of a *via media* between the oppressive over civilization of the Old World and the menacing wildness of the Western frontier."<sup>116</sup> Even if it gained attention primarily for its size and silver ostentation, the machine eventually won over both the public and the jury. While most critics spoke of the aesthetic of the machine, the design of the locomotive was referenced already as symbolically "American," both in showy design and in practical engineering: "Being a typical American engine with its slender boiler, large headlamp, pilot, cab and bar frame; it contrasted strongly with the European locomotives. The British entries were at complete variance to this American exhibit."<sup>117</sup> John H. White, Jr.'s synopsis of the engine's appearance at the Exposition includes a description of some of its non-silver details:

Made of ash, maple, black walnut, mahogany, and cherry, the cab was a fine example of the cabinet makers art. The marquetry might have gained the praise of Boulle, the French master of delicate inlay work. The tender was elaborately scrolled and painted. A portrait of General Grant and the Arms of the Republic were reportedly painted on the tender's side.<sup>118</sup>

These features were visible on one side of the tender, found in one known photograph (**fig. 2.7**) that was taken after it was put into use by the Rock Island Lines in Illinois following the fair. The idea of wide, open Western spaces was connoted for the European crowd by the Grant locomotive "America." The transcontinental railroad was being laid piece by piece as the Exposition Universelle was held, from the cultivated Eastern U.S. through the mid-West and the plains, the railroad was part of a modern symbol of this progress. An aura of "discovery, innovation, and modernity" surrounded the railroad and the locomotive in Reconstruction-era America and the train had become a visual subject of interest for mid-nineteenth-century painters in the years before.<sup>119</sup> Leo Marx alludes to how landscape painting, the railroad, and the government were already

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>117</sup> White, "Grant's Silver Locomotive," 54.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>119</sup> Marx, "The Railroad-in-the-Landscape: An Iconological Reading of a Theme in American Art," 79.

interacting around the idea of tourism and commercial interests prior to the United States

Geological Survey, meeting of the transcontinental railroad, and photographers of the 1870s:

No doubt the novelty of the railroad was still a factor in attracting the attention of such mid-nineteenth-century landscape painters as Jasper Cropsey, George Inness, Thomas Moran, and Albert Bierstadt; in several instances, in fact, the work of painters and photographers was commissioned by the railroad companies as part of their effort to promote tourist travel by rail and, probably more importantly, to improve what now would be called their “public relations” with a view, especially to winning large grants of free land from the Congress.<sup>120</sup>

The presence of the locomotive in Paris was part of a modern and visual image of the Far West, and the effort of the U.S. and Grant Locomotive Works to send the machine to Paris established the importance of the visual impression of the “America.” Mentions of the silver-plated America and its gold medal at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 would be circulated by Grant Locomotive Works for years to come. Examples include a bank note and engraving (**fig. 2.6**) from 1888 boasting engravings of the locomotive in Paris, both sides of the gold medal, and the description of the award. A framed picture of a different Grant Locomotive Works locomotive (**fig. 2.9**) is located at the MIT Museum though it references the gold medal won by the firm in Paris in 1867.<sup>121</sup> The United States representation at the Exposition Universelle reflected modernity in ways that were unintended and interwoven. The industrial elements of progress and the visual expressions of icons, primarily the locomotive, were emerging rapidly in post-Civil War U.S. The dissemination and visual circulation of those icons was made possible on the international level by the Exposition Universelle.

Another striking example of early Western attempts at a primitive stage of a “form follows function” aesthetics is the highly successful Illinois representation, which was also significant symbolically, as showcasing a kind of geographical gateway and industrial precursor of the developing Far West. Illinois, a state since 1818, was by 1867 the most populous Midwestern state, which had been a major contributor to the Union Army during the Civil War; its main city, Chicago,

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> The contemporary rendering of the locomotive seen in **fig. 2.10** was constructed from research by artist John Ott. His print references the America as Grant’s Silver Locomotive and its production for the “1867 Paris International Exhibition.”



was by 1870 the second largest city of the Midwest with 300,000 people. As a result of the motivation of James H. Bowen, a U.S. Commissioner to the fair, it was generously represented at the Exposition. Illinois presented many samples of natural and farm products, as well as agricultural machines in the Annex, with two buildings and their contents in the Fair's park. McCormick reapers garnered not only a grand prize (like in every other Fair since 1851) but also the Legion of Honor for the inventor. Other successes included Deere and Woolridge ploughs, as well as the Schuttler lumber wagon.

The prefabricated Illinois schoolhouse and farmer's cottage (the interiors of which displayed maps, photographs and documents on Western agriculture) both received silver medals. They could be considered "icons of American ideology"—i.e. concrete embodiments of the doctrine of self-reliance and its special connections to farming and education—and, more specifically, symbols of the hope of Western prosperity and opportunity.<sup>122</sup> "Showing that luxury in the new world was to be found in simplicity and space", they were exemplars of the simple, robust construction adapted to the necessities of new lands, in striking contrast to the highly elaborated Oriental buildings—the Egyptian temple, the Mosque, etc.—that surrounded them in the park.<sup>123</sup> For Americans at the Exposition, the buildings illustrated the modern and improved "American standard of living" as compared to European standards, and attracted "more interest than anything else" according to Commissioner Beckwith.<sup>124</sup> According to the *Prairie Farmer* correspondent, "this simple structure, standing amid the mosques and temples and all the elaborately finished and decorated buildings of eastern nations, is doing a grand missionary work and speaking louder than words of the comfort and prosperity in what, to foreigners, is too often considered a wilderness inhabited by a rough, half civilized people."<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ellen Weiss, "Americans in Paris: Two Buildings," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 45, no. 2 (1986): 164.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. see Beckwith 308-310; Usher 113; Weiss 164-166

<sup>124</sup> Merle Curti, "America at the World Fairs, 1851-1893," *The American Historical Review* 55, no. 4 (1950): 846.

<sup>125</sup> "Western Farm Cottage At the Paris Exposition," *Prairie Farmer*, September 28, 1867.

Sometimes referred to as the Western Farm House, the cottage was also considered by an American correspondent in Paris to possess a desirability compared to the “low, mud walled, thatched roofed, badly lighted, badly ventilated residences of too many of the working people of the continent or even those of many parts of Great Britain.”<sup>126</sup> The farm house was intended to be placed on a quadrant of land provided by the Homestead Act, and was designed as “sectionalized” housing in that it could be expanded as prosperity improved. An owner could begin with one room for \$300 and add on rooms until reaching the full size of the house for \$1,500.<sup>127</sup> Included in Pierre Petit’s photographs of the U.S. exhibition is an image (**fig. 2.11**) displaying the Western Farm House, designed by O.L. Wheelock and constructed by Lyman Bridges, erected in the Park of the Exposition. The layout of the American buildings in the park can be seen in diagrams (**fig. 2.12**) made by the French organizers.

As a result of a wave of population growth in the Midwest, housing prefabrication flourished in the 1830-1870 period.<sup>128</sup> The Illinois *Prairie Farmer* published a sketch of the farmhouse (**fig. 2.13**) positioning the structure as a successful part of the large Illinois display, the largest from any individual state. The “Albums du Parc” located in the French Archives Nationales includes a beautiful page (**fig. 1.19**) on the Western cottage. In the diptych Petit’s photograph of the farm house installed in the park was placed above a bird’s eye view color drawing of the structure’s placement and footprint within the park. *L’Exposition Illustrée* published an illustration of the “American Farm,” a drawing by Paul de Katow (**fig. 2.14**) which was the same image reproduced in the *Prairie Farmer*. The drawing by M. de Katow was also included in the report (**fig. 2.15**) by Illinois commissioner John P. Reynolds. The stereograph coverage by Léon & Lévy included photographs of the farmhouse or farmer’s cottage, as it was also called, from a wider perspective. One stereograph (**fig. 2.16**) shows the farmhouse from a high angle, with the ornate buildings around it to contrast with its more plain style. In another stereograph (**fig. 2.17**) the farm house can be seen in

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Weiss, “Americans in Paris: Two Buildings,” 164.

<sup>128</sup> Michael O’Brien, “Aesthetic and Production Theories as Enablers of Prefabricated Housing,” in *Without a Hitch – New Directions in Prefabricated Architecture* (Lulu Press, Incorporated, 2009), 256.

the background, behind the American school house, with the Exposition Palace visible behind it. Inside the cottage were maps, photographs, statistics and information, many from the state of Missouri—a group of surplus Western objects placed inside because of no other available exhibition space.<sup>129</sup> The function and aesthetic of the decidedly “American” style house, was part of a history of prefabricated housing in the U.S. as a solution to Western problems. The intention of exhibiting the Western Farm House and the Western school at the Paris Exposition were an attempt, in conjunction with the Homestead Act of 1862 to populate the West with a certain type of people, “virtuous yeoman,” not including Southerners or wealthy planters, but women and former slaves were permitted.<sup>130</sup> According to architecture historian Michael O’Brien, the exhibition of the cottage in Paris was significant on a social level as he states, “The “Western Farmhouse” by Wheelock and Bridges carried the American Dream into the heart of the first world.”<sup>131</sup> This movement was calamitous for Native Americans who saw their land in the West taken and sold to settlers.<sup>132</sup>

The second building exhibited by the state of Illinois and at the behest of U.S. Commissioner Bowen was a rural schoolhouse. Measuring 32 by 50 feet, the structure offered admirable features like high ceilings, improved ventilation, and individual desks.<sup>133</sup> An image of the Illinois schoolhouse was also included in a drawing by M. Paul de Katow, published in the *Exposition Universelle de 1867 Illustrée* (**fig. 2.14**) and in the *Prairie Farmer* (**fig. 2.18**). The *Prairie Farmer* referenced the school as a fixture in Western lands, “Every one [sic] will recognize

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<sup>129</sup> J.C. Derby, “Letter to Beckwith, New York, February 20, 1867,” February 20, 1867, 274, Record 1186, Vol. 2, NARA.

<sup>130</sup> The Homestead Act of 1862 granted certain US citizens an area of public land (usually 160 acres or 65 ha) to settle and farm. The requirements were that the citizen had never taken up arms against the U.S. government (including free slaves after the 14th amendment), was 21 years old or head of household, including women. The Act was passed during the period of Secession as an attempt to liberalize who can obtain Western land, while preventing Southerners and wealthy planters from doing so. The Act was an attempt by Northern Republicans to uphold the yeoman farmer ideal of Jeffersonian democracy and promise free land in hopes of increasing the number of virtuous yeoman. (Foner)

<sup>131</sup> O’Brien, “Aesthetic and Production Theories as Enablers of Prefabricated Housing,” 257.

<sup>132</sup> Another case of the government supporting the proliferation of prefab housing was in the 1930s under the auspices of the Farm Security Administration which turned to similar sectionalized housing to improve the sanitary conditions for farmers in the West and Midwest. The FSA photographers documented many aspects of these methods, which have been used in many cases to address functional and sanitary housing needs in the West.

<sup>133</sup> Weiss, “Americans in Paris: Two Buildings,” 166.

in the above engraving, those plain, neat and comfortable buildings that so profusely dot the landscape of the well-settled portions of Illinois, and, indeed, all the Western States.”<sup>134</sup> The structure was appreciated for its plain and simple design and how the school, capable of holding fifty students was integrating students of diverse national backgrounds which would populate the new expanded nation.<sup>135</sup> According to Ellen Weiss, “real fervor went into its interpretation as an icon of our system of universal primary education, the basis of the ‘grandeur and prosperity’ of the new nation.”<sup>136</sup> The illustration of the school by de Katow (**fig. 2.19**) was also published in Illinois Commissioner John P. Reynolds report. Reynolds’ remarks around the school house focus on it as a popular symbol of the country’s “system of free popular education” all the while being “the most entirely plain and unpretending structure erected by any nation on Champ de Mars.”<sup>137</sup> He mostly yielded his own comments to those by the late Chief of Primary Instruction in Paris, Mr. H. Ferte, who wrote several paragraphs in respect to the schoolhouse and the American “universal education” which it supports in molding “one great nation—homogeneous in its patriotism, persevering and enlightened in the accomplishment of its political and other duties, audacious and powerful in the realization of its gigantic purposes and destiny.”<sup>138</sup> Ferte went on to acknowledge the American primary school as a place where “equality and liberty can live together in perfect harmony.”<sup>139</sup>

The schoolhouse and farmer’s cottage were two of four buildings exhibited by the United States. In the same way that photography served as a conveyer of cultural messages at the Exposition in a role formerly filled by the fine arts, the buildings in the Park also served as symbols of American society: “Although designed originally for the humble purpose of housing settlers on the western plains, these structures became, in their Parisian manifestation, icons of American ideology, bearers of cultural messages usually entrusted to “high style” rather than to vernacular

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<sup>134</sup> “The School House at the Paris Exposition,” *Prairie Farmer*, November 23, 1867, Vol. 20, No. 21 edition, University of Illinois Library.

<sup>135</sup> John P. Reynolds, *State of Illinois and the Universal Exposition of 1867 at Paris, France* (Springfield: State Journal Printing Office, 1868), 120.

<sup>136</sup> Weiss, “Americans in Paris: Two Buildings,” 166.

<sup>137</sup> Reynolds, *State of Illinois and the Universal Exposition of 1867 at Paris, France*, 119.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

forms.”<sup>140</sup> The subject of labor and the well-being of workers was a priority for the French organizers, and a point of focus for French Commissioner General Frederic LePlay, engineer, sociologist, and economist. LePlay designed the “fair’s classification system as an index of all human endeavor and designated as its culminating section, Group 10, Materials to Ameliorate the Conditions of the Working Classes.”<sup>141</sup> Group X, Class 93 was the most illustrative of the ethos behind the labor-focused theme of the Exposition, titled “Specimens of habitations, characterized by cheapness, uniting sanitary conditions and comfort.—Types of habitations for families, suitable for various classes of laborers in each country.”<sup>142</sup>

The cottage was emblematic of the U.S. Commissioner General Beckwith’s ambitions, stated in a letter dated Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>, 1865, to Derby in which he proposed that the U.S. exhibit a range of rural American homes to prove the upward mobility that was more possible in the American laboring class as compared to other countries.<sup>143</sup> An abundance of literature, with some photographs and objects about the pre-fab houses and the states of Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri were available inside the cottage for visitors, though the written information was provided primarily in English.<sup>144</sup> For those that were capable of reading English, A. Malespine wrote, “the brochures give an exact idea of the rapid and prodigious prosperity of the Western states.”<sup>145</sup> Beckwith described a row of houses in his letter, intending an ethical meaning within the exhibit:

But great interest attaches to the exhibition of rural habitations, of whatever material, adapted to all classes of laborers and every grade of fortune, including the log-houses of remote settlers and those of the transitional condition, from a humbler to a higher state of prosperity and comfort corresponding with the use and development of condition and wealth in settlements of rapid growth, in which no country can compare with America. A row or group of this kind would speak strongly to the eye and the mind. It would contrast strongly with corresponding groups from different parts of Europe and the East, where characteristics are immobility and poverty—no growth, no change. Habitations of this description are typical of the moral and physical condition of the great bulk of the population of all countries; they indicate the degrees of intelligence, thrift, and prosperity among them, and

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<sup>140</sup> Weiss, “Americans in Paris: Two Buildings,” 164.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>142</sup> Blake, *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867*, 181.

<sup>143</sup> Nelson M. Beckwith, “Beckwith to Derby,” in *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867* (Washington, D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1865), 33.

<sup>144</sup> A. Malespine, “La Villa Américaine,” in *L’Exposition Universelle de 1867 Illustrée*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bureau d’abonnements, 1867), 362–63.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* (Translated by the author.)

would be objects of interest and instruction to the great emigratory classes, as well as to the philosopher and the economist.<sup>146</sup>

This ambition and the result of the American Exposition in regard to the amelioration of the laboring classes' quality of life was echoed in Beckwith's letter to Seward the day following the awards ceremony two years later in July of 1867:

The proclamation of the awards was made the occasion of a brilliant and imposing pageant, but the event was suggestive of more grave and important conditions. Formerly the dignity, wealth, and fashion of surrounding nations met on the plains of France, 'in tents of cloth of gold', to honor arms by mimic war and feats of personal prowess in the tournament; but at that period toil was remitted to serfs, and labor was degraded. To-day the civilized world assembles on the same ground to do honor to labor. We have been accustomed to read with admiration, real or romantic, the accounts of the fêtes of the Celestial Empire, where the ruler condescends annually to hold the plow in honor of husbandry. Yesterday an assembly of all nationalities, numbering seventeen thousand persons, including rulers, peasants, and every class, put their hand to the plow, and did homage to labor, skill, and science, which are the bases of civilization and progress.<sup>147</sup>

The symbolism behind the Illinois farm house was evocative of this post-civil war motivation for the U.S. to prove the prosperity it offered to the working classes. The democratic nature of the house, and its potential to provide for upward mobility of laboring classes was exemplary of more than just a progressive belief in the benefits of the American system, but also of the philosophical promise of the West. The *Prairie Farmer* concluded that the structures were representative of larger aspects of the American system. The school house provoked conversations concerning the U.S. primary schooling system, which it praised:

They [prominent men of France, Germany, Austria and other nations] commended, in the most flattering terms, the principle of educating *all* the people in the elementary branches of learning, at least; and they saw in that simple structure before them, the great secret of the general intelligence of the American people, and consequently of their astonishing material progress. Republican institutions have never had more eloquent advocates abroad that the two unassuming wooden structures in *Champ de Mars*.<sup>148</sup>

As an example of a simple American structure, the schoolhouse elicited overwhelmingly positive reviews, both in response to American practical design and a democratically based education system.<sup>149</sup> However, the reaction to the aesthetic simplicity of the American house was a result of its

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<sup>146</sup> Beckwith, "Beckwith to Derby," 33–34.

<sup>147</sup> N.M. Beckwith, "Beckwith to Seward," in *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition*, ed. William P. Blake, Esq. (Washington, D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1870), 119.

<sup>148</sup> "The School House at the Paris Exposition."

<sup>149</sup> Malespine, "La Villa Américaine," 363.

contrast to the more ornate structures of other nations and cultures. The popularity of the “ordinary-ness” of the American aesthetic in the case of prefabricated architecture was a symptom of a practical and frugal enterprise.

The state of Louisiana participated in a similar spirit, it presented several objects which included a “portable cottage,” many examples of farm products, and a splendid set of photographs of New Orleans by Theodore Lilienthal, displayed as specimens of the economic potential of a state that, after being devastated by the Civil War, attempted to present itself in Paris as another new land.<sup>150</sup> The portable cottage can be seen in several drawings and photographs from the fair. The structure can be seen in the illustration of the schoolhouse (**fig. 2.14**), the Louisiana cottage is on the right, immediately beside the school. The portable cottage, so named because of its capability to move with the owner, was also in the background of a Pierre Petit image (**fig. 2.11, fig. 2.20**), between the Illinois farmer’s house and the school. One photograph (**fig. 2.21**) captures the prefab housing in the most clarity, though this was not from its position within the fair. *L’Exposition Illustrée* published an illustration of the house (**fig. 2.22**) alongside text describing its role in terms of mid-century migration toward the far-away lands of the West and the necessity of light and appropriate housing for Americans, characterized as a fundamentally agricultural population.<sup>151</sup>

The Michigan display also included a highly visual and material exhibition of its resources from the Lake Superior region. A diverse collection was exhibited by the northern Midwest state including minerals, photographs of mines, maps, “Indian Industry” items, and a canoe. A detailed diagram of the display has been located (**fig. 2.23**) though there are no signs of the exhibit in photographs. Published references to this specific display have not been found, though large pieces of iron ore from the region brought attention as well as the region’s copper.<sup>152</sup>

If the public needed any help understanding the benefit of the resources, structures, images, and inventions, the American exhibitors provided that information for the Exposition visitors in the

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<sup>150</sup> Van Zante, *New Orleans 1867, Photographs by Theodore Lilienthal*, 20–22.

<sup>151</sup> Raoul Ferrère, *L’Exposition Illustrée*, vol. 2, *L’Exposition Illustrée* (Paris: Bureau d’abonnements, 1867), 170.

<sup>152</sup> Blake, *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867*, 149.

form of pamphlets to support the displays. A few Western exhibits included brochures about their region which helped the audience understand the language of the visual objects, without explicitly inciting immigration, but by implicitly encouraging it through visual appeal. The Colorado pamphlet produced by the state's commissioner J.P. Whitney was published in English, German, and French.<sup>153</sup> Nevada published a similar document, in July of 1867 in Paris, to be distributed to visitors in both French and English.<sup>154</sup> Alabama also provided an informative brochure, published in French and English, by Hiram Haines, outlining the state's history at the hands of European powers, including a detailed history of the involvement of the French. The language makes indirect appeals to the French for immigration, describing the already established history of French immigration in the region, including a colony established decades earlier to escape Bourbon persecution, and the similarities that it offered to French people who thrived and flourished creating "in its gayety a miniature French town" where distinguished French refugees were able to adapt their tastes and refinement into a happy pioneer life.<sup>155</sup> The title page of the brochure states that it outlines the mineral, agricultural, and manufacturing resources, and was intended "for gratuitous distribution."<sup>156</sup> The document also makes a strong case for the cultivating of grapes and the production of local wine, supported with data to prove the rapid expansion of wine production, within the U.S. and Alabama, in particular. The document, quoting a Mr. Kennedy, makes an appeal for the production of quality and bountiful local wine for the rich and poor as a movement to fight intemperance: "every man who plants a vine will be a useful co-operator in the beneficent work of relieving the country of the evils of intemperance by the substitution of a healthy beverage for the various forms of poisons which take the name of spirits and concentrate and diffuse misery over the land."<sup>157</sup> The document makes a philosophical plea specifically to the French by presenting

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<sup>153</sup> Joel Parker Whitney, *Colorado, in the United States of America : Schedule of Ores Contributed by Sundry Persons to the Paris Universal Exposition of 1867 : With Some Information about the Region and Its Resources* (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1867).

<sup>154</sup> Myron Angel, *Etats-Unis d'Amérique. Le Nevada Oriental: Géographie, ressources, climat, et état social. Rapport adressé au comité local pour l'Exposition de Paris.*, 1st ed. (Paris: Imprimerie générale de Ch. Lahure, 1867).

<sup>155</sup> Hiram Haines, *The State of Alabama, (United States of America,) its mineral, agricultural, and manufacturing resources* (Paris: Simon Raçon, 1867), 23–24.

<sup>156</sup> Haines, *The State of Alabama, (United States of America,) its mineral, agricultural, and manufacturing resources.*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.



Alabama as a viable place for agricultural prosperity and wine production, and presents its climate as “very similar to that of France and Germany” in a publication that provides convincing information to a potential investor or immigrant.<sup>158</sup> The state of Missouri sent books for distribution about the state, to be placed in the Illinois farmer’s cottage, along with photographs and other items from the state.<sup>159</sup>

From Illinois to Louisiana, the many examples of American boosterism gathered in Paris provided an ideological transition to the new aesthetic identity that attached itself in Paris, more specifically, to the Far West. While this new identity was by no means a fixed one, it was reflective of the quickly evolving region, its people, and its wealth of untapped resources, all presented and received especially under the guise of photographic landscapes. The focus of exhibits west of the Mississippi were often alluding to the resources and opportunity that Western land provided, whether by agricultural machinery, mining potential, or images of the majestic landscapes. It was this vision that Malespine evoked in the closing of his article on the American exhibition: “We have before us the immensity of dream and ideal; it [America] has before itself the immensity of nature yet untamed.”<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>159</sup> James M. Butler, “State of Missouri,” December 31, 1866, Record 1194, Box #2, Folder V, NARA.

<sup>160</sup> Malespine, “L’Annexe Des Etats-Unis,” 398.

## **Part 2. Photography at the Exposition of 1867**

## Chapter 3. Reading American photographs in Paris

### 3.1 On the French agenda: the Role of Photography in France and the industrialized world

The role of photography in 1860s France lies at a carrefour of emerging Second Empire bourgeois tastes and the enduring French treatment of the photographic process as a democratized discovery. Following the decision by the French state in 1839 to purchase the process from Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre and Joseph Nicéphore Niépce and place it in the public domain, the long imagined “idea” of photography, as described by François Brunet, became available to everyone as a material concept of both science and art. The emergence of photography during the same years as the realist movement in French painting seems to be not only a coincidence but to share some philosophical motives. As stated by Richard Hough, “The seemingly objective nature of photography, its apparent truth to fact, made it ideally suited to the prevalent philosophical attitudes— a tool in the service of both science and art.”<sup>161</sup> The period encompassing the years of the Second Empire also happened to be a time of rapid economic growth and technological change in France. Napoléon III was elected under the newly instated universal male suffrage in 1848, however by 1851 he had exercised surprising political prowess, despite his inexperience, and established a dictatorship. As Patricia Mainardi points out, it is useful to separate the Second Empire into two separate eras, the first being the 1850s when Napoléon III sought to “consolidate his régime following his 1851 *coup d'état*,” and the second part being the more liberal period in the 1860s when “in order to stay in power, he was compelled to make concessions to the growing pressure for liberty.”<sup>162</sup> He created an original type of Empire, acquiring the support of the conservative rural vote that primarily voted for him on the sole basis of his recognizable name, all the while charging the nation forward in pursuit of science and industry. It was a period of many contradictions, while much favor was given to conservative institutions and ideas, Napoléon III and his Saint-Simonian appointees pursued modernity and innovation, vastly expanding the railway

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<sup>161</sup> Hough, *Mid-19th Century French Photography*, 3.

<sup>162</sup> Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*, 123.

system, and the Haussmanian redesign of Paris's thoroughfares, water, and sewage systems. There were social problems created by rapid increases in the Parisian population and the destruction of slums and a lack of working-class housing, however these issues were shadowed by the more glamorous and showy projects underway.<sup>163</sup> While Napoléon III remained generally indifferent to art he didn't overlook the utility of photography to document and propagandize his projects, such as those directly commissioned by the Empire including “Charles Nègre's photographs of the Asylum at Vincennes, Gustave Le Gray's series of army maneuvers at Châlon, Baldus's albums of the railroads, and such icons of imperial piety as Le Gray's portrait of the Empress Eugénie at her prié-dieu.”<sup>164</sup>

Industrial France and the growing urban population that resulted helped to foster an evolution of ideas and progressive morals. The countryside population was less isolated thanks to the expanded rail system, and this allowed for assimilating urban and rural attitudes. As Anderson writes “The search for greater truth in the arts was one aspect of the growing prestige of science, a significant feature of the age.”<sup>165</sup> Pasteur and Claude Bernard had revealed the necessity of research, while Auguste Comte's Positivism was growing in popularity as a philosophical and scientific solution to the moral and political obstacles of the day. This attitude inevitably influenced the visual arts with a gradual migration toward realism. The role of the camera and photograph by the 1860s was multifaceted, not the least of which was a pursuit of truth, for it was a tool thought to reproduce and represent unbiased truth. Niépce himself put it clearly while stating his goal for his invention: “To copy nature in all its truthfulness.”<sup>166</sup> While the first couple of decades of photography's emergence in France were influenced by topographical images such as the picturesque lithographs in the *Voyages Pittoresques*, and produced projects like the nostalgic and historically focused

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<sup>163</sup> Robert Anderson, “A Historical Background: France in the Second Empire,” in *Mid 19th Century French Photography: A Scottish Photography Group Exhibition.*, by Richard Hough (Edinburgh: Stills, 1979), 5.

<sup>164</sup> Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “A Photographer in Jerusalem, 1855: Auguste Salzmann and His Times,” *October* 18 (1981): 97.

<sup>165</sup> Anderson, “A Historical Background: France in the Second Empire,” 5.

<sup>166</sup> Victor Fouque, *La Vérité Sur l'invention de La Photographie: Nicéphore Niépce, Sa Vie, Ses Essais, Ses Travaux, d'après Sa Correspondance et Autres Documents Inédits*, Book, Whole (Paris;Chalon-sur-Saône; Librairie des auteurs et de l'Académie des bibliophiles, 1867), 154.

Société héliographique and its systematic documentation of French monuments, there soon emerged an innovative, forward-looking pursuit of knowledge parallel to the work of the Parisian photographers specifically. After the mid-1850s France saw the birth of the leading French portrait photographers: Nadar, Disdéri, Étienne Carjat, Pierre Petit, and Antoine-Samuel Adam-Salomon. Painter turned photographer Charles Nègre explored many types of photography and embodied the inventive spirit of the early generation of French photographers through his artistically motivated street scenes, architectural studies, nudes, informal portraits, and photogravures using his own process.<sup>167</sup> “The broad scope of the Paris photographers' interests was unparalleled in any other country in the 1850s. The spirit of adventure with which they were imbued is summed up in Nègre's photographs.”<sup>168</sup> Ernest Lacan's review of Nègre's exhibited photographs at the Exposition attempts to applaud his career in as much as the photographs of monuments that he presented. He acknowledged that Nègre showed a rare perseverance for the last 15 years and should be proud of the success he managed to accomplish as an experimenter.<sup>169</sup> While he was applauded for the varied styles in which he practiced, he is most remembered for his genre photographs, romantically portraying workers and street scenes. Paris photographers of the early 1850s showed a greater willingness than those of other countries to take risks with format and technique.<sup>170</sup> The Blanquart-Evrard portfolios featuring Auguste Salzmann and Maxime Du Camp photographs included series from Egypt, the Nile, Jerusalem, “the subjects ranged from archaeology to landscapes, and picturesque rural scenes, as well as photographs of paintings and sculptures.”<sup>171</sup> These portfolios, created in the 1850s, symbolized the potential for photography's exploitation by imperialist and commercial motives.<sup>172</sup> French photographers of the 1850s such as Nègre were navigating the

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<sup>167</sup> Gisèle Freund, *Photography & Society* (Boston: D. R. Godine, 1980), 81. Nègre went to Paris to study painting under *juste-milieu* painter Paul Delaroche who after first seeing photographs declared “From today painting is dead,” so it is no surprise that in such a situation Nègre moved toward photography (even if only for painting related studies).

<sup>168</sup> James Borcoman, National Gallery of Canada, and Art Gallery of Alberta, eds., *19th-Century French Photographs: From the National Gallery of Canada ; [National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa 6 February - 16 May 2010, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton 24 June - 10 October 2011]* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2009), 19.

<sup>169</sup> Ernest Lacan, “Exposition Universelle de 1867.,” *Le Moniteur de la Photographie*, August 15, 1867, 1, BNF.

<sup>170</sup> Borcoman, National Gallery of Canada, and Art Gallery of Alberta, *19th-Century French Photographs*, 22.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Berg, “The Imperialist Lens: Du Camp, Salzmann and Early French Photography.”

quickly evolving demands of photography, that it cater to the taste for the “romantically picturesque” but that it also satiate the demand for realism.

This was a time of vitality in the world of artists, intellectuals and critics in Paris which was growing into its title of “capital of the nineteenth century.”<sup>173</sup> While academic artists were enjoying success continuing the styles of sentimental and historical painting, there were many successful outsiders that met “official hostility or indifference” from the older, more stuffy tastes of the bourgeoisie. “Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal* were prosecuted for obscenity in 1857,” while Manet was excluded from the salons, Berlioz barred from the Opéra, and the daring pioneers of artistic realism such as Courbet and the Goncourt brothers were considered scandalous by their portrayal of society's lower class.<sup>174</sup> “This dialectic between art and industry, the monarchy and the bourgeoisie, had a long history in France, expanding back to the beginning of guild chronicles.”<sup>175</sup> Charles Nègre pursued studies of motion through his photographs, likely as sources for painting, but even went so far as to paint directly over a photograph in the case of *The Organ Grinder*. “He used the camera to extend the painter's vision in a search for visual information on human activities and, more specifically, for studies of motion.”<sup>176</sup> In the case of *The Organ Grinder*, the artist fooled the public at a prestigious Parisian art exhibition; instead of merely using a previously exhibited photograph as source material for a painting he exhibited the actual photograph which he had merely painted over. The line between painting and photography, and between romanticism and realism was being tried and tested during this dynamic time of photographic experimentation.<sup>177</sup>

The decade of the [eighteen] fifties is thus a crucial one in the history of photography, having witnessed one of the highest levels of artistic achievement in the medium's history as well as the use of photography for the creation of new forms and structures for the organization of knowledge. The decline in both the level of quality and serious inquiry by

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<sup>173</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” *Dissent*, no. 17? (October 1970): 439–47.

<sup>174</sup> Anderson, “A Historical Background: France in the Second Empire,” 5.

<sup>175</sup> Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*, 7.

<sup>176</sup> Borcoman, National Gallery of Canada, and Art Gallery of Alberta, *19th-Century French Photographs*, 118.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

the mid-sixties is traditionally linked to photography's evolution from an artisanal stage to an intensely commercialized and industrialized one.<sup>178</sup>

Many of the early French photographers had abandoned the *métier* by the mid-1860s, Le Secq, Le Gray, Regnault, Salzmänn, Nègre, Baldus, Bisson Frères, and the Blanquart-Evrard printing press. Although many point to the commercialization initiated by such innovations as Disdéri's *carte-de-visite* operation, it seems too simplistic to account for the broader shift.<sup>179</sup>

### **3.2 The official coverage— Petit, Léon & Lévy, the French photographic viewpoint**

The extravagant production of the 1867 Exposition Universelle took place during the eighteen-year rule of Napoléon III, the Second Empire. The Exposition came to life in the final years of the régime's rule, a tumultuous period in which many modernizing projects were established within France while also pursuing imperial interests. Some of the lasting influences of the régime were examples of Second Empire style, also referred to as Napoléon III style. The design of the Exposition Palace and park exemplified this style, which was notably eclectic, implementing many historical styles with modern materials. Unlike the Haussmannian boulevards or the Opéra Garnier though, the palace on the Champ de Mars was demolished after the fair, leaving its impression exclusively in photographs, drawings, and art work.

Photography, already in the throes of an art versus industry existential crisis, had entered its most commercial period yet. The *carte-de-visite* and stereoscopic medium had quickly transformed how the photographic industry operated, and increasingly provided a more democratic than elite market for the medium. Saint-Simonian ideas and a utopian, industrial momentum were also being applied to photography as a commercial tool, educational instrument, and low-cost alternative to fine art. Despite the intentions of the French photographic community, within the Universal Expositions the medium would come to expand the commodity market, both as an object and as a marketing tool. As stated by Walter Benjamin, "Photography greatly extends the sphere of

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<sup>178</sup> Solomon-Godeau, "A Photographer in Jerusalem, 1855: Auguste Salzmänn and His Times," 90.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

commodity exchange, from mid-century onward, by flooding the market with countless images of figures, landscapes, and events which had previously been available either not at all or only as pictures for individual customers.”<sup>180</sup> The photographic presence at the Exposition Universelle represented the way in which the photographic influence of the fair was all encompassing. Photographs were everywhere, and were used in a multitude of ways. The official photographic coverage of the Exposition, however, was much less extensive, and while the concession work under the leadership of Pierre Petit documented many of the fair’s different classes and categories, the capabilities of the small team were limited and left behind a singular and incomplete image of the Exposition’s international display.

Previously, during the year of 1855, both the Paris Great Exhibition and the founding of the Société Française de la Photographie with its introductory exhibition took place. While the 1855 Paris Great Exhibition included the medium for the first time at an international fair, awarding it unprecedented public exposure, it was excluded from the Palace of Beaux-Arts and was instead relegated to the industrial side. The SFP perspective favored the artistic possibilities, while it opposed *La Lumière* and a kind of “private speculation” it represented.<sup>181</sup> Ernest Lacan and Disdéri, back in 1855, influenced the jury of the Great Exhibition that the photographic process should be adapted to cater to “quasi-Saint-Simonian social ends.”<sup>182</sup> These included:

1. it should serve the figurative needs of science, art and industry;<sup>183</sup>
2. it should popularize, to the profit of all and sundry, what had hitherto been the monopoly of a small élite – works of art, for example – and thus become ‘par excellence, a democratic tool’;
3. it should provide instruction and education for ‘the masses, so as to elevate and improve them’;<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Walter Benjamin and Rolf Tiedemann, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1999), 6.

<sup>181</sup> Jean-Claude Lemagny, André Rouillé, and Janet Lloyd, eds., *A History of Photography: Social and Cultural Perspectives* (Cambridge u.a: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), 44.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> This list was composed by the authors in *Ibid.*, 44–45.

<sup>184</sup> Ernest Lacan, *Esquisses Photographiques* (Paris: Grassart, 1856), 204.



4. in the interests of progress, it should strive for ‘a moral effect’ upon the ‘working class’: this would prove ‘both morally and materially useful to employers and workers alike’;<sup>185</sup>
5. finally, the photographic process should be able to guarantee substantial ‘profits’, provided that sales were large and prices low.<sup>186</sup>

These ideas were still largely prevalent during the organization of the Exposition of 1867. Some instrumental characters of the 1867 fair, such as Michel Chevalier, President of the Exposition's international jury, were free-trade liberals of the school of Enfantin and Saint-Simon. The efforts to liberalize the photographic medium were implemented into aspects of the 1867 Exposition. Some ways this could be seen was the effort to utilize photographs as instructional and morally useful. The expansion of photographic documentation, reproduction, and landscape work at the Exposition was representative of photographic work at the 1867 fair that sought to communicate knowledge. In contrast to the predominant photo discourse of the day which concerned technological processes and aesthetic competition, photography at the Expositions broadened the implementation and the agency of the medium.

Despite the ebbs and flows of French social doctrines, photography and its practitioners wavered between more artistic moments, commercial ubiquity, and the utility as a democratic tool. The motive of Emperor Napoléon III in the 1855 fair was to impress the legitimacy of the Napoléonic legacy and recently established Empire.<sup>187</sup> By the time of the 1867 Paris Exposition, he had liberalized his rule and his motive was to place France at the center of world civilization.<sup>188</sup> This fair would be governed and regulated more than previous expositions, and within that structured intention was the use of photography, a medium to be utilized by the organizers to record and portray the high place of French civilization beyond the visitors of the Palace and the Park, to the world.

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<sup>185</sup> S. H., “Cours Public et Gratuit de Photographie Donné à l’École Industrielle de Gand.,” *Revue Photographique*, n.d., 151–52.

<sup>186</sup> André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, *Renseignements Photographiques Indispensables à Tous* (Paris: Chez l’auteur, 1855), 6.

<sup>187</sup> Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*, 39.

<sup>188</sup> Anna M. F Jackson, *Expo: International Expositions 1851-2010* (London: V & A Publishing, 2008), 17.

### 3.3 Pierre Petit photography concession-- A limited perspective of the Exposition

In 1866, the Imperial Commission granted the exclusive *concession* for photography of the 1867 Exposition to Parisian portrait photographer Pierre Petit. This amounted to a monopoly of all photography and reproductions within the exhibition palace, the park, and enclosures of the grounds, a privilege that was challenged by a group of his colleagues.<sup>189</sup> Petit's name would appear on all photographic products, and while he was responsible for the overall operation, he appointed a team of photographers to execute certain categories of the coverage: Charles-Louis Michelez for fine art works, Auguste-Rosalie Bisson jeune for general views, and Léon and Lévy for stereographs. This arrangement, as described by the photographic periodicals created a problematic monopoly over the space and objects of the Exposition; one that played out publicly in the year leading up to the Exposition. There was discontent expressed on both sides of the channel including a *British Journal of Photography* editorial which quoted the *Daily News* when it attacked Petit's incompetence just as it equally condemned his exclusive rights.<sup>190</sup> In France a dispute occurred between the pioneering periodical *La Lumière*, edited by Marc-Antoine Gaudin, which passionately took up the side of the majority countering the monopoly, with the rival *Le Moniteur de la Photographie* under Ernest Lacan, who having been granted an “Atelier International de Photographie” by the Commission, took the side of the Commission Impériale.<sup>191</sup> Lacan's defense of the concession declared that the 1855 and the 1862 fairs had shown that a competitive field would only bring disorder and hinder the paths of circulation. He also noted the importance of being able to guarantee exhibitors the security of their objects, and only by controlling the photographic production could they protect against unauthorized reproductions.<sup>192</sup> As a result of the protest there

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<sup>189</sup> The appointed representatives of the group were photographers Carjat, Bingham, Disdéri, Muriel, Pesme, Pliat, Reutlinger, and Trinquart.

<sup>190</sup> *The British Journal of Photography*, vol. XIV (London: Greenwood, H., 1867), 22.

<sup>191</sup> François Brunet, “Voir et Revoir l'exposition En Petit Volume. La Couverture Stéréographique de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867.” *Transbordeur.*, Paris, Macula, Photographie histoire société (“Musées de photographies documentaires”), no. 2 (2017): 127.

<sup>192</sup> Ernest Lacan, “Exposition Universelle de 1867,” *Le Moniteur de la Photographie*, April 15, 1866, 23–24, BNF.

were exceptions to this exclusive concession, at least one of which was the publishing license of over one hundred stereographs by the Anthony company of New York, reproducing the works of Petit's appointed stereoscopic producers Léon and Lévy.<sup>193</sup> Other photographers were also able to photograph within the grounds of the Exposition in isolated cases such as Louis-Jean Delton's equestrian images (**fig. 1.13**) and Koch & Wilz's panoramas of the Exposition (**fig. 3.1, fig. 3.2**). The concession was largely respected, and aside from the few exceptions which are small in volume of images, the exclusivity proves a revealing collection.

### **3.4. Photographic Coverage in Collections: Archives Nationales, Getty Museum, Smithsonian Institution**

An impressively rich, but incomplete collection of the official coverage of the Exposition is held by the French Archives Nationales in Paris. The ensemble of iconographic documents is composed of illustrations such as drawings, watercolors, bi-sections and maps, in addition to photographs. This assortment of mediums allows for a detailed and thorough examination of the planning, from the construction through the eventual demolition of the Exposition buildings and grounds, including unique images not found in other collections, such as the photograph (**fig. 1.17**) of a man looking over the Champs de Mars during the early period of the fair's construction. We are able to understand in detail the layout and construction of the Exposition thanks to the abundance of both drawings and photographs following this process. The collection includes albums such as the "Album of the most remarkable installations" from the London Exposition of 1862, published in 1866 by the Commission Impériale as an instructional guide for all the nations to follow in hopes of building the most attractive displays that could be arranged for 1867. The Commission took these examples into consideration when designing the measurements and layouts of the exhibit rooms, which included desired space proportions and floor plans depending on the type of products to be exhibited. Included in the album are such singular illustrations as the colorful image (**fig. 3.3**)

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<sup>193</sup> Brunet, "Voir et Revoir l'exposition En Petit Volume. La Couverture Stéréographique de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867.," 129.

spotlighting the English display of colors and chemical products, and the wider view showing the composition of an English porcelain display (**fig. 3.4**). Other influential artifacts are the colorful *Albums du Parc* (**figures 3.5 – 3.10**), which in two volumes and 224 pages include watercolors by “F. Roux” as well as photographs by Petit or in his name. It does not cover the entire park but it does offer a thorough understanding of the park aesthetic in utilizing the illustrations and photographs side-by-side while focusing on major installations, be it picturesque or unusual designs.<sup>194</sup> Amongst the examples shown are the drawings and photograph (**fig. 3.8, fig. 3.9**) of Pierre Petit's own Photographic Pavilion an elegant structure which could be found in the park and which served both as a portrait and printing studio and the command post for the photographic enterprise. Also included were photos and illustrations (**fig. 3.10**) of the elegant photosculpture pavilion. While it is not possible to completely account for the entirety of photographs produced, despite the useful Archives Nationales inventory of Petit's technically and visually impressive coverage, it is estimated to be in the thousands of negatives when considering all of the formats as well as the requests on behalf of individual exhibitors.<sup>195</sup>

The official photographic coverage covers many angles, phases and formats. Disregarding the other iconographic materials, a summary of the photographs in the Archives Nationales collection includes the following large groups of images: an album, (**fig. 1.18**), of nearly two thousand portraits of exhibitors and attendees, images following the stages of construction of the Palace from design to demolition, individual exhibits, ceremonies, the park, and lastly a collection of the stereographic coverage. These groups together form a partial corpus of an officially sanctioned vision which played an instrumental role in propagating the interests of Napoléon III's government. Large format photographs provided a limited view, but a more comprehensive impression of the Exposition was supplemented by drawings, paintings, and stereographic images of the Exposition. The large format photographs tended to lack interesting composition and function

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<sup>194</sup> Only one page and one building are shown from the United States section within the *Albums du Parc*.

<sup>195</sup> Brunet, “Voir et Revoir l'exposition en Petit Volume. La Couverture Stéréographique de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867.,” 127.

more as encyclopedic documentation of displays and buildings. In addition, many of the more successful large photographs found in the Getty albums are absent in the French National Archives collection.

While in its floundering years, and with the emperor setting his sights on imperial ambitions, the regime displayed its superiority and centrality in a grand exhibition, unknowingly a final public swan song of power and beauty. Visitors such as Gustave Flaubert described the variety and number of exhibited objects to be too much to handle when he complained to George Sand after his visit that “man isn't made to swallow infinity.”<sup>196</sup> The viewers of the official photographic coverage, however, didn't have to. That is because of a distinct concentration of subjects within the official Exposition photographic coverage, architecture, painting and sculpture were most predominant, a trend which is consistent across the formats and photographers. For many of the countries, there are only photos of their “painting and sculpture” display, while France’s exhibits were covered in greater diversity. Instead of looking at the entire coverage, an examination of this trend will take place in a more focused study, that of the stereographic collection. While the majority of the fair was filled with industrial exhibits, a disproportionate number of photographs feature exclusively artistic and sculptural works. The Archives Nationales collection reveals a potent and organized intention on the part of the Imperial Commission concerning the design and aesthetic of the Exposition, from individual displays to architecture. The official photographic production can be seen as an aspect of this intended Imperial perspective.

The Getty Museum holds a large collection of official Exposition photographs and iconography as well. It contains more actual albums than the French Archives Nationales, amounting to roughly 230 large format photographic images. The albums are curated overviews of the Exposition, rather than the organized archive found at the Archives Nationales. The crediting is vague and inaccurate, entire albums are credited to Petit or Bisson, though most of the images are labeled with the photographer's name (be it Michelez, Bisson, Petit, or Léon & Lévy) as well as

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<sup>196</sup> George Sand and Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance Entre George Sand et Gustave Flaubert*. (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1916), 79.

Pierre Petit. Many of the albums are of the same style, combining photographers' images to create a thorough view of the Exposition and park. One bears an inscription from Thomas Powell, a gas engineer and exhibitor at the Exposition, to a M. Eug. Lemaistre, beneath a photograph of Mr. Powell's engine in the Gallery of Industry. There are also photos by Robert Bingham, a Paris-based English photographer, who was potentially one of those able to photograph outside of the concession. The collection includes a set of stereos by C.H. Graves, an American photographer, in addition to a series of stereos from his collection by both Léon & Lévy and Anthony of New York. The Getty possesses the most pervasive photo collection outside of the Archives Nationales de France which includes a group of glass stereographic slides, providing very sharp and detailed images including one showing an overview of the park (**fig. 3.40**) and another (**fig. 3.39**) of the medal ceremony held at the Palace of Industry on the Champs Elysées. The Getty collection includes many images not found in other collections including a large format photograph (**fig. 3.41**) which shows the loads of chairs brought to the Exposition for installation. The photographs found at the Getty supplement the collection at the National Archives of France with a more rounded story of the Exposition and its execution.

The largest and most complete collection of Exposition coverage stereographic prints are the 670 cards conserved in the Archives Nationales of France, however there are several other collections which contain glass plates and in many cases, stereographic cards in more pristine condition. The archives of Léon & Lévy, now part of the Roger Viollet Agency collection owned and governed by the City of Paris' Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, contains a collection of about fifty glass plate stereo negatives. These negatives are thought to be some of the original glass negatives and portray in the highest quality the stereographic coverage of the Exposition. Several independent collectors also possess groups of stereographic glass plates and cards pertaining to the Léon & Lévy Exposition coverage. François Brunet's collection includes around two hundred Léon & Lévy stereographic cards of the Exposition. Collector Serge Kakou possesses thirty-two glass stereo plates and collector Brian May has amassed between 300-400 stereographic cards of the Exposition coverage.

The United States which did not represent a large percentage of the exhibitors, was nonetheless disproportionately scarce in the photographic coverage, with the exception of a unique album, held by the Smithsonian Museum. The album is composed of photographs credited to Pierre Petit and Léon & Lévy, presumably photographed and edited on demand for the U.S. and which features seventeen large format images of various United States exhibits both inside the palace and buildings in the park. The album was the possession of Abram S. Hewitt, who was appointed as a commissioner on behalf of the United States to the 1867 Exposition by President Andrew Johnson. The volume is the only known album which was dedicated solely to the United States presence. The album included images of the American industrial display (**fig. 3.28**), the American locomotive (**fig. 2.2, fig. 3.31**), along with wide views (**fig. 3.33, fig. 3.35, fig. 3.36, fig. 3.37, fig. 3.38**) of American sections. The album also featured American installations in the park such as the biscuit factory (**fig. 3.30**) and the Illinois farmhouse (**fig. 2.11**). While some of the included images are also located in the collections of the Archives Nationales or the Getty, some are not. For example, the images (**fig. 6.2, fig. 3.34**) of the mineral display and Colorado exhibit (the only individual U.S. state exhibit to be photographed), commissioned by the Colorado commissioner J.P. Whitney, are only found in this Smithsonian album. The Denver Public Library holds a large print and 4x5 inch negative of a slightly different photograph (**fig. 6.2a**) of the Colorado display, which is also the image found in three bespoke copies of a Colorado pamphlet prepared by Whitney, one of which is held by the University of Wyoming at Laramie.<sup>197</sup> The Colorado and mineral display images rather than being credited to Petit like the rest of the U.S. volume, is only labeled as having been “published by Léon & Lévy.” These images are not included anywhere in the Archives Nationales collection and were likely a special order on behalf of J.P. Whitney. The official French coverage included some large format images of the U.S. (**fig. 3.37, fig. 3.38**), both held at the French National Archives. One image shows a view of the U.S. fine arts display including a wall of paintings and a sculpture in the

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<sup>197</sup> The other two have not been located, but one was given to the emperor, and the other to the U.S. government.

foreground. The second image was described as a view of U.S. industrial exhibitors in the Gallery of Machines, though the prominent subject of the photo is an architectural colonnade.

The U.S. was the subject of several stereographs (**fig. 4.3, fig. 4.4, fig. 4.5, fig. 4.6**) however, as discussed in the following section, this sparse coverage reflects the subjective French view of the U.S., particularly a visual disregard for the U.S. display. The depiction of the U.S. lied outside the motives of the French organizers at the time and did not fit into the interests or aesthetic of the photographers, likely a reason for the American scarcity in the official photographic coverage in addition to the late installation of displays on the part of American organizers.



## Chapter 4. Stereography at the Exposition

### 4.1 Stereography and World Fairs as popular spectacle

The stereographic coverage of the Exposition represented not only the most utilized photographic format in terms of prints produced, but also served as the photographic form most suitable to circulation and reproduction. A major portion of the photographic coverage, the stereo views were exclusively the work of the firm Léon and Lévy, under the Petit commission. An examination of the stereoscope collection of the Exposition presents a visual perspective of the cultural and political hierarchy which was curated and transmitted outside the Exposition via the circulation of stereo views. This example allows one to see how the image of the U.S., amongst other countries, was curated according to a pre-defined taste rather than according to an accurate depiction of what was actually exhibited.

The stereographic medium was an apt tool for coverage of a popular event such as the Exposition Universelle. The abundance of stereo views allows for some subtle ideological cues to be revealed. In an article studying the 1867 Exposition's stereo coverage, François Brunet examined the relevance of the photographic niche in relation to universal exhibitions in declaring: "What remains for historians today is not only the deconstruction of (ideological) *representations* which are hidden in stereo views, traces and lessons of an imperial spectacle conceived of and organized with an intention for the mass public; but also the 3-D visual reconstruction of the spatial organization of the Exposition, made possible by the current technologies of imagery indexing and virtual reality."<sup>198</sup> He described stereography as one of the great "parent pauvre" in the history of photography, a niche that survives in great number today, but has for the most part, only attracted interest by collectors.

A precursor to our modern immersive spectacles, the stereoscopic format with its onerous viewing instrument, was created before the announcement of the daguerreotype, but within the

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<sup>198</sup> Brunet, "Voir et Revoir l'exposition En Petit Volume. La Couverture Stéréographique de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867.," 134.

Second Empire bourgeoisie it offered a welcome boost of popularity to the photographic medium in its early stages.<sup>199</sup> The history of the stereo view, however, follows a parallel historiological path of the early Expositions beginning with the London Crystal Palace Fair of 1851. Both long-ignored by critics and historians, the cheap, small stereographic prints found rapid success as “objects of consumption and commerce” according to collector Denis Pellerin, despite an enduring “quasi-general disinterest on the part of critics and historians,” both at the time and after. Stereography or stereoscopy, an inexpensive, reproducible method of viewing images with an “en relief” effect, has more in common with the early Expositions than just being critically overlooked, they were both designed for mass consumption.<sup>200</sup> Stereoviews of all the major fairs were abundantly produced beginning with the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 in London, and this would continue after 1867 through the following three fairs of the 1870s. As far as we can tell the number of stereographic views greatly outnumbers any other photographic format produced of the Exposition. Numbered through 802, the Léon & Lévy collection at the Archives Nationales is composed of around 670 stereo views, allowing for a partial understanding of the layout as well as an insight into predominating ideologies of the organizers.

#### **4.2 Stereographic views and the Second Empire: towards modernity and mass media**

The stereographic coverage of the Exposition serves as a didactic example of the guiding motives behind the entirety of the photographic coverage. Even more, while collector Denis Pellerin states that the 1867 Exposition marks the peak or even the end of the golden period for stereographs in France, it serves as a marker of the beginning of the mass culture consumption that was showing its early signs.<sup>201</sup> Utilized as *the* reproducible souvenir, Demeuelanere-Douyère describes the

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<sup>199</sup> Françoise Reynaud, Musée Carnavalet, and Exposition Paris en 3D, eds., *Paris in 3D: From Stereoscopy to Virtual Reality 1850 - 2000* ; [on the Occasion of the “Paris in 3D” Exhibition Held at the Musée Carnavalet from October to 31 December 2000] (London: Booth Clibborn Editions, 2000), 32.

<sup>200</sup> Denis Pellerin, “Les Lucarnes de l’infini,” *Etudes Photographiques*, May 2, 1998, 1.

<sup>201</sup> Denis Pellerin and Bibliothèque Nationale de France, eds., *La Photographie Stéréoscopique Sous Le Second Empire: Cet Ouvrage Accompagne l’exposition Réalisée Par Le Département Des Estampes et de La Photographie et Présentée Dans La Galerie Colbert de La Bibliothèque Nationale de France Du 13 Avril Au 27 Mai 1995* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1995), 16–17.

importance of photography at Universal Expositions as its influential utility “in carrying the echo of the *glory* of the event outside the tangible frame of the exposition and outside of its temporal limits.” Large format prints have become a primary record of these events for the long-term while stereographs were the immediate propagators of that knowledge during the period. Stereographic prints functioned as a commodity, a visual “souvenir” that compensated for the ephemeral character of the Exposition by circulating during an indefinite amount of time following its closing in November 1867.<sup>202</sup> Photography played many roles at the exposition: administrative document (on individual access cards), illustration of unexhibited objects, and as a communicative tool which multiplied the visibility of the Exposition.<sup>203</sup> Both the Anthony and Léon & Lévy firms would actively sell the stereographic cards through at least the early 1870s.<sup>204</sup>

#### **4.3 Léon & Lévy perspective: predominance of art and sculpture**

Photography, Petit's overall operation, but Léon & Lévy's stereo coverage more specifically carried out the “official” intentions of the organizers, be it political, economic, and geopolitical. Since the other formats were subject to individual orders for photo series to be created of their displays and Léon & Lévy did not seem to cater to these types of demands within their stereographic coverage, it serves as a more clearly archived and accurate example of the strategic ambitions that governed the awards and organization of the Exposition. One method by which this is visible, is in exposing the proportionality, or better yet the disproportionality of the exhibits by nation. While France represented less than a third of the exhibits and covered a comparable fraction of the space, photographs of the French exhibits numbered nearly half of the stereographs. Images of other countries' displays and objects, Italy excepted for reasons to be discussed, represented

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<sup>202</sup> Anne-Laure Carré and Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, eds., *Les expositions universelles en France au XIXe siècle: techniques publics patrimoines ; [actes du colloque international organisé par le laboratoire HTTP-Cnam, la Bibliothèque du Cnam, le Musée des Arts et Métiers et les Archives nationales ... du 14 au 16 juin 2010]* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2012), 432.

<sup>203</sup> Christiane Demeuelanere-Douyère, “Commission impériale. Exposition universelle de 1867 à Paris. Documents iconographiques.” n.d., 432.

<sup>204</sup> Brunet, “Voir et Revoir l'exposition En Petit Volume. La Couverture Stéréographique de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867.” 129.

much smaller proportions despite the number of exhibitors for each respective country. This proves how, Brunet suggests, “the Léon and Lévy catalogue reveals both the economic and geopolitical hierarchies of the moment and also the ambition to illustrate and promote French production which was the primary stakes of the Exposition.”<sup>205</sup> Brunet makes this point while speaking at a round table concerning the Exposition stereo coverage:

It [the article] touches the subject of the relation between a popular industry and a major spectacle of the Empire, which is itself a popular spectacle, but also an enterprise that is profoundly irrigated and governed by what we would call an academic aesthetic, or in any case, an exigent point of view which is manifest throughout all sorts of aspects of the Exposition.<sup>206</sup>

The aesthetic which Brunet refers to is an over-arching neoclassical, or Second Empire influence present in the design imposed by the Exposition organizers. This aesthetic can be found in the architecture and the prevalence of sculpture in the design of the Palace, as well as a ubiquitous place in the stereoscopic output of Léon & Lévy. Brunet also insists on what he observes to be the “mediological nature and artistic affinities of the Léon & Lévy production.”<sup>207</sup> This tendency is made clear by what he calls a “marked overrepresentation, in the collection, of objects with a strong iconographical value.”<sup>208</sup> This representation correlates to a disproportionate portrayal of the fine-arts galleries overall, but more specifically of sculpture, which was already a favored subject of stereographers in the 1860s. The mediological nature then, corresponds to the transmission of this artistic taste and ideology via the technology of stereography within the greater cultural outlet of the Exposition. Within the French objects, there was certainly a predominance of views concerning the fine-arts and artisanal arts, while leaving painting in the background. The focus was present in the portrayal of other nations as well, but none so much as in the case of Italy, which is portrayed via 153 views of which 146 are exclusively of its statues and sculpture, not counting general images of the inner garden and the statues therein. This predilection, an unavoidable aspect of European taste,

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> “*Photographie et exposition*”. *Rencontre autour de la revue ‘Transbordeur’*, Video, Editions Macula (Jeu de Paume, Paris, 2018), <https://vimeo.com/259487849>.

<sup>207</sup> Brunet, “Voir et Revoir l’exposition En Petit Volume. La Couverture Stéréographique de l’Exposition Universelle de 1867.,” 129.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 132.

while clearly an artistic hierarchy the organizers intended, was exaggerated when combined with the stereographers iconographic infatuation with the sculptural silhouette and the effect of the *relief*.<sup>209</sup> The pervasive use of sculpture, and thus a human or figure silhouette as the subject of most images was likely a consequence of choosing the portrait photographer Petit as the chief photography director of the coverage. The prevailing ideals of the French coverage resulted in a highly subjective impression of the Exposition, a mediological transmission in which the stereographs represented and communicated the dominating “official” artistic hierarchies rather than a proportional representation of the Exposition’s objects.

For this reason, the official photographic coverage was highly imbalanced. To study the actual visual reality of the Universal Exposition of 1867, it is necessary to clarify that the photographic record is dramatically skewed to the desires of the Imperial Commission and their appointed photographers. The U.S. exhibition was marginalized because of the preference for the academic aesthetic that predominated the official coverage. To investigate specific representations, such as the United States, at this enormous display of many nations, the use of photographic evidence, exhibition catalogues, correspondence, and periodicals must be used to arrive at a more complete image.

While the Exposition was taking place in France and incarnates a French point of view, the disproportionality clearly portrays geopolitical hierarchy as well. The case of the United States represents a perfect example of the disproportionality of subjects featured in the stereographs. One of the few stereos showing the American presence features, as the subject, a statue of Napoléon which suggested the French point of view of the United States as nothing more than a “cultural colony” of Europe.<sup>210</sup> The United States exhibited only six sculptures in the Fine Arts category and two of those sculptures were featured in two of the only six United States exhibit-focused stereographs. The first image (**fig. 4.4**), shows Launt Thompson's sculpture of Napoléon I, which was captioned as merely “Beaux-Arts, section Américaine.” The other image (**fig. 4.5**) of American

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

sculpture included an identical caption, however this image placed John Quincy Adams Ward's sculpture *The Indian Hunter* in the foreground, while the sculpture of Napoléon I remains in the background of this image as well. The other exhibited sculptures which were not featured in the photographs included a bust of Abraham Lincoln, a sculpture of a freed slave, a Rocky Mountain trapper, and a sleeping faun. This selection of subject matter, Napoléon I and an "Indian" hunter, by the photographers and editors of the stereo collection revealed the French point of view concerning the U.S at the time. As mentioned in previous sections, the French preferred a simplified view of American culture at this point, one that focused on the Native American and its myth. Featuring the Napoléon I sculpture, a character who had already been presented in photographs of numerable French and Italian sculptures, in not one but two U.S. focused images, placed France (albeit the host country and culture) at the forefront of cultural dominance, insinuating an American idolization of the French Emperor and the hierarchy of French culture. The next stereo is titled "Apparatus for the sciences, American section" (**fig. 4.6**) and featured Milton Barlow's Planetarium, while the final interior of American exhibits (**fig. 4.7**) showed a wide view of American furniture and objects, with a statue in center frame.

The Archives Nationales stereo collection includes in its American coverage an image of the American Gallery of Labor section (**fig. 4.8**), as well as an aerial view over the American park (**fig. 4.9**) with the Illinois farmhouse as the center subject. The Gallery of Labor, as seen in one stereograph (**fig. 4.10**) featured an elevated walkway, allowing a panoramic view down over the machines. In the views overlooking the Gallery of Labor (**fig. 3.27, fig. 4.10**), peering down through arched columns, one has a view of the industrial exposition, literally framed by French neo-classical architecture, presented as a second-rate attraction.

In examining the official photographic coverage, within the context of the overall Exposition, it becomes clear that there was a specific intention on behalf of the organizers. There existed a tendency throughout the exposition design and the stereos favoring the relief effect, neo-classical style and a tridimensional perspective. The photo concession was potentially meant to create what Brunet calls a "méta-médium" in that the photographs represented a miniature re-

creation and souvenir of the Exposition. The three-dimensional impression of the Exposition, en relief, would circulate and act as a mediological transmission of French ideologies, hierarchies, and standard of taste. From an historical point of view, this meta-media intention was a multiplication of the Empire's ideas, incarnated in the Exposition, captured in photographs, circulated throughout the world, and viewed in “3-D” by an exponential audience from the comfort of their sofa. The supremacy of French taste and the intended curation of the Exposition were recreated innumerable, beyond the walls of the Exposition space, and outside the months of its temporal existence.

The official photographic coverage by Petit and his commissioned photographers documented a subjective perspective of the Exposition. The photographs reveal a preference toward the values of the French organizers, leaning toward architectural and Second Empire style. The resulting large format and stereographic prints provided a French perspective of the Exposition, which was for a long time, the primary visual record of the Exposition Universelle of 1867. These images are fundamental in constructing a general understanding of the visual environment of the fair. However, for a deeper understanding of the U.S. display, the official coverage offers limited information. This section provides the visual framework that exists in which a deeper study can be initiated. The intentions from exhibiting countries such as the U.S. can only be understood as messages competing for attention within a complex cultural environment.

## Chapter 5. A New Visual World, the International Photographic Competition

### 5.1 Photography and Second Empire France

The Exposition Universelle of 1867 allowed for all work that had been created since the last Parisian fair in 1855 to be considered for entry. As will be seen in this excerpt from the international photography exhibition, what was presented was a curated showing of work that represents the twelve-year period of industrialization of photography in France. This decade has been considered a time of expansion of the medium that resulted in the “artistic decline of the photographic profession.”<sup>211</sup> In France this trajectory included a shrinking of the photographic size, from large, expensive, printed portraits to the small carte-de-visite and stereograph formats afforded by even the lower-middle class. The artist-photographer, such as Gustave Le Gray or Nadar, had disappeared in favor of the more adeptly business-minded Disdéri. The Exposition Universelle provided a special forum for photography during this time of transition. Contrasting with the trends of 1867 outside the Exposition walls, there was a broader collection on display, one that included more landscapes and architectural photographs than the average citizen had access to. Photographs embodied a new and larger source of information than just the commercial portrait industry that has represented this period in many photo histories. While photographic portraits were on display and mounted a popular competition, there was also a broad exhibition of landscapes, objects, and scenes that broached a more general pursuit of expression and displayed for a large public the new era of photography.

As a precursor to mass-media and a burgeoning tourism industry, the photographic presence at the Paris Exposition of 1867 offered a glimpse of the future while also including works created over the past twelve years of innovation. The discourse of the time freely analyzed the aesthetic hierarchy of portrait and landscape works, but the broader revelation of photographic evolution was more elusive of critical approach. The public forum of the Exposition with its agglomeration of individually-curated national displays provided the context for a new visual world. As the nations

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<sup>211</sup> Freund, *Photography & Society*, 83.



poured into the Palace with their independently prepared displays, it became apparent that the artist-photographer was rare amongst a more industrialized wave of photographic production. This industrialized phase included an expansion of photographic documentation, art reproduction, and the mass-produced portrait. The Exposition provided a concentrated demonstration of how the different countries were implementing the medium to aesthetic and utilitarian ends.

The ubiquity of photography at an Exhibition such as this Exposition Universelle allows for a formidable examination of how the value, exchange, and political significance of photographs has evolved through historical contexts. As Michel Poivert states in respect to the Marxist theory of economic value, and supported by François Brunet's "idea of photography" concept, "it is when a social relation - the exchange - is established, that the value [of photographs] is manifested."<sup>212</sup> From the identification photo on one's entry card (**fig. 1.14**) to the illustrative photographs of objects too cumbersome to send, to the formal photography exhibition, it was not hyperbole in Ernest Lacan's description that "photography is everywhere" at this 1867 international Exposition.<sup>213</sup>

The 1867 Exposition took place in Paris, not only the evolving "capital of the nineteenth century" but at that time arguably also the capital of photography, bookending one of the most innovative periods in the medium's early history.<sup>214</sup> This Exposition presented an exclusive moment of insight into the official acceptance and exploitation of the medium through the subjective filter of Second Empire France in its final days. In the twelve years since the 1855 Universal Exposition, the photographic process had undergone much proliferation and experimentation which expanded its accessibility and its usefulness, most certainly in Second Empire France, which allowed for photographs to be seen in extensive uses and styles. The particular place held by photography at the 1867 Exposition allowed for its exceptional presence in all of the exposition categories, the only case amongst the productions of industry and art with such pervasiveness.<sup>215</sup> It was a time of growth

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<sup>212</sup> Poivert, Michel, "La Photographie : Cause Capitale?," *Image & Narrative* 19, no. 4 (2018): 4.

<sup>213</sup> Lacan, "Exposition Universelle de 1867.," 57. My translation.

<sup>214</sup> Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century."

<sup>215</sup> Lacan, "Le Moniteur de la Photographie."

and vitality amongst creators of photographs, accessibility and affordability of the medium was at a high and they were used extensively as supports for a variety of exhibits.<sup>216</sup> Progress at the time was primarily measured by advances and innovations in photographic technology, however, a discussion of subject matter and applications of the medium allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the exhibited images, which has not previously been done of this Exposition. The use of photography had already excited the Second Empire's implementation of encyclopedic utilitarianism. The French "Mission Héliographique" which employed five photographers to document monuments across France in 1851, was the first of government patronage of the "nouvel art," and this encyclopedic concept was still evolving, visible in the stereoscopic fad as well as the layout of the Exposition Palace's design.<sup>217</sup>

Pierre Petit, the fair's official photographer, erected an extravagant photographic pavilion in the park of the Exposition, (**fig. 3.8, fig. 3.9**), which included a studio where one could have their portrait taken alongside exhibition spaces. There was also an ornate building (**fig. 3.10**) built exclusively for the exhibition of photosculpture.<sup>218</sup> The Imperial Commission attempted to create portrait photographs of all of the French exhibitors prior to the opening of the Exposition. The photographs were made prior to March 25, 1867, during the process of administering Exposition season entry passes. Although they didn't complete the portfolio, about eighteen hundred portraits (**fig. 1.18**) can be found in a dossier at the French Archives Nationales in Paris, which contains not only a large number of French exhibitors' portraits, but also photographs of individuals of the admitted public who were having their picture taken for their season tickets. Anyone purchasing a pass for a week or longer was required to have their photograph included on their ticket (**fig. 1.14**) with an embossed stamp to rule out fraud. The *British Journal of Photography* accused this requirement of being a "sop thrown out to the photographers of Paris," and whether or not it is true,

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<sup>216</sup> Examples include early Canadian botanical photographs, the Colorado exhibit of ores, etc.

<sup>217</sup> François Brunet, "The U.S. in 1867" (n.d.), 12.

<sup>218</sup> The medium of photo sculpture was popular during the period and was the reproduction of the models by using photo projections to create a sculpture. Contemporary photo sculpture is created utilizing 3D printing and scanning processes.

it was definitely part of the administration's officialization of a progressive and utilitarian use of photography within the structure of the Exposition experience.<sup>219</sup> Beyond the approximately seven hundred exhibitors in the photographic class, and the supporting photographs in other classes; photography was, more than any other invention, ubiquitous at this Exposition. As will be discussed in a section concerning photography's role in France during this period, and so well summarized here by François Brunet:

This ubiquity, as well as Lacan's enthusiasm, reflected the middle-brow sense of photography's "useful service" in a period that André Rouillé has called "the Empire of photography" in reference to the "illustration and legitimization" it provided for the political, social, and colonial enterprises of the regime — from Charles Marville's documentation of the old Paris under Haussmann's "reconstruction" to the generalization of photographic illustration in diplomatic communications in the 1860s.<sup>220</sup>

The Exposition provided a forum for the diverse implementations of the medium by organizers and exhibitors alike. The fair also functioned as a concentrated display of the Second Empire's implementation of the photographic format as a tool of its political and social enterprises. Though nations would bring an array of photographic work, the French Second Empire and the Imperial Commission imposed a photographic interest within the structure of the Exposition, contributing to the integral role the medium came to represent at the fair.

## **5.2 A Climax for photography in its early stages**

The photographs coming from each participating country were infused with political, economic, and social motives, from the individual to the national levels, so it goes without saying that the presence of photography at this Exposition was diverse and abundant. With around seven hundred exhibitors in the photographic class, there were displays (**fig. 5.1 – fig. 5.6**) from Australia, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, North and South America exhibited throughout the Palace.<sup>221</sup> Not that individuals from those regions were exhibitors necessarily, but that images of those places were

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<sup>219</sup> *The British Journal of Photography*, XIV:128.

<sup>220</sup> Brunet, "The U.S. in 1867," 12.

<sup>221</sup> Lacan, "Le Moniteur de la Photographie."

on display. Photos of Asia and the Middle East were primarily from a colonial or traveler's perspective. The Exposition was taking place in Paris, the cradle of photography and the center of the photographic world, and maintained an exclusively Western-centric point of view. This survey will address the official international photographic category at the Exposition of 1867 which provides an essential context for the American images from the Far West. Rather than addressing the broader photographic “presence” at the Exposition, this section will cover exclusively the official class of photographic exhibition from participating countries.

The 1855 and 1867 Universal Expositions provide concentrated cases for studying specific moments within photographic history.<sup>222</sup> The exhibitions provided an “ideal forum for the host country to promote its notions of progress, nationalism, imperialism, unity, education, culture, entertainment, and commerce” as well as serving as “some of the largest and earliest public venues for the exhibition of photography.”<sup>223</sup> Similarly, these two events were also crystallizations within the chronology of photography as they brought the form to a much larger and far-reaching public. The expositions brought together the immensely broad range of applications and provided a context and example within the history of photography's economic, political, and aesthetic status.<sup>224</sup> Peter points out that many of the types of photographs exhibited in 1855 were consistent with those shown in 1867, though some new genres in 1867 included “equestrian portraits, geographic views, images of China, and greatly enlarged panoramic photographs.”<sup>225</sup> The emergence of these “geographic views” was pertinent as the genre which the American Far West exhibited exclusively.

It is clear that there was no defined line as to whether photographic entries were judged on their value as technological advancement and thus as industrial or scientific objects and process, or as works of art. In the competition at the Exposition Universelle, the jury attempted to adjudicate

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<sup>222</sup> Carolyn Peter and Nuno de Avelar Pinheiro, *Encyclopedia of 19th Century Photography*, ed. John Hannavy, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC, 2008), 514.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

the art and science of photography within one category. In his July 1867 article on the subject, A.H.

Wall provided some contemporary frustration on the issue:

Yet the photographic jurors, who are selected as men of science, invariably award medals as if they were art-critics [...] All the art-critics of the Paris Exhibition have awarded England the palm for landscape photography, and France that for portraiture. But what is the verdict of the photographic jury? [...] Then the gold medals have been reserved not for "Art the Queen" but for certain of her handmaids the "Sciences."<sup>226</sup>

The exhibition and practice of photography was revealing the growing pains of its rapid proliferation. The medium had inherited formal genres from painting that weren't broad enough to encompass the works that were rapidly evolving and expanding in form. Since the photographic community was unable to identify a differentiation between photographic technology and a genre of practice, the organizers did not adequately separate these aspects of the medium within the Exposition either. Wall's remark puts many other discussions from the period, such as the landscape-portraiture rivalry, in a more revealing light.<sup>227</sup>

The rewarded exhibitors were many; however, to give an idea of the works awarded by the jury, one must first acknowledge the works that were disqualified from competition due to the creator's standing as jury members. Niépce de Saint-Victor, Louis-Alphonse Davanne, Louis Jules Duboscq, Louis Robert, all of France, Doctor Hugh Diamond of Great Britain and Doctor Hermann Vogel of Prussia, were either members, secretaries or associates of the Jury and were thus "Hors Concours."<sup>228</sup> The three highest awards, a grand prize and two gold medals, went to French exhibitors. The distribution of these awards proved to honor the mastery or innovation of technical processes utilizing photographic methods, so it was clear that the international jury valued the scientific aspect of the medium over its artistic form. The grand prize in photography went to Henri Garnier for his photogravure process, which was developed around 1864, utilized multiple exposures and produced enhanced print quality.<sup>229</sup> Lacan provided support for this decision in his

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<sup>226</sup> *The British Journal of Photography*, XIV:326.

<sup>227</sup> Wall was foremost, an artist and critic, who argued for the acceptance of photography as an art, for further reading on him and the ideological conditions surrounding the rise of English photography and its milieu, see Edwards, *The Making of English Photography*.

<sup>228</sup> Niépce de Saint-Victor was a cousin of Nicéphore Niépce.

<sup>229</sup> Gravure héliographique (f.) - early photoengraving process invented by Niépce de Saint-Victor that had only limited

review of the award selection while listing the considerable contingent of French heliographic engravers and photo lithographers. According to him, in previous expositions the Englishman M. Talbot had received honors, as well as the Frenchman M. Poitevin. It was just, he stated, that M. Garnier's invention, completely original as well, received an exceptional award.<sup>230</sup> The highest awards honored the advances in photographic technology as well as innovative applications of the process. The first gold medal was awarded jointly to Frenchmen Tessié du Motay and Maréchal for their collotype process (phototypie) and photo-vitrified enamel process (photographie vitrifiée). The second gold medal went to Frenchman Lafon de Camarsac for his photographic enamels. The silver, bronze and honorable mentions were too numerous to fully examine here, but some selections provide a context for the photographic presence at the Exposition.

The Exposition Universelle of 1867 allowed for all work that had been created since the last Parisian fair in 1855 to be considered for entry. As will be seen in this excerpt from the international photography exhibition, what was presented was a curated showing of work that represents the twelve-year period of industrialization of photography in France. This decade has been considered a time of expansion of the medium that resulted in the “artistic decline of the photographic profession.”<sup>231</sup> This trajectory included a shrinking of the photographic size, from large, printed portraits to the small carte-de-visite format. The Exposition provided a special public forum for photography during this time of transition. Contrasting with the trends of 1867 outside the Exposition walls, there was a broader collection on display inside them, one that included more landscapes and architectural photographs than the average citizen had access to. Photographs embodied a new and larger source of information than just the commercial portrait industry that has represented this period in many photo histories. While photographic portraits were on display and mounted a popular competition, there was also a broad exhibition of landscapes, objects, and scenes that broached a more general search for identity. The discourse of the time freely analyzed the

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success. The English term for the process is photogravure, equating to the French term héliogravure. Photogravure has a more general meaning in French.

<sup>230</sup> Ernest Lacan, “Le Moniteur de la Photographie,” *Leiber, Editeur, 13 Rue de Seine*, August 15, 1867.

<sup>231</sup> Freund, *Photography & Society*, 83.

aesthetic hierarchy of portrait and landscape works, but the broader revelation of photographic evolution was more elusive of critical approach. The public forum of the Exposition with its agglomeration of individually curated nation displays provided the context for a new visual world.

The event offers an abundance of language surrounding photography during a period when there was so much to be discussed that the language couldn't keep up. The medium and its jargon, inherited many qualities from painting and the fine arts. The photography display at this Exposition and the discourse surrounding it reveal that many of these qualities presented a challenge to overcome. The majority of photographers from the period remained in the landscape and portrait genres, as these were the most profitable areas of the industry and only growing in popularity throughout the decade. Some individuals however, and these seem to be those with the most enduring legacy and established place in the photography canon, were those that pursued original creative expression, rather than the highly executed practice within the adopted portrait and landscape genres, or as technical innovators. The collection within the competition portrays rather accurately the photographic world in 1867 including a public that was fascinated with the exotic and with gathering visual information extensively via the portable and reproducible medium. Photography's cataloguing and documentary aspect served science during a period increasingly embracing empiricism, and created an enduring dichotomy between the camera's expanding uses. Though this debate would never arrive at a resolution, the Exposition presented a reliable show of the diverse products of the photographic processes during this time.

### **5.3 Landscapes and portraits**

The French and British had developed a rivalry during the previous exhibitions concerning which country excelled in portraiture and landscape, and this shaped much of the criticism from the two countries at this Exposition. Writings by Ernest Lacan (France) and Hugh Diamond (England) in 1867 both claim that their respective countrymen triumphed in the execution of landscape

photography at the 1867 fair. Lacan acknowledged the long-held superiority of the English landscapists and their foggy climate but claimed a French victory:

In Paris in 1855 and in London in 1862, a most incontestable superiority belonged to the English photographers for views and landscapes. Either the foggy climate presented for the lens more faded horizons, more charged perspectives, more harmonious effects of light: either the cameras used were better, the works sent across the Channel brought more than the specimens of the same genre which appeared at these two grand expositions. However, this time, we must say, and no one will deny it, the advantage is entirely with the French landscapists.<sup>232</sup>

He went on to laud the excellence of British landscape photographers William England, James Mudd, Francis Bedford, Vernon Heath, Thurston Thompson, and Rough; while claiming the productions of French messieurs Charles Soulier, Ildefonse Rousset, Ferrier fils, Davanne, Adolphe Braun, Alphonse Jeanreneaud, and M. Roman to be of the same quality but enhanced by a grander vigor and more powerful effect. He claimed that the English remained the masters of the genre, going on to extol the seascapes of George Washington Wilson, Valentine Blanchard and colonel Stuart Wortley (**fig. 5.59, fig. 5.60**), confirming that the English maintain mastery of the sea, at least in photography.”<sup>233</sup> British writer R.J. Fowler noted in his *British Journal of Photography* article that the English are known to excel in landscape photography, that “this is our specialty.”<sup>234</sup> He acknowledged the excellence of Soulier's Switzerland views, (**fig. 5.7, fig. 5.8**), and expressed his opinion that they are the best French landscapes at the exhibition and a strong competitor for Mr. England.<sup>235</sup> It must also be noted, as a more thorough discussion of the subject matter and agency of landscape photographs evolves, that Fowler boasts at length on the loyalty of Englishmen to their country and their landscape. Almost all discussion of the English excellence in photographic landscapes includes an acknowledgment to the suitability of the English climate for landscapes, ignoring credit to the execution and creativity of the photographers, but often acknowledging the quality of their lenses. Concerning Soulier, Fowler commented: “It is curious to remark that this best landscape artist in France has gone out of his own country for his best subjects, whilst the first

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<sup>232</sup> Lacan, “Exposition Universelle de 1867,” 97. My translation.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> R.J. Fowler, “Paris, April 29, 1867,” *The British Journal of Photography*, May 3, 1867, 212.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.



examples of excellence amongst English landscape artists are views in their own country.”<sup>236</sup> This aspect of the photographer's attachment—or lack thereof—to their landscape, their nation, their environment, is pertinent as it varies between countries. This expression of ethic or intention was already a part of the landscape photographer's and the critic's language. The meaning and identity exuded by the photographic prints was developing a different significance in regard to landscape than existed with painting.

The English frontrunners of the Exposition were the four notable silver medal-winning landscapists Francis Bedford, Charles Thurston Thompson, James Mudd, and William England. Francis Bedford was noted to have had the most noticeable display (**fig. 5.9 – fig. 5.13**) amongst British photographers. His exhibit was described in *The British Journal of Photography* as “only landscapes, all of one size (12 x 10) which are all hung together, occupying an entire screen.”<sup>237</sup> The collection included five from his tour in Egypt and Holy Land with the Prince of Wales, the first Royal tour to invite a commissioned photographer and an appointment that significantly boosted his reputation. The BJP critic praised him for the abundance of high-quality images he had produced, which were also “well printed, and show no sign of fading, which, as we proceed, will be found almost exceptional.”<sup>238</sup> He exhibited photos (**fig. 5.9 – fig. 5.13**) including those described as *Kenilworth, Rushford Mill, The Castle Grove, Kenilworth, Colossi on the plain of Thebes, Ruined Temples at Baalbec, and Bridge over the Lledr, North Wales*.<sup>239</sup>

James Mudd, another silver medalist and well-known landscapist showed the largest landscape prints in the British section, three prints of 18 x 15 inches. His prints were somewhat scattered in the Palace “like most of the exhibitors,” since nine of his smaller prints were seen elsewhere in the exhibition. The *BJP* critic Aur. Chlor (pseudonym) applauded Mudd's artistry but regretted that his technical skills were found wanting: “The three large pictures are magnificent

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Aur. Chlor, “Paris Universal Exhibition,” *The British Journal of Photography* XIV, no. 381 (August 23, 1867): 399. For more on Bedford's exhibit including criticism, read the accounts in the *British Journal of Photography* and *The Photographic Journal*.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Diamond, Hugh Welsh, “Official Reports of the French Exhibition,” *The Photographic Journal* 12, no. 186 (October 15, 1867): 113–26.

productions, and are well placed. One of them, *On the Tay*, has begun to show signs of fading, which I regret to say I observed prominently in Mr. Mudd's pictures in the Exhibition of 1862.”<sup>240</sup> This photograph, also titled *The Hermitage bridge, Dunkeld*, (**fig. 5.14**) has in fact survived despite its faded appearance. The other two large photographs were *View on the Llugwy, North Wales* (**fig. 5.15**), and *Trees in Dunham Park, Cheshire*.<sup>241</sup>

William England, described as “one of the forgotten giants of 19th century British photography” was also a successful landscape exhibitor.<sup>242</sup> England's series of views from Switzerland were highly regarded amongst his 9 x 7-inch prints (**fig. 5.16, fig. 5.17, 5.18**), of which there were approximately forty exhibited. Pioneering Scottish photographer George Washington Wilson received an honorable mention for his exhibit of stereographs, (**fig. 5.26, fig. 5.27**) which reportedly did not stand up to his established success.<sup>243</sup> His stereos which he referred to as “instantaneous,” included scenes on the water and included a conceptual caption in the case of his image titled *A Fresh Breeze* (**fig. 5.26**). Wilson was successful and circulated many prints in the 1860s. It was said in *The British Journal of photography* that Wilson “has perhaps, circulated throughout the world more photographs than any other man.”<sup>244</sup> Charles Thurston Thompson exhibited images (**fig. 5.33**) which were grouped with the landscapists, however they were broadly described as architectural views and as “reproductions and views from Spain and Portugal.”<sup>245</sup> According to the *Journal of the Royal Photographic Society*: “The reproduction of old architecture in this way, with so much definition of detail, is most important; and Mr. Thompson has succeeded

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<sup>240</sup> Chlor, “Paris Universal Exhibition,” August 23, 1867, 399.

<sup>241</sup> James Mudd’s photographs are rare, his landscapes even more so than his portraits, though an album of his landscapes is held at the Wordsworth Trust Grasmere.

<sup>242</sup> Matthew Butson, “England, William (1816-1896),” in *Encyclopedia of 19th Century Photography*, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC, 2008), 488–89.

<sup>243</sup> Aur. Chlor, “Paris Universal Exhibition,” *The British Journal of Photography* XIV, no. 383 (September 6, 1867): 423.

<sup>244</sup> M. Carey Lea, “Deterioration of Negatives,” *The British Journal of Photography* XIV, no. 351 (January 25, 1867): 36.

<sup>245</sup> “The Award of Prizes at the Paris Exhibition,” *The Photographic Journal of the Royal Photographic Society*, July 16, 1867, 66, Royal Photographic Society.

in giving full pictorial effect to his records.”<sup>246</sup> Thompson's images were awarded for this cultural merit, representing more of a historical contribution than a technical or artistic one.<sup>247</sup>

While not their strongest photographic category, the French exhibited some respected landscapes. Louis-Alphonse Davanne, Charles Soulier, Claude Marie Ferrier and Adolphe Braun were arguably the strongest from the French landscape exhibitors. Others garnering praise included the naturalized Frenchman (originally English) Farnham Maxwell-Lyte (**fig. 5.29**) and the little-known Maurice Brétillet (of Besançon), along with Parisians Ildefonse de Rousset (**fig. 5.30**) and Alphonse Jeanrenaud (**fig. 5.31, fig. 5.32**). Davanne, Soulier, Ferrier, and Braun presented, primarily, majestic Alpine views. One English critic writes of Davanne's collection (**fig. 5.23, fig. 5.28**): “the finest specimens of pure landscape photography in the French section--clean, clear, and bright as photographs, and every-one a picture.”<sup>248</sup> Braun was technically awarded for carbon printing; it seems he exhibited exclusively or primarily carbon prints, (**fig. 5.19, fig. 5.20, fig. 5.21, fig. 5.22**) some having been made using a pantoscopic camera along with others consisting of reproductions of art. A British critic called Brétillet's images “eight of the finest landscapes in the Exhibition.”<sup>249</sup> Fowler insisted that though the landscape genre was where the French showed the least advantage, Ildefonse de Rousset (**fig. 5.30**) and Jeanrenaud (**fig. 5.31, fig. 5.32**) were the best exhibitors of native landscapes.<sup>250</sup> This is quite a singular opinion, since they were both also dismissed by other critics. While not confirmed which prints were exhibited it is likely that *Le Pont de Joinville* (**fig. 5.30**) from 1864, was among the prints displaying Rousset's poetic Parisian style. Fowler described the work as an experiential process: “I can tell you that the Wilson of France, M. Ildefonse Rousset, has been wandering among shady dells, and under bowers of trees, and about lonely, quiet, leafy nooks.”<sup>251</sup> There remain Alphonse Jeanrenaud prints in notable collections, but

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<sup>246</sup> “The Times on the Great French Exhibition,” *The Photographic Journal of the Royal Photographic Society*, November 16, 1867, 137, Royal Photographic Society.

<sup>247</sup> Potentially less artistically acclaimed than Frenchman Auguste Salzmann who worked in this same genre. For more see Borcoman, National Gallery of Canada, and Art Gallery of Alberta, *19th-Century French Photographs*.

<sup>248</sup> Chlor, “Paris Universal Exhibition,” August 23, 1867, 484.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> Fowler, *The British Journal of Photography*, May 24, 1867, 249.

<sup>251</sup> Fowler, *The British Journal of Photography*, Feb. 1, 1867, 57.

they are few, this example *Fontainebleau* (**fig. 5.32**), was likely another exhibited image at the Exposition. C.T. Thompson applauded Jeanrenaud's images of the aqueduct and Chateau de Maintenon, which he claimed have “excellent photographic qualities” and are “by the Tannin process.”<sup>252</sup> Eugène Cuvelier was awarded a bronze medal for his albumen and salt prints, (**fig. 5.39, fig. 5.40, fig. 5.41**), of Fontainebleau. Paul Champion was awarded for his exhibition of views from China and Japan (**fig. 5.37, fig. 5.38**). A certain Vafflard was mentioned for memorable large Parisian views. Maxwell-Lyte presented landscapes (**fig. 5.24, fig. 5.25**) from the Pyrénées, particularly one with “the Chapelle de Poney le Hun in the middle distance” which Thompson described as “exceedingly grand.”<sup>253</sup> The spoken of chapel, after much research must be that of Pouey-Laün, in the Val D'Azun, and while the photo has not been located, one of his Pyrénées landscapes, (**fig. 5.29**), is likely a similar example.

Overall, it is precarious territory, considering the lack of surviving images that remain, to traverse within this landscape rivalry. The French and the British both had exemplary photographs within the category. Looking at the group of images as a whole, and particularly the group of landscape images, there appear to be three primary motives, the exotic or unseen, idealist or picturesque, and the historical. Bedford, Davanne, and Bourne, offer some of the most important images from the competition. The landscape images, including those from other countries, was at this time offering a rich new body of information. The reason photographers like Bedford and Davanne stand out is that they created technically and aesthetically captivating images for the period's multiple types of popular photographs and those channels of distribution. Samuel Bourne and other traveling photographers abroad portrayed growing western power, and imperialism therein, all the while extensively documenting a country and its people. The French, and more particularly the Parisians, were creating romantic, picturesque photographs from the Paris environs, and these images likely impacted a generation of French photographers in an evolving Parisian

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<sup>252</sup> C.T. Thompson, “Illustrated London News - The Paris International Exhibition,” *The Illustrated London News*, September 14, 1867.

<sup>253</sup> “The Photographic Journal,” vol. 12 (Royal Photographic Society, 1867), 121.

aesthetic. Rather than the social and aesthetic importance of portraits, the broad landscape genre differed from landscape painting in that even though it did at times present feeling or beauty, it was a vehicle for information, and idealism. There were no war photographs, or realist images, like in Charles Nègre's portrayal of Parisian workers, there was only a romantic glance towards the real.

By far, the most popular and sought out images in all of the Photographic Exhibition, were those made by sculptor turned photographer Antoine Samuel Adam-Salomon, (**fig. 5.62, fig. 5.63**):

“Have you seen these photographs?” I said to two English photographers whom I met in the Exhibition building a few days ago. “Indeed I have,” said one, and his brother said he had seen these pictures also. “But what photographs do you mean?” I asked, and the expression of mutual understanding which appeared in each of our faces assured us that we all thought of the same pictures, and these were the magnificent portraits of M. Salomon in the French department.<sup>254</sup>

So many critics spoke of Adam-Salomon's exhibit this way in writing about the photography exhibition that they seemed both enamored and exhausted with the popularity of his portrait photographs. The range of his tones, with his subtle lighting was accented by the proportional props and velvet fabrics that distinguish his 8x10-inch prints. The only exception to critical success was compatriot Ernest Lacan, who placed Charles Reutlinger, in the same realm while accusing Adam-Salomon of letting his “sculptor” side have too much power rendering his subjects with a cold statuesque indifference.<sup>255</sup> In fact, the only contemporary with which Adam-Salomon's portraits deserve comparison is Nadar. His attention to the subtleties of light from the capture to the extended care he took in his printing, placed his images in a class far above the other portrait exhibitors. The other popular portraitists included Vauvray, and Angerer from Austria (**fig. 5.64**), while Nadar did not exhibit. The discourse, in the primarily French and British journals, searched for an artistic breakthrough. Adam-Salomon's portraits were even described at the time as “the last triumphs of the photographic art,” failing to anticipate photography and portraiture's many years ahead while acknowledging his exemplary style.<sup>256</sup> The portrait exhibition was dominated by painting-inspired discussions of aesthetics and style and provoked controversy around the process of re-touching. It

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<sup>254</sup> *The British Journal of Photography*, XIV:199.

<sup>255</sup> Ernest Lacan, “Exposition Universelle de 1867,” *Le Moniteur de la Photographie*, October 1, 1867, 105, BNF.

<sup>256</sup> *The British Journal of Photography*, XIV:186.

comes as no surprise that the most popular photographic exhibitor, Adam-Salomon, was a portraitist, and French, the nationality that most highly excelled within the genre.

Though he received no award, Disdéri exhibited the largest portrait in the exhibit, (**fig. 5.42**), of the painter Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, “it is life-size and is marked *sans retouche*.”<sup>257</sup> A bit ironic that Disdéri, successful inventor and patent holder of the mass-produced but hand-held size *carte de visite*, made his mark with such a large image, but in contrast to many other skilled photographers he was more of an innovative businessman than an artist. The criticism surrounding the exhibition at the time helps to give an idea of what was valued, and how exchanges expressed that value. During the 1860s the photographic portrait surpassed the painted portrait in popularity. The cult of personality surrounding portraits likely emerged during this period. With the *carte-de-visite*, and less expensive modes of production, portraits were in high-demand, and the production of them quickly soared.

#### 5.4 The Exotic

While the majority of images in the exhibition were from Europe, there was a special fascination with images from less familiar places. Russia brought fourteen photographic exhibitors including images described as successful and “of high merit.”<sup>258</sup> Awards went to Klokh and Doudkiewicz [sic], Mieczkowski, Borchardt, Bergamasco, and A. Alassine. Better known as Klokh i Dutkiewicz, this Warsaw pair gained the highest photography award for Russia at the time, a silver medal. While together they peddled in a great number of *cartes de visites* portraits, many of which can be found today, they were also awarded for the “views” of Melecjusz Dutkiewicz, like one image from 1860 (**fig. 5.44**), as well as the “four groups of tropical plants well-arranged and cleverly photographed.”<sup>259</sup> Jan Mieczkowski and Robert Borchardt gained a bronze medal each, the former for portraits including one (**fig. 5.43**) of Anton Rubenstein, and the latter for *carte-de-visite*

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid., XIV:236.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., XIV:308.

<sup>259</sup> “The Photographic Journal,” 124.

portraits, (**fig. 5.47**) Riga views (**fig. 5.48**) as well. Bergamasco and Alassine both received honorable mentions, the latter was praised for views of the Kremlin and its surroundings, as well as scenes of the Mazilowa village and several temples, while he also exhibited cartes-de-visites and art reproductions.<sup>260</sup> Bergamasco was a prolific portraitist, exhibiting photographs including his theatrical portraits (**fig. 5.49**) from St. Petersburg. There is mention of a collection exhibited by the “état-major of the army of the Caucasus” including landscapes, architectural and native costumes, all of which were considered exotic to Europeans.<sup>261</sup>

Amongst those who didn't receive medals: Lev Zeitlin of Tiflis exhibited Caucasian “types”, (**fig. 5.46**). Maksymilian Fajans, photographer of notable characters, was lauded in the press for his portraits (**fig. 5.45**), though he wouldn't acquire a medal until the 1873 Exposition in Vienna. His display at the Paris Exposition can be seen clearly in a Bisson view (**fig. 5.3**) from the Petit concession.<sup>262</sup> The Abdullah Brothers [Abdullah Frères] presented landscapes from Turkey. The panoramic views (**fig. 5.61**) overlooking Constantinople (Istanbul) were applauded for their quality and perspective.

There were many allusions to photographs from India in textual accounts, yet the only awarded works were from British photographers of the colonized nation, under British sovereignty since 1858. Photographers Colonel Briggs, Shepherd and Bourne, (**fig. 5.50, fig. 5.51**), and W. Griggs formed a large part of the British photographic collection from India.<sup>263</sup> There were several other contributors from the country like the photographic portraits of native noblemen exhibited by His Highness the Majarajah of Holkar, G.C.S.I. of Indore as well as photographs of mission buildings from His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore, G.C.S.I. Government contributions from Bombay included photographs of cave temples and native castes, as well as from the School of Arts showing photographs of antiquities and of the Hill tribes of Southern India. The other contributors

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<sup>260</sup> *Catalogue Spécial de La Section Russe à l'Exposition Universelle de Paris En 1867.*, xii, 288 p. ([S.I.]: La Commission Impériale de Russie, 1867), 35.

<sup>261</sup> “The Photographic Journal,” 124.

<sup>262</sup> A complete listing of the Russian photographic contribution can be found in E. Dentu, *Catalogue Général, Publié Par La Commission Impériale. Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Première Partie, Conenant Les Œuvres d'art (Groupes I à V)*, 1:118.

<sup>263</sup> *Catalogue officiel des exposants récompensés par le Jury international* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1867), 34.

were British military titled officers, showing photographs and stereoscopic views.<sup>264</sup> Griggs' images, (**fig. 5.52**), from Dr. J. Forbes Watson's book *The People of India* were part of the exhibit presented by the India Museum of London which included portraits of ethnographic types from assorted areas and tribes of India, as well as a “very remarkable series of Indian criminals.”<sup>265</sup> According to descriptions such as the one in the British *Reports on the Paris Exhibition* the photographs from India had been separated into different areas. Some were located in the Indian department, while others were included in the English department of the history of labour; this detail may clarify the fact that while there were “but few photographs exhibited in the department for India,” in the separate English history of labour section there was a “large and most interesting collection of photographs illustrating Indian architecture.”<sup>266</sup> Within the India department, views by Bourne and Shepherd showed the beautiful scenery of Cashmere and other places. Images created by Shepherd and his collaborator Arthur Robertson from this period in India and Pakistan (**fig. 5.53**, **fig. 5.54**) were likely present, and represent some remarkable examples of early photojournalism style images. The separate display in the history of labor included such images as *The Bridge on the Marquel Canal*, *Bheem Tal* (**fig. 5.50**), *The Lake from near the Dak Bungalow*, and *The Tomb of the Emperor Toghluk*, amongst others.<sup>267</sup> It seems the only photos of China were the bronze-medal winning collection by Paul Champion, a set of 10 x 12-inch images which along with architectural views also included some portraits, despite the superstitious nature of the people that he described as quite difficult to photograph.<sup>268</sup>

Concerning Australia and other British colonies, and in Thompson's frank opinion: “There are also a few photographs from Malta, Natal, Queensland, Victoria, and other British colonies, but

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<sup>264</sup> For detailed information on the Indian section see: Spottiswoode & Co., *Catalogue of the British Section: Containing a List of the Exhibitors of the United Kingdom and Its Colonies, and the Objects Which They Exhibit: In English, French, German, and Italian: With Statistical Introductions and an Appendix in Which Many of the Objects Exhibited Are More Fully Described.*, At Head of Title: Paris Universal Exposition of 1867 xiii, 464, 363, 322 p., [1] folded leaf of plates (London: Printed for Her Britannic Majesty's Commissioners and sold by Spottiswoode and Co., New-Street Square, 1867), 274.

<sup>265</sup> Diamond, Hugh Welsh, “Official Reports of the French Exhibition,” 183.

<sup>266</sup> *Reports on the Paris Universal Exhibition, 1867*, Reports on the Paris Universal Exhibition, 1867, vol. 2 (George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1868), 189–90.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> *The British Journal of Photography*, XIV:32.



they are not of a character to call for a special notice.”<sup>269</sup> Of the five reported Brazilian exhibitors, and one from Uruguay, the only awarded exhibitor was the native Swiss George Leuzinger, who was lauded for his impressive panoramic views (**fig. 5.66, fig. 5.67**) of Rio de Janeiro, the Praia Grand, and Bay of Rio de Janeiro; of which he was one of the first to photograph and show to the European audience. Prints of his photographs that were exhibited bear a mention of their award at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867, and thus they are easily identified.<sup>270</sup> Fellow Brazilian exhibitors Carneira and Gasper, J.F. Guimaraes, and Joaquim Insley Pacheo also exhibited what were described as good portraits.<sup>271</sup>

Perhaps due to the enduring appreciation for their early creative expression, there were two photographers exhibited at the Exposition which remain the primary photographers still present in today's photo histories. Henry Peach Robinson, the British silver medalist, contributed what *The Photographic Journal* referred to as “composition pictures.”<sup>272</sup> Amongst a showing of some of his well-known photographs; *A Mountain Dew Girl* (**fig. 5.55**) and *On the Way to Market* (**fig. 5.56**) were described as “successful pictures.”<sup>273</sup> Considered an “art photographer,” Robinson composed images by combining multiple negatives, including the popular and infamous *Fading Away* which brought about much discussion. His pre-Raphaelite influence and symbolic intention made his images some of the most polemic and artful of the time. A contributor to the *British Journal of Photography* evoked the complications of language surrounding the medium:

Gentlemen, -- There are many puzzles to be found in the reports of the jurors of the great French International Exhibition: but that which I should like to have explained is this--Why does one report state that Mr. H.P. Robinson's medal was awarded for this, and another state that it was awarded for that, while a third states that it was awarded for something else? One describes it as for composition photography, another as for artistic merit, and your own pages inform me that it was for views. Which is correct: -- I am, yours, &c.<sup>274</sup>

This dynamic was often cited in criticism from the time, as there was already a frustration with the inadequacies of the inherited jargons of fine art and industry, an ineffectual language in

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<sup>269</sup> *Reports on the Paris Universal Exhibition, 1867*, 190.

<sup>270</sup> A large collection of his prints are held in the Special Collections of the Getty Research Institute.

<sup>271</sup> “The Photographic Journal,” 122.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>274</sup> *The British Journal of Photography*, XIV:369.

photographic discourse. Robinson sought an expressive sentiment in his compositions, and with *Fading Away* his aspirations for the sublime succeeded with a metaphysical illustration rich with narrative and romantic vision.<sup>275</sup> Often cited in tandem with Robinson for “artistic photography,” was Julia Margaret Cameron, who received an honorable mention for her portraits. Critics sometimes referred to her photographic subjects as figurative “heads” and were met with varied levels of appreciation. One account referenced once that her award was specifically to honor one image, (fig. 5.57, fig. 5.58) of John Herschel, taken in April 1867 just before her exhibit arrived in May to Paris.<sup>276</sup> R.J. Fowler gives a compliment, which could have been easily dismissed at the time, but which retrospectively holds much insight into her originality within the Exposition when he states that: “I do not see anything resembling them in style in any of the picture galleries in the building, and do not remember to have noticed portraits of this stamp in any picture gallery I have visited.”<sup>277</sup>

## 5.5 The International Photographic exhibition: a new era of expression

By 1865, photography, particularly in France, experienced a watershed moment, in that this generation of primitive photographers who explored the artistic and scientific possibilities of the medium, were quickly replaced by a wave of documentation and commercialization. According to Gerry Badger, “the whole tenor of early French photography was unselfconsciously exploratory. These photographers were concerned primarily with exploring--fundamentally the visible and material world around them, and then the pictorial possibilities of the medium.”<sup>278</sup> The mid-1860s in France represented a moment where photographers and their audience departed from the naivety of the 1850s, a period of marvelous experimentation. This context is an essential vantage point from which we can understand the visual culture and photography of this Exposition Universelle in 1867.

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<sup>275</sup> Jannie Uhre Mogensen, “Fading into Innocence: Death, Sexuality and Moral Restoration in Henry Peach Robinson’s *Fading Away*,” *Victorian Review* 32, no. 1 (2006): 1.

<sup>276</sup> Julian Cox and Colin Ford, *Julia Margaret Cameron: The Complete Photographs* (Getty, 2003).

<sup>277</sup> Fowler, *The British Journal of Photography*, XIV:200.

<sup>278</sup> Hough, *Mid-19th Century French Photography*, 9.

It takes place just prior to the separation of the “mundane record” from “high art.” There was certainly an “official” appreciation for the full breadth of photography's uses. Solomon-Godeau confirms that “photography in France had from the beginning been granted official recognition, sanction, and patronage.”<sup>279</sup> There was an emphasis on innovation within the medium stylistically as well as technologically, while increasingly employed as a handmaiden of science and the pursuit of knowledge. Since the 1867 Commission Impériale allowed any work created since the Exposition of 1855 to be exhibited, the collection at this Exposition was a specific collection of innovative styles of photographs from the height of its early period (primarily from England and France) along with examples from a new period, one that sought to collect and categorize knowledge en masse.

To take stock of the exhibited works, there were several photographers whose work stands out as influential. The portrait had changed from a luxury to a commodity, and the landscape ignited the imagination and informed about the world. Photographers like H.P. Robinson found a place in the photography canon long-term, but he also garnered enthusiasm at the time for his creative compositions. Prince Albert purchased *Fading Away* and had a standing order for all of the composite images he would create. Those photographers excelling and experimenting outside the primary two genres had both a popularity at the time, as well in the longer photo history. Photographers within the classic genres like portraitist Adam-Salomon, achieved fame at the time, proving a mastery of the medium far above the crowd. Julia Margaret Cameron established her unique aesthetic, providing the most artistic presence within the idea of portrait photography at the fair. Charles Shepherd's images from India and Pakistan, though captured in the spirit of colonialism, were early examples of the style of photojournalism to come. From the United States, photographer Lewis M. Rutherford exhibited his silver-medal winning picture of the moon, (**fig. 5.65**). The image represents a level in which the photographic practice was on display from mundane reproductions to the detailed image of the moon and its craters.

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<sup>279</sup> Solomon-Godeau, “A Photographer in Jerusalem, 1855: Auguste Salzmann and His Times,” 97.

The U.S. brought eleven official photographic exhibitors, of which the notable entries were Lewis M. Rutherford of New York, Carleton E. Watkins of California, Lawrence & Houseworth of California, Theodore Lilienthal of Louisiana, and Alexander Gardner of Washington, D.C.<sup>280</sup> Gardner's Washington D.C. collection of portraits and government buildings represented an institutional and banal presence, exhibiting little creativity in their clean execution. The images were representative of an element of governmental patronage, while publicizing the U.S. as a strong presence in the rebuilding from the Civil War. The culturally innovative work predominantly came from Watkins and Lawrence & Houseworth of California. In the context of the international photographic category, the photographs from California were evocative of an evolution of practice and style, creating an international visual idea of the American Far West. Loaded with similar imperialist motives as the English photographers of Asia and India, the photographers of the American West were by that time settled in the region for many years. Historically, this photographic work would become part of an aesthetic and narrative about the American West. Within the context of the international photography exhibition, the photographs came to embody a new and regional vision of America.

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<sup>280</sup> Lilienthal is not often listed in catalog records of the U.S. Commission though he was a photographic exhibitor. Edward Vischer who is always listed in catalog records, did not manage to have his materials reach the Exposition, thought to have been lost en route.

### **Part 3. The Colorado Exhibition**

## Chapter 6. Colorado and an emerging Western aesthetic

The Colorado exhibition at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 was a small and curated display with a thorough historical trail. The display brought together ore samples, photographs, and maps to create an intentional image of the fledgling territory in which one can identify significant qualities of frontier life and of the pioneer experience specific to the region. Organized with the intention to put the mining potential of the region on display, the Colorado exhibit utilized the emerging photographic medium and geographical imagery to promote mining and immigration, foreshadowing the use and popularity of Western American landscape photographs to come. Previous World's Fairs saw a scattered arrangement of private exhibitors, however the Colorado commissioner Joel Parker Whitney, combined, or rather curated the entire Colorado collection into one singular display, which aligned organizationally with the nationalist design of the Second Empire organizers.<sup>281</sup> In addition to mining photographs, the Colorado exhibit also staged photographs of the landscapes and points of geological interest next to maps and ore samples of gold and silver. The economic and political motives of the Territory were put on display utilizing artistically minded objects and images, in the context of a Universal Exposition.

Roland Barthes reflected on a “fatality” of photography, in that by always requiring a referent, the *something* or *someone* that is photographed, a photograph is lost amongst the vast and infinite disorder of objects. This caused him to ask the question: “of all the objects in the world: why choose (why photograph) this object, this moment, rather than some other?”<sup>282</sup> In the case of these Colorado photographs, the choice is clear; the images were captured to “idealize and eulogize” this early era of their community, serving as illustration but also exhibiting nostalgic esteem.<sup>283</sup> Pristine landscapes described as “the most charming natural scenes in the world” were captured perhaps for their beauty, but also for their proximity to mining areas.<sup>284</sup> A complex

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<sup>281</sup> The organizers required that for this Exposition Universelle each nation organize and submit its country's exhibition rather than the private individual submission of exhibitors which had occurred for all prior Universal Expositions.

<sup>282</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 6.

<sup>283</sup> Rachel McLean Sailor, *Meaningful Places: Landscape Photographers in the Nineteenth-Century American West* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2014), xix.

<sup>284</sup> Charles A. Seely, ed., “Editorial Department,” *American Journal of Photography* 12, no. 14 (January 15, 1865): 336.

connection between the people and the land is at the center of the exhibit's meaning and expression. The choice of photographic subject and exhibit design allow for us to see that all importance and meaning was found in proximity to the mineral richness of the land. The motive, on behalf of the photographer was important, as the perspective of a local photographer with local knowledge and interests was different from a more itinerant photographer with a more tourist or commercial interest. The Colorado photographs served as examples of a local, cultural perspective. The choice of subjects primarily includes mines, mining towns, landscapes, specific rock formations and a flood. Rather than majestic, commercially appealing views of the Rocky Mountains, the photographic image of Colorado presents a representation of a local reaction to place. To more clearly illustrate the Colorado aesthetic that emerged in Paris, take for example three images: a Pierre Petit photograph of the Colorado exhibit in Paris (**fig. 6.2a**), a George Wakely photograph of the *Gate to the Garden of the Gods* (**fig. 6.9**), and a Wakely photograph of the Colorado mining town of *Montgomery* (**fig. 7.40**). The first image (**fig. 6.2a**) shows clearly how mining materials in tandem with photographs were used to create an experience of the Colorado Territory for the Exposition visitor. The exhibit placed hundreds of ore samples on display, juxtaposed with maps of the region and photographs of mining towns and surrounding geological features. The second image (**fig. 6.9**), which was one of the thirty-six photographs exhibited in Paris, shows a close view of the towering sandstone walls of the Garden of the Gods, exemplifying the geological nature of the Far West's appeal while compositionally evoking an accessible "gate" symbol to the West looking toward the future. The third image, a landscape photograph (**fig. 7.40**) which features a serene mountain lake scene with the mining town barely noticeable against the base of the hillside, serves as a pictorial context for the economically and scientifically-motivated ore samples on display, utilizing a classically beautiful setting. The intentional use of this ensemble of objects and images marks a turning point, a shift which could be characterized, very broadly, as a transition between what had been an *idea* or *myth* in Henry Nash Smith's sense and a more concrete, materially and territorially-based representation of a region of the Far West. This shift leaves behind the older Romantic taste for primitivism with the scarcity of Native American figures in the Colorado exhibit

(there was one photograph of Ute Chiefs included) despite their conspicuous presence in prior Parisian expositions and salons since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Just as importantly there was, it is worth noting, a near-total absence of Western subjects and landscapes in the US fine arts exhibition. If a new Western American aesthetic emerged at this Paris Exposition, I would like to argue, it was because of displays such as the Colorado exhibit via photographs and objects rather than fine art depictions. The renovation of the Post-Civil War European and French view of America is one of shifting from a European fascination of the *myth* of the “vanishing Indian.” The aesthetic created during this shift was built on a geographically-related appeal throughout the larger Far West, and was exemplified on a regional level in the Colorado display.

Within a broader Western American representation, Colorado had its singularities. As seen by the choice of photographs, there were more views of the close environment, landscapes with which the people interacted rather than the grander, big mountain scenes so popular amongst paintings of the era. Photographs of the Monument Creek area point to the alternative representation of landscape which invited participation and imagination rather than mere admiration of beauty. The collection of Colorado images also excluded most of the prevalent photographs of the town of Denver and the urban establishment that it represented. Rather, it encompassed nothing other than the people’s response to their environment, not the selling of a sublime image, but the creation of an identity that is inseparable from the land and resources on which their new lives were built. This image served as a visual and cultural alternative to the “Rocky Mountain” scenes present in images such as Albert Bierstadt’s *The Rocky Mountains, Lander’s Peak*, also exhibited at the Exposition Universelle of 1867.

In the eyes of the juries, and portions of the general public, the Colorado exhibit represented a relative success in relation to the rest of the American contribution in Paris. Rather than focus on ideas of success and failure however, this chapter examines the significance of Colorado as a player in the emergence of a larger Western American aesthetic that extended to the entire US exhibition. This study analyzes the American presence at the Exposition as a complex, contradictory moment, condensing the slow emergence of the United States in larger processes of globalization and



modernity. In this moment, the US is seen—or at least, is exhibited with the intention to be seen—as a new actor on the world stage, with an aura of rising technological, territorial and commercial power; the complex image of a Republic incorporating racial diversity (as a newly multi-racial civil society) otherwise known only in colonial empires; and a potential for aesthetic appeal, yet uncertain but perceptible. This latter concern with aesthetics and the visual stems from the preeminence of art—or the “collision of art and politics” which permeated the international exhibition.<sup>285</sup> The inherent aspects of the Exposition produced a ubiquity of photography and visual communication in the Empire’s “fête.”<sup>286</sup> It leads one to interrogate the ways in which American exhibitors tried to fashion their primarily economic and political motives in artistically minded objects and images, particularly in the representation of the West. This section takes the Colorado display in Paris—with its photographs, maps and hundreds of gold and silver ores—as a point of departure to investigate an early moment in a specific community of the Far West and how that region was visually presented. It seeks to examine how the early visual representation of the Colorado region played a role in the emergence of a wider Western American aesthetic that would grow in exposure soon after the Exposition Universelle of 1867 with the circulation of such geographical images as the United States Geological Survey photographs.

Examination of this moment in the circulation of images of the Far West provides the basis for a transition from what was a more negative connotation in France of “American images,” a generic label, which as Philippe Hamon has shown, was used to describe all kinds of images, American or not in origin that manifested negative aesthetic values, from circus shows to early Impressionist paintings.<sup>287</sup> This study attempts to show how the representation of Colorado represents part of a larger Western American aesthetic, and even though it bears common qualities to other Western regions – such as a fascination with geological structures, open spaces, and wilderness – it also represents an aesthetic specific to Colorado and the emerging mining

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<sup>285</sup> Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*, 1.

<sup>286</sup> Carré and Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, *Les expositions universelles en France au XIXe siècle*, 431–33.

<sup>287</sup> Philippe Hamon, “Images à Lire et Images à Voir: ‘images Américaines’ et Crise de l’image Au XIXe Siècle (1850-1880),” in *Usages de l’image Au XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Créaphis, 1992), 240.

community in its early years of settlement. Separate from the Western American image already visible in fine art paintings which tended to exploit the myth of the “vanishing Indian” and sublimity of big mountain scenes, this expression emerged from the local community and the photographs created during an early period of development. While the United States Geological Survey photography to appear shortly after this Exposition would infuse the image of the West with an “uninhabited” aura in most writings of history, this leaves out the inhabited communities during and prior to that period that were creating their own visual culture, participating in the expansion of American civilization and already renovating the concept of “American images.”

The exhibition of the Colorado Territory at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 constitutes an early instance of a display of its culture visually, and most likely, the first appearance of that expression outside of the United States. At the center of this aesthetic is the *raison d'être* of the region, its mining industry, which was represented by artistically curated objects and images. Philippe Roger states that the Civil War created a “vision” of America in France that had lied dormant for decades, and which gave rise to “a bumper crop of ideas, stories, and judgments” as a result of the attention given to the conflict.<sup>288</sup> This French “vision” of America is precisely what was renovated and expanded during the Paris Exposition of 1867, a site for international exchange of both scientific information and pictorial forms.<sup>289</sup> The Exposition served as a stage for “stories” such as that of the Colorado Territory. The emerging aesthetic of the Far West, during the years following the Exposition of 1867 would come to dominate this “vision” of America, and this would begin with the increased prominence of American geographical imagery at the Exposition in Paris. This aesthetic was built on regional representations such as Colorado, built on a representation of its territory through geographical photographs and objects. Built on more than merely a mining town trope, the Colorado image was made of an ensemble of geographical references: the visual representation of mining, the wilderness landscape, and the local geological features which were found near the mining areas.

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<sup>288</sup> Roger, *The American Enemy: A Story of French Anti-Americanism*, 73.

<sup>289</sup> Brunet, “Showing American Geography Abroad in the Victorian Era,” 184.

The Colorado exhibit (**fig. 6.2, fig. 6.2a, fig. 6.3, fig. 6.4**) featured primarily its silver and gold ores in the visual display. To create an ideal vision of the settled Territory and the appointed landscape which surrounded it, the ores were placed around photographs and maps of the region, which all together communicated information that could be understood by all nationalities. The visual representation of mining locations was an important aspect of the community shown by the photographing, copyright, and circulation of photographs. This section will examine in a two-fold cultural-historical study, how the curation and exhibit of Colorado objects at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 signified an early instance of the creation of both a “Western” and a Colorado aesthetic. The Exposition Universelle of 1867, an event that provided one of the earliest venues for the public exhibition of photography, represents an early moment of a renovated American aesthetic, due at least partially to an emerging aesthetic appeal of the American West which was entering a new era. If a Western aesthetics did emerge in 1867, it was not in the Fine Arts section, nor as a reflection of the older Romantic taste for primitivism, but rather in a diverse array of thematic, material, and photographic exhibits, those of the Far West.

This section will begin with a glimpse into the state of affairs on the ground, in Colorado, during 1860s. The economic and political situation on a local level is essential to this study since the visual representation of the Territory was inseparable from the local industry and local settler experience of the period. At the Exposition Universelle in Paris, the states and territories of the Far West exhibited their lands and culture by sending a diverse collection of objects. The Colorado display finds its place within the greater exhibition of the Far West at Paris in 1867 due to a common focus on the exhibition of mining materials. While many other states exhibited their ores in Paris; Colorado, California and Nevada were said to have had the most prominent collections.<sup>290</sup> The categories in which the U.S. as a whole would be most applauded were clearly described in *L'Illustration*, “It is not with luxury items or art objects that the American Union will shine at the Champ de Mars; nobody will say the contrary, and they admit it themselves; but it is not without

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<sup>290</sup> Blake, *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867*, 273.

reason that they count on drawing attention to the products of their mining and agricultural industries.”<sup>291</sup> An ensemble of objects and pictures that was by far the most concrete presentation of the West—including the Midwest, the Rocky Mountain area, and the Pacific Coast—in Europe to date, these displays offered a shift from a primarily intangible idea of a generic “West” to a much more physical identity. As Tangi Villerbu stresses, this aesthetic shift in 1867, resulted from “the self-expression [of the US] offered to foreign gazes.”<sup>292</sup> The U.S. exhibited many objects which helped to frame the westward expansion as an essential aspect of its self-image, despite the tiny fraction of its population that actually lived west of the Mississippi in 1867. This organized representation followed the norm of World’s Fairs in that it was primarily material: the West was presented by way of “industrial and artistic objects, photographs, and agents of its development.”<sup>293</sup> There was also the material exhibition of the Midwest, with such displays as the practical yet decorous *America* locomotive, the Illinois farmer’s cottage and school-house, and the southern display of the Louisiana cottage. These examples could be considered “icons of American ideology”—i.e. concrete embodiments of the doctrine of self-reliance and its special connections to farming and education—and, more specifically, symbols of the hope of Western prosperity and opportunity.<sup>294</sup> These objects were exemplars of the simple, robust construction adapted to the necessities of new lands, “showing that luxury in the new world was to be found in simplicity and space,” in striking contrast to the highly elaborate Oriental buildings—the Egyptian temple, the Mosque, etc.—that surrounded them in the park at the Champ de Mars.<sup>295</sup> While the Colorado identity was yet to embody any sign of luxury as yet, writings point to an eventual quality of cultural refinement, developed quickly even in mining towns, which contrasted with the more rugged experiences in California.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> “L’Illustration : Journal Universel.” v. 49 (June 1867): 199.

<sup>292</sup> Villerbu, *La conquête de l’Ouest*, 121.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Weiss, “Americans in Paris: Two Buildings,” 164.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> See Taylor, *Colorado: A Summer Trip.*, for a first-person account of travel through Colorado published in 1867, which recounts personal impressions from the local culture and its surprising refinement and singularity.

## 6.1 Colorado Territory, the 1860s.

This section will analyze how the economic and aesthetic values of the Western frontier were linked early on and how they were exhibited internationally for the first time in Paris in 1867. The experience of settlers resulted in the construction of an enduring aesthetic based on certain aspects of the land surrounding them. For the Colorado Territory, the creation of a compelling landscape was integral to the prosperity and survival of the floundering local industry. The creation of a landscape occurred in an intentional and material display at the Exposition in 1867, as described by J.B. Jackson, “[...] a landscape is not a natural feature of the environment but a synthetic space, a man-made system of spaces superimposed on the face of the land.”<sup>297</sup>

At the Paris Exposition Universelle, the interests of the Colorado population (and investors) were formed into this early representation of its landscape. Tangi Villerbu points out that like Kansas would do in 1889, Colorado was in 1867 the example of a singular initiative taken by a region separately from the national organization, which sought to exhibit at the Exposition Universelle so as to promote immigration.<sup>298</sup> Even as Villerbu states that the U.S. conformed to the demands of the Expositions Universelles in exhibiting “materially, their country, their nation,” it is clear that in closely examining specific exhibits one can discover behind the material objects the emergence of regional visual identities during an early period in the creation of a broader Western American aesthetic.

Beginning with the Pike’s Peak gold rush in 1858, the settlement of Colorado had begun. The rapid influx of settlers resulted in the incorporation of the Colorado Territory in 1861, at the dawn of the Civil War. Between the Civil War years of 1861-1865, the territory was held for the Union and the Colorado regiment had its only conflict when it defended against the invading Confederate army’s Western push at Glorieta Pass. The importance of the event, for which it was generously titled the “Gettysburg of the West,” was two-fold: the victory of the quickly assembled Colorado Regiment succeeded in stopping the Confederate pursuit of control of the Southwest

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<sup>297</sup> John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984), 8.

<sup>298</sup> Villerbu, *La conquête de l’Ouest*, 121.

(from New Mexico and Colorado territories to California), and also in protecting the mineral and thus financial wealth of Colorado from Confederate control. Though the Colorado participation in the national war was limited, there was another more violent conflict taking place within the newly populated areas of the territory, that with the Native peoples.

The history of Denver in the 1860s reads of fires, floods, and deadly conflict with Indigenous Peoples. While early settlers of the region had successfully negotiated a peaceful relationship with the Cheyennes and Arapahos of the Colorado plains, by 1864 the Fort Laramie treaty of 1851 granting an area of land east of the Rockies to the Native Americans had been breached by white settlers so frequently that violent conflict had become a daunting threat once again. As a result of the uprising in the summer of 1864, mail delivery and travel routes to the territory were closed, as it had become too risky to travel across the plains.<sup>299</sup> In addition to these consequences affecting early Coloradan settlers, the Union Pacific company announced in 1866 that the upcoming railroad would pass through Cheyenne, Wyoming rather than Denver, Colorado as the mountain passes west of Denver were more difficult terrain on which to construct.<sup>300</sup> A population loss inevitably occurred as businessmen streamed to Cheyenne, and the future of the Denver settlement was declared “too dead to bury.”<sup>301</sup> On par with the remounting violent conflict with Native peoples in 1864-1865 was another complication for the struggling Colorado region, the mining industry, the *raison d’etre* of the territory was in a financial crisis. With federal resources being funneled to the demands of the Civil War, mining development in Colorado had largely stagnated during the years of the fighting.<sup>302</sup> By late 1865, the mining industry in the Colorado territory was in dire need of capital. The crash of the Gilpin speculation boom in 1864 had lost the trust of East Coast capitalists, and Colorado miners found themselves looking even further in search

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<sup>299</sup> Colin B. Goodykoontz and Charles W. Henderson, *History of Colorado*, ed. James H. Baker and LeRoy R. Hafen, vol. 2 (Denver: Linderman Co. Inc, 1927), 498.

<sup>300</sup> A year later, the Denver population came together and pooled their money to fund a train line between Cheyenne and Denver with a slogan of “Pay or Perish” (Ellis, *The Strange, Uncertain Years : An Informal Account of Life in Six Colorado Communities*.)

<sup>301</sup> Andrew R Goetz and E. Eric Boschmann, *Metropolitan Denver: Growth and Change in the Mile High City*, 2018, 43.

<sup>302</sup> Amanda M. Ellis, *The Strange, Uncertain Years : An Informal Account of Life in Six Colorado Communities* (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1959), 75.

of a way to save the industry. As Colorado historian Liston E. Leyendecker states, “in late 1865 Colorado Territory was faced with high mining and transportation costs, a lack of finances, a reputation as a poor investment risk, a loss of its labor force, a recalcitrant body of ores, and no foreseeable means of increasing the profitable recovery of its bullion.”<sup>303</sup> While Colorado continued to possess a rich mineral potential, much of its easily extractible ores had been exhausted, and what remained was a plethora of quartz-embedded gold and silver sulfides for which there was no efficient method of extraction. A period of “process mania” then occurred; a quest to engineer a method or machine capable of turning a profit of these mines had meant a sizable loss of investment and confidence in the previous years. Mining in the region previously functioned on a small scale based on available labor and entrepreneurial spirit, but by the mid-1860s this was no longer a possible future, a large injection of capital would be necessary to install a reliable smelting process for mining on a much larger scale.<sup>304</sup> The placer mining of surface gold and silver ores had been exhausted and would need to be replaced by large-scale lode or hard-rock mining. The once eager East Coast investors had exhausted their interest after years of crafty speculation and un-profitable Colorado mines. Interested parties would spend the mid-1860s looking for a way to make Colorado appealing to European investors.<sup>305</sup> The superbly organized exhibition of Colorado at the Paris Exposition was the first of several efforts to seek investment from European sources.

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<sup>303</sup> Liston E. Leyendecker, “Colorado and the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867,” *The Colorado Magazine*, Winter 1969, 2, History Colorado.

<sup>304</sup> The Colorado mining engineers would eventually look to the British for a solution since the successful Welsh technology known as the Swansea process was discovered to be the closest fit by Nathaniel P. Hill, engineer and founder of the Boston and Colorado Smelting Company. (Fell, *Ores to Metals*, 34.) Hill would be the one to build the first successful smelter in the Rocky Mountains at Black Hawk, Colorado, in 1867. His installation of European smelting methods in the Colorado mining region revived the local industry which had depleted the placer and surface gold and silver ores which had been worked since the initial Gold Rush of Colorado in 1859 and allowed for lode or hard-rock mining from that period forward.

<sup>305</sup> While economic “globalization” wasn’t yet referred to in those terms, Pascal Ory points out that it was, in fact, well underway. In Lemesle et al., *Paris et ses expositions universelles*, 8.

## 6.2 Colorado at the Paris Exposition

The first and largest of these efforts was the venture carried out by Bostonian capitalist Joel Parker Whitney.<sup>306</sup> The Colorado exhibit was perhaps the most well-organized of all the American displays in Paris. A *New York Times* correspondent went even further:

There is no department in the Exposition better arranged than Colorado. There are maps, plans, specimens, and photographs of everything that is interesting. There can be no difficulty in obtaining an exact idea of the resources and character of the Territory [...] It is so creditable a thing for a Territory so distant to have come so promptly up to time.<sup>307</sup>

Though this Exposition was meant to be a state affair, the fledgling territorial government had been failing to put together a commission. The Territory's legislative body was not in session to appropriate funds for the costs of transporting and installing such an exhibit, so when Governor Alexander Cummings appointed George Maynard as commissioner, the latter was sent into a frenzy to try to gather the necessary funds and objects. The Coloradans had been attempting to gather donations of money and ore from local citizens to send to the Paris Exposition with the hope of inspiring European investors in the cause of Colorado mining ventures. They partially succeeded at this, as their donated ores had arrived in New York, only to become stranded once they arrived there. Commissioner Maynard lacked the money to send them any further, and the minerals were in fact being held by the railroad until the bill was paid. Maynard then had no choice but seek out the help of Coloradans in the Northeast. Maynard's search for funding eventually led him to Boston where he met with Joel Parker Whitney, a wealthy man who was closely tied to Colorado and its mining efforts. Leyendecker's article states that Commissioner Maynard traveled throughout the Northeast and eventually to Boston where he asked Whitney to help fund the transportation and installation of the exhibit, only to have Whitney insist on the role of Commissioner for himself. Were he the sole Commissioner, he would finance the entire endeavor and additionally he would bring his vast collection of Colorado ores to Paris. In Whitney's account, he describes how he had

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<sup>306</sup> For more on the efforts made to advertise Colorado in Europe, such as the establishment of the British and Colorado Mining Bureau and the Dutch purchase of Boulder Creek mine Caribou, see Mehls, "The New Empire of the Rockies: A History of Northeast Colorado," 83-84.; Spence, "The British and Colorado Mining Bureau," 81-92.

<sup>307</sup> "The 'Representation' of Our Mineral Wealth at the Paris Exposition," *American Journal of Mining* III, no. 13 (June 22, 1867): 250.



previously offered, while in Colorado, to take care of the exhibition since he did not expect the public to be able to raise the necessary funds. He required to be designated the sole commissioner, which he was denied initially, only to have the Governor appoint him after he had returned to Boston. The title and responsibility of commissioner were thus seized at the last hour by investor and promoter Whitney, who opted to sponsor the Colorado display with his private wealth in hopes of spurring European interest in the burgeoning economy, and for the businessman, also to advertise his own Colorado mining investments.<sup>308</sup>

The Colorado exhibit was quite a special case.<sup>309</sup> While the French organizers of the Exposition requested to have nationally organized commissions rather than an open system of private submissions, as in prior Universal Exhibitions, this still resulted in each region or nation assembling an organized selection of privately owned exhibits. The Colorado display was quite different, a singular case in 1867, wherein rather than following the formal application process, Whitney took full control from the appointed Colorado commissioners and assembled a highly curated collection of objects to represent the region. As Villerbu emphasizes, this type of initiative was rare and rooted at least partially in the hopes of growing the population, seizing the opportunity to show itself (as Kansas would in 1889) at a “crucial stage in its development.”<sup>310</sup> The Boston mining speculator’s motivation resulted in a sizable display of silver and gold ores framed by a collection of 36 photographs and 14 maps of the region, which became one of the Expo’s attractions (**fig. 6.2, fig. 6.2a**). The clever juxtaposition of the photographs, maps, and minerals was a successful idea, which A. Malespine, in *L’Exposition Illustrée*, described despite his overall disappointment with the American section; proclaiming the minerals exhibits were “truly the remarkable side of this [American] Exposition.”<sup>311</sup> He also applauded the “excellent idea of

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<sup>308</sup> Ken Morrow, “Joel Parker Whitney, The Richest Man in Placer County” (Rocklin, California: Rocklin Historical Society, January 2013), 10.

<sup>309</sup> For more concerning the organization and correspondence concerning the Colorado Exhibit see: Leyendecker, “Colorado and the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867.”; Whitney, *Reminiscences of a Sportsman.; Daily Miners’ Register*, 1866-1867; “The ‘Representation’ of Our Mineral Wealth at the Paris Exposition.”

<sup>310</sup> Villerbu, *La conquête de l’Ouest*, 121.

<sup>311</sup> A. Malespine, “L’Exposition Américaine,” in *L’Exposition Universelle de 1867 Illustrée*, ed. François Ducuing (Paris: Bureau d’abonnements, 1867), 194.

attaching to the ores very pretty photographs, representing the sites neighboring the mines.”<sup>312</sup> In a letter dated February 26<sup>th</sup> 1867, Whitney writes to Derby, with instructions for Beckwith to “put them [Colorado ores], especially those sent by me, up in the order according to the Schedule, those of each District together, County etc,” and finishes the letter by informing Derby that he will arrive by steamer on March 6<sup>th</sup> and go directly to Paris, and “if the putting up of the ores could be delayed until my arrival, I could personally attend to them.”<sup>313</sup> Upon arriving in Paris, a distracted Whitney, on his first international voyage, procrastinated in the redaction of a Colorado pamphlet:

How I struggled to complete my pamphlet of a hundred pages on far-off Colorado. I never consult that old work without smiling at the sentence which I read over a dozen times or more, and was unable to get beyond it. Describing Denver, pleasantly situated on Cherry Creek: “Rising evenly beyond are higher hills, girt with walls of rock shooting up perpendicularly for hundreds of feet, seeming like embattlements ready to belch forth the crashing weight of iron upon the vales below. Succeeding are ranges of mountains piling in upon each other until they culminate in white peaks at an altitude of from 14,000 to 16,000 feet above tide water. These are the beacon lights of welcome to the weary traveller on the plains, long before he refreshes himself at the sparkling streams of the foothills which they supply.”

Whitney’s nostalgia and emotion for the Colorado landscape and mountains as “beacons of light” is clear in his memoir. That affinity is expressed in his choice of objects to include in the exhibit, rather than a purely scientific display of mineral resources, he sought to create an experience for the spectators, in which they were surrounded by photographs of majestic landscapes, orientating maps, and the riches of the soil. This was not out of character, because even though Whitney was an adept businessman he was at heart an adventurous spirit and sportsman which led to his Colorado travel and eventual investment. Whitney, who by 1860 had established residence in Boston, had made five round-trip voyages to California by that year. In his memoir *Reminiscences of a Sportsman* he described great difficulty in balancing his passion for outdoor pursuits and his business interests; he forced himself in 1860, following a return from California “to give up entirely the perusal of books treating of sporting and adventurous affairs, which inflamed my imagination with longings, and for

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Joel Parker Whitney, “Letter to J.C Derby Esq. H H,” February 26, 1867, 1194 – Applications for Exhibit Privileges, Box #2, Folder III, National Archives and Records Administration.

several years I adhered strictly to this resolution.”<sup>314</sup> It is obvious that he saw adventure and outdoor sporting activities as a detrimental distraction from his business goals, however by 1865, he had grown to a point of reconciling this:

Disposing in the early part of 1865 of my commercial interests, and experiencing the exhilaration of a freedom I had long been denied, I resolved to take my way to the Rocky Mountains, having read so many accounts of adventurous life there from the interesting sketches of the early pioneers.<sup>315</sup>

Through Whitney’s writing it becomes clear that his intentions in Colorado, even when they ventured into the business realm, were rooted in a desire for outdoor adventure and freedom, intangible ideals that Whitney would pursue in new ways following his many years of abstinence from the writings of adventure, though allowing himself during that time his own fishing and outdoor excursions well-planned out in advance. The timing was crucial as his Colorado exploration coincided with the planning of the Exposition Universelle and would lead to his participation in Paris which offered international travel as a new experience for the business-minded adventurer. The Colorado display in Paris embodies the parallel interests of Whitney: the landscape and outdoor environment as an active element of imagination and identity paired with the economic appeal of the mining potential and ore collection. In this way it represented more than just a business motive for the appearance in Paris, Whitney sought to re-create and share the Colorado experience with a larger audience, imparting a sense of the freedom and determined Western identity that he also sought to experience. Whitney’s eventual mining investments (likely from the money he made by selling commercial interests in 1865) gave him excuse to return to Colorado. The manner in which he made subsequent trips in 1865 and 1866 bears evidence to the outdoor experience the investments offered him. In 1865 he made the trip by stagecoach, however in 1866 he traveled by saddle-horses, wagon, and mules in order to take advantage of buffalo and other hunting. His Colorado life was one of escape and adventure, and so it was no surprise that he jumped at the opportunity to both curate the Colorado display in Paris utilizing his ore collection (amassed during

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<sup>314</sup> Joel Parker Whitney, *Reminiscences of a Sportsman* (Forest and Stream Publishing Company, 1906), 34.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

the 1865-1866 trips), promoting his own mining investments, and creating a visual and material experience of the Colorado that was for him a marriage of his business and outdoor interests.

As a man interested in new experiences, Whitney was quickly distracted upon arrival in France: “It was my first trip abroad, and my sensations when I arrived in Paris in the evening hour were of an exciting character.”<sup>316</sup> Whitney described a packed social schedule following his arrival, but managed to complete his pamphlet on the ores of Colorado published in English, French and German, with 15,000 copies published in the hopes of spurring investment and immigration interest. The sixty-one-page document “Schedule of Ores contributed by sundry persons to the Paris Universal Exposition with some information about the region and its resources” (**fig. 6.1**) lists first the ores contributed by the Colorado residents with details including: the contributor, mine name and location, depth, weight, ore type, and coin value. Following these are the lists of Whitney’s contributions: Maps Illustrative of Colorado, Photographic Illustration of Colorado Mining Interests, and an inventory of ore samples from his private collection. What follows is thirty-six pages of detailed description of all aspects of Colorado nature, immigration, development, and mining industry. The text is highly detailed with numbers and data of nearly every segment of Colorado life. In tandem with the rich display of Colorado mineral wealth, photographs, and maps, the complete experience functioned as a highly informative and attractive advertisement for the territory. Whitney didn’t avoid the more difficult aspects of settler life, and described the history of conflict with Native peoples, as well as the technical process shortcomings from hard rock mining; however, he ended the document with an affirmation these were problems of the past.<sup>317</sup>

In his memoir, Whitney describes his arrival at the Exposition in which he found the American section in complete disarray, with many American exhibitors and commissioners present but at the mercy of the Commissioner General N.M. Beckwith, who had delayed the installation of the exhibits out of pure indecision. Whitney claims Beckwith completely lacked executive ability,

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>317</sup> Whitney, *Colorado, in the United States of America : Schedule of Ores Contributed by Sundry Persons to the Paris Universal Exposition of 1867 : With Some Information about the Region and Its Resources*, 61.

and after he threatened to send a cable to the President of the United States to ask for Beckwith's replacement, the latter finally acquiesced to allow the exhibitors to take their places. Whitney, albeit responsible for this development, nonetheless took advantage by claiming an optimal place "decidedly the best spot in the mineral department for exhibiting its ores, and this included plenty of wall space on which to mount the maps and photographs Whitney had taken with him."<sup>318</sup> The large display (**fig. 6.2, fig. 6.2a, fig. 6.4**) included about four hundred feet of shelving, with the largest mineral pieces being placed on the floor. With some three thousand samples of gold and silver, and large pieces weighing up to twelve hundred pounds, the Colorado display was the only region which "attempted to classify them and explain their history or the nature of the area from which they had been taken."<sup>319</sup> The *Daily Miner's Register* described the Colorado display's particular aesthetic: "Whitney had the cases covered with blue velvet cloth and glass casing, an idea which appealed to Commissioner General Beckwith, who gave orders to have all shelves in the mineral department so decorated [...]."<sup>320</sup> In his memoir, Joel Whitney boasted that, once arrived in Paris, he had taken control of the American displays and managed to place his hundreds of rocks—ores of silver and gold—in or near the "centre reserved for pianos, paintings and works of art," as Beckwith allegedly complained, rather than in the annex where it otherwise should have been situated alongside machinery and industrial products.<sup>321</sup> Available installation photographs show that, in fact, the Colorado display occupied—though not "the very centre of the American department," as Whitney claimed—a substantial and probably strategic corner area of the mineral section (**fig. 6.3**). It seems that Whitney, with his lavish display and accompanying photographs, was attempting to align the material appeal of the West, visually and categorically, with the more artistic displays that occupied the center of the French Exposition.

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<sup>318</sup> Leyendecker, "Colorado and the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867," 9.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>321</sup> Whitney, *Reminiscences of a Sportsman*, 177.

### 6.3 Early Colorado photography

The connection between Colorado, France and photography reaches back further than this early link in the territory's history. Fourteen years after news of the process had made its way to the United States, photography (or daguerreotypy) reached the Colorado area as early as 1853.<sup>322</sup> Explorer Colonel John Charles Frémont was living in Paris when he learned of the U.S. government's plans to survey three western lines for the future railroad. The line that would become his itinerary on his fifth expedition into the American West, was originally under the command of a Captain Gunnison, who was killed by Native People early into his work. According to his wife's writing, Frémont was influenced by Alexander von Humboldt's *Cosmos*, a book he acquired while on the journey through London to his Liverpool steamer, which inspired in him a hope that photography would be applied in travel to secure "the truth in Nature," even though Humboldt's text has no mention of photography.<sup>323</sup> Soon after, in New York, Frémont, who had already completed four Western expeditions (three were government-sponsored, the fourth and this fifth were self-financed) acquired daguerreotype equipment and employed Solomon Nunes Carvalho as photographer on the expedition. Though it wasn't publicly known, Fremont had unsuccessfully attempted daguerreotype coverage of previous expeditions.<sup>324</sup> The first photographs in Colorado were later made during the voyage as the team passed through the southern part of modern-day Colorado (then part of Texas or Mexican territory) on their survey between the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth degrees of latitude, looking for a possible route for a railroad. One surviving daguerreotype (**fig. 6.5**) taken by Carvalho of a Cheyenne village at Big Timbers is in my findings the earliest existing photograph from present-day Colorado. This refutes among others, the assertion by Mangan in *Colorado on Glass*, which claims that an 1859 ambrotype portrait of William Maine,

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<sup>322</sup> This is to distinguish that in fact it was daguerreotypy which reached Colorado in 1853, and to clarify it as a medium within the broader genre of photography.

<sup>323</sup> John Charles Frémont, *Memoirs of My Life by John Charles Fremont. Including in the Narrative Five Journeys of Western Exploration, during the Years 1842, 1843-4, 1845-6-7, 1848-9, 1853-4. Together with a Sketch of the Life of Senator Benton, in Connection with Western Expansion. By Jessie Benton Fremont. A Retrospect of Fifty Years Covering the Most Eventful Periods of Modern American History. With Maps and Colored Plates. Vol. 1., 655 p.* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke & company, 1887), xv.

<sup>324</sup> Martha A. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*, Yale Western Americana Series (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2002), 88.

taken by James Sabine is Colorado's oldest existing photograph. For five to six years after this 1853 expedition, no photographers are known to have come to the region.<sup>325</sup> It wasn't until the Colorado Gold Rush beginning in 1858 that a group of photographers including but not limited to Rufus E. Cable, James Sabine, George D. Wakely, and painter John Y. Glendinen were active in the area in the first years of the gold and silver mines.

In *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (**fig. 6.6**), we see the 1862 Emanuel Leutze painting, which as Martha Sandweiss points out, features a figure “distinctly reminiscent of John C. Frémont.”<sup>326</sup> The mural and studies by Leutze can be considered part of a thematic collection in the visual arts of the period, which provoked a hopeful feeling during the Civil War, ignoring not only the painful war in progress but also any other American past besides the “recent march westward that had brought the emigrants to their mountaintop lookout.”<sup>327</sup> This westward hope can be found in the early Colorado images and argonaut writings. Man's control over nature is another element of that hope which Leutze portrays with the pioneers' power to climb the mountain, along with religious motifs to communicate the divine aspect of westward expansion as though sanctified by God. Portraying westward expansion as a religious mission allowed the audience to overlook the more realistic reasons for migrating west: the search for gold, land, power, and prosperity. Sandweiss even connects the themes expressed by both the painting and photographic mediums of the era: “His picture (Leutze's)--as so many western photographs of the 1860s and '70s would likewise be—was resolutely about the future; his America moved inexorably forward toward her western destiny.”<sup>328</sup> A positive look towards the future was an omnipresent element of the various works created by early Coloradoans. Their lives were built on a quest (masked by religion or not) for a new *Eldorado*, and the myth-building that had begun even prior to their arrival, would be continued by their stories and images. The exhilarating success of the California Gold Rush in 1848

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<sup>325</sup> Terry William Mangan, *Colorado on Glass: Colorado's First Half Century as Seen by the Camera* (Denver: Sundance, 1975), 11.

<sup>326</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 157.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*

was but a recent memory, and one that would influence the pursuit of riches in the Rocky Mountains for better or worse:

The presence of gold had long been imagined or known of in the Rocky Mountain country. Its incidence and availability had been the subject matter of rumors, exaggerations, factual accounts, and the wishful thinking of the Indians, Mexicans, and Spanish for centuries. This had motivated prodding and searching and intrigue of all kinds. But the geography was confusing and the stuff was elusive.<sup>329</sup>

The writings of the period were filled with elusive references to the actual reality of wealth available in the Rocky Mountain soil. Alice Polk Hill collected many of these “tales” and published in 1884 her *Tales of the Colorado Pioneers*, which pointed out the capitalist myth regarding who actually gained the riches in the West: “The fortunes are in the eternal illusion of gold, not in that barbarous metal itself. The capital gains come rich from the least investment of hope.”<sup>330</sup> The literary allusions being vague, and the actual production numbers being described as “at best, estimates” these symbols of a Western promise, a golden Eldorado, were prevalent in the photographs and paintings created during the period.<sup>331</sup> Albert Bierstadt, in fact, also exhibited his painting *The Rocky Mountains, Lander’s Peak*, (**fig. 6.7**) in the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. The painting set in modern-day Wyoming exhibits many of these qualities, evoking the idea of Manifest Destiny and portraying a sublime Western wilderness in Eden-like idealism. Contrary to Leutze, Bierstadt included the majestic Rocky Mountain peaks as both a wonder of divine creation but also an obstacle to Western explorers, an element not included in the photographic collection representing Colorado.<sup>332</sup> Bierstadt added the drama of the domineering peaks and illuminated clouds, in an ideal landscape languishing the “vanishing Indian.” The photographers, working in the same period, such as Wakely, were not trading in the ideal or sublime, but they were looking west and into the future and instead of capturing the mountains that impeded their path westward, Wakely, for example, featured the *Gate to the Garden of the Gods* (**fig. 6.9**) as an immense open

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<sup>329</sup> John D. Young and Dwight L. Smith, *John D. Young and the Colorado Gold Rush*, Book, Whole (Chicago: R. R. Donnelly, 1969), xv.

<sup>330</sup> Alice Polk Hill, *Tales of the Colorado Pioneers*, Book, Whole (Glorieta, N.M: Rio Grande Press, 1976), 6.

<sup>331</sup> Young and Smith, *John D. Young and the Colorado Gold Rush*, xviii.

<sup>332</sup> Michelle Facos, *An Introduction to Nineteenth Century Art* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 138.



door to western exploration. This perspective would be seen in other Western images in the decades to come, such as the paintings of Thomas Moran and the photographs of Timothy O' Sullivan and William Henry Jackson portraying the Green River in comparable style, and the illustrations (**fig. 7.1, fig. 7.2, fig. 7.3**) in John C. Frémont's 1887 memoir.

There was more than simply a desperate businessman's search for investment at the heart of the Colorado exhibit in Paris. As Villerbu makes clear, there were multiple versions of the West put on display: "The French are therefore offered a multitude of initiatives intended to present the West, coming from various horizons. Each exhibitor wishes to demonstrate the presence of the West, its grandeur, to the French public."<sup>333</sup> While Bierstadt was showing a majestic scene overflowing with nostalgia and religious promise, the opulent Colorado display of ores and landscapes presented that grandeur in a descriptive and material way, the promise was of riches, looking toward the future. The images brought to Paris by Whitney were the earliest photographs from the Colorado settlement to circulate as far and to as large of an audience as was reached at the Exposition in 1867. Since the territory had only been settled in 1858, these photographs would be the first of the Colorado area to be exhibited at a World's Fair. In line with W.J.T. Mitchell's thesis that "landscape is not a genre of art but a medium," the concurrent production of both landscape painting and photography allows for useful comparison as well as context within the medium of landscape.<sup>334</sup> While the idealistic aesthetic of painting contrasts starkly to the realistic aspect of photographs of the period, both are mediated by culture to very different ends and both are impregnated with these personal and cultural ideas. It is for this reason that Mitchell's theses on landscape can be referenced in a discussion of 1860s western photography in addition to painting.

Landscape was a cultural practice at play within the Exposition in Paris, and the landscape photograph was among the most important visual tools of the Far West. The photographs informed and influenced different audiences in different ways. They were seen by local Colorado settlers in Colorado, potential European immigrants and the Emperor in France. To each of these audiences,

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<sup>333</sup> Villerbu, *La conquête de l'Ouest*, 121.

<sup>334</sup> W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

the photographs had different meanings. For that reason, these early Colorado photographs represented a particular place in the context of the Exposition. Presented neither as a commercial product nor as a work of fine art, the images existed in an ambiguous informational space that offers much to discover concerning the cultural action of the photographs. Though they were exhibited under the guise of boosterism, the images were received as art if not by the public, then at least by the editors and illustrators which adapted them to lithographs for publication.<sup>335</sup> As seen in many of the accompanying illustrations (fig. 6.15, fig. 7.36, fig. 7.47, fig. 7.48, fig. 7.49, fig. 7.53) the photographs of Wakely were published in great number as lithographs in the illustrated journal *Le Tour du Monde* and *Harper's Monthly Magazine*. This reproduction and circulation would contribute to a visual understanding of Colorado for years to come.

#### 6.4 Joel Parker Whitney and George Wakely

This period of photography in the Colorado territory presents a case of specific interest in that the Exposition took place very early into the settlement of the area, resulting in a relatively small corpus of images. The majority of the photographs in the Colorado display were the work of an otherwise little-known photographer, George D. Wakely, who was the first “permanent” photographer to set up business in Denver, where William Gunnison Chamberlain would become his primary competitor. While many itinerant photographers would pass through the area in the early 1860s, Wakely was the first to establish a photography business in Denver on Larimer Street in 1859, during the early days of the mining rush to Colorado. Wakely came to Denver with his family as part of a theatre troupe, which his wife and children continued while he began his photography business in its first location just across from the Apollo Hall theatre, run by his family.<sup>336</sup> While the majority of the images in the Colorado display are confirmed to be made by

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<sup>335</sup> The photographs of Wakely were published in great number as lithographs in the illustrated journal *Le Tour du Monde* and *Harper's Monthly Magazine*.

<sup>336</sup> Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 575.

Wakely, only a certain number are definite matches to his 1864 copyrighted group of images, and his other surviving photographs. The original Wakely copyright registration journal is still available in the Library of Congress Rare Books collection, which consists of the twenty-six images mounted to pages deposited for copyright in Denver in 1864 with handwritten titles and copyright information below each image, visible in the microfilm copy (**fig. 6.8**).<sup>337</sup> The thirty-six images collected by Whitney for the exhibition likely include images by other early Colorado photographers including Chamberlain, Henry Faul, Rufus E. Cable, and others. The only traceable images from the group taken to Paris are those by Wakely, copies of many of which can be found in Denver archives and other institutions, a quite impressive surviving collection held by institutions considering his modest reputation.<sup>338</sup> Whitney's Colorado pamphlet (**fig. 6.1**), distributed in Paris, lists the titles of the photographs included in the Colorado display. In Pierre Petit's photographs (**fig. 6.2, fig. 6.2a**) of the Colorado exhibit we make out these images, framed in black walnut, lining a lower shelf (**fig. 6.4**).<sup>339</sup> The collection includes images of mining sites and settlements as well as the scenic mountain and sandstone landscapes surrounding the areas of extraction including the Garden of the Gods, Twin Lakes, and Monument Creek sites. Landscape views such as Wakely's *Twin Lakes* and *Garden of the Gods* (**fig. 7.50, fig. 6.14**) were already being praised in 1865, in the *American Journal of Photography*, as "the most pleasing photographs we have ever seen" and "among the most charming natural scenes in the world."<sup>340</sup> This early photography much like any industry in Colorado at the time was dependent on the mining industry. In this case it was quite direct, as a majority of the images featured mining areas specifically, with accompanying

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<sup>337</sup> An un-catalogued collection of William G. Chamberlain carte-de-visite prints immediately follows the Wakely collection copyright in the same DPL document.

<sup>338</sup> In addition to those images held by History Colorado (formerly State Historical Society of Colorado) and the Denver Public Library, Palmquist notes in *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West* that additional Wakely images are found in the Library of Congress, George Eastman House, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library- University of Georgia, as well as small collections at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Montana Historical Society, University Art Museum – University of New Mexico, Museum of New Mexico, George Eastman House, New York Public Library, Visual Studies Workshop, and Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin. There are also two images held by the Smithsonian, one image of the Smithsonian Castle was part of an 1866 copyright. Wakely's Washington D.C. stereographs make up the majority of the collections outside of Colorado, with a minority of Colorado images in these collections. The Harry Ransom Center as since refuted these holdings.

<sup>339</sup> *Daily Miners' Register*, May 16, 1867, 1.

<sup>340</sup> Seely, "American Journal of Photography," 336, and Palmquist and Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West*, 575.

landscapes from the regions nearby. Since 1862, Wakely had also been making carte-de-visite portraits of mining pioneers, a few of which may be found in collections, though none of which were taken to Paris.<sup>341</sup> His work had already found praise among photographers, as exemplified by this excerpt from the *American Journal of Photography*:

Mr. G. D. Wakely, formerly of this city, has recently returned from the gold regions of Colorado, and has brought a fine collection of views. Many of the views are illustrative of gold mining and of special interest to the share-holders in mining companies; but some of them simply as landscapes are the most pleasing photographs we have ever seen. The views of the “Twin Lakes” and the “Garden of the Gods”, are among the most charming natural scenes in the world.<sup>342</sup>

The majority of photographs in the collection taken to Paris all played complementary roles. The photographs provided quite specific information, nearly exclusively pertaining to the mineral wealth and production, and the natural wonders. Almost all of the photographs contain information concerning Colorado; the natural resources, industrial development and potential. The exceptions to this rule are the photograph of Ute Chiefs and of the Denver flood (**fig. 6.10**). Iconography of Native peoples was the stereotypical trope of the American West up until this point, however Native Americans were only seen minimally at the Exposition including a portrait depiction within the Colorado exhibit. The inclusion of the Ute Chiefs’ photograph seemed a strategic choice on the part of Whitney. Indigenous Peoples and Utes in particular, remained a strong presence in the Colorado region at the time, however as explained above, the hostile relationship with the surrounding tribes had been violent in the years leading up to the Exposition. The choice to include a peaceful portrait of the chiefs, was likely a strategy to show the French audience the familiar image that they connected with the Far West, and to portray the Indigenous Peoples in a peaceful way. Even when Whitney took Frenchman Louis Simonin and other Europeans on a tour of Colorado following the Exposition, the threat of being attacked en route by Indigenous Peoples was a concern in Simonin’s writings.<sup>343</sup> As for the Denver image, the choice of such a dramatic image of the burgeoning town,

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<sup>341</sup> Opal M. Harber, “A Few Early Photographers of Colorado,” *State Historical Society of Colorado*, October 1956, 285.

<sup>342</sup> Seely, “Editorial Department,” 336.

<sup>343</sup> Louis Simonin, *Le Grand-Ouest Des États-Unis* (Paris: Charpentier, 1869).

might have been less strategic. Rather than show Denver as a growing urban center, it was depicted during a time of natural catastrophe, that of the flood of 1864 (**fig. 6.10**). It was one of several photographs of Denver included in Wakely's 1864 copyright, however it seems that Whitney selected from other photographers' collections as well, and he had his choice of many more typical images of the growing town. Disregarding his intentions, what we can read from this single appearance of Denver within the thirty-six photographs taken to Paris, was the vulnerable position of settlers within the unyielding environment of the West. The inclusion of these images expresses a kind of connection to place, bringing in non-commercial elements to create a sense of belonging to the settler experience and environment.

Before entering a study of the photographs included in the exhibit, it is important to reiterate the multiple levels of influence at play. The photographs that could be located and that still exist are those taken by George Wakely, but the curatorial power of J.P. Whitney, Colorado commissioner, cannot be underestimated. The capitalist had several intentions in mind as he produced, financed, and created the Colorado exhibit, and while that cannot be ignored, this section presents an argument for the cultural implications of these photographs and the particular role that they played. Though they could and have been cast aside as mere supporting documents, these photographs embodied power and meaning in a subtle way for three different audiences: the local Colorado audience, the Eastern U.S. audience, and the European/French audience. Beyond the settler communities, they were seen by potential immigrants, acting as more than mere advertisements for mining interests, they contributed to a growing understanding of the West. Just as Rachel Sailor argues that "local photographers actively influenced local notions of the frontier," one could argue that these photographs contributed to both local and international understandings of the frontier.<sup>344</sup> They served to provide the local community with a sense of identity attached to their environment, they promoted the region to Eastern American viewers who gained a foundational visual

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<sup>344</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, xix.

understanding of Colorado life in viewing the images, and they educated potential European immigrants and investors as to the advancement of Colorado civilization.

## 6.5 The Western landscape in context

Within a discussion of the landscape as it pertains to Western settlers and photographers, one oscillates between references to the idea of the landscape and the image of the landscape. The implementation of landscape and its power were, for the Colorado Territory and the Far West, being introduced on an international level, evoking many of the complexities suggested by W.J.T.

Mitchell:

Landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and the commodity inside the package.<sup>345</sup>

The landscape as subject and the landscape as object are two important and very separate ideas within this discussion. The landscape as real place is the one referred to by Emerson:

The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of all these men's farms, yet to this their land-deeds give them no title.<sup>346</sup>

In this case the natural landscape is experienced, spoken of, and seen by multitudes over the centuries. A drastic transition occurred during the period of Colorado's settlement concerning the perception and interaction humans had with the local landscape, and this change greatly impacted the way in which the landscape was altered, captured, and portrayed. For the Native peoples, the Garden of the Gods was neutral and sacred ground, and while it was frequented by the Ute, Cheyenne, Arapaho and Apache, the Utes believed that it was the birthplace of man. The Utes inhabited the area and depended upon the springs nearby for thousands of years. Ute descendant and tribal historian Clifford Duncan described the philosophical transition that occurred as the Colorado land was invaded by Euro-American settlers: "I don't own the land, the land owns me. That is the

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<sup>345</sup> Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 5.

<sup>346</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, (James Munroe and Company, 1836), 7.

way of looking at life prior to the Europeans. How could you own something that owns you? It's kind of like saying, "This is my God," rather than God saying, "This is my child."<sup>347</sup> Ute life was centered around sacred places, they were deeply and spiritually attached to the land as "[f]or them, all life and living was organized around the mountains."<sup>348</sup> The study of Ute petroglyphs gives insight into how deeply the land was revered. "The tree represented all vegetation, and all things that grow."<sup>349</sup> Rocks and trees held healing powers and were the source of many rituals. Because the Utes considered sites like Garden of the Gods as sacred, it is clear that they embodied an essential appreciation for the landscape. As mountain people that considered mountains to be sacred, their spiritual center was the mountain (or high place) from which they oriented their lives "in a centrifugal pattern that spirals out from the sacred center."<sup>350</sup> The Moache Utes never travelled out of sight of Pikes Peak, and each ethnographic band was oriented to specific mountains.<sup>351</sup> The petroglyphs are the primary art related to human appreciation of the land and landscape prior to the sketches and photographs made by settlers in the 1850s and 1860s. Though the contrast between the Ute admiration of the land and the settler's desire to exploit it could not be more dramatic, they did share some similar attraction to particular features.

The geographical sites chosen by the different cultures bears much similarity. Though the impetus for the Euro-American settler was the area's mining interests, their fascination for impressive rock formations and their need for creeks and springs, allowed for a common taste in geographical sites. Even more stunning is that the creation of petroglyphs, drawings, and photographs in and about these areas overlapped.<sup>352</sup> The Utes continued to create petroglyphs into the 1900s, including some in Western Colorado which portray the Utes being removed from their

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<sup>347</sup> Carol Patterson, "Petroglyphs of Western Colorado and the Northern Ute Indian Reservation as Interpreted by Clifford Duncan," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 105, no. 5 (2015): 2.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>352</sup> See Greatorex, *Summer Etchings in Colorado*; and Mathews, *Pencil Sketches of Colorado: Its Cities, Principal Towns and Mountain Scenery*. Copies of Mathews' book were sent East in 1867 by Frank Hall, an early booster of Colorado who pushed for Colorado to be represented in the Paris Exposition of 1867 and claimed Mathews' book was "designed to convey an illustrated view of the Country." (Abbott, *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State, Fifth Edition*, 85.)

land and moved to a reservation in Utah in 1881. Alfred E. Mathews published a book of lithographs in 1866 which were sent back east in great number by Colorado booster Frank Hall. Mathews' book portrays many of the same locations as Wakely, such as Garden of the Gods (**fig. 6.11**), as does a later edition of etchings by Eliza Greatorex (**fig. 6.12**). Greatorex describes interactions with the Utes, even sketching two chiefs with whom she interacted. Greatorex, an Irish artist, cannot provide much useful opinion on the settler sentiment as she was a traveler only there for the season, yet her ideas seem similar and were likely influenced by the settlers with whom she visited. She acknowledged the Ute spiritual connection with the springs via a story from a military commander and explorer, Colonel Enoch Steen:

These medicine waters are looked on with awe as being the abode of a spirit who breathes through the transparent waters, causing the commotion on their surface. The Arapahoes, especially, attribute to this water-spirit the power of giving to their undertakings success or failure. Passing by the springs, on the war-trail of their hereditary enemies, the Yutas, through the 'Valley of Salt,' they never fail to offer presents to the 'Manitou.'<sup>353</sup>

The impressions of Greatorex provide some insight to the interpersonal and cultural divide that occurred while settlers and Indigenous Peoples shared the region. Greatorex only expressed appreciation in the happenstance that allowed her to view the chiefs at Manitou Springs, which "completed her picture."<sup>354</sup> Her passages expressed a shared fear of the "Indians," a desire to capture their likeness for her sketches in which they provided a purely exotic role, but mostly belittled the Ute culture and preferred to glorify the settler development taking place.

Settler artists such as A.E. Mathews and George Wakely, were creating images of the natural world that surrounded them, but they expressed just as much pride about the growing civilization as they did in the natural beauty. Their interaction with the natural landscape was not un-related to the relationship which the Native peoples experienced before them. In all likelihood, it was the Native People who indicated some of the sites to early explorers. At the very least they revered the same features of the land, treasuring the natural beauty and attempting to identify with it in some way, however there was a vast contrast in how each culture saw and portrayed its relationship to and

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<sup>353</sup> Eliza Greatorex, *Summer Etchings in Colorado* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1873), 30.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.



within the landscape. The Ute culture clearly saw the mountain as sacred, and lived in worship and peace with the land. The settler culture almost immediately took on a conquering attitude toward the land, and while they certainly appreciated its beauty, in comparison to the Ute worldview before them, the settlers' admirations and images exemplified the capitalist motives that brought them. This phase, early in the region's settlement, represents the beginnings of a regional aesthetic established during this early period of settlement which portrays the geographical but roots from the economic. The photographs express a fascination for the natural landscape, but in reflecting on the Native people's reverence for the landscape that preceded it, it is clear that this fascination on the part of the settlers is inseparable from the economic potential of both the land and the portrayal of the land. Economic interests were at the root of the natural landscape's importance to the settlers. The imperial appropriation of the landscape visually points to a deeper cultural rift, as Sailor suggests "western photographers often portrayed settlers in their new landscapes in a way that confirmed their visual expectations and conformed to their desires for their new home at the same time that it denied the already present cultural landscape of Native peoples."<sup>355</sup> Culture and economy intertwined during this phase, resulting in the early signs of an aesthetic which would become much more visible in the years to follow. Before the U.S. Geological Survey photographs by Timothy O'Sullivan and William Henry Jackson, local settlers such as Wakely were surveying their own regions, capturing the wonder of the West and creating an aesthetic identity rooted in the land which promised their prosperity.

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<sup>355</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, xxiv.

## 6.6 Early photographs and the commodification of the Colorado landscape

The industry in which these photographs of the early Colorado settlement existed was a rapidly growing market. Following the display of stereoscopes at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1851, and the emergence of printing photographs on paper soon after, stereographs rose to mass popularity by the late 1850s. While the images in the Colorado exhibit were small prints, most of the images which were exhibited were also published as stereograph series. Whitney chose to exhibit all three Wakely photographs of the Garden of the Gods in Paris. As mentioned, *L'Exposition Illustrée* critic A. Malespine was pleased by the idea to place photographs of the beautiful landscapes that neighbor the mines, near the display of minerals.<sup>356</sup> These photographs were an attractive way to appeal to viewers of the mineral display using the familiar landscape aesthetic. The curatorial aspect of the photographs within the Colorado exhibit contributed to a broader experience in which the viewer admired pretty pictures as if gathering rocks in the Garden of the Gods. The Garden of the Gods images (**fig. 6.9, fig. 6.13, fig. 6.14**) provide three different points of view of the impressive rock structures. Though it had been written about by early explorers, this was the first time that photographs of the monument were exhibited in Europe. In this way, International Expositions were an important site for the exchange of visual information and the creation of iconography, as they provided the earliest opportunity for the international exhibition of photographs.

The Garden of the Gods photographs were, as inscribed on the bottom of each print, “Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1864, by G. D. Wakely, Photographer, in the Clerk’s Office of the District Court, Denver City, C. T.” The registration of a copyright does connote an interest or intention to commercially distribute these images, meaning that they were commercial products, circulated as stereographs or small prints. Though they are rare, there are some surviving Wakely stereographs of these Garden of the Gods images, with the copyright information printed on the front, and with the series titled “Views of the Rocky Mountains.” They were published at least

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<sup>356</sup> Malespine, “L’Exposition Américaine,” 194.

twice, as the font and layout vary on two surviving cards. The copyright and publication of the stereographs proves the intention on the part of Wakely to circulate the images as a commercial product. The commodification of the landscape was integral to his business. It comes as no surprise that Wakely was business-minded, throughout his career he set himself up as a photographer with a stable business and studio. The National Stereoscopic Association reports that he “issued several scarce series” including “Views of the Rocky Mountains,” “Scenic study of Garden Gods,” both printed in 1867, another from Colorado in 1864, as well as series’ from Washington, D.C. in 1866, Nebraska in 1864, and Leadville in 1879.<sup>357</sup> The trend proves that he was a “commercial” photographer interested in the sale of reproductions rather than simply private commissions. However, he was also an immigrant, born in England, and lived in Chicago (and maybe New York City) prior to migrating out West; first to Kansas then Colorado. As a settler photographer Wakely was photographing all aspects of settler life. He was taking carte-de-visite portraits of miners, photographing the rapid development Denver, mines and mining towns, as well as the natural features of the area in which he lived. Just like all photographers in the West, portraits were for the local clients, a limited audience and market, in this case primarily direct commissions for miners to send back east. The group of images which he copyrighted and published, and which were taken to Paris were of a different genre. These were captured perhaps as a gamble, in hopes that the landscape and mining sites would become popular and sell to the greater public, and stereographs were one means by which that commercial success was often made.

Stereoscopic popularity had taken off in America by 1858, according to Sailor “the viewer was able to have a visceral experience of distant landscapes; the odd almost holographic images enabled an intimacy with the site.”<sup>358</sup> Stereographs were an emerging sign of modernity, of a mass visual culture dependent on the exchange of cards primarily among the middle class. According to Snyder, “[t]he creation of a large and definable market for landscape photographs began in the mid-to-late 1850s by means of the incorporation of localized photographic businesses, in the form of

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<sup>357</sup> “Photographers of the United States of America” (National Stereoscopic Association, 1994), 717.

<sup>358</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, 68.

combined photographic and publishing houses, that were dedicated to the production and sale of travel, architectural, and landscape prints and stereographic views to incoming tourists.”<sup>359</sup> The full extent of how far and wide these Wakely stereographs circulated cannot be known, but what we do know is that due to the Colorado exhibit in Paris, the small print images reached at least as far as Paris, the Exposition’s fifteen million visitors, and were reproduced in publications. The impact of the photographs varies greatly between the local Colorado community, other Western communities, and the East Coast/International audience. Wakely did perhaps intend or hope for these photographs to circulate as tourist style photographs for the entertainment of far-away audiences, a popular industry at the time, however this was merely a business motive that drove much of photographic production during the period. The commercial motive, according to Joel Snyder, drove much of photographic production beginning in the late 1850s as the photographic industry took a turn. He explains that the first generation of landscape photographers, those practicing in the 1840s-1850s, were of the “privileged classes” and their work exhibited a familiar naturalism inherited from the tropes of fine art landscape depiction. Their style was “almost completely dependent upon the pictorial conventions of the genre” and produced personal work “intended for a rather small audience of dedicated amateurs and educated professionals.”<sup>360</sup> This adherence to naturalism, implicating the sensibility of the artist, ultimately undermined that first generation of photographers, according to Snyder, whose work was contingent on imparting the artist’s “experience of nature” in a way that expressed their sensibility, an aesthetic aspect that early photographers were unable to attain.<sup>361</sup> Wakely however belonged to the second generation of landscape photographers, who were “aware of what landscapes in other media looked like [...] but without an ingrained commitment to these forms.”<sup>362</sup> They adopted a commercial rather than an artistic practice as they were “freed from the obligation to make works of art” and empowered by a photographic industry that could reproduce and republish their works, creating an entirely novel visual culture for a growing

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<sup>359</sup> Joel Snyder, “Territorial Photography,” in *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 179.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, 177–79.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

audience, and an emerging middle-class audience.<sup>363</sup> What Snyder calls an artistic obligation was likely also an elite exclusivity or class and education required to afford the photographic hobby and aesthetic knowledge for the initial era of its practice. This freedom, of the second generation of photographers, to make photographs that were less contingent on the aesthetics of fine art and still commercially viable was precisely what allowed the photographers of the Far West, such as Wakely, to innovate in how they photographically portrayed their life on the frontier. The established histories of photography would likely constrain these Wakely images to that category of commercial commodity, but they serve as much more than tourist-style entertainment for social stereoscope viewing. Landscape photography, albeit a marketable prospect at the time, was nonetheless mediated by culture and serves a multi-faceted rhetorical role. Wakely's photographs operated on three different levels: influencing the local Colorado community's understanding of their environment by contributing to the construction of a meaningful identity, meeting the demand of the greater American audience who sought to understand Western expansion, and lastly, satiating the appetite for curious European spectators and potential immigrants thereby informing haphazardly a large population on the international level.

Photography was an essential tool for Western frontier communities and the development of their cultural identity. Sandweiss argues that photography is inseparable from the construction of the image of the American West during its creation. The production of photographs in the 1860s already existed within a dichotomy of demands and audiences. Whether for the local or national, scientific or recreational, "no part of the American historical imagination is so shaped by visual imagery as its image of the nineteenth-century West."<sup>364</sup> Sailor insists that it is essential to look beyond the handful of known photographers that have come to define this era of western photographic history.<sup>365</sup> At the juncture of those two claims, the photographs by Wakely were part of the local production of frontier photographers helping to build an image for their community. An immigrant

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<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 13.

<sup>365</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, i.

himself, Wakely and his colleagues' images tell us more about the frontier community than the more famous photographs made soon after as part of the Geological Surveys by more notable names like William Henry Jackson and which became historically representative of the federal Western expansion of the period. If anything, the images by Wakely informed the choice of geographical sites for passers-by like Jackson. Jackson photographed Garden of the Gods, Monument Creek and Twin Lakes, sites previously photographed, copyrighted and circulated by Wakely. The influence and photographs of local photographers' like Wakely, influenced the image of the area on a local and national level to the extent that later visits by photographers' such as Jackson were mere repetitions. Even if Jackson produced a larger number of existing images, which are more artful, they don't represent the settler community in the way photographers such as Wakely did. As a Western settler, Wakely was a part of the community and created images that allowed the new inhabitants to adjust to a new environment, since according to Sailor: "They could see themselves and their neighbors in the landscape, which allowed them to conceptually shape the new spaces according to their own cultural imaginings and to make sense of the new cultural and physical landscapes in which they found themselves."<sup>366</sup> The photographs of surroundings like Garden of the Gods were essential since the settlers could appropriate aspects of the landscape to fit within the spectrum of their Western European aesthetic models. Wakely had a studio in central Denver since 1859, so it is likely that for many years both residents and tourists alike saw and purchased his paper prints. The style in which photographers like Wakely captured the surroundings was able to fit into the pre-existing visual heritage of the settlers themselves. As Sailor points out, settlers and photographers of the west adapted their new landscape to their already established ideals: "What Euro-Americans needed from the landscape, wished for the landscape, and projected onto the landscape was very much rooted in their cultural background, and landscape photographs, especially, expose a point of view mediated via a thoroughly modern and mechanical means."<sup>367</sup> The Garden of the Gods photographs adhere to a kind of "dramatic and awe-inspiring sublime view

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid., xxiv.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

that touts western lands as superior to eastern, more European scenes” more than say, a picturesque model, which had informed many of the eastern landscape images of the period.<sup>368</sup> The natural landscape features of the West, such as the Garden of the Gods, and on the other end of the spectrum, the prairies, didn’t fit into the quaint and charming landscape aesthetic of the picturesque or the pastoral. Even the painting by Bierstadt (**fig. 6.7**) exhibited at the Exposition, adapted the Rocky Mountains into a scene of the appealing picturesque quality. Photographers on the other hand, possessed much less malleable tools than brush and paint, instead relying on more mechanical means which they used to create images informed by the established models of past landscape artists, innovating a new style in the process. The photographs of Garden of the Gods, and other images of the Far West, such as Carleton Watkins’ photographs from California, explored the grandeur of awe-inspiring features which aligned with some qualities of the sublime. They didn’t implement the fear of more classic sublime paintings, but instead invoke the mysterious vastness of the Western frontier and unexplored wilderness. That is where photographers of the Far West departed from their contemporaries, both compatriot painters and European photographers. In adapting European landscape models to the environmental features of the West they began a kind of novel aesthetic, perhaps Western sublime, which in the case of the Garden of the Gods photographs, invoked the daunting size of the rock features leading toward the unknown expanse of Western space. The elements of the West which were exhibited in Paris, included materials from these landscapes, set against the backdrop of these images, creating an original representation of the West built on this novel photographic style, which adapted the sublime to the unique qualities of the Western environment.

The accumulation of this and other aspects of the landscape were combined within the Wakely gallery in Denver, i.e. the “hub of visual culture in western locales” and circulated as prints and stereographs. The display within the gallery provided the community with “literal and symbolic sites for cultural expression” as well as it “aided them in the creation of a meaningful place for

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<sup>368</sup> Ibid., xxv.

themselves.”<sup>369</sup> The photographs of Wakely contributed invaluable to the visual culture of the region by helping transform the unfamiliar territory into a “meaningful place” for the community.<sup>370</sup> In this case even though the landscape photograph was strategically created as a commodity, its cultural significance and impact was just as consequential on the local level. In this way, within the photographs of Garden of the Gods, as Mitchell states in one of his theses on landscapes, the landscape is both “the package and the commodity inside the package.”<sup>371</sup> The image which was created as a package to sell the idea of Western prosperity in fact allowed for the commodity itself, the actual meaningful image to exist as a commodity. The social and symbolic influence of the commodity on the local identity was facilitated by the greater demand for the packaged repetitious, consumable landscape.

This demand, in fact, was greater nowhere than in the Eastern states. The era saw the rise of portraiture, by far the most popular style of photograph, but by the late 1850s-mid 1860s the rise of stereographs and the collodion method allowed for a mass market for landscape photographs. The creation of most Western landscape images stemmed from the curiosity and commercial demand of the Eastern population which had hitherto only read travel accounts, seen lithographs or sketches, and merely had a vague, unverifiable understanding of what lie West of “the States.” Sailor states how these photographs served as proof of stories about the West:

Photographs verified the vastness of the plains, the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains, and the unfathomable size of California’s great Sequoia trees. Photographs showed eastern viewers not only the majesty and relative oddity of the western landforms through the lens of the geological expedition but also portrayed exotic cultures in these environments. The photographs that depicted opportunity for gold or land or business, whether distributed as photographs, lithographs, or wood-engraved illustrations copied from them, provided proof for eastern eyes of what had before been only speculation and rumor.<sup>372</sup>

For the eastern viewer, the veracity of photographs was unquestioned at the time and informed the curiosity of the majority of the United States population; they helped to understand the rumors concerning Western wilderness or discover the “oddity of western landforms” such as Monument

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid., xxiv.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 5.

<sup>372</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, xxii.



Creek or Garden of the Gods, or an idea of the size of the Rocky Mountains. The Western landscape was a marketable commodity which provided entertainment just as much as it provided information for the eastern viewer. The impetus for Wakely's copyright and publication of his 26 images in 1864 was almost certainly for the marketability of these Western scenes to the eastern stereo audience who could "travel over all the countries of the world, without moving a yard from our own firesides."<sup>373</sup> This was the success of an exploding visual culture which thanks to the mass production of stereographs allowed the stereoscope to become "the first universal system of visual communication before cinema and television."<sup>374</sup>

In a similar fashion, this circulation is what allowed these little-known photographs an influence on a third audience, that of the public at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris. The primary differences between the Eastern American viewer and that of the Exposition attendee lies in their expectation and their distance. For the most part, an eastern U.S. audience was seeking out images of the West and likely hearing stories and tales of Western life which created a pre-informed idea of what treasures the Western landscape held. As they were closer to the West they inevitably were more informed and curious about the realities of their country's mysterious expanse. The French or European viewer was much less informed on the rumors and realities of Western American life if they were even informed at all. There is no reason to suspect that the average attendee of the Exposition Universelle was any more interested in the Colorado landscape and lifestyle than they were in any of the other 50,000 exhibits. As stated earlier, the French had established through literary sources a mild fascination with the American West which to that point was built on stereotypes of Native Americans and tales of gold. This Colorado exhibit and the photographs within were a subtle introduction of a less mythical and more regional Western perspective to this unsuspecting audience. Buried beneath the strategic business interests of Coloradans and one east coast investor (Whitney) was the latent and early sign of a Western

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<sup>373</sup> "America in the Stereoscope," *The Art-Journal*, July 1, 1860, 221.

<sup>374</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*, 1st ed (New York, N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1989), 17.

aesthetic featuring geographic images and objects. This visibility, along with the exhibition of Western landscapes from California to a roughly fifty million Exposition attendees, predates the creation and circulation of the Geological Survey photographs, and points to an earlier and larger trend of a Western American aesthetic based on geographical images. As will be examined, the direct influence of Wakely's images on the French audience, such as those portraying the Garden of the Gods, is far greater than their appearance within the Colorado exhibit. The photographs were the source for lithographs (**fig. 6.15, fig. 7.26, fig. 7.47, fig. 7.49, fig. 7.51, fig. 7.53**) used to illustrate the extensive reports from Louis Simonin published in the illustrated travel journal *Le Tour du Monde* concerning his travels to Colorado following the Exposition with J.P. Whitney. The success of the Colorado exhibit perhaps amplified the reach of these images, and the Colorado aesthetic overall. For it wasn't just photographs that were exhibited to represent the territory to a European audience, there were primarily specimens of silver and gold, garnering a medal, a visit from the Emperor, and the larger audience that those honors likely inspired. There were also maps which both excited the imagination and aided European minds as they "slowly rolled back the mists of uncertainty that shrouded their geographical understanding of western North America."<sup>375</sup> For the European audience (which could also read the Colorado pamphlet published in 3 languages) this enlightening introduction to Colorado specifically was certainly novel. Though French activity had begun in the Great Plains with the Mississippi journey of Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet in 1673, the ensuing activity of trappers and trading would only slowly increase French influence in the region, challenging Spanish control, but never reaching more than a peripheral status of control (**fig. 6.16, fig. 6.17**). Though this region and the Far West in general was a subject of much rumor and imagination, no photographs or material artifacts from the territory could have been exhibited to so wide an audience since its recent settlement; this was likely the first view of the exotic landscape of which an image had only been previously written or sketched. Ores and photographs were paired together to strategically encourage immigration and investment, but incidentally some of the earliest

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<sup>375</sup> William Wyckoff, *Creating Colorado: The Making of a Western American Landscape, 1860-1940*, Book, Whole (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1999), 28.

geographical images of the region were introduced to a wide audience, the first sign of a Colorado visual identity, contributing to “broader cultural imaginings of the West.”<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 6.

## Chapter 7. The Colorado Photographs

### 7.1 Garden of the Gods: A Gate to the West

The landscape scenes chosen by Whitney, make up a relatively small part of the photographs shown in Paris; however, they were well-received and reveal much about the culture of the early Colorado community. The landscape photographs were the work of George Wakely and were all included in his 1864 copyright. They cover primarily three different areas: Monument Creek, Garden of the Gods, and the Twin Lakes. The choice of scenes in these photographs didn't include classic Rocky Mountain views, but rather peculiar natural phenomena and more subtle mountain scenery. These locations were popular for early explorers and settlers in part because of their proximity to springs and water sources, but also as scenic and interactive elements of the landscape. Humans had frequented the area for thousands of years, and European explorers gave names to the features of the area already held sacred by Native peoples. Early trappers dubbed Fountain Creek the "Fontaine qui bouille" and European explorers first called the Garden of the Gods the "Red Rock Corral." In fact, legend has it that it was aforementioned Rufus E. Cable, surveyor and photographer, who proclaimed during a visit with M.S. Beach in 1859, upon first seeing the impressive red towers that in retort to Beach's suggestion that it was a "capital place for a beer garden," Cable contested that it was a "fit place for the gods to assemble," thus dubbing the scene Garden of the Gods.

Like many contemporaneous images of the Far West, the Garden of the Gods photographs impress upon the wonder of the Eastern American or European viewer. What it lacks in drama it replaces in originality while it serves as a material symbol of a gateway within the theory of "Manifest Destiny." The scene is one that had never been seen by foreign eyes, and therein lies some of its power. The images are quite simple in composition, yet the image *Gate to Garden of the Gods* (**fig. 6.9**) overfills the frame with the size of the rocks, centering on the narrow passageway with a faint view of Pike's Peak in the distance. In his engraved drawing of the photograph (**fig. 6.15**) published in *Le Tour du Monde* in 1868, Eugène Cicéri enhanced the appearance of the sky

and of Pike's Peak in the background, heightening the drama of the scene. Wakely took the photo from a closer distance than most of his landscape images, allowing the viewer to see details of the towering rocky features. Though it lacks the drama of Soulier's Swiss Alpine or Watkins' Yosemite views, the rhetorical implication of the photo of the "Gate" to the Garden of the Gods represents and invites the viewer through an open gate to the West, an introduction to all the physical wonders to be discovered (and conquered) in the Western American landscape.

While this specific image of the "Gate to the Garden of the Gods" was an original view and was recreated in many mediums for years to come, it was already part of an established gateway symbol present within early depictions of the West. In Frémont's 1845 *Report of the Exploring Expedition* there are three lithographs, possibly based on Carvalho daguerreotypes, which depict: Pass of the Standing Rock (**fig. 7.1**), Devil's Gate (**fig. 7.2**), Hot Spring Gate (**fig. 7.3**), all of which strongly resemble the Wakely photograph. Wakely might have previously seen the symbol of the gateway in Frémont's publication, or in other images, but it certainly became an oft used trope of Western imagery along with the portrayal of irregular rock formations.

Circulating as an engraved drawing in *Le Tour du Monde* (**fig. 6.15**) by 1868, the composition of the landscape served as one example of a depiction of the Far West aesthetic. The detailed rock features tower and frame a snowy Pike's Peak within the mountain range at the back and center of the image. In the foreground grassy plains with slivers of light slipping through the cloudy sky lead the viewer's eye toward the "gate" beyond which mystery, grandeur, and expanse are shown to await. The light and sky details of the drawing seem to exaggerate those captured by the camera. Without the presence of Native peoples or settlers, the landscape is presented as a setting for action to take place. Inviting passage through the gate, both the photograph and the drawing lay the aesthetic ground for the wide, open Western landscape.

Since these photographs of the Garden of the Gods can be grouped within the category Sandweiss classifies as "public photographs," in that they were intended for mass distribution rather than a private client, they can be considered as contributing factors within the larger spectrum of visual and written methods of narrating the early days of life in the Far West. The composition of

the photographs was designed to appeal to a viewer or buyer in a certain way, but could also be informed by outside forces. If we were to take these images at face value, they could be construed as mere documentation of Colorado's geographical features, but Wakely was likely influenced by popular landscape tropes. An uninfluenced photographer could have turned around 180 degrees and photographed the plains that constitute half of the state (it's also possible that he did), but Wakely was operating within a framework of inherited aesthetic models and the enduring expanse of the prairies was did not fit into to established European landscape compositional forms. This point is exemplified in Sandweiss' study of Humphrey Lloyd Hime's 1858 photograph *The Prairie Looking West* (**fig. 7.4**), which portrays a somber view of the vast Canadian plains.<sup>377</sup> Sandweiss confirms that "despite their relative success" (they were widely distributed as chromoxylographs in a portfolio of an exploration survey of Western Canadian lands) Hime's photographs failed to penetrate "the powerful barrier of viewers' expectations."<sup>378</sup> The ominous presence of bones and a human skull in the foreground of Hime's image certainly contributed, but were not solely to blame, for the bleakness of the image which showed Europeans the "terrifying emptiness that stretched across the North American prairies" when engravings were circulated and published in the *London Daily News* in 1858. In fact, this instance, one of few known photographic attempts to portray the plains, taps into a type of Western sublime landscape style which photographers of the West would employ at this early stage, invoking awe and mystery by the size and scope of Western space. Even though flat landscapes may provide less captivating photographic subjects than mountains, rock formations and hills, later American artists and photographers would portray them in varying and dramatic fashion. To name a few of the early innovators; Georgia O'Keefe, Farm Security Administration photographers, Grant Wood, and Alexandre Hogue would capture the inherit spirit or the dislocations of the plains and prairies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but prior to this only few depictees tackled the unrivaled expanse of the American plains, even though they inspired literary work such

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<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid., 146–47.

as James Fennimore Cooper's 1827 classic *The Prairie*.<sup>379</sup> In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the plains were settled and cultivated, more images were made of the plains. Painters showed a pastoral, and narrative perspective while photographs continued a grimmer depiction involving sandy dugouts and homesteads. Though the plains would be transformed from the "Great American Desert" to the breadbasket of the world, photographs would portray the physical and spiritual influence of the plains, as the last major American region to be settled. Hime's photograph was transformed and replaced in other reports and portfolios, which sought to alter it into a more positive message by removing the skull and bones.<sup>380</sup> So while Wakely was likewise partaking in the creation of an aesthetic he was also playing by and influenced by pre-established rules which necessitated mountains and features for a picturesque or dramatic landscape scene.<sup>381</sup> In this case however, not only was he focused on an imposing geological feature of pre-established interest, he was also looking towards the West and framing it in an inviting and accessible way. For the Eastern American viewer, who would presumably be the primary targeted audience, the West was symbolic not just of mystery and opportunity, but it also embodied a post-Civil War optimism for the future. Wakely's choice to portray the "Gate" created a symbolic accessibility to a "new western world that was yet to unfold" was also a choice to ignore less appealing aspects like the wide, open plains and their terrifying emptiness.<sup>382</sup>

As Wakely was an immigrant himself, his point of view that was portrayed via the photographs reflects that kind of liberal individualism of a European immigrant, business owner, and committed Western settler. The style of image of the West that he chose to render, by featuring certain aspects of landscape and development, was full of possibilities. His own desires and motives can be seen in how and what he chose to photograph. It is likely that Wakely, knowingly or not,

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<sup>379</sup> "Plain Pictures: Images of the American Prairie," *The Annals of Iowa*, no. 57 (1998): 167–69.

<sup>380</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 148.

<sup>381</sup> Rachel Sailor carefully describes the subtle way in which photography was introduced "into a culture that had a very distinct and developed aesthetic sensibility." The landscapes in the West were influenced by landscape painting and "Western European cultural heritage of landscapes in the visual arts." The most popular, she states, are the charming views stemming from the "picturesque" as well as a dramatic absence of "picturesqueness" to western scenes. Still others invoke the awe of the sublime. Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, P. xxiv-xxv.

<sup>382</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 13.

played on the mystery and curiosity of the West in his “public” images for an audience and market which would include would-be settlers and immigrants as well as East Coast stereo collectors. The symbolic portal that the *Gate to the Garden of the Gods* photograph represents was an invitation for a physical or imaginary voyage into the West. Wakely’s personal history likely influenced the idealization in his photographs to appeal to an audience he could relate to, that of the future settler or immigrant. Clearly, potential immigrants would be more prone to pick up their lives and move to the unknown Far West if they were introduced to photographs of their future home and the pleasing environment, riches, and future that awaited them. This theoretical motive however can be as easily attributed to Whitney for selecting these photographs to show in Paris as it can be to Wakely for choosing which scenes to shoot. However, as it pertains to Wakely, the choice to photograph a peaceful Garden of the Gods scene (**fig. 6.9**) and an inviting gateway, quite possibly stems from the pre-immigrant mindset that he once had himself. An even bolder conjecture would suggest that Wakely via his photographs worked, perhaps inadvertently, as an agent of immigration which would contribute to his community and economy. For these aesthetic, political and economic reasons, Wakely’s choice of subject matter projected an image of invitation or entry to the frontier, a subtle window of forward-looking freedom that was obligingly directed toward the West. Not the first and far from the last to use a symbolic “gateway to the West,” Wakely and other early photographers of the region embraced the Gate to the Garden of Gods as a metaphorical entrance to the Far West, still a highly mysterious region in the mid-1860s.

## **7.2 Imperial Landscape**

Landscape, photography and imperialism emerged as influential and intersecting forces in the nineteenth century that aided in disseminating practices and discourse which affirmed one another. While profiting from the marketable quality of the Western landscapes and the photographs of those landscapes might have been Wakely’s intention upon capturing, printing, copyrighting, and distributing the photographs of this landscape, the rhetorical and symbolic power of the images far



exceeds this commercial endeavor.<sup>383</sup> The historical power of the image falls under Mitchell's suggestion of the "Imperial Landscape." In the case of the Garden of the Gods, the imperial implications were potent. The Garden of the Gods area was a location known to be revered by Native peoples for thousands of years. As Sandweiss states, "from the 1860s on, photographs became increasingly influential as a way of creating and shaping national visions of the Far West" and this included the use of photography to aid and abet "in the imagined disappearance of the West's Native peoples."<sup>384</sup> Though Sandweiss is primarily referring to the portraiture of Native peoples, it is also the photographs of Western landscapes which helped sculpt a myth of the West as a "blank slate upon which Americans could inscribe their own future."<sup>385</sup> In this way the imperial implications of these images of the Garden of the Gods are so instrumentally potent; a sacred monument, treasured by Native peoples for thousands of years, was used by Wakely and other photographers to perpetuate a story of the land that ignores a history of human activity and concentrates strictly on the future, part of broader a result during western expansion:

In focusing on the most dramatic features of the western landscape, in minimizing the presence of people with earlier claims to the land, in illustrating what Americans could accomplish through focused use of the West's resources, the photographers and their patrons turned their backs to the history of human conflict in the West and set their eyes squarely on the region's future.<sup>386</sup>

None of the Wakely landscape photographs portray a presence of Native peoples and since we know there were many Utes and other tribes still active well beyond the mid-1860s in the area, this absence corresponds to a prolonged tendency on the part of Western photographers to ignore a current or former human presence on this land. Settlers adopted a narrative whose goal was to conquer the West or as William Gilpin stated "to subdue the continent," and photographs and text were utilized during the period to ignore the past, look to the future, and sculpt a vision of the imagined West of stories, panoramas, and paintings. This motive was even noted by journalist E.L. Godkin in 1864 when he wrote:

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<sup>383</sup> Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 15.

<sup>384</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 13.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*

New communities are springing up at the West every month, on whom the past has but little hold. They have no history, and no traditions.... The West, in short, has inherited nothing, and far from regretting this, it glories in it. One of the most marked results of that great sense of power by which it is pervaded, is its strong tendency to live in the future, to neglect the past. It proposes to make history, instead of reading it.<sup>387</sup>

The appropriation of this landscape and specific site by Euro-American settlers, but also by Wakely and eventually by Whitney are potent representations of Western imperialism. The same community that was responsible for the destruction of the Native peoples' way of life, was also appropriating the landscape and image of a place sacred to that specific tribe, the Utes, and using it for their commercial and imperial interest. In that sense it fills the requirement of a "dark side" of landscape explained by Marxist historians, though in a new way.<sup>388</sup> Rather than the "secular, sensuous temptation" that Mitchell says Petrarch feared in the admiration of the landscape, this dark side is linked to the ambivalent genocide that was occurring at the same time that the sacred place was being appropriated. I would also argue that this image *Gate to the Garden of the Gods* (**fig. 6.9**) could be considered a photographic example of what Mitchell calls an "originary moment." Kenneth Clark suggests that Petrarch, as the "first modern man" is "probably the first man to express the emotion on which the existence of landscape painting so largely depends; the desire to escape from the turmoil of cities into the peace of the countryside."<sup>389</sup> This originary moment is ancient evidence of a beginning to the "contemplation of nature."<sup>390</sup> Petrarch with his contradictory emotions due to monastic philosophy, proves "the original, transitional moment from ancient to modern [...] by showing that Petrarch himself lives in both worlds, is both a modern humanist and a medieval Christian."<sup>391</sup> While the portrayal of the Garden of the Gods undoubtedly includes the "dark side" Mitchell describes, it could be added on to this list: "Petrarch fears the landscape as a secular, sensuous temptation; Michelet treats it as a momentary revelation of beauty and freedom bracketed by blindness and slavery; Milton presents it as the voyeuristic object for a gaze that

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<sup>387</sup> E. L. Godkin, "The Constitution and Its Defects," *The North American Review* 99, no. 1 (1864): 137.

<sup>388</sup> Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 12.

<sup>389</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art*, 1st U.S. ed (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 7.

<sup>390</sup> Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 11.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*

wavers between aesthetic delight and malicious intent, melting ‘pity’ and ‘Honor’ and empire with revenge enlarged.”<sup>392</sup> In that vein, this case poses nature or the landscape as entrance, but also as the *arc de triomphe* of manifest destiny, representing neither fear nor sin, but rather a worship of the same natural monument that the Utes held sacred and a gateway to more lands to be conquered. The symbol of a “Gate“ to the West is even closer to the “dreamwork” Mitchell describes: “Landscape might be seen more profitably as something like the ‘dreamwork’ of imperialism, unfolding its own movement in time and space from a central point of origin and folding back on itself to disclose both utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unexpressed resistance.”<sup>393</sup>

Westward expansion certainly leaned upon a utopian fantasy. Eliza Greatorex, during her time in Colorado, often described the quest for an Arcadian existence to be a primary goal.<sup>394</sup> Greatorex attributed the mountain features of forest, river, and mountain views as contributing to this Arcadian ideal. She closes her book saying, “farewell to the glorious land, hoping and praying for the fulfillment of that sunny dream of Arcadia that came to us under the sunset lighting Pike’s Peak, as for the last time we turned into the tents gleaming beside the blazing pine logs of our last camp fire.”<sup>395</sup> Sara Jane Lippincott, writer and activist, travelled with the artist and furnished the introduction for Greatorex’s book under her pseudonym Grace Greenwood. She described the experience traveling through Colorado as a voyage in which they found nothing but beauty, grandeur, simplicity and nature; though they often feared they would come across “wildness, savageness, and desolation” they never did, and thus portrayed life in Colorado as beautiful and utopian.<sup>396</sup> Greenwood acknowledged that she was influenced beginning twenty years prior by John C. Frémont’s *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains [...]*, a narrative and largely scientific account of Frémont’s survey expeditions.<sup>397</sup> Greenwood confirmed that her idea of

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<sup>392</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Greatorex, *Summer Etchings in Colorado*.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 5.

the West was shaped in a large way by Frémont's adventures and descriptions, which included accounts of grizzly bears and battles with Indigenous peoples, but also descriptions of majestic and picturesque scenes. She even described the included lithographs (**fig. 7.1, fig. 7.2, fig. 7.3, fig. 7.5, fig. 7.6**) as "rough, but truthful" which were often portraying dramatic renderings of sublime and picturesque scenes.<sup>398</sup> In fact, much of Groot's and Greenwood's language in the book use the words "sublime" and "picturesque," signaling an experience of the landscape which was highly informed and shaped by their pre-existing cultural expectations.

The construction of an imagined West was built upon the public images created by photographers like Wakely, who focused on the impressive features of the land, the potential opportunity in the natural resources, and who ignored the past relationship of the Native peoples to the land. This, according to Sandweiss was a practice executed throughout the development of the West, but in this case, of the Garden of the Gods, the symbols were quite concrete. The site was appropriated, white-washed and mass distributed as a commodity which entered into the larger cultural vision of the West. The dissemination of this view depended on not only the reproducible paper prints of stereo-cards, but also the early use of connecting words to the photographs which would narrate and illustrate life in the West from the point of view of the settler. This perspective implied, like that of Petrarch, a kind of discovery of nature and of the new West, which ignored the Native peoples and the past of the continent. The narrative, like that of Gilpin, insinuated that the Western landscape was an object to be acquired, and the inevitable disappearance of the Native peoples was inherent in the myth that was created. Wakely and his contemporaries, most notably William G. Chamberlain, contributed to the creation of this aesthetic as some of the original image-makers in the Colorado Territory during the early days of settlement. Even more, their photographs emerged during the period in which the circulation of photographs grew vastly, enabling the attribution of a greater cultural dimension to the legacy of their images. Photographs of such features as the Gate to the Garden of the Gods, of which Wakely's photo is one of the earliest

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid., 6.

known, were made over and over again by photographers such as Chamberlain (**fig. 7.7**) and William Henry Jackson (**fig. 7.8**) to name just a few. Jackson captured the site many times over the years and often inserted a horse and buggy into the foreground, building an even clearer cultural significance, yet his photographs that would become the most well-known were likely inspired by the early local photographers, such as Wakely. Not only are they a direct pre-cursor to the photographs created during the Geological Surveys that began at the same time that the images were being exhibited in Paris in 1867, but they represent the significance of the work of local photographers who haven't been included in the historical photographic canon and yet left a lasting influence on the emerging aesthetic of the West. They were participating in the commodification of the Western landscape, representing photographically the imperial essence of Western expansion, all while contributing to the vision of the imagined West in the minds of Europeans and Eastern Americans. Wakely's choice to feature the "gate" of the Garden of the Gods over other spectacular but less symbolic sights, was reiterated not only in Colorado but in many Western representations to come. The landscape photographs were significant within the creation of an aesthetic of the Far West, as the landscape was developed as a commodity just like natural resources beneath it.

### **7.3 The Lost Landscape of Monument Creek: Nostalgia and Imagination**

A.E. Mathews' book of pencil sketches from 1866 includes a brief description of the geological history which formed the "monument" rocks, a popular attraction in Colorado Springs, known as "Colorado City" at the time. His brief text summarizes the interest of the rock formations which consisted of their geological interest and their curious form which inspired the imagination.

The curious and beautiful in nature are here combined in a most pleasing manner [...] These monuments are to be seen on the slopes of the ridges which run down from the mountains [...] Some look like sibley tents, and those that show themselves between trees suggest a vast encampment of soldiers in groves of pine; others look like ladies with broad hats on. Then

there are representations of vases, urns, bells and pyramids, some of the latter being inverted.<sup>399</sup>

Mathews' sketch provides a wide perspective of the place by which to introduce them (**fig. 7.9**), where settlers can be seen approaching and walking amongst the formations that, being slightly larger than human size, dot the landscape of peaceful, rolling hills. The scene provides a quaintness, a far cry from the majestic mountain landscapes of awe and sublimity, as well as the forward-looking regard West present in much imagery from the period. Rather, the representations of Monument Creek present a peaceful present-ness, free from religious and economic influence, where settlers sought to engage in their new environment, an activity which is pervasive in the visual representations of the site over many decades.

Whitney included three Wakely photographs of Monument Creek in the Colorado exhibit in 1867. The photographs (**fig. 7.10, fig. 7.11, fig. 7.12**) were titled *Scene on Monument Creek, no. 1*, *Scene on Monument Creek, no. 2*, and *Scene on Monument Creek, no. 3*, though Whitney lists no. 3 as no. 5 in his Colorado pamphlet list of photographs, since Wakely himself gave it both numbers on his copyright application. The photographs make up three of the four Monument Creek images included in Wakely's 1864 copyright.<sup>400</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century significance of the Wakely photographs of Monument Creek is quite similar to those of Garden of the Gods, despite the later decline of the Monument site. The interest of the "Monument Creek" area was the rock formations referred to as monuments, umbrella rocks, mushroom rocks, or hoodoos. To be clear, these specific rock formations are no longer referred to, in fact there is almost no sign or reference to the famous formations which enamored earlier inhabitants, besides the existing creek still retaining its name Monument Creek, and a park in the area named Monument Valley Park. The creek and park though, contain few if any of the monuments from which their name originated. The formations were found not only in the Monument Creek Valley specifically, but also throughout other bluff areas in

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<sup>399</sup> Alfred Edward Mathews, Julius Bien, and Chalmers Hadley, *Pencil Sketches of Colorado: Its Cities, Principal Towns and Mountain Scenery*, Book, Whole (New York, 1866).

<sup>400</sup> Junius E. Wharton, *History of the City of Denver from Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time; to Which Is Added a Full and Complete Business Directory of the City* (Denver, Col.: Byers & Dailey, printers, 1866), 2–5.

Colorado Springs, of which few remain in Woodmen Valley Park, as seen in Google Earth images (**fig. 7.13, fig. 7.14**) of remaining formations. The attraction for artists and settlers was more than just the formations themselves and encompassed the fertile valley landscape in which the formations were found as seen in Mathews' sketch (**fig. 7.9**), where they can be seen dotting the rolling foothills. The popularity of the "Monument Creek" area peaked during the decades following the settlement of Colorado. As observed in photographs, writings and artwork from the period even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was a popular tourist attraction while inhabitants of the area also enjoyed interacting amongst the curious geological formations within the landscape.

The Monument Creek photographs are significant as historical documents in primarily two different ways: they preserve the fact and memory of a place that no longer exists, and even more importantly, they enlighten us to an intimate aspect of settler life which involved not just physical engagement with the landscape but also engagement of the imagination. While many photographs may serve as "historical documents" these play a particular role. Contrary to sites like Garden of the Gods which still exist in almost exactly the same state today, Monument Creek does not remain in any similar form to the way it was when these images were taken. Another interesting aspect is that George D. Wakely did not usually include human figures in his landscape photographs, nor most taken outside of an urban area. Two out of his four Monument Creek images include a male figure posed near the monuments, a divergence from his habitual method when photographing landscape scenes. This tendency is consistent within the portrayal of Monument Creek across mediums. Consider the photographs of Wakely (**fig. 7.10, fig. 7.11, fig. 7.12**), William H. Jackson (**fig. 7.15, fig. 7.16**), William Gunnison Chamberlain (**fig. 7.17, fig. 7.19**), and Bryon H. Gurnsey (**fig. 7.18**), the etching by Mathews (**fig. 7.9**), and the painting by Walter Paris (**fig. 7.20**); all show figures physically interacting with the monuments. Other images feature the fantastical imaginings of the monuments in the etchings of Eliza Greatorex (**fig. 7.23, fig. 7.24**) and the drawings of A.L. Musick (**fig. 7.21, fig. 7.22**). This element separates the portrayal of Monument Creek from other landscape scenes as it invited interaction with the scenery rather than simple admiration of it. For this reason, the photographs, as archival evidence, serve as more than nostalgic and factual preservation of the

site, they signify a separate genre of landscape, adding another element to the cultural value of Western geographical images.

As the town of Colorado Springs developed, the umbrella rocks featured in the photographs, and so interesting to early explorers and settlers, were soon forgotten and engulfed in the construction of homes after the 1950s.<sup>401</sup> The majority were never protected as public space and are now destroyed or scattered among parks and private property, completely unknown. Though nearly all evidence of them has disappeared from Monument Creek, there are some of them still visible in Woodmen Valley several miles from Monument Creek, as seen in Google Earth images (**fig. 7.13, 7.14**) of the remaining monuments surrounded by houses. Pat Musick, of Colorado Springs, wrote a nostalgic newspaper article in 2000 in which she laments the loss of this area, in which she played as a child in the 1950s. Her father, the late artist Archie Leroy Musick, had worked as a laborer on the construction of the “Denver Highway” (now I-25) in the 1920s and came to discover the peculiar rock formations describing them in his journal: “The road camp lay amid some of the most freakish rocks on the globe,” he wrote. “They were not colossal [...] but of a proportion more intimate with man's normal imagination -- before he lost it.”<sup>402</sup> He apparently became so enamored with the strange rocks which invited exploration both physical and of the imagination, that he would later take his family to visit them often, eventually writing and illustrating a children’s book “Jigger Flies First” based on fictitious animals that lived amongst the monuments and overlooked the construction of a nearby Air Force Academy. The book, published in 1957, includes extensive illustrations (**fig. 7.21, fig. 7.22**) of the umbrella rocks and the imaginary world in which animals navigated amongst the formations. The opening and closing of the book feature maps of the area with certain umbrella rocks named as the home for each animal, as well as the “Dutch wedding rocks” and “Paint Pony’s Picture Window.” In fact, the picture window (**fig. 7.21**) is a frame created by an arched umbrella rock through which the horse character gazes out at the landscape: “When

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<sup>401</sup> Pat Musick, “Umbrella Rocks: Out of Sight, Out of Mind,” *Colorado Springs Independent*, March 9, 2000.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*



you look through it,” he says, “what you see far off looks close up.”<sup>403</sup> The author, Musick, anthropomorphizes the animals and how they experience the landscape throughout the book. The rocks alter the way in which Pony, and also Musick, experienced the local landscape. The book, and the article by daughter Pat Musick, are some of the only accounts to be found from the 20<sup>th</sup> century describing the existence of Monument Creek, and they both exude a nostalgic fascination with how the geological formations sparked the imagination of those who were able to live and play amongst them.

Eliza Greatorax also felt that the rocks inspired the imagination in her etchings and writings of “Monument Park” from her book published in 1867. She published six drawings (**fig. 7.23, fig. 7.24**) of the area in her book, which all portray the rock formations as strange, human-like creatures. She introduced the drawings with some disclaimer: “The remarkable rock formations which I have attempted to delineate, may seem to be rather the creation of the artist’s fancy than the result of even the most eccentric contortion of nature.”<sup>404</sup> She chose to accompany the drawings with an extract of a letter from General William Jackson Palmer, the founder of Colorado Springs, who dubbed Monument Park his “bijou” and planned to live near it. He wrote:

For standing around everywhere are piles of rock, taking all imaginable shapes of humanity and of human constructions; there are goblins which came out from their cavernous home in the mountains one night, and were fascinated by the beauty of the place into a too prolonged stay; the rays of the morning sun caught them, and before they could hurry back, they were turned to stone.<sup>405</sup>

He continued to describe them as many different beings “huge frogs petrified as they leaped,” “tall grenadiers,” “donjons and ramparts,” and “Chinese mandarins.”<sup>406</sup> While Greatorax’s rendering was likely inspired by Palmer’s text, they were not alone in invoking the way in which these forms stimulated the imagination. Many photographs of the formations (**fig. 7.15, fig. 7.16**) show people interacting near and amongst the formations. A.L. Musick, in his journal from the 1920’s describes animals interacting with the forms; “Horses and colts frolicking on the plain would stop to gaze

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<sup>403</sup> A.L. Musick, *Jigger Flies First* (Denver: Sage Books, 1957).

<sup>404</sup> Greatorax, *Summer Etchings in Colorado*, 74.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*, 75–76.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*

through the apertures, giving the ridiculous impression that they were looking through windows to see what was going on outside,” stating that the “picture window” from his book was inspired by the actual interaction of horses with the umbrella rocks. The younger Musick recounts in her article that her father would spend every night exploring amongst the umbrella rocks even after long days of labor, in his journal he confirms that “not a one must be overlooked.”<sup>407</sup> It seems that from discovery through its near total destruction in the mid 1900s, Monument Creek and its mushroom rocks served as a fantastical playground for citizens, and as an aesthetic wonder for artists and photographers.

Similar to the photographs of Garden of the Gods, the Wakely images of Monument Creek were converted to engravings (**fig. 7.26**) and circulated in *Le Tour du Monde* in France within the Colorado report by Louis Simonin.<sup>408</sup> The fact that settlers knew about and photographed the scene tells us much about their experience in the area. The creek lies on the Old Ute Trail and was an area and water source frequented by the Ute people. In addition to the dramatic features of the land, the creek also served as a water source to settlers. Though this gives a case of appropriation and commodification of the landscape on the part of the settlers, the aesthetic did not endure past the 1950s, but points to a popular site particularly in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Monument Creek’s location along the old Ute trail was crucial, as it was historically used by the Ute tribe who frequently camped along Monument Creek as one of two year-round water sources. The Utes considered the center of the Garden of the Gods to be sacred and would thus never camp there, but would camp around the extremities and often along Monument Creek.<sup>409</sup> The Ute trail, reportedly one of the oldest migratory trails in the United States, with human use dating back 10,000 years “came across the plains to the east, passing through Templeton Gap, fording Monument Creek, climbing over the Mesa, and then threading through the Garden of the Gods, en route to the ‘boiling springs’ in

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<sup>407</sup> Musick, “Umbrella Rocks: Out of Sight, Out of Mind.”

<sup>408</sup> Louis Simonin, “Le Far-West Américain,” *Le Tour du monde : nouveau journal des voyages*, January 1868, 225.

<sup>409</sup> Historical Society of the Pikes Peak Region. and Harvey L. Carter, *The Pikes Peak Region, a Sesquicentennial History.*, 75 p. (Colorado Springs, Colo., 1956).

Manitou, Ute Pass, and the rich hunting grounds in South Park sixty miles to the west.”<sup>410</sup> Since the eventual development of the area has all but erased any aesthetic or cultural trace, the tourist guides, photographs and art of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have created a limited period of record of the site. The photographs and art that captured “Monument Park” as it came to be known in the 1870s represented a particularly Western landscape, and exemplified an inviting aspect of Western life of being outdoors. The exhibition of this cultural aspect of Colorado life was particular to the exhibition of landscape at the Exposition Universelle, and stood out as a landscape and environment with which humans interacted, rather than merely a “picture.”

Monument Creek was painted, photographed, and etched by many people between the 1860s and 1880s. A sampling of images include paintings by Walter Paris in 1874 (**fig. 7.20**), a watercolor by Thomas Moran from 1873 (**fig. 7.29**), lithograph by A.E. Mathews in 1864 (**fig. 7.9**), etchings by Eliza Greatorax in 1873 (**fig. 7.23**, **fig. 7.24**), drawings within the Hayden Survey Report of 1876 (**fig. 7.25**), a drawing by Leon Jean-Baptiste Sabatier (**fig. 7.26**) from a George Wakely photograph in 1867, photographs by George Wakely likely prior to 1864 (**fig. 7.10**, **fig. 7.11**, **fig. 7.12**), and William Henry Jackson after 1870 (**fig. 7.15**, **fig. 7.16**). These are but a sampling and reproductions were likely widely distributed. The latest known representation was a postcard (**fig. 7.27**) from circa 1930 which titled them “Dutch Wedding Rocks” (like in Musick’s book) and the collector confirms that the rocks were then on private property and no longer accessible to the public.<sup>411</sup>

While the Garden of the Gods inspired awe, few existing geological features have been known to provoke such a broad expression of the imagination. It is clear that settlers enjoyed both admiring them from afar and exploring amongst them. Geographical imagery would soon come to define the aesthetic of the Far West, and these photographs and artworks of Monument Creek were created during the same period. While much of the geographical imagery to come, particularly photographs, would portray wide sweeping views of landscapes in the context of surveys, resources,

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<sup>410</sup> Stewart M. Green, “1912: Ute Indians Ride Through Garden of the Gods on the Old Ute Trail,” *Colorado History* (blog), February 27, 2018.

<sup>411</sup> Frank Brusca, “Dutch Wedding Rocks,” *Route 40* (blog), n.d., <http://www.route40.net/page.asp?n=6482>.

and exploitation, few would portray such a place as the Colorado Springs foothills and its monument rocks which offered a site of exploration and imagination. Even though it disappeared under eventual expansion, the preservation of its memory in the form of images allows for its designation as a once meaningful place. To speak of the site as a landscape is to miss the importance of it altogether. For the importance of many landscapes is to become the picture since the word landscape, first introduced into English meant “a *picture* of it, an artist’s interpretation,” only later did the word come to mean “the view itself.”<sup>412</sup> For the Euro-American settlers, photographers, and artists, this particular site was featured in “pictures” but served more importantly as a forum for interaction and interpretation. Likely a result of the anthropomorphic nature of the rock features, photographs and renderings of the site nearly always include humans amongst the formations, and if not, they transform the rocks to resemble an expression of the imagination. In this way, the Monument site differs from just about every other portrayal of the Colorado or Far West geography; its value lied less in its economic potential, it was appreciated for its beauty, but it was also meaningful as a playground for the imagination. In this way it embodies an original type of Western landscape separate from the picturesque and sublime models of European tradition. The wonder of it, rather than existing solely in its own beauty, relied on the imaginative expression and participation of its viewer. In contrast to the intellectual participation of the viewer with photographic tropes such as the “gate” in the Garden of the Gods, the images in Monument Park invited physical participation as well as a participation of the imagination. This aspect of its existence tells us more about settlers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century than all the U.S. Geological Survey photographs combined; even more, it signifies a cultural shift, as A.L. Musick stated in his 1920s journal writings: “They were not colossal [...] but of a proportion more intimate with man's normal imagination -- before he lost it.”<sup>413</sup> For Musick was but a continued participant in the imaginary landscape of the umbrella rocks, which the photographs, art, and literature confirm was the case

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<sup>412</sup> Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, 3.

<sup>413</sup> Musick, “Umbrella Rocks: Out of Sight, Out of Mind.”

beginning with its discovery by settlers, but potentially less so in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This study of Monument Creek photographs, within the Colorado exhibit in Paris 1867, illuminates a subtler side of the early Colorado settler. The inclusion of such imagery is a diverse addition to a cohesive examination of the development of the Far West expansion narrative. While the majority of early photographs from the period point to a culture of greed, adventure, and exploration, these images point to a more tender side of the pioneer, portraying the active imagination of early settlers as apparent within the visual culture of the era. If the Garden of the Gods points to an appropriation of a native sacred site, the appropriation of the Monument Creek area is something else. Different from the economic exploitation of the land, mountaineering aspect of conquering it, or even the mere admiration of natural beauty; the Monument Creek formations provided a site for creative interaction, and this is understood most clearly via the visual culture. Furthermore, the human-landscape interaction which took place amongst the Umbrella rocks in the first decades of Colorado settlement represented a particular phenomenon which was free from any religious, spiritual, or sacred signification as well as any imperial implication of Manifest Destiny. Though the entirety of Euro-American settlement involved the imperial motive within the appropriation of native lands and resources such as Monument Creek, the actual result of settlers' use of this particular site included no exploitation until much later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; rather, the settler mentality sought to enjoy and interact within the landscape in both a physical and mental way exactly as it was. Now the Monument Creek hoodoos represent a lost landscape destroyed by the expansion of residential building, but the creative works of artists and photographers that the landscape inspired provide evidence of the value of place that once existed.

## 7.4 Mining Photographs

As a driving force behind Western development, mining played an important part in the livelihood of western settlers and the emerging aesthetic of the Far West.<sup>414</sup> Visual exploration of mining development took place in many colonial areas in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Colorado was no different. The visual portrayal of mining would form a large part of the Colorado image, continuing throughout its development. The early visual culture surrounding mining would vary in style between areas in the world, but the primarily gold and silver mining taking place in the American Far West would prove to result in a similar photographic style, be it California, Nevada, or Colorado. A major difference was the prevalence of placer (surface) versus lode (hard rock) mining; California images of placer mining contrast with the more common process of lode mining in Colorado. Mining development shaped the landscape of Colorado in an enduring way, both in its rural areas and towns. The portrayal of this development, via early photographs, informed both the local settlers and foreign interests to the state of affairs in the far-off territories while establishing visually a “technological landscape” in which expansion reshaped, mined, and tamed the Western environment.<sup>415</sup> Moreover, the process of photographing this change to the landscape corresponds to Rachel Sailor’s suggestion of the broader purposes of local photographs in that “they represent a significant concern that occupied most nineteenth-century regional photographers of the American West: the activity of physically shaping newly inhabited landscapes and endowing them with new cultural significance.”<sup>416</sup> The cultural significance of mining development far outlived the settlers who lived amongst the early mines, rather the visual record of “physically shaping” the hillsides of Colorado’s earliest mountain towns would prove an enduring aspect of the region. The lasting effect on the cultural identity of Colorado is visible in meaningful works such as the 1934 Charles Bunnell painting *Cripple Creek Mine* (**fig. 7.30**), which portrays a romantic impression of an abandoned

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<sup>414</sup> Christine Hult-Lewis, “The Mining Photographs of Carleton Watkins, 1858-1891, and the Origins of Corporate Photography.” (Boston University, 2011), ix, (Order No. 3463122).

<sup>415</sup> David E Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007).

<sup>416</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, 3.

mining town through juxtaposition of angular buildings against rounded hillsides, and strategic use of warm light.<sup>417</sup> However, this portrayal of a beautiful mining environment is the exception; the mining town landscape often invites descriptions of negative opinion concerning its aesthetic and yet paintings such as this one point not just to “deep-seated cultural attitudes toward land and life,” but an artistic and/or acquired cultural appreciation for the inherent charm of such scenes.<sup>418</sup> An early example of this appreciation can be seen in Charles Christian Nahl and August Wenderoth’s painting *Miners in the Sierras* (**fig. 7.31**) from 1852. Considered the first-known oil painting of an early gold camp, the work contributes to the “lure of the West” by showing a peaceful, even romantic representation of Western argonaut life and an idealized aesthetic of mining within the landscape.<sup>419</sup> Acknowledging that the work of a miner is fatiguing by depicting the man drinking water from a bucket, this early artwork presents a highly idealized depiction of mining life that exists in harmony with and surrounded by Eden-like nature. The subjective implications of these paintings diverge drastically from the more subtle intentions of mining photography.

Historically the perception of mining landscapes is riddled with qualitative judgments on their aesthetic appeal. Mining landscapes represent change, and through the visual portrayal and perception of the Colorado mining landscape during its era of creation one can understand the ever-changing effects of society on nature, and vice versa. Bayard Taylor gave a first-hand account during a visit through the mining towns in 1866:

The whole string of four cities has a curious, rickety, temporary air, with their buildings standing as if on one leg, their big signs and little accommodations, the irregular, wandering, uneven street, and the bald, scarred, and pitted mountains on either side. Everything is odd, grotesque, unusual; but no feature can be called attractive.<sup>420</sup>

Often accused of seeming temporary, or ephemeral due to their rapid development, Richard Francaviglia insists that mining towns represent truly historic and tenacious aspects of American

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<sup>417</sup> Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, ed., *Pikes Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy, 1919 - 1945 ; October 6, 1989 - December 31, 1989 ; [Exhibition]* (Colorado Springs, Colo, 1989), 47.

<sup>418</sup> Richard V. Francaviglia, *Hard Places: Reading the Landscape of America’s Historic Mining Districts*, Pbk., 1997, Book, Whole (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 11.

<sup>419</sup> Smithsonian American Art Museum and Amy Pastan, *Lure of the West: Treasures from the Smithsonian American Art Museum* (New York; Washington, D.C.: Watson-Guption Publications; Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2000), 82.

<sup>420</sup> Bayard Taylor, *Colorado: A Summer Trip*. (New York: G. P. Putnam, and son, 1867), 57.

culture.<sup>421</sup> An 1879 tourist guide points out the damaging effects of mining on the land, but rather than considering it a tragedy, it is advertised as an attraction:

The mountains are scarred and seamed by prospect holes; the bed of the creek exhibits the results of sluicing and washing; the tunnels and shafts and galleries introduce the visitor to the actual labor of blasting ore from the hidden treasury; the smelting works gives him a good idea of the processes by which the crude masses are rendered valuable to trade and commerce. And all these things are to be seen the year round within a few hours' ride of Denver [...].<sup>422</sup>

The guide was advertising a tour for visitors to see the mining intervention to the landscape in the nearby Rocky Mountains. Wonder and revulsion formed a complex fascination with the mining landscape.

Studying the photographic representation of Colorado mining settlements and the circulation thereof allows for an overdue analysis of the intersection of art and industry in our interpretation of a quintessentially American landscape. As a precursor to the popularity of the United States Geological Survey photographs, the analysis of the mining landscape exists at a point of cultural-economic crossover. Today it is a culturally predominant point of view that mining landscapes represent a negative influence and all industrial transformations of the landscape are seen as ruinous and exploitative; as Leo Marx put it, that the machine had invaded the garden.<sup>423</sup> This was not always the case, for during this period in the nineteenth century “mining activities symbolized progress and man’s domination over nature.”<sup>424</sup> If a pastoral ideal was an abiding theme expressed via art, literature, and even agriculture, then an industrial ideal was a less enduring and more complex symbol of the nineteenth century. Taylor, during an 1866 visit through the Colorado mining region depicted in the Wakely photographs acknowledged the double-sided implication of the mining landscape: “My experience in California taught me that gold-mining utterly ruins the appearance of a country, and therefore I am not surprised at what I see here. On the contrary, this

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<sup>421</sup> Francaviglia, *Hard Places: Reading the Landscape of America's Historic Mining Districts*, 11.

<sup>422</sup> Stephen F. Smart, *Colorado Tourist and Illustrated Guide via the “Golden Belt Route,” the Great Wheat and Corn Producing Region Extending from the Missouri River through Central Kansas and Colorado (Which Is Traversed by the Kansas Pacific Railway) to the Rocky Mountain Resorts.*, ed. Kansas Pacific Railway Company., 72 p. (Kansas City: Ramsey, Millett & Hudson, 1879), 12.

<sup>423</sup> Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, Reprint, Galaxy Book 179 (London: Oxford Univ. Pr, 1979).

<sup>424</sup> Francaviglia, *Hard Places: Reading the Landscape of America's Historic Mining Districts*, 9.



hideous slashing, tearing, and turning upside down is the surest indication of mineral wealth.”<sup>425</sup>

Underneath the undesirable aesthetic lied a fundamental promise of prosperity.

Far from a widespread appreciation, the complex symbol of progress and prosperity that mining activity represented was and continues to be disproportionately visible in imagery of the period for an activity that took place in marginal, and often hidden locations. The visibility of mining sites and landscapes in circulated images points to a physical embodiment of the Western mentality of the nineteenth century. As a caption for a sketch of Nathaniel P. Hill’s Boston and Colorado Smelter in Black Hawk, Colorado (**fig. 7.32**) built in 1867, Duane Smith writes “Smoke, in the nineteenth century, meant progress, industry, and jobs.”<sup>426</sup> Though the mining industry acknowledged its operations’ “serious disfigurements, if not positive injuries” to the land, the detriment was always argued in relation to the dollar.<sup>427</sup> As Francoviglia insists, “we had a lot of unsettled country that still challenged us, so most Americans accepted mining landscapes as inevitable.”<sup>428</sup> Similar to the earlier “ravages of the axe” which Barbara Novak points out was more of a paradox or “double-edged axe” than a lament, since Americans accepted the positive and negative sides of progress, which was -- in the case of the “axe” --the destruction of the wilderness.<sup>429</sup> In this case, mining serves as a similar example of this paradoxical situation, since the destruction of the land both to build mines and cut down surrounding trees served as the foundation for the Colorado economy, and we see this acceptance of progress in the photographic portrayal of the mines.

Though the Colorado mining aesthetic was original and geographically specific, the depiction of mining and industrial life was not. The aesthetic falls in line with the realist trend present in fine art painting since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in the U.S and throughout the industrial age.

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<sup>425</sup> Taylor, *Colorado: A Summer Trip.*, 56.

<sup>426</sup> Duane A. Smith, *Mining America: Industry and the Environment, 1800-1980* (Niwt, Colo: University Press of Colorado, 1993), 94.

<sup>427</sup> Rossiter W. Raymond, “Engineering and Mining Journal,” ed. Richard P. Rothwell, *Engineering & Mining Journal* 21, no. 16 (April 15, 1876): 365.

<sup>428</sup> Francaviglia, *Hard Places: Reading the Landscape of America’s Historic Mining Districts*, 9.

<sup>429</sup> Barbara Novak, “The Double-Edged Axe,” *Art in America*, 1976. Thomas Cole, father of the Hudson River School of landscape painting on the East Coast lamented the “ravages of the axe” in his 1836 *Essay on American Scenery*, which were blamed for destruction of the wilderness beginning earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A taste for real life and industrial scenes was intertwined with a sense of nationalism on the part of early 19<sup>th</sup> century artists following the War of 1812 and a political and cultural trend toward increased independence from Europe. This nationalism resulted in a sense of identity on the part of American artists whose realist scenes such as Bass Otis's *Interior of a Smithy* (**fig. 7.33**) revealed in work, the mechanical process, and even "the potential drama of technology."<sup>430</sup> Rather than "classical goddesses, grandiose allegories, or exotic flights of the imagination," Marianne Doezema argues that American viewers of the early to mid-nineteenth century were less interested in aesthetic qualities and the imaginary than in factual and informational content.<sup>431</sup> While Otis, John Ferguson Weir, and Charles Willson Peale created romantic paintings of technical and industrial labor between 1800 and the 1860s which laid a path for visual appreciation of realist industrial scenes, it was artists such as W. T. Russell Smith who in works like *View of Pittsburgh from the Salt Works of Saw Mill Run* (1838) (**fig. 7.34**) truly laid the ground for the industrial landscape picture.

The portrayal of the mine registers in the same realm as another icon of industrialization, the railroad. Mines, like the railroad, were aspects of the "progress" which Leo Marx called "the aggressive conquest of nature" which Americans regarded, during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as a "means to an ideal end" in which American expansion resulted in a middle point between wilderness and industrialization.<sup>432</sup> Both the mine and the railroad came to visually represent technology within the landscape in photographs and paintings. Marx makes the important point that "progress" or the civilizing and industrialization of Western expansion was seen by Americans as a positive force "the achievement, in a new kind of society, of a *via media* between the oppressive over civilization of the Old World and the menacing wildness of the Western frontier."<sup>433</sup> This is where the mining photographs of Wakely and other photographers enter into the greater visual culture of the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Marianne Doezema, *American Realism and the Industrial Age*, (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1980), 15.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. Doezema also notes that Otis was possibly influenced by the engravings of Englishman Joseph Wright of Derby, whose mid-18<sup>th</sup> century works were widely distributed in America by the late 1760s and early 1770s. Derby's *The Blacksmith's Shop* was innovative in that it focused on the process of labor, and bears similarity of subject to the work of Otis in his single genre painting *Interior of a Smithy*.

<sup>432</sup> Marx, "The Railroad-in-the-Landscape: An Iconological Reading of a Theme in American Art," 106.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*

century. Painters and photographers would continue within this purely American narrative via the Geological Survey Photographs exploring the untapped resources of the West as well as in the painting works of artists such as J. Frank Waldo and Alexis Jean Fournier which continued to document the progress of civilization and portray realistic paintings about man's presence in the landscape. Wakely's images, created in the early 1860s and exhibited in Paris in 1867, circulated during a period in which realist painting and photography created parallel if separate narratives concerning the industrial and expanding civilization in the West. They similarly portrayed "progress" or industrialization as a positive force since even its destructive qualities propelled Western expansion "in the recovery of a simpler, more natural and harmonious way of life."<sup>434</sup> This was a complex pastoral ideal in the works which was also present at the intersection of the Colorado natural landscapes and industrial mining scenes presented in the Wakely photographs.

Whitney's selection of Colorado photographs contained a majority, twenty-two out of thirty-six, which portray mines or mining towns in some fashion. Nearly all of those by George Wakely have been located and allow at least a partial examination into the mining aesthetic of early Colorado photography. The mining photographs are all *public* photographs, created for a wide audience rather than a single client, showing the sites at which mining activities took place or the towns where miners lived. Though it is known that many miner portraits were available at the time, Whitney must have made the decision not to include these, but rather chose to exclusively show the environment in which the community lived and in which potential settlers could imagine a new life. A significant aspect was also to show the development that existed within the Colorado territory's mining economy, the primary motive behind the creation of the exhibit at the Paris Exposition Universelle.

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

## 7.5 Domesticating the Mines: Towns, Mines, and Landscape

Prior to the 1860s (and even for a while after) the land West of the eastern states, particularly west of the Mississippi was portrayed as wild expanse. As the settlers of Colorado arrived with the discovery of mining riches in the late 1850s, the photographs coming from Colorado in the early years of its settlement would be the first to portray the territory as a tamed, prosperous region of the Far West. The Wakely mining images show several different aspects of life in the small mining towns of Colorado, but almost always from a distant bird's eye view. Rather than focusing on the labor or industrial aspect of mining, the images show a wider view of the community around the mines. Catherine Hult-Lewis describes the effect of this style in the mining photographs of Carleton E. Watkins (from the same period) in which he "emphasized the communities in which the mines are located, focusing on the pastoral, even domestic, details that convey a sense of a civilized town."<sup>435</sup> In the case of Watkins, Hult-Lewis argues that this style of perspective calmed the worries of investors about the rumors of lawless California mining camps as well as portraying the areas as viable tourist destinations.<sup>436</sup> While Wakely's motives are hard to know, it is clear for Whitney's Paris display that showing the wide, landscape-style photographs of mining towns could both reassure investors that Colorado mining could support an economy and community, as well as promoting to potential immigrants a civilized, even pastoral, mining town amongst the mountains. The caption summary from Wakely's image *Black Hawk and Gregory lode* (**fig. 7.35**) describes how certain domestic details in the panoramic view could inform the viewer of the civilized necessities that exist there: "Shows the Presbyterian Church with a spire, on a hillside, and commercial buildings with signs that read: Wholesale & Retail Groceries, Commission House, Dry Goods and Wholesale & Re[tail] Meat Mar[ket]. Lumber piles, and horse-drawn covered wagons are near false-front buildings." Not only does it show the conveniences to entice potential immigrants, but the prominent church on the hillside must have been a reassuring feature to investors or settlers

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<sup>435</sup> Hult-Lewis, "The Mining Photographs of Carleton Watkins, 1858-1891, and the Origins of Corporate Photography.," 87.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-88.

alike. Similar Wakely views were included such as *Central City* (**fig. 7.46**), which shows a similar perspective of the neighboring mining settlement, in which can be easily read the names of businesses such as Central City Bakery, Young American Clothing Hall, Stoves, Concert Hall and Billiard Room, amongst others. In both photographs the development of houses winds through the valley into the distance, creating a scenically appealing sense of development and space. The photograph of the town of Empire City (**fig. 7.37**) offers a bird's-eye view with a different appeal as it shows a residential area with houses and a storefront amongst trees, at the foot of a hillside. Rather than the urban environment of the Black Hawk and Central City with their tight rows of houses and businesses, the town of Empire was shown to provide a community amongst the mines, where trees have been preserved around the log cabins, and a rural small-town settlement exists in a pastoral and economically thriving setting with the tracks of mines visible up the hillside. As with most of the mining town photographs, lumber piles and wagons are strewn about amongst the buildings, creating a rough but developing feel. The photograph of the *Mines of North Empire* (**fig. 7.38**) captures a similar view which focuses on the mining infrastructure and roads in the hillside above North Empire with log cabins in the foreground. Visible behind the ridge of the hill are more mountains in the distance, creating a kind of scenic landscape view of the mining development. The image is one of the more industrial and intrusive examples of the mining aesthetic, though even as it acts as an illustration of Greeley's negative impression of mining's effect: "earth distorted into all manner of ungainly heaps and ridges, hills half torn or washed away, and the residue left in as repulsive shape as can well be conceived, roads intersected and often turned to mire by ditches," the balanced composition allows for the invasive development to blend into the landscape.<sup>437</sup> Even though the line where the timber has been clear-cut through the wilderness is visible along the ridge, the rolling hills in the background allow for a spacious expanse to exist outside the development.

The rural domesticity seen in the photographs of Empire becomes even more pastoral and serene in the portrayal of the town of Montgomery. The town of Montgomery was shown in three

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<sup>437</sup> Horace Greeley, *An Overland Journey, from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* (New York: C.M. Saxton, Barker & Co., 1860), 292.

separate photographs, in the first, (**fig. 7.39**), the town is shown from above with the town full of log cabins and a storefront in the foreground, while the hillside rises up behind, plundered for the timber to furnish the town seen below, and with mining roads cutting diagonally into the hills. The other view of Montgomery, (**fig. 7.40**), is quite a contrast, as the town is barely visible set against the background in a serene mountain and lake scene. The photograph closely resembles Wakely's landscape of Twin Lakes, with both taken from ground level, placing the lake in the foreground in front of hills behind. This image of Montgomery differs in the way that it domesticates the town, as it creates a safe, pastoral setting to contrast with the reputation for "rough and tumble" mining camps. These images would surely appeal to settlers and immigrants looking to come and make a life in the West as single men, but also in order to bring along their family as well. Even more, his scene of Montgomery from this distant vantage point places the man-made point of interest within a picturesque scene. Mining as pointed out by Francaviglia created communities made up primarily of males in its early boom years. Though he states some anthropologists have claimed that mining is symbolically female "mother earth yielding her mineral treasures," it is more common in American history to adopt the Judeo-Christian narrative which places "men in these occupations as far back as Old Testament times."<sup>438</sup> This was not always the case, for example, British women and children worked in underground coal mines in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century until being banned by Queen Victoria, after which they continued to work above ground.<sup>439</sup> However, the Western American mines only included few women, and even then it was usually in gold panning; overall mining in the Far West embodies a legacy of masculinity. While a growing female population was a prominent sign of a mining communities' success, the initial establishment of mines in the West was predominantly a group of male argonauts.<sup>440</sup> This photograph of Montgomery is a suitable comparison to the Carleton Watkins' mining photograph *Benton Works* (**fig. 7.42**) which Hult-Lewis describes as

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<sup>438</sup> Francaviglia, *Hard Places: Reading the Landscape of America's Historic Mining Districts*, 112.

<sup>439</sup> Helen Pidd, "Why 'pit Brow Lasses' Were Coal Mining's Unsung Heroines," *The Guardian*, October 14, 2018, sec. Culture.

<sup>440</sup> Francaviglia elaborates that though women did at times work underground and as laborers or mining engineers, this was not the norm. However the female population grew as a mining site became more successful and stable, contributing in many essential ways to the success and survival of the community.

evoking “a quiet, though decidedly masculine, domesticity.”<sup>441</sup> Everything that Watkins does in the Benton image, Wakely executes two-fold. The Montgomery image is, even more than the Benton one, a bucolic, splendid landscape; however rather than the placement of Benton Mills to challenge this bucolic nature, Wakely nestles Montgomery comfortably where the hills meet the serene lake, evoking an agreeable, and picturesque landscape, and leaving the subject of mining mostly out of view.<sup>442</sup> In contrast to the first Montgomery image (**fig. 7.39**)—which decidedly resembled the more rough and masculine mining camps—this lake scene invites not just courageous argonauts, but families, women and domesticity. The result is a domestication of the mining town in which the technological and industrial subjects are cast aside in favor of a peaceful, idealized community.

It would seem as though there is more intention here on the part of J.P. Whitney in his curation of the Colorado images, and while that might be true overall, the final Montgomery image and its title point to a particular intention on the part of Wakely. The third Montgomery image (**fig. 7.41**) was titled by Wakely as *Waterfalls at Montgomery* and while it indeed features a cascade as the subject at close range, it equally shows the mining mill operating with the power of that waterfall. The caption for the image, kept in the Denver Public Library reads: “View of wooden water wheel and an arrastre used for grinding ore in Montgomery (Park County), Colorado. A flume and probably a wooden platform are on the hillside near waterfalls and a creek.” Wakely focused purely on the waterfall in his title, romanticizing, or even ignoring, the industrial presence alongside the natural feature. It would seem that Wakely, in his photographs of mining towns overall, was seeking to portray them as in harmony with nature as much as possible. His photographs were usually more focused on the landscape and the natural scenery than the industrial element present. Though Watkins would go on to become a prominent if not “the” preeminent landscape photographer of the nineteenth century American West, and Wakely would disappear into obscurity, the mining images of Wakely are, at times, more pleasingly executed and with more intention,

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<sup>441</sup> Hult-Lewis, “The Mining Photographs of Carleton Watkins, 1858-1891, and the Origins of Corporate Photography.,” 96.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

particularly in the case of Montgomery (**fig. 7.40**), placing himself far enough away to allow the mining town of Montgomery to disappear into the valley and in the reflection of the peaceful mountain lake. Rather than the “movement and energy” created by the receding ore tracks in Watkins’ *Benton Works* image, Wakely creates stillness and peace in photographs like *Montgomery*.<sup>443</sup>

The last several photographs represent varied views. There is an image recorded in Whitney’s list of photographic illustrations as *Gregory Lode* which may be the image (**fig. 7.43**) which has a handwritten title on the Denver Public Library print that reads *Gregory lode looking south, Gregory store and F. Smith Bank 1861*. If this is in fact the image included in Whitney’s Paris exhibit, then it offers a completely different style of photograph which was taken before most of the other images. The prospectors are posed in front of the Gregory Store, with the Gregory Mine visible up the hillside, and is labelled as having been taken in 1861, prior to the other images taken closer to 1864. The photograph is at closer range than most of Wakely’s other images, but is nonetheless taken from a high angle, seemingly on the hillside across.<sup>444</sup>

The majority of Wakely’s images don’t include visible settlers, and while this might have been circumstantial since mining town populations were in a period of flux during the mid-1860s, even a depression in 1864, the towns were yet to be permanently abandoned. Whether or not this was his intention, the effect is a portrayal of towns that seem both developed and abandoned at the same time. Furthermore, the depiction of an empty town results in a tone more similar to a landscape photograph. It seems a stylistic choice on the part of Wakely, whose style developed over the years, from the roughly composed image of *Gregory Lode* in 1861 (**fig. 7.43**) with its posed subjects, to the serene view of *Montgomery* (**fig. 7.40**). Wakely tended toward the picturesque and a more landscape style the more he photographed mining sites. Excluding the human element caused the wide town views to feel more artful, resulting in a timelessness that allows the viewer, the

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<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>444</sup> Though it must be noted that all of the Wakely images are relatively wide views, always capturing the surrounding landscape around his focus, with the image of “Waterfalls at Montgomery” as the only potential outlier.



potential migrant or local prospector, to impose their own imagination on the place. Of course, it is also possible that Wakely sought the abandoned feel of the empty towns in order to show the development and potential of the area during a time of financial depression and “process mania” in the local mining industry. Portraying the towns as a landscape, and in that effort, excluding humans, represents a style on the part of Wakely that Whitney must have appreciated. In order to show cultured Europeans the rough mining mills of the Far West, Whitney surely appreciated having the landscape style of photographs, which could be easily understood within their existing visual language. For this reason or another, Whitney included no photographs which sought to portray the life of the pioneer. He did not include portraits of minors, or Wakely’s most famous photo of Mademoiselle Carolista walking a tightrope in downtown Denver. He curated a culturally constructed and man-made landscape of Colorado which existed as a canvas on which European viewers could impose their own story. Within his highly decorated and curated display of ores, he chose to display photographs that allowed for the creation of what Volker Barth describes as an “independent imaginary world,” which was a created view of Colorado, mostly separate of human experience and resulting in an aesthetic which focused on the landscape and the geographic qualities.<sup>445</sup>

Whitney included a Wakely image of another small mining town titled *Buckskin Joe and Snowy Range* (**fig. 7.44**). Taken from the ground, the picture captures the town at the human level, looking down a desolate road of log cabins with a wheelbarrow on the side of the road in the foreground, and the snowy mountain range in the background. Though it strays from Wakely’s tendency to photograph the town wide and from above, it is consistent in that there isn’t a settler in sight, though the town was not abandoned for many years later. The quiet desolate scene is serious in tone; Wakely must have preferred the empty feel of what appears to be a ghost town to the more bustling moments. This photograph is somewhat anomalous in the collection as it neither domesticates, nor accentuates the industrial activity; it does, however, in its quiet, emptiness evoke

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<sup>445</sup> Barth, “The Micro-History of a World Event: Intention, Perception and Imagination at the Exposition Universelle de 1867,” 22.

a kind of calmness. With the absence of visible inhabitants, it allows the viewer to project their own expectations onto the environment. For urban viewers in Paris, imagining a quiet life in a small Colorado mountain town must have offered an enticing play on the imagination. For Wakely though, it seems merely on trend as he captured these towns in a quiet artful way, accentuating the surrounding geology and capturing the small town as a landscape, not dependent on the inclusion of humans to bring it life.

The last photo is that of *Twin Lakes* (**fig. 7.50**), perhaps the most classic landscape photograph in the collection. A man and woman sit on a boulder in the foreground, with the snowy peaks in the background rising above one of the lakes. The view implies many ideological inheritances in its composition. Stylistically this picturesque scene bridges the visual gap between Wakely's Colorado to the Eastern U.S. and even Europe and provides an image that can be universally appealing in its representation of traditional composition and natural beauty. Sailor suggests that the use of the picturesque style, for example, in nineteenth century Western landscape scenes visually links "to the rest of America" in that the familiar aesthetic may have "downplayed physical distance and psychological remoteness."<sup>446</sup> It is of course, an example of inherited European picturesque style, and yet the way in which the subjects were placed in the composition points to an entirely different way of identifying with the landscape. As an example of settlers identifying with their new home, this image can be read as a posed environmental portrait, of the kind taken in other areas of the West, with the subject posed in their surroundings while faced to the camera. These types of portraits often place the subject in front of an object of pride, something they constructed or put work into, be it a sod-house, a mine, or even the particularly interesting case of the destruction of the St. Louis mound.<sup>447</sup> The Wakely photograph *Gregory Lode* (**fig. 7.43**), which portrays the men posing in front of the store and mining sluice is geographically and

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<sup>446</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, xxv.

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. Thomas M. Easterly executed half plate daguerreotypes between 1852 and 1868 which show the destruction of a Native American dirt mound in St. Louis, Missouri, many of the images feature the settlers posed on and around the mound throughout the stages of its destruction.

chronologically a closer example. However, in this case much like in Wakely's Monument Creek photographs, subjects are posed subtly within the scene, having their photo taken with the surroundings as it has come to embody an important part of their identity. In contrast, take the European examples of photographs by French photographers Rousset (**fig. 5.30**) and Maxwell-Lyte (**fig. 5.25**). The subjects' placement in the compositions is similar, however in both cases the subject is turned away from the camera, posed as though admiring the scene. There is a tendency for American subjects of the period to pose as one would for a portrait within the wider environmental scene, often surrounded by objects of their life: homes, a stagecoach, animals, or tools. In this case, I would argue, the settlers pose against the beautiful mountain scenery creating meaning in the same vein as when posed against something they constructed. They held the same kind of pride as they identified with the majestic landscape which, though they didn't build, they adopted, and they travelled far across dangerous terrain to reach, and for varying amounts of time they had led struggling pioneer existences to survive in. Writings from the period point to a kind of transformation of character and appearance once they had endured life in the Colorado mining towns, such as this observation by Taylor during his summer trip through the Gregory Gulch in 1866:

People [...] are, perhaps (many of them), so glad to escape from restraint, that they are more natural, and hence more interesting than in the older States [...] it is sometimes difficult to recognize the staid New Englander in the sunburnt individual in sombrero and riding-boots, who smokes his pipe, carries his pocket-flask, and tells any amount of rollicking stories. He has simply cast off his assumed shell and is himself; and I must confess I like him all the better.<sup>448</sup>

The settlers, it seemed, were fundamentally transformed by their new home and lifestyle from the Eastern American or European that they were before they came to the Colorado. A studio portrait would have been insufficient to express this new identity as the landscape in which they lived formed such an integral part of it. There was a cultural identity that was geographically specific and their complex relationship with the land which either blessed them with riches or cursed them with none formed and shaped them into a changed version of themselves. This is a landscape

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<sup>448</sup> Taylor, *Colorado: A Summer Trip.*, 58.

photograph, but it is also a portrait. It is an heir to the legacy of the daguerreotype, “the vehicle which democratized portraiture,” and as a result, produced complex, personal expressions of the pioneer experience in the West.<sup>449</sup> The Western photograph in 1867 provided a contrast to the Parisian studio portraits, in the wealth of information that can be expressed in the image. As daguerreotype historian John Wood states, the daguerreotype “removed the portrait from the sole province and gaze of the aristocrat and presented to the common man and woman individual pictures of themselves they could actually own.”<sup>450</sup> To follow the daguerreotype, the photograph placed the camera at the frontier, captured pioneers at the far reach of Western civilization and recorded facts and artistic scenes of personal importance, which would become a cultural trend with the construction of a Western American aesthetic characterized predominantly by the geographic image. Here lies the importance of these local Western photographs: they represent a divergence with the European or even Eastern American landscape image. European photographers went out exploring in search of a scene, they sought, like the painter, to create or capture a beautiful image. R.J Fowler suggested that the British were perhaps superior to the continental French or Swiss photographers because they captured their landscape images in England, in their homeland, rather than travelling to other landscapes.<sup>451</sup> They considered it unnecessary to leave one’s surroundings in search of a more impressive landscape. This mentality—that the photograph captured abroad—detached from one’s own country and landscape was lesser, makes the case for the particular importance of photographs such as Wakely’s. Far from merely indexical “economic and social documentation” or “middle-class egotism,” the images represented an expression of emigrant life at the American frontier and circulated as prints and engravings across the ocean to give an impression of life at the frontier.<sup>452</sup> They are evidence of an early Colorado culture, which was aesthetically more complex than the stereotype of simple mining portraits.

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<sup>449</sup> John Wood, *The Scenic Daguerreotype: Romanticism and Early Photography*, Book, Whole (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

<sup>451</sup> Fowler, “Paris, April 29, 1867,” 212.

<sup>452</sup> Wood, *The Scenic Daguerreotype: Romanticism and Early Photography*, 2.

The culture was represented by a lifestyle that was specific to Colorado. Within the culture there was distinction between what you could be called, depending on when you arrived in the territory. If you arrived prior to February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1861, you were known as a “pioneer” since “previous to that time, this region was little known except to Indians and the occasional explorers,” and if you arrived after this date through August 1, 1876, you were known as a territorial son or daughter of Colorado, as this was the date in which it became a territory.<sup>453</sup> The culture also came to possess a certain refinement as described during Taylor’s 1866 visit:

The degree of refinement which I have found in the remote mining districts of Colorado has been a great surprise. California, after ten years' settlement, retained a proportion of the rough, original mining element; but Montana has acted as a social strainer to Colorado; or, rather, as a miner's pan, shaking out a vast deal of dirt and leaving the gold behind.<sup>454</sup>

Colorado was in fact less than ten years settled at the time of his writing, and yet his account tells of a diverse, cultured population; a drastically different story than the more common tales of rough, mining town life, and pointedly different than the mining towns of California. This Western style of portrait represents one of the ways in which the Colorado and Western settlers utilized photography to identify with the specific landscape of their adopted home, beyond the mines. The settlers of Colorado had a meaningful relationship with the land and geographical qualities of their adopted home, and so it goes to suit that the use of landscape images was, from the outset ubiquitous, and fundamental in the formation of a Colorado identity and aesthetic.

As Samuel Bowles states in his 1869 Colorado guide, 1866 and 1867 “were the kernel years of Colorado; they proved her; they have made her.”<sup>455</sup> Bowles explained how in these two years circumstances became difficult for the mining settlers “affairs became desperate; the population shrunk; mines were abandoned; mills stopped; eastern capital, tired of waiting for promised returns, dried up its fountains; and the secrets of the rich ores seemed unfathomable.” During these two years, not coincidentally during the period of preparation and exhibition for the Paris Exposition of

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<sup>453</sup> Maria Davies McGrath, “The Real Pioneers of Colorado,” 1934, 5.

<sup>454</sup> Taylor, *Colorado: A Summer Trip*., 131.

<sup>455</sup> Samuel Bowles, *The Switzerland of America: A Summer Vacaton [Sic] in the Parks and Mountains of Colorado*, Book, Whole (New York; Springfield, Mass; S. Bowles & Co, 1869), 146.

1867, those who lived in Colorado territory had to face many challenges or leave. These difficult years in between the early boom of discovery and the prosperity that would come in the years after, forced those that remained to become “self-reliant, and, believing that they had a good thing out here.”<sup>456</sup> While it’s not certain that Wakely remained for too long after these images were taken, sometime prior to or during 1864, it does seem that he was attempting to portray this belief. There are rarely visible humans in his photographs of these towns, and while it is possible that the town populations were in decline at the time of the photographs, some would come back to thrive. Wakely was part of the non-mining population which up until the years following 1867 depended on the success of the industry. He had vested interest in the success of the community, and he did his part in attempting to make artful representations that contributed to an appealing aesthetic of his local community.

## **7.6 Colorado: A rare success for the U.S.**

Whitney’s effort was a success, both personally and for Colorado. He regularly sent news back to Colorado from the Exposition which was published in various newspapers such as one (**fig. 7.45**) in the *Daily Miners’ Register*. The appearance was an important one for Whitney, who made a favorable impression and reputation for himself, while creating a positive reputation for Colorado – aesthetically and economically – amongst European connections that spurred an interest in Colorado and its resources. The successful exhibition prompted European scientists to make exhaustive examinations of the ores, of which the reports “caused the investment of much foreign capital” into the mines of Colorado.<sup>457</sup> During the Exposition, the Colorado commissioner received an honor which “catapulted him [Whitney] into great prominence.”<sup>458</sup> Whitney partook in the grand ceremony of Emperor Napoléon III, in which he was bestowed a gold medal in the presence of

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<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado: Embracing Accounts of the Pre-Historic Races and Their Remains*, 2nd ed. (Colorado: Blakely Printing Company, 1889), 440.

<sup>458</sup> Morrow, “Joel Parker Whitney, The Richest Man in Placer County,” 14.

Empress Eugenie, the American Ambassador, the Czar of Russia, the Kings of Prussia, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Spain, and other monarchies, the Prince of Wales, the Shah of Persia, the Sultan of Turkey, Bismarck, and other most prominent European celebrities.<sup>459</sup> The gold medal was a public highlight for Whitney, which allowed for an impressive and exploitable reputation for himself and for Colorado. He proudly wrote to the people of Colorado on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1867, announcing that “in the published list of awards for exhibits of minerals, at the very head of all ores, those of any district or nation, is that to Colorado ores.”<sup>460</sup> Whitney also benefitted from a personal visit of the Emperor to his “ores” room, which he recounts in his memoir:

Not long after the prize awards at Paris I was informed by my assistant at the exposition in the afternoon of my visit that the Emperor, in the forenoon, had personally made a prolonged examination of the Colorado ores, accompanied by Mr. Ruggles, our American Vice-Commissioner-General, and this was afterwards confirmed by Mr. Ruggles, who also informed me that the Emperor had requested him to have the Colorado Commissioner visit him at the Tuileries, to whom he would give an audience.<sup>461</sup>

Whitney thus enjoyed a private audience with the Emperor Napoléon III which he describes with detail:

He [Ruggles] accompanied me to the interview with the Emperor at the Tuileries, where we received a pleasant reception, quite free from any formality. I had previously had bound up my three exposition works in English, French, and German on large paper, with maps of the United States and Colorado, and a photograph of the Colorado exhibit. This book I had bound in elegant form at the Emperor’s bookbindery, where all books added to his library were rebound in pale green morocco, embossed on the front with the Imperial coat-of-arms. This book I presented to the Emperor, who pleasantly received it, and entered into a conversation about Colorado and its resources. The Emperor spoke English perfectly with but slight accent, and I was rather surprised with his apparent knowledge of the western regions of the United States, and of the northern States of Mexico, and upon my expressing my surprise he informed me that he had lately received for the government special reports on Chihuahua, Durango, and other Mexican States from commissioners sent out for the purpose. I took pains to impress upon the Emperor the conspicuous importance I believed Colorado would gain in the future from its practically inexhaustible mineral wealth, which resulted in his conclusion to have a commissioner sent out to examine and report officially upon the subject. This afterwards led to the appointment of Louis Simonin, author of *La Vie S[ou]uterraine*, a prominent French work on mines, and of other mining works, and Professor of Geology in the French “Ecole des Mines.” Monsieur Simonin was also a prominent

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<sup>459</sup> Ibid.

<sup>460</sup> Joel Parker Whitney, “Our Paris Letter,” *Daily Miners’ Register*, July 24, 1867, Volume V edition.

<sup>461</sup> Whitney, *Reminiscences of a Sportsman*, 183.

contributor to the *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, in which after his visit he gave extensive accounts of Colorado and his experiences there.<sup>462</sup>

The success of the exhibit indeed resulted in Whitney's association with various Parisian investors and dignitaries, including the traveler, ethnographer and Americanist Louis Simonin, who in the fall of 1867 embarked on a trip for the Rockies along with Whitney and William Heine, a German traveler and philanthropist who had joined the Union army in the Civil War and then served as attaché to the American legation in Paris, as well as a prominent Crédit Foncier official, a Mr. Geise.<sup>463</sup> A four-part narrative of this trip by Simonin was published by *Le Tour du Monde* beginning in 1868, the first "modern" report on the American West to appear in this magazine, which was to become a prime source of narrative and illustration on the topic after 1870. This report was richly illustrated with engravings of images from the Far West, including scenes and portraits portraying Native people, and many landscape images derived from photographs procured by Whitney. The firm Hachette had these images electrotyped and these photographs might well be the set, now missing, which W. Heine reportedly contributed to the Paris Société de Géographie in 1868, the first entry of American photographs into that collection.<sup>464</sup> Many of the engravings were created from the Wakely images exhibited in Paris, including the gate of the Garden of the Gods scene, as exhibited by the photograph (**fig. 6.9**) and its E. Cicéri engraving (**fig. 6.15**). There were many Wakely photographs of Colorado scenes exhibited in Paris that were later circulated as *Le Tour du Monde* illustrations. The illustrations included reproductions of photographs portraying Garden of the Gods (**fig. 6.15, fig. 7.58**), Monument Creek (**fig. 7.26**), Central City (**fig. 7.47**), Twin Lakes (**fig. 7.49**), Georgetown (**fig. 7.51**), Denver (**fig. 7.59**) and Empire City (**fig. 7.53**). Many of the images were also circulated as engravings in *Harper's Monthly Magazine*. In one example, the

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<sup>462</sup> Ibid., 185. Whitney quotes that Simonin made extensive accounts of Colorado in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*. While Simonin did contribute to *Revue des Deux Mondes*, all of his extensive accounts of Colorado have been found in *Le Tour du Monde*.

<sup>463</sup> David Karel, *Dictionnaire Des Artistes de Langue Française En Amérique Du Nord: Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs, Graveurs, Photographes et Orfèvres* (Québec: Musée de Québec : Presses de l'université Laval, 1992), 750–53.

<sup>464</sup> François Brunet et al., eds., *Images of the West: Survey Photography in French Collections, 1860 - 1880 ; [in Conjunction with the Exhibition "Images of the West: Survey Photography in French Collections, 1860 - 1880" Held at the Musée d'Art Américain Giverny, Terra Foundation for American Art, from July 10 to October 31, 2007]* (Chicago, Ill: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2007), 27, 124.



photograph of Central City (**fig. 7.46**) by George Wakely can be seen as an engraving in *Le Tour du Monde* in France (**fig. 7.47**) and *Harper's Monthly Magazine* in the United States (**fig. 7.48**). In some cases, the engravings help to confirm which Colorado photographs were actually exhibited in Paris, since their reproduction can be seen in the publication.

Wakely's photographs were circulated as engravings in the U.S. in a June 1867 edition of *Harper's Monthly* magazine. The engravings from Wakely photographs included images of Denver (**fig. 7.57**), Central City (**fig. 7.48**), Black Hawk (**fig. 7.36**) and Empire (**fig. 7.55**). There was no artist named as the creator of the images, nor was it stated that the engravings were created from a photograph, as was stated in *Le Tour du Monde* reproductions. For this reason, it has been up until this point unknown from what source these images were created. The use of these engravings in the American publication and the use of separate drawings from the photographs in the French publication point to a popularity of the photographs amongst publishers at the time. The use of Wakely photographs to create engravings in both American and French publications make the otherwise unknown photographer an important source of imagery of Colorado from the period.

### **7.7 The Colorado exhibit as a shift toward a geographic aesthetic**

The primary intentions of the organizers of the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 were to show the cutting edge of progress across the world's countries and cultures; to condense the world "spatially and temporally" in order "to illustrate the fundamental components of human civilization."<sup>465</sup> To analyze the Exposition, one must take individual exhibits as points of study so as to identify the specific acts of cultural creation within each one, rather than generalizing broadly across regions or nations. This example offers a case in which one can generalize within a specific exhibit, rather than generalizing amongst multiple cases within the Exposition. It serves as an illustration that a cultural assumption or generalization cannot be made across whole nations or

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<sup>465</sup> Barth, "The Micro-History of a World Event: Intention, Perception and Imagination at the Exposition Universelle de 1867," 24.

civilizations. Rather, we can observe an “ongoing process of interpretation resulting from people negotiating the pathways of their lives in their particular corners of the world,” amongst the array of displays within the Exposition.<sup>466</sup> Within this curated display, one is offered a snapshot of the life and business of the territory at a specific moment, highly subjective and yet representative of the Colorado settlers’ needs: investment and immigration, by way of materially presenting its geological and economic potential.

This collection of objects and ideas formed what Volker Barth called an “independent imaginary world” which, in the context of this Universal Exposition, sought to create an imaginary visual experience within the mind of the spectator rather than a true representation of a real site from outside the gates of the Exposition.<sup>467</sup> The visual images offered by the Colorado exhibit facilitated this new imaginary world in the mind of the spectator. In *La Conquête de l’Ouest*, Tangi Villerbu lays out the history of the narrative and of visual images of the Far West presented in France, helping to reveal the groundwork on which the Far Western story existed in the visual mind of the French spectator. Colorado displayed an individual identity and geographic aesthetic at the Exposition Universelle of 1867, however that singular display was to be a new part of an enduring Western narrative in the mind of the French audience. The tours of live Native Americans, and James Fenimore Cooper’s novels served as the imaginary (or subconscious) world on which this this new geological and geographical image was added. The shortcomings or faults of the Territory were left out of the future-focused narrative, which was a necessity in the utopian, conflict-free world required by the French organizers.<sup>468</sup> Rather, this exchange, this international display, represents the earliest part of a trend amongst Far Western states and territories to form a new identity based on their landscape and geological environment. This trend encompasses the tendencies from many layers of contributors: photographers, investors, governmental

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<sup>466</sup> Tim Oakes and Patricia Lynn Price, *The Cultural Geography Reader*, Book, Whole (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York; Routledge, 2008), 30.

<sup>467</sup> Barth, “The Micro-History of a World Event: Intention, Perception and Imagination at the Exposition Universelle de 1867,” 22.

<sup>468</sup> This accounts for almost all mention of Native American presence, conflict and war (a sharp turn from the former Western American narrative in France based on exotic interest in the Indigenous people of North America), as well as the financial challenges the Territory was and had been experiencing for years leading to the Exposition.

commissioners who in this time leading up to the formation of the Geological Survey efforts, were supporting and promoting the aesthetic and technological value of Western American land. The aesthetic and economy of the Far West formed in conjunction with one another, rather than in a parallel or complementary manner. The Colorado display at the Paris Exposition of 1867 illustrates how that interconnectedness expressed the greater ideas behind the community's survival: determination, resourcefulness, and imagination.

The case of the Colorado exhibit features many levels of influence, most notably that of J.P. Whitney, who as an investor rather than a local citizen, cast a powerful and subjective influence on the final state of the exhibit. Even if the exhibit allows for a mere glimpse of the evolving culture in Colorado, it is an intentional and specific example which was curated to serve a purpose. Behind the goal of promoting the territory and its resources, we are able to see aspects of the early years of culture creation within the territory and its inhabitants. This culture, experienced through photographs and writings, clearly expressed a geographically specific identity, which included aspects of imagination, creative exploration, and refinement in addition to the common themes of determination, courage, and perseverance. A close study of the photographs exhibited within the exhibit allows for a specific cultural identity to be seen within the process of cultural creation amidst the rapidly fluctuating state of the Colorado territory's development. The photographs of settlers interacting amongst the rock structures of Monument Creek served as visual evidence of an intangible aspect of settler culture. Far from a singular instance, the imaginative and exploratory creativity of the settler experience was visible in the photographs sent to Paris, but more fully understood in diverse media from the period. George D. Wakely, as a frontier photographer, adapted inherited landscape and visual styles and applied them to his specific community resulting in a more nuanced aesthetic of Colorado mining towns, contrasting with those of California and other Far Western communities.

The Colorado display, though it was considered the most organized and pleasantly arranged, certainly falls short of the primary intention of the organizers which was to show "the cutting edge

of progress within each sector.”<sup>469</sup> The Midwest and Eastern U.S. were a different case, presenting grand prize and cutting-edge accomplishments such as the McCormick reapers and Chickering or Steinway pianos. Colorado presented instead a display of its potential. These efforts resulted in an early circulation of images which promoted an aesthetic for the territory of Colorado and the Far West more generally, linked to its natural resources and landscape rather than the Native people. Whitney’s boosting spirit contributed to these results, though of course he did not singlehandedly create the trend of a new “aesthetics of the West,” where pictorial appeal met economics and geography, and of which photography became the signal medium in 1867. Whitney was utilizing photographs (without crediting the photographers) as documentary or environmental illustrations—and the total absence of any commentary on Wakely’s pictures shows that they were received as such—but more importantly he also used a landscape that invited fascination as advertisement for a regional economy that was yet struggling. This Colorado exhibit foreshadowed the use and popularity of landscape photographs to come.

Whitney, Wakely, and the Colorado display in Paris are absent from most Colorado histories. The *Colorado Magazine* publication of the former Colorado Historical Society published an article in 1956 mentioning Wakely, written by Opal M. Harber whose 1956 Master’s Thesis from the University of Denver described at length the histories of around fifty early photographers of Colorado, and listed sixty more of whom very little was known. Though Harber and Peter Palmquist have published very useful biographies of the man and his work, neither is complete, with both finishing his story following his return to Colorado (Leadville) in 1879. In fact, Wakely lived quite a migratory existence following his residency in Denver, living most of his time from the early 1880s through his death in 1922 in Texas working as a photographer, and at times as a piano dealer. Despite his long and prolific career, his commercial prints of the landscapes of Colorado and stereographs of Washington D.C. remain the most abundant in collections. Whitney, also mostly absent from Colorado history, can be found in one volume: Steven Mehls’ *The New Empire of the*

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<sup>469</sup> Barth, “The Micro-History of a World Event: Intention, Perception and Imagination at the Exposition Universelle de 1867,” 24.

*Rockies: A History of Northeast Colorado*. In the 1984 publication by the Bureau of Land Management, much credit is given to the role played by both Whitney and Simonin. Mehls concluded his paragraph concerning Whitney's "spectacular" endeavor of early promotion and Simonin's Colorado exploration and subsequent publications in France with the generous proclamation, "while no definite records of the capital these ventures brought to the region are available, all indications are that promoters were successful in their work. This hard-selling Colorado mines to Europeans, firmly established by 1870, continued, through local entrepreneurs, well into the twentieth century." Liston E. Leyendecker's 1969 article in *Colorado Magazine* explored the story of Whitney and the Colorado presence in the Paris Exposition, however prior to my research I haven't found that anyone identified the photographs within the display or observed their role within a history of the Western aesthetic.

While it is likely these ventures and others helped pull the territory out of an economic slump, it is also clear that the circulation of Colorado imagery by Whitney and Simonin, was an early use of geographically related photography, which in its intrinsic connection to the exploration and development of the Western lands also contributed to an emerging Western American aesthetic.<sup>470</sup> From its first presentation at the Expositions Universelles, the U.S. had begun a trend. The West would continue to be presented in France in greater number by the exhibition of its minerals, agricultural products and photographs, "massively presented in 1889 and particularly in 1900" as well as at Exhibitions in between.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Mehls, "The New Empire of the Rockies: A History of Northeast Colorado," 83. The British and Colorado Mining Bureau begun by Robert Orchard Old would act as a promotional agent in England for several years, followed by other agencies which would soon imitate its methods to promote Colorado mining stocks in major European cities between late 1860s and 1870s.

<sup>471</sup> Villerbu, *La conquête de l'Ouest*, 121.

## **Part 4. The California Exhibition**

## Chapter 8. The Idea of California

### 8.1 Renovating European Perception

The representation of California at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 provides a prominent case of the trans-Atlantic imperial history that shaped perception at this international fair. For several hundred years, the California region was of much interest to European powers, but unlike the conquered regions in central and eastern North America, power over California was difficult for Europeans to develop and defend due to its remote location. The California presence at the Exposition presents a specific moment of evidential study as the state evolved from its image as a maritime colony built on centuries of myth and legend into a Western American state with a more physical and material image.

For several hundred years California was a subject of literary legend in Europe and travel journals, notably those by Lapérouse and Vancouver, were the major sources that created an early understanding of the area's geographical features and culture.<sup>472</sup> The appearance of California photographs at this Paris Exposition established a new era of California's reputation and visual image. Sketches of the northern California coast circulated in published travel accounts during France, England, and Spain's exploratory years of the Alta California coast (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries). Daguerreotypes and paintings of the Gold Rush expanded visibility even more. The emergence of reproducible images in the form of collodion photography and stereographs in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century allowed for a circulation of California scenery on a new level. Not only were amateur images of California development able to be used in favor of speculation and immigration, but the technologies also found the ideal subject in California geography through the adept hands and eyes of Carleton E. Watkins and Charles Leander Weed (exhibited by Lawrence & Houseworth) whose photographs were exhibited at the Exposition. Contrary to many other well-received landscape photographs exhibited in the Exposition, the images of California held further interest. Dr. Hermann

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<sup>472</sup> La Pérouse, Jean-François De Galaup, Comte de, *Voyage de La Pérouse Autour Du Monde*, ed. L.A. Millet-Mureau, 4 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie de la République, 1797); George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean, and Round the World*, 3 vols. (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, Paternoster-Row; and J. Edwards, Pall-Mall, 1798).

Vogel, in his review of the American photography at the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle, described the appeal of the California images in comparison to Rutherford's celestial image, and explained why the exhibition of these images held such historical importance:

But the general public care little about the moon, and enjoy more by far the fine landscapes of Watkins, of California. He has exhibited a number of large pictures of the grand mountains and the gigantic vegetation of America. America is still to us a new world, and anything which gives us such a true representation as a photograph, is sure to be looked upon with wondering eyes.<sup>473</sup>

The California photographs were a popular attraction at the Exposition, and Watkins was officially rewarded with a bronze medal. In the above quote, Vogel referenced the silver-medal winning photographs of the moon exhibited by Mr. L. M. Rutherford of New York, which found more commendation from the jury, but were of less popular interest than the photographs of Watkins. The visibility of the photographs provided the attending public a further understanding of California, and in that created a new representation of America as well. No longer just a subject of speculation and myth, the photographs helped to illustrate the grandeur of Californian geography. The unbelievable size of Sequoia trees and the beauty of Yosemite Valley were no longer just the stuff of folklore. The photographs of California scenery, much like the discovery of abundant gold in its land, further showed how California lived up to its legend.

The representation of California at this Exposition was organized under the guise of the California Commissioner William P. Blake, who made public his thoughts about how the state should be represented, namely via its land and resources. The visibility and intrigue of the Far West was established by photographs and material specimens at this Exposition Universelle. The impression left in Paris in 1867 would disseminate into the public perception of California in the years to come as these images were reproduced in publications both in Europe and in America. The distillation of the California and Nevada region into a visual code of landscape features and mining methods established a new chapter in the representation of the Far West at this Exposition. The ways in which the exhibition space and the medium of photography influenced the history of

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<sup>473</sup> Dr. Hermann Vogel, "The Philadelphia Photographer," May 1867, 174.



California was part of a modernized visualization in which lens-based media including the photograph and the stereograph were both symptoms of and players in a mutating context of visual discourse.

## 8.2 A literary myth

This visual impression at the Exposition Universelle was preceded by a long history of literary myth surrounding the California region in Europe. It has been debated where the name of California first emerged, but the novel *The Adventures of Esplandián*, written around 1510 by Spanish writer Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo is a frequently referenced source. Long before Spanish explorers set eyes on the place, the novel described the island of California as a near paradise made impregnable by cliffs, headlands, and rocky coasts, with land abundant in gold.<sup>474</sup> Pertinent not only in the reference to its name, the image de Montalvo paints of a legendary California of dreams, a far western El Dorado, corresponded remarkably closely to aspects of the California of reality. Not the first destination to get this type of advance billing, California was intriguing in the way that its natural qualities of landscape, climate, and resources lived up to the legends and visions created around its myth.<sup>475</sup> As a place, California cannot be defined by its outline on a map, or even by the fertile valleys, mountain peaks, dramatic coastlines, and desert expanse that altogether form its physical landscape. When it comes to California, the physical place has been promoted by the stories which “have kept it alive in the imagination.”<sup>476</sup> This is true not just since the Gold Rush and the invention of Hollywood, it appears to be the case ever since early maps depicted it as an island separated from present-day Nevada by a narrow channel centuries before its settlement. This piece of land on the Pacific Coast embodied a spiritual promise as described by Kevin Starr: “From the beginning, California promised much. While yet barely a name on the map, it entered American

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<sup>474</sup> James D. Houston, “From El Dorado to the Pacific Rim: The Place Called California,” *California History* 68, no. 4 (1989): 174.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*

awareness as a symbol of renewal. It was a final frontier: of geography and of expectation.”<sup>477</sup> The imaginary *idea* of California, for Europeans, came along well before its colonization. Explorers dreamed of an extraordinary place at the western edge of the New World far before they ever saw it with their own eyes. This idea was created throughout several centuries before argonauts charged West in pursuit of discovered gold. Early maps and legends painted it as an offshore island at the Western extremity, and though this was geographically incorrect it was psychologically closer to the truth.

The exploration of California by foreign powers between the mid-18th to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century led to many literary accounts of California sent back to Europe. The maritime nations of France, England and Spain were the countries who most explored the new world and circulated many informative and entertaining tales of exploration. The narratives were often encyclopedic and instructive, but also offered wit and lively adventure, telling tales that created a far-away “world of romance and mystery.”<sup>478</sup> The region, home to many Indigenous tribes, was only sparsely populated by the Spanish presidio and mission settlements along some narrowly explored stretches of the coast. Since prior reports provided guidance to later explorers, the experiences often resembled each other, and thus the letters, reports, journals, and memoir accounts started to present a shared sense of California.<sup>479</sup> This began primarily with the 1786 visit by Royal French Navy Captain Jean François Galaup de Lapérouse and the three visits by British Mariner George Vancouver between 1792 and 1794. The founding classics of California travel literature were those by Lapérouse and Vancouver published in 1797 and 1798, respectively.<sup>480</sup> California historian Kevin Starr points to the watershed importance of these accounts: “As first expressions of how California struck the foreign imagination, they went far to shape the expectations of those who came after.”<sup>481</sup> The inland journeys of Lapérouse and Vancouver—the former via an abrupt route along cliffs and canyons

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<sup>477</sup> Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), vii.

<sup>478</sup> Duhaut-Cilly, Auguste and Charles Franklin Carter, “Duhaut-Cilly’s Account of California in the Years 1827-28,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1929): 131.

<sup>479</sup> Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*, 3.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*

from Monterey to Mission Carlos Borromeo at modern-day Carmel-by-the-Sea, and the latter following the San Francisco peninsula over an easy, rolling landscape from Mission Dolores to Mission Santa Clara—proved to become prototypes for future journeys, recoverable pilgrimages over the next fifty years in which “visitors took imaginative possession of the awaiting landscape.”<sup>482</sup> Not only were Lapérouse and Vancouver creating an enduring and widespread *idea* of California, their judgments on the weak status of Spanish colonization in the territory led to the first challenges to Spanish control of the region.

After Lapérouse, the early 19<sup>th</sup> century brought the tales of French voyagers including Duhaut-Cilly, de Mofras, and du Petit-Thouars; these three produced the most valuable accounts but were certainly not the only French explorers to set foot on California in those years.<sup>483</sup> These printed reports allowed for expectations and information to be passed from one explorer to the next, and regardless of language it seems, since Duhaut-Cilly referenced George Vancouver’s influence most often in his narrative. In 1839, the French Foreign Office employed Count Eugène Duflot de Mofras to explore the northern Mexican region for future French settlement. He hoped to establish a New France in California, redeeming the fallen glories of Louisiana and Quebec. De Mofras even wrote a secret plan (in the appendix to his report) which gave a detailed plan for a French take-over of California. Though this plan would gather dust in Paris, his report *Exploration du Territoire de l’Orégon, des Californies, et de la Mer Vermeille* (1844), is said to be the best report written by a European prior to the American control of California.<sup>484</sup> De Mofras emphasized the fertile land and abundant pastures, and his account only included one image, a sketch (**fig. 8.1**) of *New California*. The voyage of Duhaut-Cilly beginning in 1827 also published an account which included a similar

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<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> For more on the French imperial interests and voyages to California consult Rufus Kay Willys, “French Imperialists in California,” *CHSQ*, 8 (1929), 116-29; Abraham P. Nasatir, *French Activities in California* (Stanford, 1945); and the following reports: Jean François de Lapérouse, *Voyage Autour Du Monde*, trans. By Charles N. Rudkin as *The First French Expedition to California* (Los Angeles, 1959); Duhaut-Cilly, and Charles Franklin Carter. “Duhaut-Cilly’s Account of California in the Years 1827-28.” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1929): 130–66; Nasatir, Abraham P. “The French Consulate in California, 1843-1856.” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1932): 195–223;

<sup>484</sup> Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*, 9–10.

illustration (**fig. 8.2**) of Monterey Bay. This history of travel literature showed a marked interest of the French to colonize the California region. Following the American seizure of control of the California territory, French migrants nonetheless continued to settle in the San Francisco area during and after the Gold Rush. As journalist Etienne Derbec wrote in 1850, “On our poor little maps of California printed in France, the San Joaquin is shown as a river flowing between the California mountains and the sea, a short distance from San Francisco, in the midst of a rich plain which its waters cover with gold dust every year. The editors had even taken the pains to gild that precious plain on their maps.”<sup>485</sup> Taking the time to illustrate fields of gold on the map of California, the French took the literary legend of California and imposed on it a physical representation of its beauty and riches. The visual representation of California continued to take on a material and geographic angle. Along with other maritime explorers, the French were responsible for continually building a legendary California reputation. This *idea* of California as a land of promise and mystery separated it from the rest of the United States, as no other areas had been preceded by such promise and legendary myth. Following fifty years of French exploration and colonial interest began the Gold Rush era, during which some 30,000 immigrants came to California from France alone. French newspapers and correspondence sent an abundance of information back to France in the twenty years leading up to the Exposition Universelle of 1867.

During the Gold Rush, news of California gold reached a depression-stricken Paris and resulted in a frenzy. The Parisian newspapers, writes Abraham Nasatir, “published every scrap of information about California.”<sup>486</sup> French consul to the King, Jacques Antoine Moerenhout described the gold fervor accurately from Monterey in 1848, “Never, I think, ... has there been such excitement in any country of the world.”<sup>487</sup> The imaginary appeal of California, which existed well before the discovery of gold, would only grow between the 1840s and 1860s. John C. Frémont’s

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<sup>485</sup> Etienne Derbec and Abraham Phineas Nasatir, *A French Journalist in the California Gold Rush; the Letters of Etienne Derbec.*, 258 p. (Georgetown, Calif.: Talisman Press, 1964), 97–98.

<sup>486</sup> Abraham P. Nasatir, “The French Consulate in California, 1843-1856,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1932): 57.

<sup>487</sup> Jacques Antoine Moerenhout, “The Inside Story of the Gold Rush, by Jacques Antoine Moerenhout....,” trans. Abraham P. Nasatir (California Historical Society, 1935), 6.

1845 report on overland routes to California was already known in Paris amongst his other expeditionary reports, and his name would gain even more recognition in conjunction with the valuable placers found on his Mariposa Estate. The reports from French explorers starting with Lapérouse in 1786 to De Mofras in 1844 would be immediately followed by the influx of stories following the discovery of gold in 1848. The French Revolution of 1848, over-throwing the July Monarchy of Louis-Phillippe, caused a delay of the news of California gold in making its way to Paris and then took a while longer to be verified. The news was met with skepticism, and wasn't fully believed until the *Journal des Débats* declared on December 23, 1848, that "We might treat as humbug all the reports coming from America were they not supported by the strongest evidence. The real facts are beyond the wildest dreams."<sup>488</sup> The detailed letters of French journalist Etienne Derbec would regularly appear in the pages of the influential *Journal des Débats* newspaper with stories from the California gold mines starting in 1849.<sup>489</sup>

### 8.3 A visual frontier

Images and illustrations of California in Paris and France would grow as the French population in California exploded in San Francisco and around the mines. The *Théâtre des variétés* in Paris was the first to present to the public the panorama "Journey to California" on August 8, 1850, taking the audience on a visual representation of Frémont's overland trip across the mountains and plains to California. The panorama was a giant cylinder of painted tableaux which as it was slowly rolled to display the voyage, took the Parisian on a further flight of the imagination in regard to California.<sup>490</sup> The visual story of Frémont's expedition ended by showing the life of gold miners. The visual depiction of California was still in its infancy and panoramas were a highly circulated image. While the popularity of the panorama pointed to a heightened French interest in the

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<sup>488</sup> "Mines d'or de La Californie," *Journal Des Débats Politiques et Littéraires*, December 23, 1848. Translated by the author.

<sup>489</sup> Jean-Nicolas Perlot and Howard Roberts Lamar, *Gold Seeker: Adventures of a Belgian Argonaut during the Gold Rush Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), xix.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, xx.

California Gold Rush, it was also an early example of a circulated visual representation of California. In 1862 Louis Simonin published an article chronicling his 1859 California visit in *Le Tour du Monde*, which featured many illustrations of various California regions circa 1859-1860, including Yosemite, Mariposa County, Chinese immigrants, black and Native Americans. As a narrative told from the French perspective, there were many aspects that departed from the American point of view. A more subtle acknowledgement of the natural surroundings was included, while a less antagonistic portrayal of other races presented the most striking divergence. Simonin's detailed descriptions included commentary on the prevalent racist attitudes:

This particular trait of the Chinese in keeping their national customs has made them especially hated by the Americans, who pursue them with sovereign contempt. The Chinese have a yellow complexion, and as such, they are hated by the Yankees, who do not admit colored races to the same degree of equality as the white race.<sup>491</sup>

The racist and imperialist aspects of California life were openly communicated in written accounts, but the French traveler's perspective on these aspects presented an alternative to the local discourse. The visual representation of the region included some documentation of non-whites but the point-of-view behind the creation of visual media was white and reflected that perspective. The "American" perspective that began with the visual images and literature of the post-Gold Rush years marked a shift from a multi-national perspective to a hegemonic influence over the future of California's image.

By the time of the Exposition Universelle of 1867, the French, and more specifically, Parisians had been engaged spectators of the California saga for many years. The most celebrated painter of the Gold Rush, the German emigrant Charles Christian Nahl studied in Paris until the 1848 Revolution caused him and his family to flee to California during the Gold Rush. Though some sketches had appeared in the reports of explorers (**fig. 8.1**, **fig. 8.2**), the 1850s and 1860s would produce the first prominent wave of California visual representation. Painting and photography would emerge in parallel as the San Francisco population boomed, but at the Paris

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<sup>491</sup> Louis Simonin, "Voyage En Californie," *Le Tour Du Monde : Nouveau Journal Des Voyages*, 1862, 6. Translated by the author.

Exposition Universelle of 1867 it was photography that presented a new vision of California. The photographic production during this period and the exhibition of Far Western materials at the Exposition Universelle of 1867 were part of the cultural evolution of modernity in which the images were as indicative of the evolution as the audience was. The 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs participated in an exchange underneath which transpired “the evolving subjective experience of a new kind of spectator; brought about by a complex of social and technological conditions organized around new ways of thinking and discussing the visual.”<sup>492</sup> The visual representation of California within the Exposition existed in a post-Gold Rush era and was also re-shaping the European imagined *idea* of California through photographs rather than painting. In the longer term, as Jonathan Crary has theorized, within the history of modernism, avant-garde art and 19<sup>th</sup> century photography existed “as overlapping components of a single social surface on which the modernization of vision” was taking place.<sup>493</sup> However, paintings of California landscapes, most famously those of Bierstadt, wouldn’t be seen in Europe until years later, and already the more realistic image of California via the photograph would precede the more exaggerated expression of Bierstadt’s painted scenes.

California historian Kevin Starr has insisted that “[a]fter the Gold Rush, California would never lose a symbolic connection with an intensified pursuit of human happiness.”<sup>494</sup> The period including the Exposition Universelle of 1867 represents the first era following the Gold Rush in which California maintained this reputation and position as an imagined land of promise. This period is what solidified the California Dream as an enduring element of Western American history. Throughout the period concerned by this study, that is to say prior to 1867, California was a maritime colony more than a frontier, maintaining the region’s status as a Pacific outpost rather than the Western-most edge. At the time of the Exposition in Paris, California was still two years away from the completion of the Transcontinental railroad, and much transport was still taking place by

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<sup>492</sup> Nickel, Watkins, and Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins*, 22.

<sup>493</sup> J. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, October Books (MIT Press, 1990), 5. Nickel applies Crary’s theory to his examination of Carleton Watkins’ early California photography specifically in his essay in Nickel, Watkins, and Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins*.

<sup>494</sup> Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*, xiii.

sailing around the southern tip of South America. Kevin Starr titles his chapter concerning the 1786-1850 history of California “Prophetic Patterns.” California solidified its place in the international imagination during this phase of its history and this was not dependent on American settlers looking westward, nor on overland travel. This era of California history is uniquely separate from United States history, and more closely linked to European imperialism and during this founding time, in which California changed from European to American hands, were the establishing years of a visual representation of California. While the state of California was presented in Paris in 1867 as a diverse agricultural and mining region, the large photographs of the northern California landscape were the most influential for both the short and the long-term effects on its international perception. The myth of California that began as a literary legend would evolve during this time into a real place, in which photographs proved the grandeur of its physical landscape. This would solidify the transition of California from a Gold Rush dream to a geographical reality. The exhibition of California photographs and resources would re-ignite the California dream, alluding to a new phase in which California appeal was based on its enduring geographical reality rather than its exhaustible mineral resources.

#### **8.4 American California: Creating a modern image**

The California exhibit in Paris 1867 marked the beginning of a new era of visibility of American California. By the 1860s, California, particularly San Francisco and nearby areas, had established a civilization and lifestyle that had evolved beyond anything else in the Far West. San Francisco was far more urbanized and cosmopolitan than any other western city, resembling something closer to Eastern states and areas of southern Europe.<sup>495</sup> The Gold Rush, though recent and brief, became the foundation of the American Californians’ “mythic history” due in part to Bret Harte’s *The Overland Monthly*, which shaped the events as comedy, melodrama; a massive fictional

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid., 49.



history. During this explosive time after the Gold Rush, Californians built layer after layer of a regional identity, initially constructed upon the Hispanic roots of its settlement and often interlaced with Christian promise.<sup>496</sup>

The state struggled for years to create a society and economy that lived up to and developed the long-proclaimed potential in the fertility and beauty of the land. By the 1867 Paris Exposition, however, they had managed some progress. The state brought to the Exposition a selection of those items which best represented their work and their evolution; described by California commissioner William P. Blake as “wheat, wines, and minerals, chiefly”, and which also included a prominent exhibition of photographs.<sup>497</sup> These objects were carefully chosen, and organization of the California commission was carefully discussed in a democratic manner. California presented itself as a far different place than the maritime colony—full of potential but lacking capable cultivators—it once was. While it endured as a mineral-rich land, this was not the essence of the display. The correspondent for the daily *Alta California* newspaper even expressed dismay that the California mineral display, though it was adequately presented, was over-shadowed by the impressive Colorado mineral display: “Dr. Pigne’s collection of minerals is well arranged and labelled. It fills two cases, and serves to dispel the delusion sure to seize upon the stranger as he enters the department that Colorado is the place where all the gold and silver in the United States are obtained.”<sup>498</sup> The agricultural and mineral contributions showed a diverse California economy, the same *Daily Alta* correspondent attested to a strong showing from the state which was unfortunately hindered by a lack of organization:

I believe that it is generally conceded that California is better represented at the Exposition than any other State in the Union, and, if there was any person here at the commencement to

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<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>497</sup> William P. Blake, “Contribution of Articles from California,” January 18, 1867, 2, Entry #1194, Box #5, Folder V. 40.51., NARA.

<sup>498</sup> M.G. U, “LETTER FROM PARIS - June 27th, 1867,” *Alta California*, August 9, 1867, Vol. XIX, No. 6355 edition, University of California, Riverside.

arrange its contributions properly, would have attracted a good deal of attention, for the articles sent, though few, are at least novel.<sup>499</sup>

Amongst the more powerful contributions of the California commission were its photographs. In association with the agricultural and industrial strength of the young state, the images of California landscapes met fresh European eyes, who had for centuries heard tales of its grandeur but never before seen a truthful image. The exhibition of the California landscape photographs was illustrative and symptomatic of the evolution of a Californian image within the wider context of modernization of visibility. The sketches, paintings and panoramas of the previous hundred years had established amongst Europeans a vague understanding of Californian natural grandeur. The photographs of Yosemite Valley and Mariposa trees would confirm the actual aesthetic reality of some of California's natural features and begin a new era of California myth and promise.

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<sup>499</sup> U, "LETTER FROM PARIS - June 27th, 1867."

## Chapter 9. Material Display of California Resources

### 9.1 Commissioner Blake and the California commission

William Phipps Blake was appointed by the Governor as the California Commissioner to the Exposition.<sup>500</sup> From his time in the field with the railroad survey of 1853 through his tenure as scientific secretary of the United States to the later Paris Exposition Universelle of 1878—Blake demonstrated an attention to the visual expression of Western geology and topography. Beginning with his own sketches and watercolors recorded in his field guides and his published illustrations in the official railroad survey *Report*, Blake was connecting the visual power of illustration with the geological information he sought to convey. In addition to this role Blake would also take on responsibility for writing the Report concerning Fine Metals, for collecting and editing the *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition*, and in 1870 he compiled the *Bibliography of the Paris Universal Exposition of 1867*. Blake was a Yale-trained geologist, mining engineer and educator; according to biographer David Dill, a “Yankee gentleman and pioneer geologist.”<sup>501</sup> He had previous exhibition experience having served as the U.S. organizer and collector of minerals for the New York City Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations held in 1853, and the California Commissioner at the London International Exhibition of 1862. He would continue to serve as a commissioner (though not of California) in subsequent World’s Fairs in Vienna in 1873, Philadelphia in 1876, and Paris again in 1878.<sup>502</sup> His experience in California began in 1853, when at the age of twenty-seven he served as geologist-mineralogist on a survey expedition to establish a railroad route for the Great Pacific Railroad in conjunction with the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. A relative of Eli Whitney, and Yale colleague/rival of elder geologist Josiah D. Whitney, Blake was well connected and as a result of his performance during the railroad survey he proved himself a productive and talented scientist whose conclusions have

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<sup>500</sup> “The Paris Exhibition—Appeal to the Public,” *Stockton Independent*, December 22, 1866, Volume XI, Number 123 edition, CDNC----1866---1.

<sup>501</sup> David B. Dill, “WILLIAM PHIPPS BLAKE: Yankee Gentleman and Pioneer Geologist of the Far West,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 32, no. 4 (1991): 385.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*, 387.

held up over time.<sup>503</sup> Blake proved himself an eager explorer and made complex discoveries which would allow for future agricultural development of desert lands. He kept detailed and illustrated notes of his observations during the survey, and on top of his scientific success (he discovered a previously unknown and optimal mountain pass on which the railroad could construct through the Sierra Nevada) he had a visual appreciation for California geology and geography:

His eyes followed the narrow thread of the Gila River as it wound past an extraordinary landscape. The highest of the peaks is called A-melle-e-quette by the Yuma Indians and Chimney Peak by residents of the fort [...] From twenty miles away he sketched Chimney peak in watercolor on one sheet of his notebook. The vivid scene became etched in his memory [...] Intensely curious about the great unknowns of western geology and natural history, Blake stayed in California for nine more months, investigating the Coast Range formations, mineral occurrences, gold mines, hydraulicking operations, the great Sequoias—all grist for his geological report.<sup>504</sup>

The watercolor of Chimney Peak, seen in his field guide (**fig. 9.1**) was published as a sketch (**fig. 9.2**) in his geological report of the Williamson Railroad Survey. His report included several of his own illustrations including a sketch (**fig. 9.3**) of a mammoth sequoia, a sketch of a mirage (**fig. 9.4**) on the Colorado Desert, and Sierra Nevada from the four creeks.<sup>505</sup> He exhibited, in his journals, an interest in combining image with scientific observations prior to his work as commissioner.

By the time he had completed his own expedition and report, he was put to work in the office of Captain Andrew A. Humphreys, chief of the Pacific Railroad surveys, where he completed reports of southwestern expeditions gathered from the field books and collections of French geologist Jules Marcou, of the Whipple expedition, and Brevet Captain John Pope.<sup>506</sup> By this time he had a thorough understanding of the natural history of the Far and South West. He was interested in diverse natural history, collecting and reporting on shells and fossils in California, and proving himself a hobby botanist as he insisted that Captain Williamson's report must include an

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<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

<sup>504</sup> *Ibid.*, 394.

<sup>505</sup> Robert S. Williamson et al., "Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, Made under the Direction of the Secretary of War, in 1853-4." (Washington: Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, 1856).

<sup>506</sup> Dill, "WILLIAM PHIPPS BLAKE: Yankee Gentleman and Pioneer Geologist of the Far West," 395–96.

examination and report on the plants he collected during the survey expedition.<sup>507</sup> Eventually returning to the East Coast, he spent several years doing sporadic work as a geology consultant and publishing a mining magazine from 1858-1860. By 1861 Blake was ready to return west when he heard that the California legislature would be forming a geological survey and he lost no time pursuing the position of state geologist. To Blake's disappointment, his relative and Yale colleague Josiah D. Whitney had already orchestrated a way to seize the position through the political influence of his San Francisco kin. Blake, with over a year of experience in California geology, was bitter over losing the position to Whitney who had never set foot in the state; in departure from his affable nature, he refused to collaborate with Whitney thereafter.<sup>508</sup> Things would turn around for him when in 1861, his first year back in California, after months of work for Wells Fargo in Mother Lode towns, Blake found success promoting his uncle's mining technology, initially on the Mariposa Estate of John C. Frémont. He was vindicated soon after when the Committee voted him California commissioner to the 1862 London International Exhibition.<sup>509</sup> He would continue to travel and work in mining in the years to follow, in California and Arizona mining interests leading up to the 1867 Commission. His position as Commissioner was where he was able to truly shine, which would be proven by his long career as Commissioner for the United States at Universal Exhibitions culminating in his work for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876. As a member of the 1876 executive committee, Blake's encyclopedic experience with world fairs contributed considerably to the success of the Exposition in several ways. The first was his rethinking of the classification system in reaction to the Vienna fair, of which he wrote a 169-page critique, but his primary achievement was the collection and preparation of the Smithsonian's mineral exhibit, to be permanently displayed in Washington.<sup>510</sup> He worked and travelled extensively for a year to accumulate eye-catching specimens of metals and crystals, which became a major

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<sup>507</sup> Williamson et al., "Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, Made under the Direction of the Secretary of War, in 1853-4.," 359.

<sup>508</sup> Dill, "WILLIAM PHIPPS BLAKE: Yankee Gentleman and Pioneer Geologist of the Far West," 396.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*, 397.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

attraction of both the Centennial Exhibition and of the Smithsonian's new mineral department.

Blake's interest in associating varied visual forms to express geographic and geologic knowledge was gradually migrating from the scientific to the cultural. The development of this ever-progressing perspective would evolve in many realms throughout his career, not the least of which was international exhibitions.

His appreciation for the landscape of California and the Far West was ingrained many years before he organized the California exhibit in the Paris Exposition of 1867, which would be his last official tie to the state. All of his subsequent roles with international expositions would be in the representation of the greater U.S. He was not novel, of course, in his connection of illustration with geological and topographical surveys, as European excursions had included artists and engineers capable of systematic drawings since the eighteenth century.<sup>511</sup> However, it was significant that outside of a geological survey, Blake's experience led him to call for scenic photographs to accompany the mineral and agricultural objects of California in Paris. His previous experience at the New York and London exhibitions likely shaped his visual vocabulary, in addition to the illustration to which he was already subject in the geological field. Nonetheless, his career points to an advanced understanding of the visual importance of image and material object in relation to both scientific knowledge and the economy; something he gathered, no doubt, as scientist, mining consultant, and even, educator. This all began during his time in the field, as a young adventurous scientist, documenting the topography of the Far West. His writing, which accompanied a sketch of the mammoth sequoias of Calaveras and Mariposa read as the following: "The grandeur of the scene cannot be described, it must be seen to be felt."<sup>512</sup> He would nonetheless include his own illustration and many pages of text attempting to describe the extraordinary experience of the sequoias' impressive nature. It would seem that he spent many of the following years attempting to

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<sup>511</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, Mathew Brady, and Walker Evans, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History ; Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*, 1. paperback ed., [Nachdr.] (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2007), 131.

<sup>512</sup> Williamson et al., "Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, Made under the Direction of the Secretary of War, in 1853-4.," 258.

visually convey the grand and peculiar nature of California geography. In his assembly of California objects for the Paris Exposition, it seems he managed to succeed in this. Between the geologically related illustrations of reports and articles prior to this fair, and the photographically laden U.S. Geological Surveys to follow, Blake and his 1867 California exhibit serve as an example of this novel geological-photographic link and a subjectively modern vision for how California would be portrayed.

Though Blake would eventually prove to be a knowledgeable exhibition commissioner, his experience representing the California population included some criticism. The public element of the organization did not find consensus in the Far West, and so his position was challenged and eventually led to some negligence in his responsibilities. The commission sought to finance the California display in Paris by collecting subscriptions from people of the state. The Finance committee were said, by the *Daily Alta California*, to be “sanguine that our business men and capitalists, comprehending the advantages to accrue to the State from this exhibition, would respond cheerfully to the comparatively light demands made upon their liberality.”<sup>513</sup> The funds would be for the “necessary expenses of the representation of California at the Exhibition, including freight, packing and unpacking, printing, and other necessary outlays.”<sup>514</sup> During the solicitation of subscriptions, Blake allowed his name to be used in public as it concerned the subscription, but there was some misunderstanding and contention on the part of the public as to how much of the collected funds would benefit Blake personally, either in the form of payment for his work as commissioner or by covering his expenses while on leave to the Exposition. In a published response, Blake confirmed that he would accept neither payment for his time or his expenses, and in doing so seemed to relinquish himself of some of the requirements of his role. Since he would accept no pay, he excused himself of any obligation to “leave at the earliest date and remain there until the end of the Exhibition.”<sup>515</sup> This more relaxed interpretation of the role enabled him to “go

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<sup>513</sup> “California’s Representation at the Paris Exhibition,” *Daily Alta California*, January 13, 1867, Vol. 19, No. 7050 edition, CDNC., 1.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

and return at [his] own convenience and pleasure and will not prevent [his] doing all in [his] power to serve the State and its interests while at the Exhibition and in Europe.”<sup>516</sup> This leniency did seem to prevent him from preparing the display in a timely manner, which did not turn out too well for the California commission, since as referenced above in a June 27th *Alta* article, the lack of organization and personnel to receive, label, and arrange the California objects, resulted in the California objects remaining unlabeled and under-represented even up through the viewing by the jury.

Despite the installation ending up lacking adequate care, the collection and curation of the California display was undertaken with attention and planning. The representation was organized from the top down, Blake and the California Committee took orders from the national Advisory Committee and followed those instructions as expected.<sup>517</sup> This was the first time the United States had proposed to take part in a foreign exhibition as a national entity, any previous participation having been individual. As a national effort, the space to be available for the United States collection was limited. Abundant correspondence between Commissioner General N.M. Beckwith in Paris, Secretary of State William H Seward, and other members of the Advisory Committee discussed how to best organize a true representation of the United States finest objects, but it was decided that since there would not be time to accomplish this, they would do their best to curate an adequate collection.<sup>518</sup> Taking their instruction from the French Imperial Commissioners, the national Advisory Committee appointed a member for each Group of the Exposition, and further called on experts in each of the classes to aid in the selection of applications.<sup>519</sup> As described in the *Alta*, the California representation in Paris would be selected on a local level by Blake and a Mr.

Death:

With regard to the exhibition of the products of California industry and the inventive genius of our citizens, it is found necessary to restrict the collection to some extent, on account of

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<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>517</sup> California Committee members named in the *Alta* as Mssrs. Blake, Weill, Touchard, Deeth, Fay, Stow, Ewer and Evans.

<sup>518</sup> Charles A. Joy, “Report of the Advisory Committee,” Minutes, Minutes of the Meetings of the Advisory Committee to the United States Commission, 1866-1867 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government, December 15, 1866), Record 1193, NARA.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*



the limited space at our command in the Exhibition building. The representation of the United States promises to be far more extensive than was at first anticipated, and it is necessary to use great discretion in sending articles forward for exhibition, as it is worse than useless to pay freight and charges on articles which will only be in the way, and would not be allowed space in the building on their arrival at Paris. This matter was fully set forth in letters from J.C. Derby, U.S. Commissioner to the Paris Exhibition and on the motion of Mr. Touchard, it was resolved that the matter of accepting or rejecting particular contributions, with a view of economy of space, be referred to Professor Blake and Mr. Deeth, with understanding that their action would be fully endorsed by the Committee.<sup>520</sup>

The restrictive parameters put in place certain levels of priority for the California commission. The Committee published an article outlining the items it hoped to gather to represent the state, and the resulting collection resembled this list exactly. The letter outlined the objects with an ambition to “show them, in short, that we have the material basis of future greatness and prosperity that will far exceed the wonderful realization of our short history.”<sup>521</sup> The fulfillment of this letter points to how instrumental the Committee was in curating the California image in Paris. Blake’s influence, as outlined previously, would be instrumental in developing an effective representation of California.

## 9.2 The Natural Resources of California

The California committee laid out a detailed plan for its display at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. The committee listed the following: ores, combustibles, cereals, wines, native woods, wool (and other fabrics and those manufactures made from them), manufactures, mining machinery, photographic art (especially in the form of grand mountain scenery).<sup>522</sup> The Committee referenced in a published letter a level of acknowledgement of the state’s responsibility to send an accurate representation of California’s goods not only to enhance their own opportunity, and to contribute to “the advancement of science, art and civilization”, but also “for the benefit of the millions less favored than ourselves, who will crowd the avenues of the Exhibition, anxious, perhaps, by seeing to learn something of this far-off El Dorado.”<sup>523</sup> The organizers acknowledged

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<sup>520</sup> “California’s Representation at the Paris Exhibition.”

<sup>521</sup> William P. Blake et al., “California at the World’s Exhibition in Paris,” *Stockton Independent*, November 12, 1866, Volume XI, Number 89 edition, CDNC.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*

that this was an opportunity to make a powerful impression on the world stage, and that by exhibiting the material resources and condition of its arts and manufacturing, California could inform a public that had little understanding of its progression economically in the wake of its mining fame.

The California committee expressed the importance of overcoming the barrier of language and creating a visual impression of the state's land and resources, not only on the layman, but also for European financial interests. Building on the existing history of California as a mythic land of paradise and El Dorado, the organizers seized the opportunity to exhibit what would become a modern version of that legend, this time employing visual means for capitalist ends.

We can show the middle and industrial classes of Europe what materials we have in our hills and valleys ready to be extracted, forged and woven into the various shapes useful and profitable to man. We can show to foreign capital evidence of the treasures that lie dormant in our mountains for want of means to extract them, or of cheap transportation.<sup>524</sup>

The committee placed an emphasis on the priority of presenting the state's raw materials. Rather than the advancement of its civilization or the evolution of its industry, the committee put forth the importance of placing before the artisans, laborers, middle and industrial classes, and foreign capital its "material basis of future greatness and prosperity."<sup>525</sup> The committee also explicitly called for "unrivalled specimens of the photographic art, especially in the form of views of our grand mountain scenery."<sup>526</sup> For a state that had developed a civilized culture in San Francisco, the committee showed little interest in revealing that side to the European audience, instead the California organizers sought to gather the raw materials and natural assets of its land and scenery, and to form its statewide image on a material-based exhibit. This resulted in an aesthetically focused exhibit guided by strategically chosen objects and economic interests.

There was a fundamental contrast between the regions of the United States in how their cultures and civilization were exhibited. The Eastern states presented diverse, advanced displays

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<sup>524</sup> "California at the World's Exhibition in Paris," *Daily Alta California*, November 10, 1866, Vol. 18, No. 6087 edition, CDNC.

<sup>525</sup> Blake et al., "California at the World's Exhibition in Paris."

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*

including fine art paintings and sculptures, pianos, and technological wonders like the transatlantic cable. The Midwest had a more industrial collection, exemplified by a locomotive, farmer's house, and McCormick reaping and mowing machines. The Far West consisted primarily of mineral and ore collections, except for California, which in addition to its copious minerals also presented samples of wine, cereals, woods, wool and woolen products, and a prominent photograph display of its natural scenery. The award-winning objects from California included a silver medal for the State collection of cereals, a silver medal for William P. Blake's collection of over three hundred ores and minerals, a silver medal to Dr. J.B. Pigné-Dupuytren for his collection of minerals, a bronze medal for the Mission Woolen Mills for woolen goods, a bronze medal for Carleton Watkins' photographs of Yosemite and Mariposa trees, and an honorable mention for the Buena Vista Vinicultural society for its sparkling Sonoma wines. The medal crop showed that the state was applauded primarily for its agricultural and raw materials. Even though it exhibited some of its more mechanical objects in smaller number, those were not awarded in the competition. The choice on the part of the California organizers to exhibit the state's natural and material wealth, including in the choice of photographic subject seemed an intentional choice, and resulted in a display that brought a new image of California to the European audience. The image of California that emerged in the Paris Exposition was a modern expression of California's post-Gold Rush status, that of a specific regional culture building on the myth of the past, but proving its verifiable prosperity.

California exhibited in many categories, and its agricultural showing proved the progress the new society had made. This post-Gold Rush era of the 1850s and 1860s was a period in which California pursued, to borrow Tangi Villerbu's term, a "conquest to normality."<sup>527</sup> Villerbu suggests that this process was akin to the tendency which historian Richard Wade described in 1959, when he affirmed that the interest in establishing cities west of the Appalachian mountains signified a desire to re-create, on land considered new or virgin, one's previous world from which they came.<sup>528</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> Villerbu, *La conquête de l'Ouest*, 141.

<sup>528</sup> Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830*, Illini Books ed (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

Though Wade's thesis applied to earlier settlements—those established through 1830—and exclusively to their urban and social development, it serves as a more suitable alternative to Turner's frontier thesis. The decade following the Gold Rush was a period in which American Californians had to prove themselves capable and worthy of the land they had seized from Mexico and indigenous people, and which had been long coveted by other nations. In the early years of American California, it seemed that a dearth of character and experience might doom permanent settlement and development of the land: "California could only be as good as Americans were capable of making it, and the American capacity for certain forms of bad behavior was already notorious. [...] Disputed land titles, squatterism, aridity, and gold fever worked against the predicted agricultural utopia."<sup>529</sup> This uncertainty informed the early years of developing a California regional identity. The successful exhibition of raw and developed resources, to represent California at the Exposition, served to validate the progress and normalcy that had been attained on an international level. The public exhibition of this progress was an important visual motive not just for California, but for the U.S. organizers as well.

The woods of California were some of the most prominent resources from the state. The submissions to the Exposition were primarily finished pieces and consisted of cabinet and door panels by the woodworker John D. Boyd of San Francisco, a giant redwood plank from McPherson & Wetherbee, as well as the wooden picture frames custom-made to display the photographs of Carleton E. Watkins. Boyd, of California, was the only American contributor noted in the United States' *General Survey of the Exhibition* report on "Class 41—Forest Products and Industries":

The State of California failed to send the cross-section of the great tree *Sequoia gigantea*, as proposed. It was found that a cross-section of a tree 30 feet in diameter would weigh several tons, and that it could not possibly be transported from the forest in season for the exhibition. There were several samples of a beautiful ornamental wood from that state, a species of *arbutus*, the "madrona" or "laurel," which were remarkable for their beauty of

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<sup>529</sup> Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*, 47.

grain. An ornamental door made of this wood by J. D. Boyd, of San Francisco, was very beautiful in this respect and also in finish.<sup>530</sup>

The French *Rapports du jury international*, briefly referenced Boyd's samples, alongside objects from Wisconsin, Utah, and Kansas, within a lament that the U.S. didn't send a larger representation of its forest industry: "A country which possesses such large forestry resources, and who knows, above all, how to make such remarkable use of it, makes us regret their sending only a few samples of small importance to appear in Class 41."<sup>531</sup> The absence was pointed out in an October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1866 letter, six months before the opening of the Exposition, by U.S. Commissioner in Paris N.M. Beckwith when he observed that samples of cabinet wood of the United States were wanting.<sup>532</sup> Boyd's work was selected to be exhibited as a superior product, since as stated in a letter by Beckwith, that "producers in a national exhibition compete with each other and consequently present many similar and rival products but in an international exhibition, the producers of each nation compete with those of all other nations and for that purpose the superior products of each are alone required."<sup>533</sup> This fact puts the exhibition of wood products slightly on a different scale than that of mineral products. It was clear that in the exhibition of ores, the U.S. intended to prove the abundance, in addition to the quality of its samples. With the wood resources it sought to prove the extraordinary size in the case of the sequoias, and quality, in the case of Boyd's finished cabinetry. Boyd made a point to appeal to the French with his contribution, both with the excellence of his fine wood finishing and woodworking, but also within the details of his application.

With his contribution he included two letters in French and English, describing in detail his door "intended for a boudoir" which can be seen in an exhibition photograph (**fig. 10.1**), designating the multiple panels and how a variety of stain and polish allowed each piece to be presented and used differently. He requested a specific purpose for his wood pieces once the Exposition came to a

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<sup>530</sup> United States Commission to the Paris exposition, 1867, *General Survey of the Exhibition; with a Report on the Character and Condition of the United States Section* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), 152.

<sup>531</sup> "Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Rapports Du Jury International," 70.

<sup>532</sup> Nelson M. Beckwith to J.C. Derby, "No. 126," October 31, 1866, 3, 1194 – Applications for Exhibit Privileges, Box # 7, NARA.

<sup>533</sup> Nelson M. Beckwith to William H. Seward, "Paris, Oct. 24, 1866," October 24, 1866, 5, 1194 – Applications for Exhibit Privileges, Box # 7, NARA.

close: “At the pleasure of the Commission of H. R. Majesty, I beg that at the conclusion of the Exposition they may exposed for sale, the proceeds of said sale to be donated to sufferers from the late disastrous floods in France.”<sup>534</sup> Boyd presented himself as a sophisticated exhibitor, with a firm handle of both French language and current events, and of French culture which appreciated highly-skilled workmanship. As an artisan, Boyd intentionally sought to impress this European audience with his skills as a wood-finisher, exhibiting the wood resources of California in their finished form. He was strategically placing his work in the context of the French Exposition hierarchy, built on the French economic system in which the quality of products and the institutional validation of that quality formed a strategic commercial framework for industry, government, and elites.<sup>535</sup> As Vasseur explains, even before Universal Expositions provided competitions for international status, the French industrial expositions played a necessary role for the French in that they provided a framework in which products gained institutional validation to serve a commercial strategy. This distinction was elemental for the government and élites in the economic strategy which depended on a hierarchical ranking of quality. For artists, up until the 1870 or so, the Salon and the Académie des beaux-arts provided this system of honors, commissions and medals, distinguishing the officially patronized artists.<sup>536</sup> The inclusion of the U.S. in this universal exposition, allowed for artisans like Boyd to commercialize this validation in the U.S.

Boyd’s writing revealed his perspective as not just a promoter of his own fine workmanship, but also as an artisanal worker in a state whose forests offered both trees to be developed and others to be revered. Boyd’s letter also included two newspaper clippings of articles written by himself in which he proposed to expertly finish a cross-section of a mammoth sequoia, which would purportedly be cut into sections representing the states and territories of the U.S., and eventually be brought together to illustrate a newly re-unified map of the post-Civil War U.S. in Paris. The

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<sup>534</sup> John D. Boyd, “Gentlemen of the Commission from the United States of America to the Paris Exposition,” January 18, 1867, Entry 1194, Box 1, Folder III 14.6, NARA.

<sup>535</sup> Édouard Vasseur, “Pourquoi organiser des Expositions universelles? Le « succès » de l’Exposition universelle de 1867,” *Histoire, économie & société* 24e année, no. 4 (2005): 593.

<sup>536</sup> Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*, 1.

proposal to create and exhibit this map, originally made by Sam. B. Ruggles, evoked a response from Boyd in which he promoted and reflected on his skill, as a portrayal of a California culture:

Therefore, in the spirit of a true Californian, that ever rejoices in anything that resounds to the honor of our State, I respectfully suggest that the side of the section designed for the representation of the map of our nation be polished in the most artistic manner of which polishing I now offer *gratis*, and will agree to put a shine on that tree that will not be outshone, even by the well known loyalty of our noble State; and where nature has done everything on so grand a scale, are not the recipients excusable in embellishing, as a token of gratitude? Besides, it affords an evidence that the arts are not entirely forgotten by the miners of California.<sup>537</sup>

The first article served to prove Boyd's acknowledgement of his exhibited objects as examples of his fine wood staining, polishing and embellishing, but also as a symbol of the grand scale of nature in the state. Boyd put forth his idea that Californians, as recipients of the benefits of this majestic nature were bestowed the right to embellish and promote the great trees, even if that resulted in their destruction. The promotion of the sequoia wood map marks one instance of attempting to portray the majesty of the giant California tree by exhibiting its parts rather than its whole. The other notable occurrence was the exhibit of the bark of the Calaveras mammoth sequoia "Mother of the Forest," stripped from the tree and reconstructed around a giant core in New York and in London in the mid 1850s prior to the availability of a photographic representation. This representation still left the public in disbelief, the exhibition of the true size of the trees was not believed.

The California mineral exhibition, along with the overall American one, was intended to illustrate the amplitude of American mineral wealth, as expressed in this report on the New York Chamber of Commerce:

THE FRENCH EXPOSITION—EXHIBITION OF OUR MINERAL RESOURCES.—The proceedings yesterday in the Chamber of Commerce of this city—reported in another column—seeking for a full and efficient display of the mineral resources of the United States at the worldwide "Exposition," to open in Paris in April, 1867, will be found of unusual interest. If properly sustained by adequate and judicious appropriation by Congress, on whom the full government duty is devolved by the plan of the "Exposition," such an exhibition of our exhaustless natural wealth must inevitably exert a most important influence in widening and firmly establishing, in the eyes of assembled Europe, the metallic basis of our public credit, not to mention the active and wide-spread stimulus it would impart to European emigration into our metalliferous regions. We will not think it possible that

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<sup>537</sup> "A Section of the Big Tree at the Paris Exhibition," *Daily Alta California*, August 17, 1866, Vol. 18, No. 6002 edition, sec. City Items, CDNC.

Congress will now begrudge the seed, so soon to reappear in harvests of a hundred, if not a thousand fold.<sup>538</sup>

The New York Chamber of Commerce, which included U.S. Commissioner Samuel B. Ruggles was an early voice promoting the U.S. participation in the Exposition, for the benefit of New York commerce which extended to national interests. The national agenda described in the *New York Times* clipping referenced above, was as quoted “of unusual interest.” The opinion put forth by the New York Chamber of Commerce was remarkably pointed for an industry that physically took place, for the most part, hundreds or thousands of miles away. However, mining development and investment had origins in the Northeastern and New York economies and therefore was of shared significance.

Ruggles, in particular though, presented himself as more than merely concerned with economics. Many early conversations in New York surrounding the U.S. participation in the Paris Exposition were politically charged, as many contained bias against friendly interaction with the French since they disapproved of the course of action pursued by the French Emperor in Mexico.<sup>539</sup> Ruggles however saw the long-term national interest, and though it was not stated as such, in these pointed opinions he actively began to construct and suggest ways to promote and represent the American West by use of natural resources. Ruggles acknowledged that the U.S. would likely be represented in some capacity at the Paris Universal Exposition, and he espoused from the outset a strong opinion that the U.S. resources should be properly exhibited. He insisted that:

The interests of Europe were the interests of New York, and that if they were to be represented at this World’s Fair at all, it was their duty to see that they were represented

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<sup>538</sup> “The French Exposition—Exhibition of Our Mineral Resources,” n.d., 1194 – Applications for Exhibit Privileges, Box # 1, NARA.

<sup>539</sup> “Chamber of Commerce--Our Representation at the Paris Exposition of 1867,” *New York Times*, January 13, 1866, New York Times Archive.



properly and fairly, so that the people of the various nations might see for themselves the wonderful resources and progressing manufactures of our country.<sup>540</sup>

To make this point to the New York Chamber of Commerce, far from the mining fields of California, that the U.S. would need to raise funds to support a “proper” representation in Paris, Ruggles used a piece of California ore as a symbol of the importance of physical representation:

Here Mr. Ruggles pointed to an ingot of silver weighing 216 ounces, the product of the Elmira mines of the Sierra Blanca Silver Mining Company, California, being the proceeds of 500 pounds of ore, a specimen of which also lay upon the table, and said: “We, ourselves, more than all others, will reap the benefit of the exposition of our resources when the miner or the thousands of other callings see such evidences of our real and prospective wealth as this before me, and a hundred others equally as expressive, who can tell the influence there exercised upon their minds?”<sup>541</sup>

At this same meeting, another member of the Chamber, Elott C. Cowdin, Esq., then spoke in agreement with Ruggles that the U.S. presence at all previous European exhibitions that he had experienced in the last fifteen years was inadequate and incomplete. In light of the “late war,” which made the U.S. “known to the world and to each other” and which “vindicated the character of our institutions and insured their permanency,” it was argued that the U.S., if adequately represented would show that it was not only unified following the Civil War, but that it was “even greater in peace than in war.”<sup>542</sup> On the national level, decisions were being made in the New York Chamber of Commerce, “as a representative organization of the commercial metropolis of our country,” that would look to Western states and their resources to portray the United States as a newly re-established nation of potential wealth and power. Cowdin referenced the specific resources with which he believed no other country could compare: “Tell me, if you can, what nation is able to compete with the United States in the variety and value of the earth’s products; its corn, its cotton, its wheat, its rice, its copper, its coal, its silver, its gold, its oil, its iron?”<sup>543</sup> He went on to promote the benefits which would be derived by the people of the United States, by exhibiting altogether the strongest American could gather: “It will serve to *advertise* the fruits of our genius and our soil, our

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<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

inventions and our products, our mineral resources and their availability.”<sup>544</sup> Ruggles, like in his promotion of a sequoia wooden map of a post-Civil War unified America, was looking to the resources of the West, in their grandeur and abundance to create a novel representation of the United States, and an impressively renovated impression following the Civil War. As Chairman of the committee upon Group V.—Products, raw and manufactured of mining industry, forestry, etc.—Ruggles acknowledged the material potential that could be exhibited from the Far West. Strategizing from New York, he announced the symbolic power of items such as the silver ingot referenced above and set out to ensure that the material representation from the West would strengthen and revive the reputation of the United States in Europe. Ruggles, along with other organizers on the national level, recognized the untapped potential that the material representation of the West could employ on the international stage, particularly in the case of the Western minerals:

The Chairman [Ruggles] has travelled some thousands of miles in the West to arouse an interest in the importance of having this Group [5] well represented. He had met the western commissioners at Chicago and concerted measures for procuring specimens of the products of that portion of our country. [...] The Governors, boards of trustees, and leading men took a lively interest in the movement. Railroad companies offered to transport articles for the exhibition free of charge; and the important bearing of the Exposition upon emigration was fully appreciated. The West would send forward a full representation of its cereals, ores, and minerals.<sup>545</sup>

The effort to collect and exhibit Western resources, orchestrated by U.S. organizers, served as a physical representation of the scientific exploration of the West and foreshadowed a visual way in which the development of the West would come to portray the greater United States. Given the opportunity to exploit the resources of the West in the name of nationalist interests, the U.S. entered a realm in which it was able to compete on the international level, presenting an abundance of land and metalliferous regions to develop. Western resources allowed the U.S. to shine where it could amongst the competition. The French excelled in more refined categories but were less rich in

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<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

<sup>545</sup> Advisory Committee of the Paris Universal Exposition, “Minutes of the Meetings of the Advisory Committee to the United States Commission, 1866-67,” January 22, 1866, 55, RG 43-Records of International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, Entry 1193, NARA.

minerals and raw materials, and so the Far Western U.S., including California and its large and diverse exhibit carved its place amongst the more developed countries.

Minerals represented at this time a laborious and risky exploitation. There were many reasons to present the potential that ores and precious metals in abundance represented to the European public. In his introduction of the *Rapports du jury international*, Michel Chevalier lays out the subtleties of wealth, capital, and productive power. He separated the history of wealth into periods of time divided by the year 1848: “I take this date from 1848, because it marked the end of an ancient period and the beginning of a new one in the production of precious metals. California mines were discovered in 1848.”<sup>546</sup> Precious metals in their exploitable form, like all raw materials, he explained, represent both wealth and capital at the same time, and despite the small place that precious metals occupied in the overall inventory of wealth, the discovery of gold in California marked the beginning of a new era.

The mineral wealth of California, already known to the world for many years, was visually experienced at this Exposition, which along with the mineral representation from other states and territories left a powerful impression on the public. The United States exhibited mineral wealth from California and other regions which seemed to be inexhaustible.<sup>547</sup> Chevalier even put forth a projection that the United States would become a leader of the global economy along with China: “In about thirty years, the United States will have, in all probability, a hundred million population, in possession of the most powerful means, distributed over a territory which would make fifteen or sixteen times the size of France, and of the most admirable disposition.”<sup>548</sup> In the *Reports of the United States Commissioners*, William H. Seward acknowledged the benefit of California and Western contributions on a national level: “In California, and upon the Pacific coast, through the exertions of the citizens of San Francisco, the Chamber of Commerce, the State Commissioner, I.N. Hoag, secretary of the State Agricultural Society, and a committee of the citizens of Nevada, a very

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<sup>546</sup> Chevalier, “Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Rapports du jury international,” xv. (Translated by the author.)

<sup>547</sup> Vasseur, “Pourquoi organiser des Expositions universelles? Le « succès » de l’Exposition universelle de 1867,” 589.

<sup>548</sup> “Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Rapports Du Jury International,” dxv.

satisfactory representation of the products of that portion of the country was added to the Exposition, and contributed largely to the value of our national representation.”<sup>549</sup> The contributions from California and the Far West, it was confirmed, enriched the visual appeal of the United States.

Minerals from California were grouped into several different contributions. The displays were also adapted to create the greatest impression upon the viewer. The primary exhibit of minerals was that collected and curated by California State Commissioner William P. Blake and contributed on the behalf of the state of California. The *Daily Alta* published a summary of Blake’s journey around the state to select the best samples to send to Paris:

FOR THE PARIS EXHIBITION.—A letter from Professor Blake, at Marysville, to a friend in this city, states that he is making a tour of the northern mines, and will visit Downieville, San Juan, Nevada, Grass Valley, and other points, making collections of minerals for the Paris Exhibition. The State Agricultural Society, through the Secretary, Mr. Hoag, had given Professor Blake a fine lot of duplicate specimens of copper ore from the Cosmopolitan and Genessee mines (presented by Mr. Bidwell), iron ore from Sierra county, silver ore from the Mexican mine, copper ore from the Northern and other mines, etc. Dr. Frey and others send, through the Agricultural Society, large and magnificent specimens of rich silver ore from the Blind Springs District. The tour of Professor Blake is producing such good results that he will probably prolong it to such an extent as to render it impossible to exhibit the collection at the Merchants’ Exchange before the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, when it will be necessary to repack everything for immediate shipment by steamer for Paris. Our citizens can rest assured, however, that the collection, when completed, will be a superb one, and its exhibition at Paris will be productive of a vast amount of good to the Pacific coast.

Blake later stated that the collection he managed to gather on his travels would “awaken a new interest abroad in our mineral wealth and its development.”<sup>550</sup> Blake’s commitment to curating an appealing mineral display pointed to both an interest in the economic side of California’s mining industry, but also his personal interest in geology and a motive to share that interest visually to the public. Following the exhibition, the *Reports of the United States Commissioners* summarized the display:

The gold-bearing quartz of California, and the ores of copper, quicksilver, lead, iron, manganese, and other metals, together with the salt, borax, sulphur, coal, and petroleum from the same State, were exhibited by a collection classified and sent forward by W. P. Blake, the State commissioner, and which received a silver medal.[...] A collection of the ores and minerals found in California and the adjoining States and Territories, intended to illustrate the mineral resources of the Pacific coast region of the United States. Silver medal.

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<sup>549</sup> William P. Blake, ed., *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1870), 6.

<sup>550</sup> “California’s Representation at the Paris Exhibition.”

This collection contained over 300 specimens of good size, taken from the principal gold-bearing veins of California, and from the copper, quicksilver, lead, and iron veins. The borax, salt, petroleum, and building materials were also shown. All the specimens were properly classified and labelled.<sup>551</sup>

There was also a collection by Dr. J.B. Pigné-Dupuytren of San Francisco whose contribution was described in the *Reports*:

Collection of minerals from California. Silver medal. This was a very complete collection of ores of gold, silver, copper, lead, iron, quicksilver, &c., from the principal mines of the Pacific States, all neatly classified, labelled and catalogued, and intended for the collection of the Ecole Imperiale des Mines at Paris.<sup>552</sup>

The collection of Dr. Jean-Baptiste Pigné-Dupuytren was mentioned in a November 1866 newspaper article as being brought together “in behalf of the French Government.”<sup>553</sup> From the outset it was intended that his mineral collection would be presented to the School of Mines in Paris. There is no other sign of Dr. Pigné-Dupuytren’s affiliation with the French organizers besides his nationality which has been found. His collection was described as a duplicate of the one contributed by Blake since they included parallel types of ores, but Pigné-Dupuytren’s had the intended donation of the collection to the École des Mines in Paris. Outside of the cabinets displaying the collections gathered by Blake and Dr. Pigné-Dupuytren there was another display, likely the formation in the foreground of the Colorado exhibition photographs (**fig. 6.2, fig. 6.2a**) consisting of specimens from several different states and territories which merited a mention in the *Reports*:

Several large and very rich masses of silver ore from the [Poor Man] lode, Idaho, attracted much attention, and received recognition from the jury by the award of the gold medal. These masses occupied the summit of a pyramidal mass of ores in which were found blocks of iron ore from Missouri Iron mountain and Lake Superior, copper and ingots from Lake Superior, coal of Pennsylvania, silver ore from California, and rock-salt from Louisiana.<sup>554</sup>

This sculpturally designed pyramid of ores represented a prime example, and potentially the most overt case of American organizers’ intentional visual promotion of the nation’s mineral wealth. The configuration included samples from various regions, large pieces, including one from the Poor

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<sup>551</sup> Blake, *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867*, 149, 274.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>553</sup> Blake et al., “California at the World’s Exhibition in Paris.”

<sup>554</sup> Blake, *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867*, 149.

Man's lode in Idaho, which was one of five from the lode exhibited that were described as "veritable curiosities and demonstrate beyond cavil the wonderful richness of the ores in that region. One of these weighs over 200 pounds, and has been assayed at between 60 and 80 per cent of pure ruby silver."<sup>555</sup> The large ores were optimally stacked in a pyramid-shaped mound, in an obvious effort to display the plentiful potential of the country's subterranean wealth. This type of display served as a physical representation of the commercial foundation of the Western American exhibition based on a capitalist impetus to shape the expanding Western extractive economy.

This also played into the performative nature that international exhibitions came to exemplify. The combination of industrial and art exhibitions coincided with the emergence of a modernized event, which shifted from purely didactic objectives into events including a more festive nature.<sup>556</sup> This evolution occurred as a result of the change from the national industrial fairs and as an effect of the financial interest in popularizing the events. The most influential element of this transition was the growth of the visual element. In his study of World Fairs and architecture, Wesemael discovered that organizers believed "it would be possible to attract and persuade broad layers of the population by applying a mixture of education and amusement" within the international exhibitions.<sup>557</sup> He insists that "the core of this popular didactics was invariably formed by rapid and primarily visual transfer of information."<sup>558</sup> For society more generally, he notes that international exhibitions marked "the switch from a book culture to an image culture in the Western world."<sup>559</sup> In this context, the exhibition of minerals toed the line between a scientific display and popular attraction. Since the Exposition audience included those from the upper, middle, and lower classes, the appeal of the objects—minerals in this case—was able to communicate many different messages to different audiences. Taking the minerals out of the display cases and assembling the

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<sup>555</sup> C. B. S., "THE PARIS EXHIBITION," *The New York Times*, June 17, 1867, VOL. XVI, NO. 4906 edition, 2.

<sup>556</sup> Vasseur, "Pourquoi organiser des expositions universelles ? Le « succès » de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867," 574.

<sup>557</sup> Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight*, 18.

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.*

largest samples in a pyramid, the agency of the objects was expanded from their stated classification as samples of scientific and commercial interest into a spectacle of natural phenomena.

During this period mining interests were powerful national interests, particularly in the colonial world. Michel Chevalier described the mineral exploration and geological representation he was observing in the case of the U.S., England, and Australia at the time:

In the United States, regions barely conquered by civilization and often still uninhabited, are explored in their mineral constitution, and represented by geological descriptions; that is what we are seeing, especially for the areas west of the Rocky Mountains, including California. In the English colonies, the same fundamental importance is attributed to geology. The geological maps of the province of Victoria, those of English India, executed with care and on a large scale, are highly illustrative of the usefulness of geology's role. Another large Australian colony of England, New South Wales, also has a special geological explorer, to which is due, in large part, the high interest in the exposure of the useful rocks found there. These observations show us the way forward, when it comes to using a country's resources and searching for the mineral deposits it contains, whether civilization has occupied it for a few sittings, or has been established there for only a few years.<sup>560</sup>

The mining of raw materials was an industrial force, and its influence was economic, not necessarily visual, in most cases. Aesthetically, mining has had a negative connotation, if anything representing the degradation of natural landscapes and formations. Horace Greeley expressed this opinion in his 1860 journal writings while travelling through mining areas of the U.S.:

Mining is a necessary art, but it does not tend to beautify the face of nature. On the contrary, earth distorted into all manner of ungainly heaps and ridges, hills half torn or washed away, and the residue left in as repulsive shape as can well be conceived, roads intersected and often turned to mire by ditches, water-courses torn up and gouged out, and rivers, once appeared as crystal, now dense and opaque with pulverized rock--such is the spectacle presented throughout the mining region.<sup>561</sup>

The exploitation of new lands was considered a visually detrimental force on the landscape, and yet the display at Expositions provided an opportunity to transform the process into an aesthetically curated demonstration.

The mineral exhibition, in the case of the United States, was a nationally organized effort to collect and present an abundance of valuable samples, worth a sizeable fortune, and donate them to foreign institutions at the fair's closure. To attract the interest of investors and extraction innovation

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<sup>560</sup> Michel Chevalier, "Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Rapports Du Jury International" (Paris : Imprimerie administrative de Paul Dupont, 1868), 7-8., CNUM. (Translated by the author.)

<sup>561</sup> Greeley, *An Overland Journey, from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859*, 292.

was the stated motive. To subliminally appeal to potential emigrants was an additional purpose, but what happened peripherally was a visibility of the mining wealth, of the raw mining materials, in a way that came to contribute to the American West's enduring visual appeal. The visibility of mines and minerals would play a particular role in the case of the Far West and California, enduring beyond the mining boom of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **9.3 California as America: California within the U.S. exhibit**

Correspondence points to a hierarchical element in the selection of California exhibitors. That California could serve as a valuable section of the U.S. display was not lost on the national organizers. There were several written statements which point to preferences on the national level concerning how best to represent the United States in Paris. One over-arching theme was to portray the United States as a strongly unified nation. This would serve to contradict the French who had been speculating about the eventual dismemberment of the U.S. throughout the duration of the Civil War conflict.<sup>562</sup> There was one idea for the 1867 Exposition which would portray the U.S. unified again, by visually exploiting the California giant sequoias, albeit an idea that was not achieved in the end. This idea took several forms, but all of them proposed to send a cross section of a mammoth California sequoia to Paris. One idea, never materialized, was proposed by Samuel B. Ruggles, member of the national Advisory Committee and chairman of the committee upon Group V. He put forth the idea in a letter sent by overland telegraph to the secretary of the California State Agricultural Society and asked, in an excerpt published in the *Alta* on August 17, 1866, "Will California send to the Paris Exhibition, with her other resources, a cross section of a log of one of her mammoth trees, subdivided for transportation, to be reunited at Paris, as a type of renewed Union?"<sup>563</sup> The suggestion was seen by San Francisco wood-worker John D. Boyd whose reply included a deeper description of the idea:

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<sup>562</sup> Roger, *The American Enemy: A Story of French Anti-Americanism*, 71.

<sup>563</sup> "A Section of the Big Tree at the Paris Exhibition," *Daily Alta California*, August 17, 1866, Volume 18, Number 6002 edition, sec. City Items, CDNC, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.



My attention has been attracted by an article in your paper of this day's issue, having reference to the patriotic suggestion of the U.S. commissioner to the Paris Exhibition, that California send with her other resources a cross-section of one of her mammoth trees to the Paris Exhibition, designed to be divided so as to represent as many parts as there are States and Territories in the Union, and those parts to be again placed together in their original positions in Paris, as a type of renewed Union, and thus presenting to the world a triumphant map of our whole nation reunited on a *sprig* taken from one of the forests of the loyal state of California.

Boyd offered to professionally polish the wood “gratis” and wrote another letter in disappointment upon learning that the mammoth “map” of the United States made of California wood had been rejected due to its cumbersome size. He lamented the claim that the tree was too large to transport despite a previous promise from the Pacific Mail Steamship Company to ship the tree segment up to the amount of five tons to New York for free.<sup>564</sup> The *Sacramento Daily Union* reported separately that the reason for the failure of the idea was something else: “The Paris Exhibition Committee have discovered that there is not a saw in the world long enough to cut a section off the end of the Big Tree trunk in Calaveras county, and unless one forty feet in length can be made here, they will not be able to forward the section, as proposed, to Paris.”<sup>565</sup> This claim only served to foment the “larger than life” reputation of the California sequoias, since it was not a valid hindrance to this plan. Whichever the reason, the cross-section of California mammoth tree did not make it to Paris. Nonetheless, this idea caught on with the French, and in the *Album de l'Exposition Illustrée*, published in February 1867, a section is written in which a hypothetical letter, which would have been written the previous year, described a plan to exhibit a mammoth sequoia at the Exposition of 1867. The fictional anecdote, (**fig. 9.5**), was one of several literary pieces from a French perspective in which the mammoth California sequoias played a fictional role of perpetuating the tales of California's natural marvels.

The California “big tree” was already a figure in the both the European and American travel literature. The French perspective seen in the *Album* marked a continuation of the European side of what François Brunet described as a “cult of the sequoia,” which had since at least 1862 enlarged

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<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

<sup>565</sup> “By Telegraph to the Union,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, September 8, 1866, Vol. 31, No. 4820 edition, CDNC.

the audience of the symbol beyond the American imagination.<sup>566</sup> By the mid-1860s the tree was already an emblem for American primitivist and nationalist discourse, and its visibility in the context of the Exposition of 1867 points to an even broader context of this icon and how it took on an alternative meaning in the French mindset.<sup>567</sup> While the American critique often took on a hermeneutical approach, the French shared a certain tendency toward consigning it a “consecrated” status, but were distanced ironically from a religious affiliation they considered a Yankee “naïveté.”<sup>568</sup> However in this case, the appearance of the California giant sequoia at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, within the photographs of Carleton Watkins, was employed for the greater political motives of the U.S.

The appeal of the giant Sequoia as a symbol of greatness was repeatedly seized upon by strategic organizers in Washington. Ruggles, in his request above, hoped to appropriate the tree in the interest of the national image to present a symbol of unity by creating a map of the United States from a segmented Sequoia trunk. The strategic placement of the California photographs, particularly those of Carleton Watkins were also utilized to enhance the national image, rather than being placed in a specific California section. Watkins’ photographs, as seen in Petit’s exhibition photographs (**fig. 10.1, fig. 10.2**), were placed on the most conspicuous wall in the primary room of American objects. They can be seen in two exhibition images, positioned in a context of potent nationalist iconography. Above the framed images to the left is a large carved and painted coat of arms installation of bald eagles and American flags. On the adjacent wall, Petit’s photographs show that there was another gallery of framed photographs of similar size and dimensions (**fig. 1.10, fig. 10.2**). Those were the display of Alexander Gardner’s photographs; the middle rows depicted portraits of prominent American men and the top and bottom rows displayed Washington government buildings. Angela Miller, in her study of 19<sup>th</sup> century American landscape paintings, has suggested that there was an attempt, around the years of the Civil War, to create representations of

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<sup>566</sup> Simonin, “Voyage En Californie.”

<sup>567</sup> François Brunet, “The sequoia files : L’arbre merveilleux,” *Transatlantica : Revue d’Études Américaines*, no. 2 (2017), <http://journals.openedition.org/transatlantica/9881>.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

the West to establish an aspirational image of a re-unified America. She makes a case that the Western landscape served as an escape from the pain and destruction of the Civil War in the East.<sup>569</sup> In the Paris Exposition of 1867, photographs of the Western landscape were utilized for political motives in this attempt to create a united and harmonious image of the United States. Exhibited in diptych fashion (**fig. 10.2**) as Far Western counterparts to the iconic buildings and leaders of Washington, the mammoth trees of Mariposa and the majestic walls of the Valley of Yosemite were established as cultural icons as well. While the Exposition walls were furnished with this iconography, the floor beneath was filled with a heterogenous collection of some of the United States' stand out items such as the Steinway and Sons pianos, busts, and models of frontier homes. The room was the most visible of the American display, and while the Sequoia "map" of re-unified America had not been realized, in the room's curation one sees an attempt to put together the pieces of America in a show of cultural display which included both the classical busts and pianos alongside timeless natural landscapes.

Elizabeth Hutchinson, in her study of Watkins' *Section of the Grizzly Giant* photograph acknowledges this aspect of the Sequoia's significance as an American icon: "Romantic viewers found the Mariposa Grove a sign that this continent was as old as other aspects of God's creation, and that the young republic had something ancient and noble with which to counter Europe's monuments of civilization."<sup>570</sup> The names of trees such as "Grizzly Giant," "Father of the Forest," and "Mother of the Forest," invited an ancient and paternalistic view of these towering figures, which seemed to represent a greater plan or destiny of the nation.<sup>571</sup> The title *Section of the Grizzly Giant*, Hutchinson argues, refers to the divisive war and was "as much an appeal for moral leadership as a demonstration of moral authority."<sup>572</sup> The photographic representation of Mariposa Grove in the United States display in Paris served as proof of the ancient and noble in America, a

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<sup>569</sup> Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1996).

<sup>570</sup> Elizabeth Hutchinson, "They Might Be Giants: Carleton Watkins, Galen Clark, and the Big Tree," *October* 109 (2004): 57.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*

visual symbol of the enduring natural monuments to overshadow the temporary political rupture. Within the context of this room of “giants,” the California natural monuments served as enduring natural icons in contrast to the cultural and political icons of the Eastern states, brought together to build a unified image of United States civilization.

In a different way, Ruggles’ hope was realized in the end, rather than constructing a map of re-unified America with the pieces of a Sequoia trunk, they were able to show entire Sequoias framed in natural wood of the trees, alongside other cultural giants from around the nation, taking the nature of California from its regional meaning and positioning it as a segment of the American collection. Nancy Anderson has argued that western landscapes were frequently used to negotiate economic interest in the West by appealing to older ideas about the elevated value of nature:

Skillfully crafted and consciously composed for a market interested in the West (often as an investment), most western landscapes carried a conciliatory message implying that the natural and technological sublime were compatible, that the wilderness landscape Americans had used to define themselves and their nation since the seventeenth century could endure as a cultural icon while being converted to economic use.<sup>573</sup>

The U.S. organizers were tapping the appeal of the wilderness alongside commercial products in the California exhibition as a symbol of this unified and commercially viable component of the American frontier. The images exhibited by Lawrence & Houseworth, of San Francisco, would serve as examples of this negotiated compatibility, exhibiting mining and landscape artifacts and photographs side by side.

The California trees were representative, along with the grand walls of Yosemite, of Western giants. The Mariposa Grove would come to embody not just California icons, but a national identity as well, as trees would be named after American cultural heroes, representing the wilderness as a symbol of American destiny, rather than Californian heritage. Frenchman Louis Simonin described this designation in his articles published in 1868, the year following the fair, in *Le Tour du Monde*,

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<sup>573</sup> Anderson, Nancy K., “The Kiss of Enterprise,” in *The West as America : Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920* (Washington Londres: Published for the National Museum of American Art by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 241.

during which he followed a Western itinerary that was influenced in part by the American displays at the Exposition:

Names have been given to the most prominent of the trees. Go through the entire list of great men in America from Washington to Grant, you will find most of these names. About a hundred of the trees have been baptized in this way. They carry their designation inscribed on a tin sign. Below, there are sometimes philosophical inscriptions like this: “The groves were God’s first temples.”<sup>574</sup>

Simonin emphasized the peculiarity to naming the trees with such identities and ideas. His illustrated articles, published for many years following the voyage, utilized engravings of Lawrence & Houseworth photographs (**fig. 10.45**, **fig. 10.55**) which positioned people on and around the fallen trees, and which had been exhibited in the 1867 Exposition.

Carleton Watkins along with the subjects of his photographs, such as Galen Clark in the photograph of the Grizzly Giant (**fig. 10.57**), structured the viewer’s response to the natural scenes, and served as giants in their own right.<sup>575</sup> The photography presence at the 1867 Exposition was significant in that collodion photography and stereography offered novel reproducible methods which enabled representation of these giants in mass numbers. Through the circulation of their image, they would come to represent “marvels of the West” which were instrumental in the early days of tourism. The display of California objects alongside photographs of the giant trees and majestic landscapes signified a transition in the visualization of the California dream. Evolving from mythical tales of riches and exploitation, the idea of California began a trajectory highlighting its aesthetic naturalism.

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<sup>574</sup> Louis Simonin, “De Washington à San Francisco, À Travers Le Continent Américain,” *Le Tour Du Monde : Nouveau Journal Des Voyages*, 1874, 234, Gallica. Translated by Glassberg.

<sup>575</sup> Hutchinson, “They Might Be Giants,” 117.

## Chapter 10. Re-shaping the California dream: Watkins, Houseworth and the successful moment of the photographer-entrepreneur

### 10.1. Lawrence & Houseworth: the West coast business of photography

The story of how Thomas Houseworth and George S. Lawrence began the premier stereographic publishing firm on the west coast began like many others in 19<sup>th</sup> century San Francisco, as itinerant miners. At twenty years old, Thomas Houseworth sailed from New York to San Francisco on the *Canton* and teamed up with a young Lawrence, with whom he worked a claim in Calaveras County with mild success for nearly a year. Following a year of searching for gold in Trinity County, California, the pair abandoned their mining pursuits in mid-1851.<sup>576</sup> The young men would make their lives in San Francisco, having experienced the reality of futile gold rush dreams. As full-fledged members of the California gold rush, Lawrence and Houseworth represented the type of individuals that would develop San Francisco into a forefront city of modernity. Their presence at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 presents a point of entry to examine the early professional photographic establishment in San Francisco and how that competition peaked in Paris.

Simply put, George S. Lawrence was a businessman, a jeweler and later an optician by trade. Lawrence started his own business in San Francisco as a jeweler in 1852, but by 1854 he had transitioned to optics. By 1855, Lawrence and Houseworth had formally established their partnership in an optical firm. Houseworth would prove to be the photographic force between the two. Stereographic views arrived in San Francisco in 1853 when Robert H. Vance announced he had received a case of them. Vance was a daguerreotypist, with an industrious career creating views and successful gallery businesses in both North and South America. He was the premier photographic force in San Francisco throughout the 1850s, laying the ground and providing the opportunities that formed the major photographic players in the bay area for years to come, including Charles Leander Weed, Carleton E. Watkins, and Lawrence and Houseworth. A direct influence on these future landscapists, Vance produced a series of 300 daguerreotypes portraying the California frontier in

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<sup>576</sup> Palmquist and Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West*, 304.

1851.<sup>577</sup> Vance, open to novel photographic technologies as he was, remained for most of the 1850s devoted to the daguerreotype and ambrotype mediums. He valued upholding his reputation, declaring in an 1857, in regard to his new melaneotypes and photographs that “Our aim is to perfect ourselves in any new branch of our Art that may be invented, previous to introducing it in in our establishment.”<sup>578</sup> Vance was the precursor to the Lawrence and Houseworth firm in many aspects, particularly in regard to his business acumen. He led a distinguished twenty-five-year career in the photographic industry, navigating the quickly changing attitudes and technologies of the field, both as a photographer and gallery owner. Vance’s most overlooked quality however was his modern and visionary role in which Palmquist described him as “one of the first to perceive and capitalize on the American public's enormous appetite for realistic depictions of the lands of the Pacific West.”<sup>579</sup> This foresight enabled his continued commercial success adopting and exhibiting the evolving photographic art, making him arguably “the Pacific coast’s premier photographic trendsetter and practitioner of the 1850s.”<sup>580</sup> This is one element of context which negates the theory that Carleton Watkins and C.L. Weed were uninfluenced when they created their respective Yosemite photographs. By the end of the decade, Vance was in a commercial decline, only peripherally capitalizing on the stereograph craze of the early 1860s, creating an opening in the market for the Lawrence and Houseworth firm to take over in San Francisco.

Vance was also an influential precursor to the Lawrence and Houseworth business model and talent roster. The Lawrence and Houseworth firm would bypass Vance in the stereograph industry, becoming the foremost creator and publisher of stereoviews on the West Coast. Up until 1863 however, Lawrence and Houseworth were principally opticians, secondarily dealing their growing catalog of stereographs and cartes-de-visites. It has been suggested that by 1860, the firm was the exclusive California dealer for the London Stereoscopic Company.<sup>581</sup> Starting in 1863, the

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<sup>577</sup> Peter E. Palmquist, “California’s Peripatetic Photographer: Charles Leander Weed,” *California History* 58, no. 3 (1979): 196, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25157920>.

<sup>578</sup> Robert H. Vance, “Ahead!,” *Wide West*, March 8, 1857, 4, CDNC.

<sup>579</sup> Palmquist and Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West*, 559.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*, 564.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

firm began the business of procuring and publishing stereographic views, marking a turning point in their creative influence. The views on which Lawrence and Houseworth built their business were the work of several operators most notably C.L. Weed. Vance had employed Weed long before the Lawrence and Houseworth firm, though he was not the former's principal camera operator, a role that belonged to a man named Milton M. Miller. Weed's involvement with the Lawrence and Houseworth firm would prove instrumental in the firm's growth as a publisher of stereographs.

The contribution of Lawrence and Houseworth to the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 falls very much in line with the firm's general contribution to the photographic field of the era. The firm specialized in obtaining and publishing a large collection of images, which contributed to the public perception of California in the 1860s. The collection shown in Paris was diverse and copious, less curated than that of their San Francisco rival, Carleton E. Watkins, who was also exhibiting at the fair. This contrast is attributed to Watkins' more controlled and artistic approach to the creation and presentation of his work, while the L & H firm was focused on providing a large offering of photographs for to meet commercial demand. The *General Survey of the Exposition* described the L & H contribution in detail:

Photographic and stereoscopic views, comprising 22 large photographs of the Yosemite valley, California; 4 of the mammoth trees; 21 stereoscopic views of the Yosemite Valley; 33 of the mammoth trees; 40 of San Francisco; 17 illustrating the art of hydraulic mining; 43 of placer mining; 158 of scenery in California, and 29 in Nevada.<sup>582</sup>

The collection included 26 large photographs and 341 stereoscopic views. The collection was donated to European establishments at the closure of the Exhibition including the Photographic Society of Paris, the Jardin des Plantes, the Geological Society of France, and the British Museum. The distribution of these images to diverse institutions was an additional act of influence on the part of the firm. Since the firm was a publishing house and not an individual photographer, authorship of the work published by Lawrence and Houseworth was obscured for many of the images.

Photographs were purchased from working professionals including Weed, Watkins, Hart, and

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<sup>582</sup> United States. Commission to the Paris exposition, 1867., *General Survey of the Exhibition; with a Report on the Character and Condition of the United States Section*, 260.



Muybridge, but the firm primarily published stereoviews which were obtained from all over.<sup>583</sup>

Even though the authorship of the California images isn't known positively for most of the Lawrence and Houseworth catalogue, a large portion, particularly those exhibited at the Exposition, are proven or thought to be the work of Charles Leander Weed.

The photographs are reported to have been donated to many different institutions and societies following the Exposition's closure. The lists of institutions are inconsistent across publications, but most have a general resemblance to the following, "At the close of the Exposition, these views were donated by the exhibitors, through the commissioner from the State of California, to various public societies and institutions, including the Photographic Society of Paris, the Jardin des Plantes, the Geological Society of France, and the British Museum."<sup>584</sup> Other sources reference the Geological Society of London, the French School of Mines, Columbia College-New York, and England School of Mines. The large photographic prints of Yosemite and the great trees were said to be distributed amongst the Photographic Society of Paris, the Jardin des Plantes (photographs of the trees), the Geological Society of France, and the Geological Society of London. The stereo views portraying mining, described as "being interesting exhibits of the methods of California mining, especially of the hydraulic method, and of sluicing on a great scale," were reportedly offered to the French École des Mines, Royal School of Mines, England School of Mines, and Columbia College, New York.<sup>585</sup> Not all of the photographs or stereographs can be found in these locations, but considering the accuracy of the firms' sales catalogs, a significant portion of the exhibited images can be identified.

Four of the photographs exhibited by the firm in Paris and donated afterward have been located in the archives of the Société Française de la Photographie, which were presented to the Society members following the closure of the Exposition. The catalogue of the SFP lists four

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<sup>583</sup> Weston J. Naef and James N. Wood, *Era of Exploration: The Rise of Landscape Photography in the American West, 1860-1885* (Buffalo : Boston: Albright-Knox Art Gallery ; distributed by New York Graphic Society, 1975), 35.

<sup>584</sup> United States Commission to the Paris exposition, 1867, *General Survey of the Exhibition; with a Report on the Character and Condition of the United States Section*, 260.

<sup>585</sup> "California at the Great Paris Exposition," *Daily Alta California*, November 29, 1867, Vol. 19. No. 6467 edition, CDNC.

Yosemite Valley photographs from Lawrence & Houseworth of San Francisco, dating from 1867. The donation records of the SFP give no mention of Lawrence and Houseworth, however, they do mention a “M. Laurent” who “put before the eyes of the Société, on December 6, 1867, four large prints (views of California), which he had mentioned at a previous meeting.”<sup>586</sup> The inventory of donations to the SFP in 1867 (**fig. 10.4**) a document compiled from handwritten records in 1971, also outlines the donation of four prints by a “Laurent.”<sup>587</sup> This Laurent character is unidentifiable, and possibly a mis-translation of “Lawrence,” though George S. Lawrence was not known to have been in Paris, and all donations were reported to have been made via California commissioner William Phipps Blake. The large format photographs donated to the SFP, measuring 16 x 20 inches, were depictions of The South Dome (**fig. 10.5**), El Capitan (**fig. 10.6**), The Cascade Fall (**fig. 10.7**), and The Sentinel Rock (**fig. 10.8**). They were later described as having been amongst Weed’s “best known” photographs, likely describing the 1864 mammoth series generally.<sup>588</sup> These four images are the only large format photographs from Lawrence & Houseworth to be known to exist in the collection to which they were donated at the close of the Exposition.

There are two known extant collections of the mammoth print series, the most well-preserved one is a thirty-photograph collection which was given to the San Francisco Mercantile Library in 1867 by Lawrence & Houseworth. The entirety of the collection has been confirmed to have been captured in 1864 by the photographer Charles Leander Weed, though his signature is not found on the actual prints. The four photographs donated to the Société Française de Photographie, are included in the print set preserved by the Mercantile Library since its donation in 1867, until it was auctioned by Sotheby’s in 2012 for \$374,500. The New York Public Library holds the only other extant set, though two of the photographs in the NYPL collection consist of different images.<sup>589</sup> The Mercantile Library’s well-preserved series is valuable, as the quality of the prints

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<sup>586</sup> Katia Busch, “Dons Recus Par La SFP de 1855 à 1971” (Société Française de la photographie, n.d.). Translated by Glassberg.

<sup>587</sup> P. Marillier, “Inventaire Des Dons Recus Par La S.F.P. Depuis 1855,” 1971, 6.

<sup>588</sup> Julie K Brown, *Making Culture Visible: The Public Display of Photography at Fairs, Expositions and Exhibitions in the United States, 1847-1900*, 2019, 74.

<sup>589</sup> The NYPL set contains two variant plates. *South Dome—From Little Yosemite and Little Yosemite Valley* instead of *The Yo-Semite Fall, Near View* and *The Mammoth Grove Hotel*.

allows a true appreciation for the photographer Charles Weed, historically disregarded, but acknowledged to having been the first photographer of Yosemite. The entirety of appreciation and published examinations of Weed's work under the auspices of the Lawrence & Houseworth banner have concerned the bounteous collection of his stereo views and cabinet cards. The thematic breadth of those stereographs is historically poignant, which Peter Palmquist and others have acknowledged over the years. However, Weed's mammoth prints have long gone overlooked, their influence unknown, and his authorship completely obscured. The prints held at the SFP measure slightly smaller than those in the two known extant collections and are of slightly less quality currently. While their location and the confirmation of their donation after the Exposition is valuable, the Mercantile Library copies offer a more accurate representation of the photographs' appearance at the time of exhibition.

The twenty-six mammoth-plate photographs exhibited by Lawrence & Houseworth have hitherto been overlooked critically, but also in respect to their circulation and exhibition. The entirety of the thirty-image set is included in the illustrations (**figures 10.9 – 10.38**) since the four extra images in the collection are not distinguishable. The Mercantile Library's set presents the photographs in album form, cased in an ornated wooden box, with other details visible in the photographs (**fig. 10.9**). The images were likely exhibited in similar form at the Exposition Universelle, as one letter references the prints can be found in a portfolio in the Exposition. The images are enlightening concerning the legacy of Charles Leander Weed, whose mammoth photographs were eclipsed historically by the work and reputation of Carleton Watkins. The public and international exhibition of these photographs was more impactful than has previously been understood. The structure of photographic publishing at the time, obscuring Weed's authorship has likely resulted in the long-term ignorance of his most impressive works. Critically, his execution of these images, while inferior to Carleton Watkins' composition and technical precision, was respectable. Viewing these extant prints, it becomes clear that Weed's oeuvre merits more attention than it has previously received, as a groundbreaking character in California's burgeoning photographic industry and its lasting visual legacy.

This album of mammoth print photographs has for a long time historically existed in the shadow of Watkins' more famous pictures. However, at the time of the Exposition, and for the years prior, it is likely that Weed's images would have reached at least as large of an audience as that of the Watkins' images. He had been one of the most experienced and active outdoor photographers in California for some time, particularly since his first Yosemite trip in 1859. The mammoth print album offers one of the best extant opportunities to examine the photographer Charles Leander Weed, who was a fundamental force in the early establishment of California's photographic production. Weed had a stand-alone career as a photographer, which has been difficult to examine by researchers since he rarely claimed authorship and his photographs were almost exclusively published under the publishing firm or gallery for whom he was employed. Peter Palmquist has suggested that as the first person known to have photographed Yosemite in 1859, Weed was likely the influence for Watkins' decision to document Frémont's Mariposa estate in 1859-1860, as well as inspiring him to photograph Yosemite for the first time in the Fall of 1861.<sup>590</sup>

Born in New York in 1824, Weed grew up in Wisconsin and arrived in California by the winter of 1854. He began work as a camera operator for portrait photographer George W. Watson in Sacramento, before entering into partnership with Robert Vance's Sacramento gallery three years later. By the late 1850s he was proficient in the wet-collodion process, making negatives on glass. His experiments with large-format negatives would begin around this time, as he ventured to put these techniques into practice on outdoor subjects.<sup>591</sup> Weed and Watkins were both inspired early on (between 1857-1859) to take their cameras outdoors to capture landscapes, mining, and urban scenes. It should be noted that both of these men also began their careers in California, capturing portraits. This initiative or inspiration has not been credited to the two men, even though they both independently chose to create images of California's geography and development rather than the more popular business of portraits, likely influenced by Vance and others' outdoor daguerreotypes.

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<sup>590</sup> Peter E. Palmquist et al., *Points of Interest: California Views, 1860-1870: The Lawrence & Houseworth Albums* (Berkeley Hills Books, 2002), 17.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*

The period between 1859 and the early 1870s can be considered as a period in which representation of California was largely concentrated on the landscape and its features. This effort was exclusively due to the work of local photographers of the period and the reproducible quality of the wet collodion technique. C.L. Weed received positive reviews as early as 1859 for his Yosemite photographs executed that year on a trip to the area with James Mason Hutchings, where he captured the first photographs of the Yosemite Valley. Weed's photographs amplified the existing excitement surrounding the natural marvel. With that series of at least twenty large glass-plate negatives and forty stereoview negatives, Weed uncovered a visual gold-mine. While historically Weed's name has been obscured, he was often credited for his photographs at the time. The reproductions of his photographs featured in Hutchings' *California Magazine* in November of 1859 (**fig. 10.39, fig. 10.40**) acknowledge that the images were reproduced from photographs of "C.L. Weed."<sup>592</sup> His photographs exhibited at Vance's gallery were also publicly known to be his work. If the drawings of Thomas Ayres, (**fig. 10.41, fig. 10.42**), the artist hired to create sketches during the first visit by white settlers in the Yosemite Valley in 1855, reproduced and published in *Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine* in 1856, sparked tourist interest in Yosemite and its towering falls, the photographs by Weed, exhibited in Vance's gallery in 1859 fanned the flames. The vantage points established by Ayres can also be seen as the points of view taken by Weed and Watkins in photographs of the Valley.

Carleton Watkins' would follow up Weed's ventures into Yosemite with a photographic practice that exhibited a mastery of the medium and the subject. As a figure in the lineage of visual forces of California, Weed merits this closer examination, especially in the context of the international impact of his oeuvre. After his initial photographs of Yosemite were described as "Magnificent, wonderful, excellent," he was already on to the next job, establishing a gallery in Asia. In fact, one way to distinguish this photographer from others more critically applauded, is that he was a pioneer of photography in California and beyond, executing many "firsts."<sup>593</sup> As the first

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<sup>592</sup> "Hutchings' *California Magazine*," *Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine* IV, no. 5 (November 1859): 197.

<sup>593</sup> Palmquist, "California's Peripatetic Photographer: Charles Leander Weed," 197.

to photograph Yosemite Valley, his work followed the Yosemite drawings of Thomas Ayres as the earliest visual explorations of the white settlers' perspective of California, while his photographic images at the Exposition were also an early appearance of California geography on the international stage.

## 10.2 Charles Leander Weed: The Mammoth Prints

The mammoth-plate photograph album of Yosemite and Calaveras Grove completed by C.L. Weed in 1864 represented the height of his landscape photographic practice. His work reached the international stage at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 and provided one of the strongest photographic portrayals of California to date. His photographs were the establishing guide for the selection of viewpoints and features for many future images created in the Yosemite Valley. If his initial imperial-size negatives from Yosemite in 1859 satisfied local curiosity but lacked luster, his album captured in 1864 proved artistic and technical progress for the photographer. Described as “peripatetic” by Peter Palmquist, he was always on the move, productive and opportunistic.<sup>594</sup> It seems obvious now that a photographer would want to photograph the majestic features of Yosemite Valley, but it was the adventurous spirit and the scenic eye of Charles Leander Weed in 1859 that resulted in the original perspectives and photographic compositions from which Carleton E. Watkins, Edward Muybridge, George Fiske, and Ansel Adams would base their later compositions.

Correspondence from the Exposition organizers included a most telling letter in a piece of correspondence (**fig. 10. 58**) from Commissioner Beckwith to W.P. Blake, which requests “Please deliver to Frank Leslie, or order six (6) large Photographic Views from the Exhibit of Messrs. Laurence & Houseworth. They are marked with the name of M. Leslie and are in the Portfolio.”<sup>595</sup> This letter is the only evidence that confirms that Lawrence & Houseworth’s mammoth print images were exhibited at the Exposition in the format of a portfolio or album. This fact is one of the most

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<sup>594</sup> Palmquist, “California’s Peripatetic Photographer: Charles Leander Weed.”

<sup>595</sup> William P. Blake to N.M. Beckwith, “Paris, Sept. 24, 1867,” September 24, 1867, 1194 – Applications for Exhibit Privileges, Box # 18, Folder II. 9. 10. Lawrence & Houseworth, NARA.

significant details concerning the California landscape photographs in general. Not only were Lawrence & Houseworth's images' internal structures in the typical more romantic style of the period, but their exhibition format for their "views" was as well, as Nickel has described:

The "view," conversely, presupposes the more private experience of page-turning or card-sorting: its anonymity and its dependence on other similarly unauthored views within the logic of the larger topographical system of the printed report, album, or archive militate against the notion that its maker be considered a self-expressive "artist" in our modern sense of the word.

Watkins' more modern composition and exhibition on the wall, set him apart and gave him much more exposure at the Exposition Universelle of 1867. In the longer term, breaking the formal photographic landscape style as well as re-imagining the exhibition model for landscape photographs garnered him respect as an "artist" and visionary by contemporary standards. The author of the L & H photographs was unnamed, the photographs were anonymous and composed for "page-turning" more than for exhibition on the gallery wall.

### 10.3 The Great Trees of Calaveras

The Lawrence & Houseworth exhibit included four mammoth prints of the Great Trees of Calaveras, which were almost certainly the same images as those in the Mercantile Library album. The photographs were titled: *The Mammoth Grove Hotel, Calaveras County, Cal.* (**fig. 10.14**); *The Sentinels, 315 feet high, Mammoth Grove, Calaveras County, Cal.* (**fig. 10.24**); *The Original Big Tree, 32 feet diameter, Mammoth Grove, Calaveras County, Cal.* (**fig. 10.13**); *The Fallen Tree Hercules, 325 feet long, Mammoth Grove, Calaveras County, Cal.* (**fig. 10.28**). The four photographs showed culturally significant scenes, with human figures posed amidst varied interactions with the trees. All of Weed's images from Calaveras in this series were carefully choreographed in a way that emphasized the settlers' development and relation to the trees. No more than one image, *The Sentinels, 315 high*, (**fig. 10.24**) portrays the full size of living, standing mammoth sequoias. The other three photographs feature downed sequoias at different phases of exploitation. These photographs, captured in 1864, were not the first photographs of the Calaveras

Mammoth Grove, rather these images were captured many years after their discovery at a point when settlers had felled and exploited many of the trees. The *Sentinels* photograph (**fig. 10.24**) shows settlers with a horse and carriage posed between two towering trees which mark the entrance to a house. These images by Weed tell a story of human mastery over Nature, and how the features of California nature were written into the legend of California. Some photographs built up the giant sequoias as ancient signs of ancient history and icons on which meaning was constructed, in the *Sentinels* photograph (**fig. 10.24**) Weed placed the towering trees in a quotidian scene, other-worldly in size, around which local life took place. Subjugating the trees to a human-defined role in which they served as gateways through which one could pass to arrive at a building, the settlers' association with the trees was established visually. The widely framed photograph tells a story, not just of natural grandeur, but also the story of settlers' integration of their life into the landscape and its features. This is precisely the type of image which by associating the trees with American settlement, contributed to what François Brunet called the "Americanization of the sequoia."<sup>596</sup> The image stands out as well as it represents a rare photographic example of attempting to show the actual size of a living *sequoia gigantea*, a California character long preceded by its legendary reputation. By placing the humans at the base, the viewer saw in the photograph the scale at which the settler was dwarfed by the larger-than-life nature of California, while also appropriating its existence as little more than a piece of decoration in settler expansion. This type of representation, placing the tree visually within the framework of settler development, accentuated the association of *sequoia gigantea* with settler discovery and exploitative interests. In the decline of the Gold Rush, settlers looked to new commercial interests such as the Mammoth Trees to satiate the need for lucrative resources in the context of settler expansion. It must be emphasized again that this is the only photograph, of the four large format Calaveras Grove prints exhibited by Lawrence & Houseworth in the Paris Exposition which shows a living, standing giant sequoia as the focus of the photograph. The other three images all focus on exploitation and touristic appropriation of the

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<sup>596</sup> François Brunet, "The Sequoia Files : L'arbre Merveilleux," *Transatlantica : Revue d'Études Américaines*, no. 2 (2017): 2.



Grove. The influence of such a photograph and this perspective was significant since much of the early destruction enacted upon the trees was in an effort to prove to the public the size of the redwoods. These attempts, including the exhibition of the 100 ft. portion of bark taken from the “Mother of the Forest,” and the circulation of a section of trunk of the “Discovery Tree,” failed to convince:

From the Calaveras grove some sections of a fallen tree were cut during and pending the great World’s Fair that was held in London some years since. One joint of the tree was sectionized and transported to that country in sections, and then set up there. The English who saw it declared it to be a Yankee invention, made from beginning to end; that it was an utter untruth that such trees grew in the country; that it could not be.<sup>597</sup>

The above quote is taken from Congressional debate concerning the Yosemite Grant, which sought to protect Mariposa Grove from the destruction enacted upon the Calaveras Grove as a reaction to the demands of World’s Fairs, such as the aforementioned sequoia bark display at the London International Exhibition of 1862. It is à propos then, that by the time of the Paris Exposition Universelle, though rumor of a section of trunk to be sent was circulating, photographs which showed the full height of the trees was an impactful symbol.

The trees had over the years undergone the imposition of belief systems and ideologies, beginning with the sacredness bestowed upon them by the local Native American tribes including the Miwok and the Tule River Tribe, and later, in 1860 when Unitarian Minister Thomas Starr King made his way to California, imposed his Christian views of divinity upon the Great Trees, bestowing a kind of transcendental sacredness on the Mariposa Grove, following so much destruction of the Calaveras Grove. In between that time though, and particularly up until 1864, the trees were overtaken by the interests of commercialism and novelty, the strongest force in California settler communities, looking for any new exploitable resource to sustain settler expansion. Between 1860 and 1864, the Calaveras Grove was at the height of tourism. Weed’s photograph of the *Original Big Tree* (**fig. 10.13**) shows the touristic development that had resulted in the man-powered destruction of a giant sequoia of the Calaveras Grove. Titled *The Original Big Tree, 32 feet diameter*

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<sup>597</sup> John Conness, “A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875.,” *The Congressional Globe*, May 18, 1864, 2301.

(**fig. 10.13**), the photograph shows the gazebo-covered stump and felled trunk of the “Discovery Tree” laying on its side, against which a staircase had been built. A man was posed standing next to the trunk. There is also the photograph *The Mammoth Grove Hotel* (**fig. 10.14**) which showed the construction of the 1861 hotel (a hotel had previously been built in 1853, as well as a log cabin before that) with people posed all around the house, some on foot and some on horseback. Both photographs represent the triumphant commercial apparatus installed in the Calaveras Grove. The two photographs taken in 1864 showed the status of the existing structures at the time. The development of the site underwent many changes in the years of its exploitation beginning in 1852-1853. The gazebo (**fig. 10.13**) was in fact the famed stump upon which a dance floor was installed (**fig. 10.43**) and where settlers were known to have hosted celebrations and events. Weed’s photographs, and the larger Lawrence & Houseworth collection of Calaveras Grove images focused on this settler exploitation of the Grove, revealing the touristic motives that were currently in place. The year in which these photographs were taken, 1864, was also the year in which Abraham Lincoln signed in the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove as part of a protective grant under the control of the California state government. The development shown in these photographs and the tourism that this imagery inherently promoted was part of the reason that the Mariposa Grove was decided to be protected in the Yosemite Valley Grant Act so that the same unbridled development did not befall the natural wonder of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa trees in the same way it had the Calaveras ones, in addition to creating barriers for mining and forestry.

The fourth Mammoth tree photograph (**fig. 10.28**) exhibited by Lawrence & Houseworth was titled *The Fallen Tree Hercules, 325 feet long*. This style of trophy scene would become one of the most popular styles of photographs amongst the giant redwoods. The caption of the photograph revealed some of the challenge in creating an imposing impression of the trees pictorially. This Hercules tree was downed by a gale in 1861. As it lies on the ground, the length, rather than the height of the tree was described as “325 feet long.” The trees, when standing were simply too tall for photographers to capture in a way that revealed their towering size in a powerful way. It was more tightly composed photographs such as this one, with humans giving scale to the existing

“height” of the tree’s fallen trunk that enabled the feeling of impressive size to translate to the viewer. The elusive height, too tall for a photograph, had to be described textually, unsuccessfully evoking the formerly impressive height of the tree, but successfully associating the trees as a symbol of settler culture. The image exudes a triumphant air, exemplifying the prosperity of the settlers in a portrait with the fallen giant. This story fits well into the legacy of Calaveras Grove, which was most famous for white settlers’ domination and recreation within the context of the trees’ destruction as seen in a drawing (**fig. 10.43**) of the dance floor installed on the stump of “The Discovery Tree,” and the dancing parties that took place. The tree had survived over a thousand years of forest fires and storm winds, but could not survive the arrival of the white man; this destiny it shared with the Pomo, Miwok and other tribes who had lived amongst the redwoods for millennia, and who had revered and respected it.<sup>598</sup> The fallen Hercules Tree seen in Weed’s photograph (**fig. 10.28**) had fallen by natural means, in a strong gale, but as a photographic subject the tree was condemned to its new role, to be objectified within the settlers’ exploitation as a resource, a marvel, and hegemonic subject. In his study of a “cult” of the Sierra Nevada giant sequoia that emerged during the 1860s, François Brunet identified a thread in which the “redwood seduced a frontier lyricism less curious about the trees than the men who cut them down.”<sup>599</sup> In this crystallization of the pioneer in the wilderness, the frontier spirit described by Tocqueville decades earlier was made incarnate, the spirit of the frontier was one that respected nature less than the pioneer man’s victory over it.<sup>600</sup> Posed against the fallen marvel, the pioneer’s triumph over not only the frontier and the fight for survival was here on display, but also their triumphant appropriation of the wilderness. The settlers’ relationship with the natural wonders of the West embodied a white, imperialist attitude of exploitation, as compared to the respect exemplified by the indigenous tribes who had lived amongst the sequoias before them.

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<sup>598</sup> Greg Sarris, “The Ancient Ones,” in *The Once and Future Forest* (Heyday, 2021).

<sup>599</sup> Brunet, “The Sequoia Files : L’arbre Merveilleux,” 1–12.

<sup>600</sup> This is a paraphrasing of an idea put forth by François Brunet in his article “The sequoia files : L’arbre merveilleux,” 1.

For the European viewer who had long heard tales of California, these photographs represented an illustration of a kind of California dream, as it existed at the time. With human subjects always placed amongst the mammoth trees and the majestic Yosemite cliffs, a visitor to the Exposition Universelle might have imagined that this represented life in California as it was lived by the settlers. This narrative, presented via photographs and published drawings built upon the already existing reputation of the giant sequoia in France and Europe which emerged following its publicized discovery in 1852, was a mythic continuation of the tale of Eldorado.<sup>601</sup> Some Europeans, but doubtlessly many Americans would have seen already the lithographs of the mammoth trees printed in *Hutchings' California Magazine* and James Hutchings' previous publication, *Hutchings California Scenes*, (**fig. 10.54**) and the species had already undergone popularity in European gardens. In fact, the tallest living example today of the species outside of California is a specimen near Ribeauvillé, France planted in 1856. In Europe and the UK, the giant sequoia became a popular tree in English-style gardens, planted in many gardens following their popularized discovery in the 1850s. Giant sequoias had previously been illustrated through articles circulated in France, such as Louis Simonin's 1862 article in *Le Tour du Monde*, in which the trees were depicted by several drawings inspired by drawings.

Taken in 1864, the date of the "Hercules" photograph was particularly significant as it took place during the American Civil War. As Simon Schama has so clearly stated, "The Big Trees were thus seen as the botanical correlate of America's heroic nationalism at a time when the Republic was suffering its most divisive crisis since the Revolution."<sup>602</sup> The exhibition of the photograph at an international exposition allowed this nationalism to enact its power on the greater public, particularly at this 1867 Exposition Universelle in the years immediately following the Civil War. The authoritative pose of Western settlers depicted in Weed's photograph represented the more exploitative nature of California settlers. Schama has argued that it was Eastern American visitors

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<sup>601</sup> It must be noted that 1852 was not the year in which the species was actually discovered by European explorers (thought to be 1833), but this is the event that resulted in its public attention.

<sup>602</sup> Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1995), 187.

who brought the veneration of the sequoia groves. The Western settlers had a different point of view which was most adeptly captured in Weed's images. The photographs didn't evoke a veneration or sanctity of the trees, rather they were positioned as objects of exploitation at worst, or curiosity at best. Weed's depiction of American settlers posed triumphantly against the fallen "Hercules" evoked the heroic triumph of a pre-ordained Manifest Destiny. The photographs emphasized that this "Destiny" began in ancient times with the initiation of the trees' millennial lifespan.

A modernized perspective appeared during this period which focused on nature of the Far West via the medium of outdoor photography. The perspective of settlers and settler photographers created a vision of the West which was modern and specific to both place and time, establishing a subjective image of the Far West and influencing the future of the photographic medium simultaneously.

#### **10.4 The Yosemite views**

The Lawrence & Houseworth exhibit contained twenty-two photographs of Yosemite, taken by Charles Leander Weed in 1864. These images were a formal and technical progression from Weed's 1859 expedition, when he took what are now known to be the first photographs of Yosemite. In the interim, Carleton Watkins had come and produced his own sets of Yosemite mammoth-plate images, likely inspired by the 1859 photographs of Weed. The firm was in competition with Watkins, who also exhibited mammoth prints of the great trees and Yosemite at the Exposition. The two sets of mammoth prints were confused at times in the press and in correspondence, so much so that the medal attributed to Watkins was mistakenly thought to have been awarded to Lawrence & Houseworth by photographic historian Peter Palmquist.<sup>603</sup> Competition aside, it was this double exhibition of almost the same scenes that resulted in such a focused California presence. The only large pictures of California exhibited were of Yosemite and the great trees. No other place had such

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<sup>603</sup> Palmquist et al., *Points of Interest: California Views, 1860-1870 : The Lawrence & Houseworth Albums*, 21–22.

a focused and visible representation. California was visually represented as a place vastly different than the Eastern U.S. Following in the current of the mystery and grandeur of the Gold Rush, the California dream would continue to be made of the unbelievable. Photographers, in this case Weed, had succeeded in creating cultural icons and monuments in their images, the mountains and trees of California, in contrast to the portraits and architecture of Europe and the East.

The twenty-six Yosemite photographs from the 1864 collection that were exhibited serve as an enlightening addition to Weed's stereograph collection which has been published about and praised, most notably by Peter Palmquist. Few extant collections include an entirety of the twenty-six prints (**figures 10.9 – 10.38**) and only twenty-two were exhibited in Paris. Weed's return to Yosemite represented his devotion to improving his photographic practice in the venue. The 1864 collection also revealed quite a bit about Weed's legacy. He was a pioneer and an adventurer, with a level of landscape consciousness that deserves more consideration than it has received. His 1859 Yosemite imperial size photographs represented a new standard for California photography. The 1975 exhibition *Era of Exploration* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art acknowledged Weed's role in many aspects, even if several critical factors were ignored at that time by the curators, most notably that Weed had made large format photographs in addition to stereographs during his 1859 visit. The progression from Weed's 1859 so-called "primitive" style to his more technically adept 1864 practice, was highly visible if inadequate in comparison to his competitor Watkins' more refined work. Weed was an adventurer, and a pioneer, and as the first to photograph in Yosemite, experimenting with vantage points and compositions, he laid the ground for the following decades, which would prove to be the initial heyday of California landscape photography. Even more, he was a pioneer of photography of the greater Pacific Rim in a way that distinguishes him from Watkins, Vance, and the survey photographers to follow. His photographs of Hawaii (**fig. 10.46, fig. 10.47**) were the earliest known existing photographs of the Hawaiian Islands. He ventured to the archipelago in 1865 and set up a gallery with family members, executing mammoth-prints and stereoviews in difficult to reach areas of the islands such as the Haleakala crater, likely the earliest wet-plate, and definitely the first mammoth-plate photographs to be made on Oahu and Maui. One

view captures the Maunawili Valley (**fig. 10.46**), executed in a similar style to his 1864 Yosemite photographs, with a figure posed in the foreground. His mammoth plate image of the Haleakala crater (**fig. 10.47**) revealed a more ethereal aesthetic, a nod to his existing sentience of landscape, at times adequately captured by his skill. He lived and travelled between Japan, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, between the years 1859 and 1861, and returning to China, for the latter part of the 1860s, establishing studios and joint business ventures in his own name.<sup>604</sup> He was “energetic and restless,” building a large portfolio of geographic views and portraits throughout the Pacific over the course of the decade. Though his critical trail often points to his Yosemite photographs and his Lawrence & Houseworth relationship as the preeminent example of his work, it was merely one of his many ventures and landscapes which inspired his adventurous and tireless determination over the course of his career. The L & H publishing firm was certainly a lucrative relationship for Weed as a photographer, but he was not dependent upon their patronage, owning and partnering in at least four gallery and studio ventures in California, Hawaii, and Asia.

Contextually then, the collection of Lawrence & Houseworth at the Exposition of 1867 revealed a regional intention that superseded the commercial interests of the firm. Thomas Houseworth & Co. published Weed’s mammoth plate views from Asia in 1869 at the latest, included in a series titled *Oriental Scenery*. The firm also published his stereoviews from Japan as late as 1867 (**fig. 10.48**), so it is clear that the firm had the opportunity to publish these images. However, the collection submitted to the Exposition Universelle of 1867 by the firm included none of Weed’s photographs from Hawaii or Asia, even though these would have represented a more diverse geographical collection on behalf of the L & H firm. This context, by excluding portraits and other photographic production from the state of California, reveals an organizational influence from the level of the state commissioner and national commission to send only photographs which promoted the regional image of California. Excluding the vast productions of daguerreotypes and portraits, the commission granted exclusivity to landscape photographs as “our unrivaled specimens in the

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<sup>604</sup> T. Bennett, *Photography in Japan 1853-1912* (Tuttle Publishing, 2012).

photographic art, especially in the form of views of our grand mountain scenery,” requested by California commissioner William P. Blake.<sup>605</sup> The commission was so adamant in promoting this image of California that they approved of sending two similar sets of prints, i.e. both Watkins and L & H photographs of both Yosemite and the Great Trees.

Weed’s 1864 Yosemite Valley photographs were his second attempt at capturing the majestic landscape, but his first with the mammoth-plate camera. Likely part of an ongoing visual exchange amongst artists and photographers of the region, his choice of vantage point and composition had evolved along with his technical acuity. Whether it was he or Watkins who influenced the other in this regard is difficult to confirm, but it is indisputable that Weed first took cameras to the Valley and established Yosemite as the preeminent photographic subject of California. It is also clear that Weed approached the landscape with an aesthetic manner of perception. He likely influenced Watkins by composing photographs vertically when the subject required. His 1864 photograph of El Capitan (**fig. 10.17**) likely influenced Watkins to compose his view of El Capitan vertically on later trips. Watkins’ horizontal view of the monolith in 1861 (**fig. 10.53**) changed to a vertical composition in his c. 1865-1866 photograph (**fig. 10.54**).<sup>606</sup> His tendency to position one or several human figures in the foreground was a cliché of the era, but one that has been considered a fault of judgement when “he posed figures whose breezy postures sometimes detracted from the seriousness of the general subject,” such as that in his view overlooking Yosemite Valley from the Mariposa Trail (**fig. 10.10**).<sup>607</sup> This choice was not just a style of composition but more emblematic of the larger terms around which these “views” were created in the 1860s. As Douglas Nickel has pointed out, the photographic “view” by 1860 was considered a more private experience and was published as part of a report, album, or more general topographical series.<sup>608</sup> The photographic landscape “view” photograph was not generally imagined for disposition on the wall, exhibition style, though this changed as industrial fairs were beginning in the U.S. Carleton Watkins’ reimagining of the

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<sup>605</sup> Blake et al., “California at the World’s Exhibition in Paris.”

<sup>606</sup> Naef and Wood, *Era of Exploration*, 82.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>608</sup> Nickel, Watkins, and Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins*, 23.



photographic “view” and invention of his mammoth-plate camera, have thus far been credited by scholars with reimagining the eventual mode of photograph exhibition. The composition of Weed’s images, including a human proxy within the photograph with which the viewer could relate, was merely the context for which most photographs were imagined during that period, i.e., the stereocard, the album or portfolio. His photograph *THE YO-SEMITE FALL, Near View* (**fig. 10.22**), exemplifies some of the weaknesses of his wet-plate practice, such as streaked collodion and the blur of the trees which would have been important details to nineteenth century clientele. His subjects, even in such a powerful setting, add an element of familiarity, as they appear to fish on the banks of the Merced river, imposing a cultural and dated element into the otherwise eternal landscape. This technique, as illustrated in *THE SENTINEL ROCK* (**fig. 10.38**) detracted from the grandeur of the view, but also participated in the “discovery” narrative of the white settler’s appropriation of the Yosemite landscape. This specific type of photographic portrayal, seen again in the impressive setting of *THE YO-SEMITE FALL, Front View* (**fig. 10.18**) signified the cultural attachment of the settler to the landscape, evoking a new visual illustration of the California dream. These images’ most closely related counterparts in Europe were Charles Soulier’s landscape photographs (**fig. 5.8**) or Francis Frith’s photographs of Lauterbrunnen in Switzerland also a glacial valley of comparable aesthetic. Weed’s images represented a different cultural role than those of the European photographers, neither of whom lived in the Lauterbrunnen, nor Switzerland. As peripatetic as Weed would prove to be during the 1860s, he was for all related purposes a California settler and inhabitant. The images by Frith and Soulier, represented a touristic point of view, with the houses of the town in the foreground of the towering waterfalls. Weed’s images were proposing the view of the discoverer, perhaps no instance more apparent than *Yo-Semite Valley, from the Mariposa Trail*, (**fig. 10.10**). With Weed’s widely framed composition, the tall pine tree shown in its entirety (Watkins’ similar image crops the top of the tree to gain a slightly closer vantage point) leads the viewer’s eye to a silhouetted figure, wearing a coat and hat, and leaning meditatively against the trunk, admiring the view of the valley spread out before him. The perception of the valley, in all its perfectly exposed glory lies on the other side of this foreground overlook location.

The view of the Valley landscape was taken for the photograph viewer's experience and the gaze was instructed by the settler figure whose presence imposed the colonial perception of the white settler's discovery, both excluding the Native American from their ancestral existence in the valley, while constructing a California cultural identity based on the existing natural marvels rather than the civilization actually created by the settler community. Though this human element has been criticized as detracting from the landscape, it would continue as a popular trope by the Western photographers to follow. Weed's early inclusion of the pioneer as an active participant in the experience of the Western American landscape would be seen in the photographs of the USGS Survey photography of the years that directly followed. The prevalence of this trope would endure, one of the many more blatant examples of this phenomenon can be seen in the turn of the century Grand Canyon photographers Emery and Ellsworth Kolb participating in their own photographic process in what Rachel Sailor titled "performing the pioneer."<sup>609</sup> The figures in Weed's photographs may or may not have been posed participants, but they appeared to be settlers, merely caught in action in the scene. In the context of the Exposition Universelle, the viewers were millions of prospective immigrants confronted with an idealized California experience embodied by the settler figure.<sup>610</sup> Watkins on the other hand, excluded the trace of man from his landscapes, and for that reason amongst many others, has garnered praise as the preeminent American landscape photographer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by virtue of his more refined vision.

Critically, Weed's landscape images have largely been considered "naïve" and "primitive" compared to his contemporaries. Nonetheless, at the time of their creation his landscapes were often lauded by the press. His mammoth-prints of Yosemite were praised as "perfection of photography" by the *Daily Alta* in October of 1864, his Hong Kong views as "a guarantee of their surprising skill" by the *Overland China Mail* in 1860, and his mammoth views of Hawaii's Haleakala Crater as "Magnifique, excellent, pretty fair!" by *The Friend* in 1865. History has not gained Weed much

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<sup>609</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, 105.

<sup>610</sup> Nelson M. Beckwith, "Letter of Nov. 23, 1865 to John Bigelow in Section 'Importance of the Exposition to the United States,'" in *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867* (Washington, D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1870), 27.

notoriety or respect, even though several researchers have pieced together his oeuvre partially over the years, applying authorship when possible to his unsigned images. Carleton Watkins' work has, prior to and following the Paris Exposition, nearly always overshadowed Weed's Yosemite photographs. In a social and cultural context however, Weed's Yosemite photographs were powerful pictorial tools in the dissemination of America, California, and the image of the West during this moment of re-imagination of the post-civil war U.S. image. Many illustrations (**fig. 10.39, fig. 10.40, fig. 10.55, fig. 10.78, fig. 10.84, fig. 10.88, fig. 10.106**) show the reproduction of his photographs in publications in France and America in the years following the Exposition. The articles by Louis Simonin for *Le Tour du Monde*, included reproductions of Weed's photographs, just as Simonin's articles recounting his travels through Colorado included reproduction of photographs exhibited by the state of Colorado at the Exposition Universelle of 1867. Simonin's articles were written within the year following the Exposition when he traveled through America, though the articles were published through the 1870s. While his photographs may not critically measure up to the photographers who followed his footsteps into the groves of the Great Trees and the towering walls of Yosemite Valley, he was a productive and powerful pictorial force in 1860s photography, particularly in the field of landscape and stereoviews, which were seen by the multitudes as some of the first "real" glimpses into the American West, and the identity of a post-Civil War America.

### **10.5 The Lawrence & Houseworth stereographs**

Lawrence & Houseworth included 341 stereoscopic views in their collection exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. The images covered Yosemite, Mammoth Trees, San Francisco, hydraulic mining, placer mining, scenery of California, and scenery of Nevada. The stereographic inventory produced by the firm was the work that made them "one of the American

West's most influential photographic publishing houses," according to Peter Palmquist.<sup>611</sup> The stereoscopic format had been present at International Exhibitions since 1851, and 1867 represented the apogee of the stereoscopic medium, after which the format's popularity declined.<sup>612</sup> In October of 1867 Englishman Hugh Diamond in the Royal Photographic Society's *Journal* stated "The public taste for stereoscopic views has in a great measure passed away, but still there is a considerable demand", as he went on to suggest his assumption that the format would remain a household staple.<sup>613</sup> The format has been mostly disregarded by historians and critics as a commercial item of little artistic merit.<sup>614</sup> Low-brow status arrived within a few years for the medium in Europe, as it descended quickly from its standing as a curiosity in salons of the aristocracy to affordable mass produced commodity. The *en relief* aspect of the stereo viewing experience has proven the most lasting point of interest into this media relic, with the most ardent opponents at the time deriding it as an obscene tool of realism. Perhaps the most famous detractor of the medium, Charles Baudelaire made this famous statement in his review of photographs from the Paris Salon of 1859: "A madness, an extraordinary fanaticism took possession of all these new sun-worshippers...A little later a thousand hungry eyes were bending over the peepholes of the stereoscope, as though they were the attic-windows of the infinite."<sup>615</sup> Baudelaire was fretting the existential crisis that photography posed to art, imagination, and the French soul more generally. Modernity's vulgarization of art was perhaps no more apparent for the poet, than in photography, art's industrial interloper. Baudelaire's concern was more of a reluctant acquiescence to the progress of modernity, and the influence of the "mob" on fine art of the period. One critical aspect of such a prodigious and commercial enterprise as Lawrence & Houseworth and their extensive stereograph inventory is certainly as a pre-cursor to a society of spectacle. In the context of the Exposition Universelle, that is certainly the realm in

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<sup>611</sup> Palmquist et al., *Points of Interest: California Views, 1860-1870 : The Lawrence & Houseworth Albums*, 15.

<sup>612</sup> François Brunet, "Voir et Revoir l'exposition En Petit Volume. La Couverture Stéréographique de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867," *Transbordeur.*, Paris, Macula, Photographie histoire société ("Musées de photographies documentaires"), no. 2 (2017): 125. Translated by Glassberg.

<sup>613</sup> Diamond, Hugh Welsh, "Official Reports of the French Exhibition," 118.

<sup>614</sup> Denis Pellerin, "Les Lucarnes de l'infini," *Etudes Photographiques*, Mai 1998, 16–17.

<sup>615</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *The Mirror of Art: Critical Studies by Baudelaire*, trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1955). Baudelaire's critique of photography was first published in Charles Baudelaire, "Le Salon de 1859," *La Revue Française*, 1859, Gallica, 264.

which the modern production of mass culture was showing some of its initial manifestation. Another aspect in which these more subtle photographic objects found their place was related to another French poet, this one from a following generation. In his 1939 speech on the occasion of the centenary of photography, Paul Valéry spoke on the more positive influence photography had in modernity. Just as Baudelaire reflected on photography's relation to painting, Valéry contextualized the medium in respect to writing as he "proposed that the medium also may have redefined realism by exposing those unrelated objects composing a scene that the writer's eyes miss in their selective scanning."<sup>616</sup> Stereography, more specifically, proved to fill this realist role in the 1860s. Reserving the heavy glass plates and collodion subjectively for only the most sought after majestic views photographers in the field, particularly when pursuing landscape photographs, were able to capture a more snapshot style, real life moment with the stereograph, than those destined for the imperial or mammoth plates. This spontaneous style informed the fact that the stereograph was destined for the stereo viewer not the wall or more appropriately during the period, the photograph album. The capture of these "unrelated objects" and those outside of a photographer's composed scenes causes them to serve as valuable historical documents. Valéry generously attributed certain literary aspects to the medium: "But with the advent of photography, and following in Balzac's footsteps, realism asserted itself in our literature. The romantic vision of beings and objects gradually lost its magic. The scenic backdrop showed itself for the canvas or cardboard it was."<sup>617</sup> If, in the 1860s, the landscape painting was the "romantic vision" and the "scenic backdrop", then stereographs were the story taking place in front of the backdrop.

In his review of photography at the Exposition Universelle of 1867, *Le Moniteur de la Photographie* editor, Ernest Lacan, expressed a positive reaction to the official stereographic coverage by Léon & Lévy: "Among the specimens we received from these artists are several snapshots of the awards celebration. The operation was so prompt that it is easy to recognize almost all the figures that made up the crowd. It is truly stupendous, and that is, certainly, the truest way of

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<sup>616</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays on Photography*, (New Haven, Conn: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 190.

<sup>617</sup> Paul Valéry, *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven, Conn: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 194.

writing history.”<sup>618</sup> Lacan acknowledged an aspect of “spontaneity” of the snapshot, which it seems, he interpreted as an added aspect of realism to the images. The universal quality of how the stereographic medium was implemented was an important aspect of its use during the period. The attention to detail, to see each present “figure” no matter their insignificance, served to preserve and allow a kind of re-ification of the experience that resembled at different times both entertainment and souvenir for the viewer. The medium had, among its other roles, executed the first stage toward the modern snapshot.

The three volume album of Lawrence & Houseworth stereographs published prior to 1867 have been described by Peter Palmquist as “without doubt the finest single pictorial record of the maturation of Northern California and the Pacific Coast following the rambunctious days of the Gold Rush and statehood.”<sup>619</sup> While the mammoth prints of California constructed the cultural icons of Yosemite and the Great Trees for the Paris Exposition audience, the exhibition of the Lawrence & Houseworth stereographs exposed more about the true character of California life.

The popular and reproducible nature of the printed cards, despite the hindering intermediary apparatus of the stereo viewer was a source of immense cultural influence. Even more, the necessity of the stereo viewer implied an act and participation with the image. In contrast to photographs made for the wall or the album, the stereograph implied an action beyond the one-way gaze of the view to the picture. Photographs generally act as methods of communicating information. The discursive nature of the stereograph viewing experience varied depending on the implementation. When Watkins and Houseworth were exhibiting photographs at industrial fairs within the United States, it was a “civic consciousness and industrial promotion” that were the motivating factors. In the context of this International Exposition, Lawrence & Houseworth curated a collection which imposed a specific experience of California for the viewer, a much broader one than was created by any other medium. The motivation was not merely the industrial promotion of the publishing firm

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<sup>618</sup> Ernest Lacan, “Revue Photographique,” *Le Moniteur de La Photographie*, July 15, 1867, 65, BNF. Translated by Glassberg.

<sup>619</sup> Peter E. Palmquist et al., *Points of Interest: California Views, 1860-1870: The Lawrence & Houseworth Albums* (Berkeley Hills Books, 2002), 7.

and its product, but it was a political promotion of California more generally. Since California and the Far West were still shrouded in mystery for the Exposition viewer, it was more than an aesthetic experience that was sought. The audience was to be informed, to receive knowledge which would alter their perception of the world, in this case, of legendary California. The stereographs were not intended to perform as art, that is, to exist as autonomous expressions of truth. Rather they were discursive tools through which one's knowledge of the universe was expanded by a hyper-realist representation of distant forms. In the case of this collection, those forms ranged from didactical mining pictures to romantic scenes of pioneer life. As mass produced commodities, the stereograph was implemented as a modern capitalist tool to disseminate cultural ideals, in this case they were utilized to influence a wide audience of a California culture.

Noting the history of stereography's critical and institutional disregard, it is no surprise that these stereo views from the Exposition Universelle have been sold off or misplaced by libraries and archives. They can be considered examples of the ubiquitous form of reproduction that Paul Valéry and Walter Benjamin would address in "The Conquest of Ubiquity" and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," respectively, almost a century later.<sup>620</sup> In Benjamin's essay, he addressed the presence of a cult or ritual value in contrast to an exhibition value within a work of art. From the daguerreotype to the reproducible print, photography had seen in the time of the World's Fairs a transition toward a purely reproducible commodity. With the stereoscopic view, the idea of the cult value, had already completely disappeared in exchange for purely an exhibition value. The authenticity of the work had been lost, relegating the stereoscopic medium to an object of little worth outside of its entertainment use for the masses during the period of its proliferation.

The general enthusiasm and research concerning stereographs and the medium has fallen predominantly in the realm of collectors.<sup>621</sup> The 341 stereoviews exhibited in Paris were part of the

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<sup>620</sup> Paul Valéry, "Le Conquête de l'Ubiquité (1928)," in *Aesthetics*, trans. Ralph Manheim, Bollingen (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964); Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

<sup>621</sup> Brunet, "Voir et Revoir l'exposition En Petit Volume. La Couverture Stéréographique de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867.," 125.

collection of Lawrence & Houseworth stereographs published prior to 1867, and were most likely from the three albums published in 1866, currently held by the Society of California Pioneers. The stereographs were likely exhibited in horizontal cases, which were referenced in a letter by W.P. Blake (**fig. 10.57**) concerning the donation of stereoviews at the close of the Exposition. His letter to Commissioner General Beckwith concerned the donation of stereoviews after the close of the Exposition. In his letter it stated “Please deliver to the order of the Museum of Economic Geology of London / Sir R.J. Murchison, Director / a parcel of twenty-four stereographic views out of the Exhibition made by Mssrs. Lawrence & Houseworth. These views are tied together, and marked, [and] are in one of the horizontal cases in the U.S. Section, Exposition Univ.”<sup>622</sup> The documentation of nearly all of photographs’ donations at the close of the Exposition are documented in letters held at the National Archives and Records Administration. There are letters which confirm the donation of four large format prints to the Bibliothèque du Museum d’histoire naturelle, also referenced as the Jardin des Plantes. Twelve stereoscopic views were signed for by the Conservateur at l’École des Mines. Four large photographs were signed for by a M. Lauberie, confirmed in another letter as a representative for the Société Française de Photographie. The latter letter also misspells Lawrence as Laurence, illuminating the reference made in the SFP’s documentation. Twenty-four stereoscopic views were signed for by Henry d’Aligny. Six large photographs were signed for by Bowles, Drevet & Cie, a Paris agency in charge of handling and storing objects from the Exposition. Twenty-four stereographic views of placer mining operations were promised to M. Ami Burat, a professor at l’École des Mines; several letters concern this donation as it seems many attempts were made to donate these twenty-four stereocards to the school.

Peter Palmquist has made the case that a large part of the of the stereographs in the Lawrence & Houseworth collection were made by Charles Leander Weed, though some others were potentially the work of Martin Mason Hazeltine and Alfred A. Hart, the official photographer of the

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<sup>622</sup> William P. Blake to N.M. Beckwith, “Liverpool, Sept. 30th, 1867,” September 30, 1867, 1194 – Applications for Exhibit Privileges, Box # 18, Folder II. 9. 10. Lawrence & Houseworth, NARA.



Central Pacific Railroad.<sup>623</sup> The Society of California Pioneers collection, and the selection exhibited in Paris in 1867, all published by 1866 at the latest, were likely all the work of Weed with a small portion captured by Hart, while the few Hazeltine negatives published by the firm were made at a later date, negating this claim by Palmquist. A large portion, as many as one thousand of the stereoviews in the Lawrence & Houseworth catalogs were produced during an 1864 trip on which C.L. Weed produced his thirty mammoth plate views of Yosemite and the Great Trees, thus many of the stereoviews were made during this expedition.<sup>624</sup> The trip was part of a consorted effort by the firm, in 1864, to supply an extensive record of life in California at the time. In addition to the 1864 expedition, the firm also placed a notice in rural newspapers offering to purchase stereoscopic negatives of “every place of interest on the Pacific Coast for which a fair price will be paid.”<sup>625</sup> The resulting collection resembled a meandering voyage across California and into Nevada, often technically focused on mining installations, but also acting as examples of early snapshots resulting in a kind of traveler’s journal. Three of Weed’s early series: *Sacramento during the Great Flood of 1862*; *Silver Region N[evada] T[erritory]*; and *A Trip to Washoe* were all published by the firm early during this stereographic publishing push. The Lawrence & Houseworth stereograph collection at the SCP features a group of images tracing the route from San Francisco to the Comstock mines of Nevada, forming a unique record of travel over the Sierra Nevada and portraying with “picture-story completeness” the voyage through California.<sup>626</sup> Some fifteen of the Yosemite images and several Yuba County hydraulic mining photographs were stated to potentially be the work of Hart by the Library of Congress.<sup>627</sup> All other images are considered to be the work of

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<sup>623</sup> Palmquist et al., *Points of Interest: California Views, 1860-1870 : The Lawrence & Houseworth Albums*, 19.

<sup>624</sup> Peter E. Palmquist, *Lawrence & Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth & Co., a Unique View of the West 1860-1886* (Columbus, Ohio: National Stereoscopic Association, 1980), 13.

<sup>625</sup> “TO PHOTOGRAPHERS,” *Shasta Courier*, April 9, 1864, Volume 13, Number 6 edition, CDNC.

<sup>626</sup> Palmquist, *Lawrence & Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth & Co., a Unique View of the West 1860-1886*, 23.

<sup>627</sup> This information referenced to the Library of Congress website which lists the photographers whose work was published by the Lawrence & Houseworth firm: “In 1864 Hart may have traveled to Yosemite with Charles L. Weed to make images of the valley for Lawrence & Houseworth. This attribution is based on a group of fifteen negatives of Yosemite that were purchased by the Central Pacific Railroad (CPRR) from Lawrence & Houseworth. The CPRR later published these images and credited Hart as the photographer. Hart may also be responsible for the photographs documenting hydraulic mining in Yuba County that were published by Lawrence & Houseworth in 1865.” <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/lawhou/photographers.html>, (Accessed 13-3-2021).

Charles Leander Weed. It is possible using stereographic catalogs from the time to deduce authorship of nearly all of the stereographs since Hart was the only other photographer involved in this series besides Weed.<sup>628</sup>

The circulation of this stereograph collection during and after the Exposition Universelle of 1867 was part of an evolution of the aesthetic of the American West. Culturally, the stereograph provided the most clear and abundant representation of the Far West to date. The cards circulated an impression of the land and the people of the Far West, with a specific choice of types and views. The stereographs such as *Yo-Semite Falls, 2,634 Feet High. [Yosemite]* (**fig. 10.151**) played a role in the establishment of this Western ‘type’. The California pioneer, posed on horseback at the foot of sublime mountains and majestic waterfalls was a singular expression at the Exposition. The convergence of colonialism, individualism, and adventure were established as aesthetic qualities of Far Western life in this photograph, visual symbols which would replace the dominance of California mining in the decades to come. When viewed through a stereoscope, the horseback subjects’ presence was enhanced by the three-dimensional projection, augmenting their stature by the properties of the medium. As representation of America, these characters were the idealization of the American spirit and in the absence of Civil War photographs, these characters were the symbol of the pioneer of an America looking toward the future.

Natural features and the grandeur of them were also a subject of the Lawrence & Houseworth stereographs as well as of their large-format photographs. The primary advantage of the stereographs was the greater variety of vantage points achieved by C.L. Weed in his approach to the Valley he had visited, by 1864, at least once before. Weed captured a captivating image in *The Vernal Fall, 350 Feet High – from the top, looking down*, (**fig. 10.188**). The exploration on the part of Weed, to hike and capture from different viewpoints was evidence of a creative practice. Neither indexical nor purely documentary, Weed sought to improve and expand the way these features were

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<sup>628</sup> This is one example of a catalog which references crossover between the photographer's published stereographs: Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum (website), “Lawrence & Houseworth; Thomas Houseworth & Co. Stereograph Catalog” (Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum (website), 2014), [http://cpr.org/Museum/Houseworth\\_Catalog.html](http://cpr.org/Museum/Houseworth_Catalog.html).

perceived, and in the case of Vernal Fall, the opportunity to climb up above and capture the dramatic angle resulted in a purity of subject not seen in other images of the waterfall. *Galen Clark-Guardian of the Mariposa Trees and the Yo-Semite Valley* (**fig. 10.152**) provided a close-up view of a larger-than-life character. Clark, who could be seen nestled discreetly against the trunk of the “Grizzly Giant” in Carleton Watkins mammoth print also exhibited at the Exposition, was captured here in an intimate close-up. This photograph, though of less-than-ideal technical quality with some damage to the emulsion over one of Clark’s eyes, represents one of the more intimate views of the man on record. Clark was captured amongst the trees, but in a composition which humanized the Mariposa guardian. Weed’s stereographic images of Yosemite, included extensive experimentation with vantage point, proving he must have traveled considerably around the Valley floor and rim to discover interesting perspectives. Often he included settler figures within the images, but always captioned the image exclusively concerning the natural feature or location that was shown, except in the case of Galen Clark or other celebrity such as photographs of P.T. Barnum and his entourage (**fig. 10.153**). A strong impression was made by the photographs in which the landscape of California was portrayed as the leading character in this story of place. The settlers, usually unnamed were placed in scenes and posed in activities, but the geography of the region was the most prominent subject.

The historical legacy of Weed, Lawrence & Houseworth and Watkins diverge apart from their presence at the Exposition. Watkins excelled in his technically advanced work capturing the Edenic beauty of the Valley. Weed captured and recorded excellent images of diverse elements of California’s developing years and managed to create many artful images in the process. Watkins’ representation at the Paris Exposition of 1867 tells little of California life, but it did make the photographer himself into a respected artist and a reflection of the majestic features he expertly captured. As proof of Californian excellence and vision, Watkins’ practice provided a very different product than that of C.L. Weed. As a photographer whose work was published primarily by the firm Lawrence & Houseworth, Weed served as a cultural documentarian more than his artistic rival Watkins. Weed’s contribution, though it was not, at most times, a critically superior one, left a

cultural influence. The artistic vision that led Watkins to exhibit exclusively his mammoth prints meant that the more cultural impression was left by the broader collection exhibited by Lawrence & Houseworth. The technical knowledge of mining, the aesthetic impression of Western lifestyle, and the focused impression of California and Nevada geography was provided by Lawrence & Houseworth, absent from the highly curated and much respected exhibition of Carleton Watkins.

With the construction of the railroad underway, it was understood that the West would receive an influx of visitors. These visitors were both interested in what was to be seen in the Far West, but also to take home souvenirs of that experience. Stereographs were an influential format in the visual culture of tourism. Though the mining stereoscopic views may not have been the most profitable, the images hold immense historical value now. They were also informative at the time for the Exposition audience whose curiosity surrounding the California Gold Rush was still seeking visual validation. Upon viewing them, particularly in comparison to the photographs of their contemporary Carleton Watkins, it is clear that C.L. Weed's Yosemite images were inferior technically and compositionally to those of Watkins. This opinion was of course reinforced by the official jury, which did not honor the firm with a medal, despite its abundant photographic presence. The 1864 set of mammoth prints, captured by Weed, and exhibited at the Exposition in Paris by the L & H firm were mistakenly reported by some sources to have received a medal, a theory which has been included in many books and articles concerning the subject.<sup>629</sup> There has been confusion over the years about whether it was Watkins or Lawrence & Houseworth who was awarded a medal for California landscape photography at the Exposition, as some the photographs closely resembled each other and the subject matter was the same. L & H claimed to have won a medal and printed this honor for years to come on the verso of their stereographic cards. However, the majority of reports and articles credit Carleton Watkins with the honor of a bronze medal.

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<sup>629</sup> There has been confusion over the years about whether it was Watkins or Lawrence & Houseworth who was awarded a medal for California landscape photography at the Exposition, as the photographs closely resembled one another. Despite the fact that L & H claimed to have won, and printed this honor for years to come on their stereoviews, the majority of reports and articles credit Carleton Watkins with the honor of a bronze medal.

What these photographs do—particularly in the context of their abundance—is provide a glimpse into the scenery of California on a grand scale. What these images lacked in aesthetics, they made up for in the abundance of visual representations of California and Nevada, to appease the curiosity of a public who had long heard of these far-off destinations but only seen the vaguest of its visual representations. The photographs comprise a broad visual collection of subjects and their dispersal during and after the Exposition reached a broad audience. Portraying the views of Yosemite and the great trees as the only subjects of large format images iconified these natural features while furthering the geographical appeal of California. Lawrence & Houseworth's role in the photographic industry was quite different from their rival Watkins. The firm's priority was the publishing of photography, which included procuring images from photographers, covering a broad range of locations and themes. Houseworth would eventually become known for his celebrity portrait series in the 1870s which gained popularity as a sought-after commodity, leaving behind the trend of geographical images. While the delineation between the role of firm and photographer was a pertinent aspect of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century photographic industry, the resulting effect of the images' circulation is not too different. The fundamental difference between the two business structures was the motivation behind them, as well as their eventual consideration as long-term career or oeuvre. It is difficult to critically discuss the work exhibited by and published by the Lawrence & Houseworth firm primarily because it is an anonymous collection of work. In the absence of a personal style or motivation for the work as a whole, the commercial viability of the images becomes the guiding motivation, hence why Lawrence & Houseworth brought such a large number of photographs and stereoviews to the Exposition. The inclusion of sixty stereoviews with the didactic intention to illustrate hydraulic and placer mining techniques meant the firm was tapping into some of the overriding themes of the Exposition including the appreciation of labor and the advancement of technological progress. The donation of these stereographs to mining schools in Europe at the close of the Exposition points to an educational and scientific element to their creation. The combination of mining industry pictures alongside natural landscapes points less to the firm's artistic ambitions (particularly in the abundance of stereos) and more to the intention to cater to the greatest possible

commercial interests. The diverse and abundant collection of California images provided by Lawrence & Houseworth had multi-faceted motives. As a publisher, the intention to collect, print, and exhibit the widest array of images was meant to provide many avenues of revenue for the firm, be it commercial advertising, corporate mining and transportation interests, and signifying the tourism aspect of the stereograph industry.

The Lawrence & Houseworth collection served a cultural role quite different from that of the more critically respected works of art and photography. By presenting an expansive perspective on western life, the photographs served an influential role as elements of a burgeoning mass visual culture. The marriage of this expansive collection with the mass audience provided by a Universal Exposition resulted in an impactful reach beyond the already sizable one attained by stereographs. Peter Palmquist observed within the firm's stereo production, the creation of a "pictorial language of California" created by Watkins, Alfred A. Hart, and the L & H firm. He stated that despite the worldwide production of stereoscopic images from 1850s onward, "pictorial representations of the American West had lagged."<sup>630</sup> Prior to the Civil War, even places like Palestine were more represented by stereoviews than California, according to him.<sup>631</sup> The emergence of this Californian image or "pictorial language" as he describes it, took place in this period following the Civil War, making the photographic presence at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 part of a fundamental moment by which "the stereograph served to influence public awareness and mold popular opinion."<sup>632</sup> These images made cultural icons out of the formerly exotic California locations known by name and reputation. El Capitan, Lake Tahoe, and the mammoth Sequoias were the natural features on which a California cultural foundation was built. The L & H stereographs, however, showed even more than these natural locations, and provided a more extensive insight into the reality of life in California and the American West. From Montgomery Street in San Francisco to the Comstock mines of Nevada, the panoramic "points of interest" shown by the hundreds of L & H

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<sup>630</sup> Palmquist, *Lawrence & Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth & Co., a Unique View of the West 1860-1886*, vii.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid.

<sup>632</sup> Ibid.

views on exhibition in Paris, all served to provide a comprehensive visual understanding of the reality of Western experience.

The exhibition of stereoviews specifically was paramount in this setting. As artifacts, the meaning and cultural power of the highly circulated medium is tied to their use. The contextual experience of viewing stereoscopes was generally an intimate, private experience. The public exhibition of stereos added a supplementary dimension of cultural agency. The significance of the exhibition of California, and Western photographs more generally, held at the Paris International Exposition of 1867 was this secondary dimension, taken out of their initial context and utilized as tools of national identity.<sup>633</sup> The personal stereo viewing experience resulted in these photos' usage as a travelers' souvenir, or as a touristic experience from one's own living room. The international exposition, however, placed the photographs in a context in which the national and regional identity was established definitively for the visitor in a curated collection. These photographs visually instilled power in the landscapes and natural features as icons of the West, a role held by architecture and portraits of public figures on the East Coast of the U.S. during this period. The extensive Lawrence & Houseworth collection does include examples of architecture; mining towns and wide views of San Francisco offer effectively studies in urban development. The overall impression on the viewer witnessing the broad subjects in the Lawrence & Houseworth catalog, while it cannot be reduced to the focused subject matter of Carleton Watkins' work exhibited at the Exposition, does focus often on the natural features and man's experience and exploration of that landscape.

While the photographic work published by the Lawrence & Houseworth, and later Thomas Houseworth & Co. firm has critically left little appreciation, the breadth of the work has been acknowledged as a treasure of historical record. "Lawrence and Houseworth concentrated their pictorial efforts on mining and industrial progress of all kinds; the developing towns and fledgling social and cultural improvements; as well as views of the surrounding countryside," states

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<sup>633</sup> Brown, *Making Culture Visible*, xi.

Palmquist.<sup>634</sup> The establishment of land and industry as the cultural capital of the American West was established at the Paris Exposition of 1867 for a world audience. The intentions of California's initial photograph publishers shared the motives of international expositions. Both focused on industrial progress and social improvements. As Andrew Hallidie expressed a belief in California's international potential at the 1869 Mechanics' Institute Fair, when he stated that he saw San Francisco "holding with one hand on the top of the Sierra Nevadas, [and] stretching the other [foot] far out over the Pacific seas."<sup>635</sup>

In his social history of photography in America prior to 1939, Robert Taft stated that "photography was used with more or less success in some of the explorations of the West immediately preceding the Civil War. The majority of such explorations were primarily geographic in purpose; that is, they were mainly concerned with the location and mapping of important geographical features—rivers and mountains."<sup>636</sup> But the photographs, and particularly the stereographs of the Lawrence & Houseworth collection show that geographic exploration was not the only motivation in the pre-Civil War era. Taft's claim would place them in a category relegated to scientific evidence, and yet there was narrative and regional perspective behind the images. If the motivation behind all pre-Civil War photographs of the West was geographic surveying, then the images would not have place in the galleries, salons, and Expositions of the period. There was a perspective behind the production of these images which enlightens one to the experience of the individual. The narrative perspective therefore places these images as a thoroughly modern method of writing and recording history. The stereographic medium was, it seems, the most accessible method for this process, and thus acted as a modern tool in the recording of one's individual story, which in the end became the story of a region and place.

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<sup>634</sup> Palmquist, *Lawrence & Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth & Co., a Unique View of the West 1860-1886*, 21.

<sup>635</sup> Brown, *Making Culture Visible*.

<sup>636</sup> Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene; a Social History, 1839-1889* (Michigan: ACLS History E-Book Project, 2011), 282.



## 10.6 Investigating the Mines

There were 17 stereo views illustrating hydraulic mining, 43 of placer mining, and 29 of Nevada, the majority of which portrayed aspects of the Comstock mining region. The photographs are both didactic and aesthetic in their treatment of mining in the West. Touching on both the industrial and cultural sides of mining development, the collection broadened the viewer's understanding of California. Some of the only commentary from the Exposition acknowledges the informational quality of the Lawrence & Houseworth mining stereoviews, "A similar series was sent by the firm of Lawrence & Houseworth, of the same city with the addition of a great number of stereoscopic views of the interior mining regions of California, showing in a very distinct manner the various processes in use there for the extraction of gold from the soil."<sup>637</sup> If stereoviews were used for both entertainment and education, then at least one motive behind mining stereographs must have lied somewhere in the middle. The portrayal of industrial activity and the didactic manner in which the mining stereoviews were described hint at a general curiosity beyond those involved directly in the mining industry. The sensationalism of the California Gold Rush had left a lasting mark on the general public, who were still interested in the fantastic modern legacy of mining in California.

The selection presented here are taken from the three Society of California Pioneers albums. The collection includes a broad selection of mining photographs. As Peter Palmquist has suggested, the West was a place where everything was new and continually changing. The more generally accepted subjects of photographs made in Europe and the Eastern U.S. — principal towns, monuments, and "points of interest"— did not apply for West Coast image publishers. They made a concerted pictorial effort to produce popular views of mining and industrial progress.<sup>638</sup> Though mining stereographs would prove less profitable than those which would act as tourist souvenirs for visitors, they were a concerted part of the Lawrence & Houseworth firm's dedication to telling the

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<sup>637</sup> United States Commission to the Paris exposition, 1867, *General Survey of the Exhibition; with a Report on the Character and Condition of the United States Section*, 47.

<sup>638</sup> Palmquist, *Lawrence & Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth & Co., a Unique View of the West 1860-1886*, 21.

pictorial story of California's development at a time of rapid change. The two men had also come to California with argonaut aspirations, so the mining world was likely never far from their minds at a time when it was still the primary impetus of California development and immigration. An early advertisement for the firm in the original field as opticians was a poem which used a tongue-in-cheek mining metaphor for the spectacle shop: "PLAZA DIGGINGS! Another wonder has been found, A spectacle mine! Most true!"<sup>639</sup> It was their intent as a publishing enterprise to furnish photographic content of the facets of California which were of public interest:

In publishing STEREOSCOPIC VIEWS OF CALIFORNIA AND THE PACIFIC COAST, we feel that we are supplying what has long been needed, to give correct information on the extent of our Mines, the variety of the Scenery, the size of Trees, and many other things of public interest that could not be realized from any written description.<sup>640</sup>

By 1864, they boasted the largest inventory on the Pacific coast of stereoscopic views and materials. Only Carleton Watkins was also publishing stereographs on the West Coast, and so the firm saw a place in the market to publish images of the California mines, industrial progress, landscapes, developing towns, and social and cultural improvements.<sup>641</sup> The subjects which had been popular in Europe and on the East Coast, towns, monuments, and established points of interest did not exist in California, and so the firm set out to decide which aspects of California were worthy of publishing for the stereograph market.<sup>642</sup> The selection of subjects would come to define the Western image, and the Lawrence & Houseworth firm played a major role in choosing the aesthetic interest for the widely distributed stereo cards and tourist souvenirs.

A large number of the stereograph images (**fig. 10.59 – fig. 10.66**) focus or at least feature men working in the mining fields. These types of photographs such as *The Tunnel-Gould & Curry Mine* (**fig. 10.59**), which show men posed behind mine carts would come to embody aspects of the West, in style and in content. The image *Placer Mining-Building the Dump-box* (**fig. 10.60**) places the miner in the center of a complex composition which evoked a key aspect of the mining boom,

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<sup>639</sup> "Lawrence & Houseworth," *San Francisco Bulletin*, January 10, 1856.

<sup>640</sup> Lawrence & Houseworth, *Gems of California Scenery* (San Francisco, 1866), 2.

<sup>641</sup> Palmquist, *Lawrence & Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth & Co., a Unique View of the West 1860-1886*, 21.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.*

the individual. The miner, the man, had been central to the industry of mining during the early days of the Gold Rush, and during that period he was the pictorial focus, more than the mineral elements which were the more common subject in written accounts made of mere numbers, and technical terms. The argonauts who sacrificed their lives back home in search of a life, riches, and a future in California were portrayed here embodying the other side of a practical, if greedy motive for migration, and appealing to the pathos behind the story of the pioneer. The vulnerable figure (**fig. 10.60**) was an impression that could not be articulated in textual accounts. In a culture embodying individualism, the miner was seen here as a small and vulnerable character, in the trenches of the California dream. In the early days of the Gold Rush, the gold-panning miner, the individual working his claim was the pictorial focus, whether in the field or in the studio. By the mid-1860s, Western mining had become a more corporate affair, with larger operations in which the miner had become one of many laborers required to run a productive mine. *Placer Mining – Building the Dump-box* (**fig. 10.60**) illustrates this reality, as the miner became smaller in the frame this reflected his smaller status in the mining hierarchy. No longer an individual seeking personal fortune he had become a minion, a mere laborer used to produce profits for corporations and investors. Shown as a small figure surrounded by the tools and half completed construction, the miner's stature in California had become inferior to the larger forces at play. The reality of the California experience was put in perspective as a tale of toil and treasure, with the white male individual and his dreams placed at the center of the historical frame, however small they had been allowed to become. *Placer Mining-Among the Boulders, Columbia Claim, Tuolumne County* (**fig. 10.61**) portrays miners on the floor of a boulder field in Tuolumne County, California where a rail and cart were used to haul out ore. The miners were lightly blurred by movement, and spaced from foreground to the background along the tunnel-like opening posed with their tools in hand. There is a crisscross pattern of the pipes along the top half of the frame which is augmented by a similarly shaped tool in the cart. The pattern leads the viewer's eye from the sky down through the tunnel, in a way that enables the viewer to take in the multidimensional composition, effectively taking a visual journey through the scene's interwoven subjects: the earth, tools, and the miners. It exemplifies a style of mining

photograph which presented both the technical reality and the cultural ubiquity of the industry in California. Miners, as seen in photographs such as this one, were perhaps the most visually represented Californian character of the 1850s-1870s. Photographs which sought to capture and share the technical information and regional popularity relative to mining also inadvertently established the mining character as a visual trope of the Far West. While the Eastern U.S. featured posed portraits of statesmen in studio or architectural settings, the Western man was more often captured in the midst of his work in the context of the land. The circulation of these stereographs to industrial fairs and international expositions such as the Paris Exposition of 1867 presented multiple layers of information embedded within the academically disregarded *en relief* format. The social and historical implications of this influence have been even further buried by the critical focus on more artistically respected formats. The majority of photographic imagery from the heyday of the California Gold Rush was during the age of the daguerreotype, thus its circulation at the time would not have reached the audience that was attainable with the reproduction of the paper stereograph card, particularly in the hands of a publishing company as commercially motivated as Lawrence & Houseworth. The technical requirements of the daguerreotype also resulted in a fundamentally different type of image, one that often required more production, posing, time and cost. This aspect resulted in the predominant aesthetic of Gold Rush daguerreotypes as the widely composed, bird's eye angle of a group of miners looking towards the camera while positioned around a placer mining sluice. The format fashioned the aesthetic of the subject matter. During the period of the daguerreotype the miners were independent laborers working claims, rather than employees of large operations. The individuals were more predominant figures in the photographs of that period. The stereograph would produce more spontaneous and diverse potential for mining photographs, though they would lack the sharpness and focal quality of the larger formats of the period, the daguerreotype included. Several images from the Sutro Tunnel in Nevada (**fig. 10.63 – fig. 10.66**) depict an emphasis on the men who worked in the machine shop. The posed group portraits have a more spontaneous feel than some larger format portraits. No matter the technical shortcomings of the stereoscopic format, it's low-cost and reproducible nature caused the mass circulation of that

type of image to be more prevalent than any other format. The cultural understanding of what life in the Far West, in California, in the mines looked like, and what the people there looked like, was visual knowledge almost exclusively furnished by the stereograph. The photographic record of this establishing period of a Western aesthetic produced by stereographers and publishers was the most circulated format of photography and thus a major cultural influence on the public perception of the Far West on the international scene for the extended future.

The stereoviews presented other aspects of mining as well, including more technical attributes of the mining scene. Certain stereoviews (**fig. 10.64, fig. 10.65**) show technical details. The majority portrayed wide views of mining architecture (**fig. 10.68, fig. 10.72**). Some images, (**fig. 10.73, fig. 10.74, fig. 10.75**) exhibited a kind of spontaneous acknowledgement of the pictorial quality of everyday scenes, which historically hold much value since their otherwise trivial quality would have been overlooked by painters and the use of larger photographic formats. These other mediums would focus on more cliché scenes such as the placer mining scene referenced above. The curiosity concerning California and West was piqued by the Gold Rush, and the mining industry and progress of the activity remained a motivating factor for the publishing Lawrence & Houseworth firm. The majority of the firm's mining stereographs from this collection portray wide-angle views of mining installations. Some images feature a landscape composition in which the mining and building structures serve as an aesthetic man-made presence within the view (**fig. 10.76, fig. 10.79**). The majority though, show a land that has been torn up and cluttered with the industrial workings of the extractive industry (**fig. 10.82**). The ways in which the photographs portrayed the large-scale mining establishments pointed to a narrative concerning the modernization of the West which focused on the mining industry, the driving impetus of all California development and how that industry was becoming less about the miner and more about the mine. This evolution made the mining industry a less captivating photographic subject overall, as it digressed from personal narrative to capitalist corporation. Certain images seemed to serve the rhetorical role, described by

Christine Hult-Lewis as “evidence of a mine’s prosperity.”<sup>643</sup> It would seem that it was merely one rhetorical role of these wide, industrial views. They were intended to prove that the mines in the West were not only real, but that they were growing, industrial operations. They also served the didactic role of sharing what a diverse and complex technological operation was taking place in California, and to promote the region’s mining industry.

As a whole they represent a process of corporatization that was occurring in California at the time, the period of transition from pioneering argonaut to corporate capitalist enterprise. By the mid-1860s mining was more of a large-scale operation than an individual one, and the vantage points were chosen accordingly. The mining operation had replaced the individual as the pictorial subject, in most cases. These mining images of the 1860s then, were a zoomed out, pictorial perspective of the industrial mining structure. The early Gold Rush Years focused on the argonaut, the individual, as the leading character in a California narrative, and this was illustrated with the subject-oriented daguerreotypes of the period. The format, the culture, the technical mining structure informed what the pictorial portrayed. There was little interest in the operation, and so the individual, the miner was the subject. By the mid-1860s, the focus had shifted. The images would also serve as figurative snapshots in the evolution of California mining development, this issue was suggested by Hult-Lewis when describing Carleton Watkins’ 1876 photographs of Gold Hill in the Comstock, the same location as some of the L & H (likely Weed) photographs from 1866: “A simple comparison of the 1866 views with Watkins’ taken a decade later evinces progress at a glance: there are more mines, more mills, more structures, and more improvements.”<sup>644</sup> This indirect use as a marker of growth, both in production and population can be seen between the two photographs, (**fig. 10.91, fig. 10.92**). This incident also marks one of many cases in which Watkins would take his cue from Weed and Lawrence & Houseworth, and re-photograph subjects or locations they had already photographed and published by the firm. In this case Watkins

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<sup>643</sup> Hult-Lewis, “The Mining Photographs of Carleton Watkins, 1858-1891, and the Origins of Corporate Photography.,” 87.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

photographed the Comstock with a mammoth camera ten years after Weed captured it with his stereoscopic camera. This *modus operandi* would benefit Watkins' legacy, since his work came to be considered superior and more aesthetic than the former, with his authorship also attributing a more traceable historical trail to the images.

The images of mining from the mid-1860s, though they might seem tedious now were part of a broader plan on the part of Lawrence & Houseworth, whose only West Coast competition in the field of stereograph publishing at the time was the notoriously business inept Watkins.<sup>645</sup> According to Palmquist, "Since Lawrence & Houseworth were experienced businessmen, they felt confident that they could use Weed's photographic talent to corner the market in Western stereographs," which they did.<sup>646</sup> It is not known whether Lawrence & Houseworth were contracted by any specific mining operations to produce their mining images, rather it is assumed that they were made with the motive to form a complete stereographic catalog of California subjects of public interest for sale, with the alternative benefit of publicizing their work to industry and corporate work. The interest in industrial matters of the Far West such as mining, and railroad construction went far beyond the technical trade aspect. The publishing firm was strategically interested in catering to the developing industrial industry of the West Coast by establishing their place as the preeminent photographic publisher on the Pacific.

Peter Palmquist described the value, both then and now, of the mining views of California and Nevada, emphasizing the comprehensiveness of the coverage:

One of the best and most complete groups of views offered by Lawrence & Houseworth was a large series of images which traced the main route from California to the Comstock mines of Nevada. These pictures form a unique record of teaming over the rugged Sierra Nevada range; present excellent and varied views of the region around Lake Tahoe; and give a comprehensive look at miners, mining equipment, and conditions in the Comstock. Another important group of stereographs picture placer and hydraulic mining for gold in Tuolumne Co., and copper mining in the Calaveras region. Today, such views are of great historical

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<sup>645</sup> Palmquist, *Lawrence & Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth & Co., a Unique View of the West 1860-1886*, 12.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*

importance not only because of the interesting activity but because they were taken with a picture-story completeness.<sup>647</sup>

The ideological aspect of the Western frontier as a foreign place that could be explored visually was an essential facet of the 1860s. The firm captured the evolution of the landscape throughout the period, two decades of vast transformation of the land. Before the railroad would weave its way from coast to coast, the mines were laying their mark in the hills of California and Nevada. There was a consciousness of landscape in the stereograph collection of Lawrence & Houseworth, but it was a very specific story that was told. The landscape became the visual setting for the white settler's narrative in the West, particularly during the first several decades of settlement.

Native people were seen only marginally in the stereograph collection of Lawrence & Houseworth, in 14 of the 1,495 stereoscopic views. Eight of those images were taken in a studio, the other six present them in tightly composed outdoor group portraits of rather poor quality. The indigenous population was taken out of the landscape visually, excluded from the environment on which they depended and in which they had existed for thousands of years and positioned subjectively in the perspective of the white settler. Martha Sandweiss has described the ways that photography participated in establishing the myth of the "vanishing race" and this collection presents one case of that process, primarily through their absence in the collection. In the context of this expansive L & H catalog, considered to be inclusive of most of the subjects of public interest in California, the Native people had in fact essentially "vanished." Retrospectively this absence seems illogical considering the commercial interests of the firm, and the fact that the reproducible stereoscopic format provided a profitable opportunity. This points either to a particular prejudice on the part of the firm and/or potentially Weed, who neglected the curiosity surrounding the Indigenous people or to a technical difficulty in photographing a population who were a military threat and a difficult subject with whom to gain access and trust. Albert Bierstadt, the East Coast based painter, released a series of fifty-two Western stereographs in 1860 of which eighteen included photographs

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<sup>647</sup> Ibid., 23.



of Lakota, Sioux, Oglala Sioux, Cheyenne and Shoshone people and/or their villages.<sup>648</sup> For Bierstadt the Native American was a desirable visible aspect of the western visual narrative, but for Californian settlers such as Lawrence & Houseworth and Weed, the indigenous population continued to represent an objectionable presence.<sup>649</sup> As Sandweiss has stated, “[t]he Indians existed as a foil and backdrop for the inevitable Americanization of the West.”<sup>650</sup> So, the landscape stereographs of the 1860s created by the firm included other subjects instead of the Native people, the industrial annexation of the land, the expansion of American towns, and the natural marvels.

Along the 1864 expedition from San Francisco to the Comstock there was a variety of perspectives in which the landscape was established. One of those arrangements was to position the mining structures or towns as the subject within the landscape image, and this was done in different locations along the way. The photographs weren’t necessarily pro-industry, rather they were composed similarly to landscape images without industrial elements. If anything, they venerate the engineering and industrial formations as a captivating element of the view, and in the most successful cases, the man-made element was able to guide the perspective of the viewer to see the landscape in a different way. These were not, it must be recalled, government-sponsored expeditions. As local entrepreneurs, the producers of these images were capturing the expansion of their own commercial volition, this perspective resulted in images which appreciated the work and progress within and around the state they were building. As it pertains to the 1864 expedition, Weed it seems, was exploring the route as well as the experience photographically. The towns and mining areas were captured with an eye for both the Eastern and Western American audience. For the Eastern audience there was the inclusion of “photographs that depicted opportunity for gold or land or business.”<sup>651</sup> There was also an appreciation of the landscape in which the California population was establishing its own prosperity far from other civilization and certainly far from the concerns of

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<sup>648</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 234.

<sup>649</sup> Bierstadt’s 1874 painting *Giant Redwood Trees of California* placed Native Americans in the setting, offering a contrasting imagination of the American West.

<sup>650</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 235.

<sup>651</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, xxii.

the Civil War, in a process of forming its own local or regional identity. The Lawrence & Houseworth firm had the stated intention to cater to public interest in capturing the varied aspects of California reality and with the 1864 expedition C. L. Weed did just that, while simultaneously capturing cultural perspectives of their own surroundings and development, solely with the stereoscopic camera.

The mining towns were placed in bird's eye view compositions of the landscape. Two images (**fig. 10.71, fig. 10.85**) show the towns of Silver City and Gold Hill peacefully guiding the viewer's eye through the town and eventually to the layers of rolling hills in the background. The romantic quality of the vantage point and lighting gave an inviting tone to the small towns as potential homes for immigrants and places to build a life in a place of prosperity. With a more potent message, two images (**fig. 10.69, fig. 10.70**) have subjects positioned in the foreground, admiring the expansive landscape laid out below them, subtle but distinguishable man-made buildings and mining mills included. While subjects were often placed in wide landscape scenes by Weed, these men (and in one case an accompanying dog) fill a different role, they impose the affection of the subject for the landscape on the viewer. Straying from the more common inclusion of the miner figure at work, this structure supplemented the affectionate attitude by the subject for the view, one which likely took him much work to get to, literally and figuratively but one that he seemed proud and moved to appreciate. These photographs subtly allude to economic progress and prosperity, but focus on the emotive quality of the settler and miner's journey. The stereographs were an experimental and discursive medium, and the images remained in the experiential style with the human character placed in the frame as a proxy for the viewer. The images were reflections of their exhibition style, and the stereograph card format was based on a private, personal experience rather than information or aesthetic.

Many images embraced the strong shapes of the architecture against the rolling hills. In one case, the Gould & Curry Quartz Mill is the subject (**fig. 10.72**), seen in a wide view with sun casting the buildings in a strong light and shadow pattern. The structures appear solid and the high contrast lighting emboldens the architectural elements of the mill. As a symbol of progress and prosperity,

the large-scale mill was an architectural symbol of Western economic progress. Three images (**fig. 10.89**, **fig. 10.90**, **fig. 10.91**) taken within the town of Virginia City and placed the buildings in a dramatic detailed composition. The buildings are seen clearly and closely, in an intimate view of the businesses whose names and signs are clearly read-able to the viewer. The church is present in all three images, a towering signifier of community and security. The buildings with their legible signs portrayed a place of domestication; in *View from the International Hotel, Virginia City* (**fig. 10.90**) we see the sign for “W.H. Burrall – Pioneer Book Store” with a blurred American flag waving. In *Six-Mile Canon, from C Street, Virginia City* (**fig. 10.91**), the viewer gets a glimpse through the rooftops at a horse drawn wagon waiting for its cargo tied up in front of the most peculiar tiny structure, a small office of the Sierra Valley Lumber company it can be assumed, that appears to have a strangely slanted roof. The hills stretch out for miles in the background of the town, a reminder of the rural placement of this Nevada settlement, but also revealing of the region’s mountainous landscape. *Hydraulic Mining-The Big Boulder* (**fig. 10.92**) from Yuba county provides an example of photographic ingenuity in capturing mining engineering in scenes that offer a dramatic effect. In the photograph a well-dressed figure stands posed admiring the waterfall pouring out of the cliff. The scene brings to mind the settlers posed in front of Yosemite waterfalls also captured by Weed. This context, the hydraulic mining site, utilized a similar structure in which the figure was posed to bring attention and scale to both the natural and the man-made features in the land. This scene complicates the agency of the photograph, it is neither technical document, nor admiration of the natural landscape features, but an experimental perspective somewhere between the two.

In place of the river or road, a common structure included in many of the mining stereographs published by Lawrence & Houseworth, were the tail race, flume, or sluice canal, captured as a guiding line through the landscape. Utilizing the man-made water channels as a graphic and textural element amidst the natural landscape was a method that would be repeated in the West for years to come. The most immediate instance was rail tracks in the Western photography that became a popular subject for the latter-half of the 1860s as the trans-continental railroad was

built and documented. Later, the work as the FSA photographers of the 1930s including Dorothea Lange featured canals and water pipelines as symbolically hopeful subjects winding through the California landscape during the Dust Bowl. In one image, *Siphon* (**fig. 10.96**), a photograph taken by Lange, the irrigation installations re-appeared in Western imagery as a guiding line in the photographic composition. Several images (**fig. 10.97 - fig. 10.100**) provided examples of this technique utilized in the Lawrence & Houseworth stereoscopic views. These images are some of the most aestheticized mining landscapes in their structure and composition. The scenes focused on the texture and form of the water channels as the subject within the natural landscape. Miners, equipment, and structures were excluded from the scene, thus the image leaves aside the miners' experience, the technical mining processes, and instead, focused on the aesthetic integration of the artificial channel into the land. If these images were partisan, it seems they were on the side of the mining industry. Creating peaceful views in which the waterways resembled a controlled man-made river served to glorify the mining process. The channels always ran from the position of the camera out into the distance rather than perpendicularly across the frame. This vanishing line often stretches out into the distance to the horizon, a nod to the engineering expertise as well as a more figurative reference to the evolution of man's technological presence within the landscape, the machine in the garden.<sup>652</sup> The mining process inevitably resulted in vast destruction and upheaval in the land, but these figures presented agreeable pictures of the industry, one with peaceful promise. Many stereographs (**fig. 10.97 - fig. 10.100**) were successful in portraying a subtle mining presence in the landscape. The sluice was the proud protagonist of the photos, and its mysterious destination was out of view, a parallel concept to the pioneering miner's path, in a structure infused with exploration, mystery and heroism. The photographs were meant to enhance how one normally imagined mines, leaving aside the rough aspects, and presenting a balanced impression of industry and nature. As Hult-Lewis stated in her study of Carleton Watkins' mining photographs, "The ongoing visual challenge of photographs intended to promote mineral wealth was to suggest the

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<sup>652</sup> Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*.

promise of the wealth without simply photographing piles of ore, or bars of gold, or flasks of quicksilver.”<sup>653</sup> In this way the images are really quite sophisticated visually, by portraying the most pleasing element of the process, the visual idea of the industry was transformed. Weed, who captured these images, was subtly integrating an appreciation of a natural landscape scene, a river weaving through the land in a natural manner. In this case the engineering feat, the sluice, provided a diversion of the river for the industrial use, and in that way these images assuaged and aestheticized the reality of mining to appeal to the public.

### **10.7 A visual journey in California and Nevada**

Lawrence & Houseworth published and exhibited a diverse collection of stereographs which were on display at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. A portion of these images were taken on the photographer’s travels around California and Western Nevada in many different locations. This group of images portrayed the experience of travelling from San Francisco to Lake Tahoe and the Comstock. The journey through the landscape and the experiences of pioneer life in these diverse environments was recorded with notable attention. Within this selection there are photographs of people and landscapes with the overarching theme being the experience of the voyage and life within this Western landscape. Many of the images evoke a kind of spontaneity and snapshot quality that allowed Weed to create some of his most interesting images. In a collection that oscillates between the rural and the urban, the technological and the natural, order and disorder, a complex and vibrant image of California life was established. In what can be seen as an early version of the vernacular, the “everyday” aspect of the Lawrence & Houseworth stereographs was nothing ordinary. The best of these images provide evidence of a versatile expertise and experimentation in the case of Weed’s photographic practice, a proficiency seen nowhere else in his oeuvre exhibiting more skill. The selection presented in this study were chosen as a sampling of the

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<sup>653</sup> Hult-Lewis, “The Mining Photographs of Carleton Watkins, 1858-1891, and the Origins of Corporate Photography.,” 272.

most successful images. As a visual documentation of this period in California and Western life, the series exhibits much of its value in its “picture-story completeness,” a signifier which Peter Palmquist bestowed upon it.<sup>654</sup> The collection includes masterful landscapes and experimental environmental portraits, albeit executed in a medium which did not endure or entertain modern critical respect.

Weed’s photographic work was expansive, covering a majority of the post-Gold Rush boom. While it has been neglected historically, at the time it was likely some of the most circulated work portraying California to the public outside of and around the state. Though little trail has been left from their exhibition in Paris of 1867, the historical value of these photographs’ documentation of early California culture is inestimable. As both primary resources and aesthetic works they contribute to the history of California and Far West, which has partially through photographic sources been pieced together over the last century, and stereographic archives such as this one provide a large amount of visual information. Even more than this, the series affirms Weed’s position in the legacy of Western photographer-explorers. Perhaps the most self-effacing of these characters, as he proved little concerned with his authorship and name attached to his work, we see in examining closely a series such as this one a photographer who documented the experiential element of his profession. In *Placer Mining in Brown's Flat, Tuolumne Co. Water in the Mine* (**fig. 10.101**), Weed captured his own shadow against the dirt walls of the Brown’s Flat placer mine. He introduced himself only on a few occasions into the photographs, the hint of a Western explorer-photographer character that would develop in the decades to follow by other photographers more entrepreneurial than himself. The journalistic quality of recording the experience of his and others’ travels was certainly an interesting story to circulate to a broad public of the period.

The journey from San Francisco through the Sierra Nevadas was executed in teams of horse-drawn wagons. The images feature several cases in which the teams were captured in prime position as they passed through trails of diverse terrain. The attention to position and vantage point allowed

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<sup>654</sup> Palmquist, *Lawrence & Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth & Co., a Unique View of the West 1860-1886*, 23.

for images that depicted travel in more realistic terms than any other form, a significantly more modern depiction than the anecdotes and sketches in *Hutchings' California Magazine*, the most prominent source of California travel journalism at the time. *Swift's Station, Carson and Lake Bigler Road-Eastern Summit of Sierra Nevada Mountains (fig. 10.102)*, captures the teams travelling through an idyllic mountain forest on the Eastern summit of the Sierras. This route was a temporary one, known as the Kings Canyon Road, and the road along with the waystation seen here would fall into disrepair by the 1920's. An online search reveals that this photograph is the only online reference to a photograph of this once popular passageway. *Teams, passing through the Snow, on the road Leading down into Lake Valley from the Summit of the Sierra Nevada (fig. 10.103)* exhibits another instance of the teams making their way through the California landscape, this time with men placed like silhouettes against the high snow banks. While contemporaneous accounts such as *Hutchings* published exaggerated narratives and idyllic sketches of views or scenes, Weed captured these more authentic moments of travel through the region all the while providing captivating images. In this way his practice points to a more thoroughly modern utilization of the camera apparatus and one not otherwise referenced at the Exposition Universelle of 1867. His journalistic coverage of these travels was abundant and presented a departure from the more contemporaneous goal which biased towards the mastery of a single image. Most of the images in the collection were taken during the 1864 trip commissioned by Lawrence & Houseworth and the voyage gives some simple glimpses into the infrastructure that existed, such as the King's Canyon. Another image, *Bear River Bridge. Stage Road from Colfax to Grass Valley (fig. 10.104)* provided visual cues to the existing infrastructure in the region, in this case the bridge allowing stagecoaches passage over the Bear River. This otherwise mundane view of the river landscape brought proof of a specific type of progress. Unlikely that the image was intended to provide artfulness or wonder to the viewer outside of the informational message of what travel by stagecoach resembled and the infrastructure that had already been established to facilitate such extensive travel. This type of practical information communicated via aesthetic forms was not the common function of photography during

this period, and yet stereography presented a kind of vernacular means by which scenes outside of painterly genres of portraiture and landscape were explored.

The journalistic quality of the Lawrence & Houseworth collection provided a broad experience to the stereoscope viewer and represented an advanced and modern attention to subject. *Porch of the Mission San Juan, Monterey Co.* (**fig. 10.105**) exhibited a consideration of culture, architecture, composition, and light that was advanced for the style and format of the period. As Weed travelled through the northern part of the state, his eye was not solely in search of the obvious scenes. This quiet and subtle moment within a symbol of the original colonial establishment of California points to not only an interest in California's past but also its culturally diverse population. The vantage point from which the photograph was taken, with the subject placed delicately beyond the arches out in the lawn, signified an attention to the contemporaneous experience of Mission life. Focusing on the intimate moment looking from the inside out, the Mission was not portrayed as a monument or relic of the past, but as an existing place of life. The range of the stereographic medium is also apparent in the ability to capture the bright outside light as well as detail in the shadows of the covered walkway. This journalistic view of the mission was a graphic and textural exploration of a fellow Californian, documenting the life and breadth of California experience. This photograph was reproduced and circulated as an illustration for Louis Simonin's article in the French publication *Le Tour du Monde* (**fig. 10.106**). In the context of the Exposition Universelle of 1867, images similar to this one would have come from touristic photographers such as British photographer Samuel Bourne whose work was colonial in nature, the epitome of the outsider exploiting the foreign/colonized. This case was much more complex and represented a post-colonial view from the dominating power. Weed, though he could be considered a local by this time, was an itinerant photographer and sought out places such as Hawaii and Asia in which he could produce original images of foreign landscapes and cultures. In the case of *Porch of the Mission San Juan, Monterey, Co.* (**fig. 10.105**), the multiple levels of colonization and power were no longer so clear. The political undertones point to the layers of colonization the Natives had undergone; indicative of



the previous generations forced to acquiesce to European ways, the subjects embody the inactive seclusion of a people separated from their way of life.

Two contrasting towns are portrayed in several stereographs (**fig. 10.107, fig. 10.108, fig. 10.109**) the former of Dutch Flat in Placer County and the latter of Sonora in Tuolumne County. The photographs were captured from two distinctly different vantage points which resulted in two very different impressions. From the ground level view of Dutch Flat, the town embodied a bustling Wild West town, even if the image must have been at least partially staged as seen by the figure completely motion blurred. The latter image was taken from a bird's eye view above Sonora, in which the town appears calm and deserted. The dark figure in the bottom of the frame, center of the road, might be photographic apparatus, as another stereoscopic view (**fig. 10.108**) seems to be taken from that location. In fact, there are figures and coaches scattered on the road, but the view is one of a quiet street. The contrasting scenes were taken along the journey, evocative of the diverse ambiance a traveler could expect from these towns. A third image (**fig. 10.108**) shows a ground level view of the same street in Sonora, in which well-dressed men, horses and carriages are seen scattered the length of the street. This image evokes a more orderly town than the picture of Dutch Flat, but otherwise the towns seem to share similar architecture and size. To contrast with these, *J Street, Sacramento, from Hastings' Block* (**fig. 10.110**) presents a similar style image taken in the urban setting of Sacramento. The city exemplified a vast difference in architecture from both of the towns stated above as well as San Francisco. The horse-drawn carriage was posed in the middle of an otherwise empty street. The play on lines and shapes presents a very different type of ambiance. The establishment of these varying impressions of towns, architecture and culture would have been very informative to the foreign viewer. The aesthetic methods utilized by the photographer to communicate these dissimilar environments was evidence of an advanced mastery of the medium. One stereograph, (**fig. 10.111**) features a Madrona Tree sprouting graphically into the sky in Healdsburg, Sonoma County. The Lawrence & Houseworth collection included many stereographs of native plants including cactuses and palms. This composition departs from the encyclopedic style of those images and results in a graphic and spatial appreciation of the tree's shape and location.

Europeans might have already heard of the large Madrona trees, named and “discovered” during George Vancouver’s 1791-1795 exploration of the Pacific Coast. This image provided a symbolic representation of the species, furthermore exemplifying Weed’s pictorial versatility to subject matter.

The versatility of the stereographic medium allowed for relative access and ease in capturing scenes. As François Brunet suggested, “[s]tereography is responsible, more than photography more generally, for the popularization of exotic scenes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>655</sup> In California during the 1860s, the “exotic” would be difficult to define. The rare, the new, and the extraordinary were in no short supply though. *Devil’s Canyon, Witches’ Cauldron and Steam Escape Pipe, Sonoma County* (**fig. 10.112**) portrayed a burst of the Sonoma County geysers. The fantastical names and explosive natural phenomenon made the location a desirable photographic event. *Mouth of Big River, Mendocino County* (**fig. 10.113**) captured cypress-laden cliffs towering above the ocean below as the river fed into the Pacific. The waves’ blurred movement and the large ship grounded along the rocks evoked a wild scene despite the civilized construction atop the cliffside. The picture embodied a certain exotic wildness, an accurate and yet fantastical capture of the natural fury of the Pacific coast. In line with the title of Brunet’s article “The photography of the West or the experimental history of landscape,” the early practice of photographers such as Weed was an experimental examination of not only the photographic medium but of the visual representation of landscape in the Far West.

## 10.8 Landscapes and Scenes in Nature

The landscapes of the Lawrence & Houseworth stereograph collection presented both purely natural landscapes as well as scenes in which people were captured during travel and recreational activities. Leading up to the Exposition Universelle of 1867, the landscapes of the California Coast

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<sup>655</sup> François Brunet, “La Photographie de l’ouest Ou l’histoire Expérimentale Du Paysage,” *Revue Française d’études Américaines*, no. 26 (1985): 427. Translated by Glassberg

and Yosemite were likely the primary scenes represented previously in some type of visual medium. The Pacific Coast had been seen in Europe in the form of sketches as early as the first European explorers. Photographs of the California shoreline were not in circulation otherwise. Several stereographs (**fig. 10.114**, **fig. 10.115**, **fig. 10.116**) reveal the dramatic coastline in three images all taken from a high vantage point looking along the Santa Cruz oceanfront. The light appears quite even in all three and the motion blur of the tide's ebb and flow contribute to a calmly scenic marine view. In one of his reviews in *Le Moniteur de la Photographie*, Lacan lauds the seascapes of British photographers Wilson, Blanchard and Colonel Stuart Wortley. In fact, George Washington Wilson, Scottish photographer, was awarded an honorable mention for his stereoscopic views at the Exposition Universelle of 1867 and Valentine Blanchard was awarded a bronze medal for his portraits. Colonel Stuart Wortley was an experimenter of marine landscapes and of the play of light from the clouds and the waves. His work, unawarded but present at the Exposition, was devoted to seascapes. The Lawrence and Houseworth stereographic images of the California coast were as moody and dramatic as any of those by the Englishmen. Though there is little reference to the images in primary texts from the Exposition, that is likely due to a fault of exhibition location and timing than as a reflection on their esteem. The depiction of the California coast throughout the collection contributed to a circulation of that specific landscape. The continued representation of the California coastline particularly that of the northern California area with its tall, jagged cliffs, from European exploration through the Exposition Universelle of 1867, was one that evolved from the earliest sketches in traveler's journals to the stereographs of C.L. Weed almost one hundred years later. As a representative landscape of California, the coastline was the original image created by Western explorers of the area, and thus likely the first of any visual picture circulated of the region in history. *The Ocean Beach from the Cliff House* (**fig. 10.117**) depicts three figures atop a rocky outcropping silhouetted against the ocean foam. The beach becomes rolling hills as they disappear into the background. The figures were, it was described, visitors to the Cliff House, an establishment built on the edge of the cliff overlooking the ocean, which is just beyond the left frame. The image, however, presents three proud characters, more gentlemen than explorers as we

can make out the top hats on the tiny figures. In contrast to the other seascapes and particularly those of the British photographers, this image stands out for its narrative symbolism. The image is not an experiment on how the light can variably be captured as it reflects through the clouds onto the ocean. There was a regional and narrative force behind this image that was created with only humans and the landscape, an effect which often included architectural subjects in the case of European photographers. C.L. Weed was here telling a story of discovery and imperialism utilizing only the settler's figure captured within nature. What lingers from the anecdotal quality of this image was how on the foundational level the story of immigration and colonialism was transformed into a portrait of triumph and wonder. For an image that has very little exhibition legacy not to mention much true technical value to the half stereograph print, there was an immense amount of social and political meaning captured through the eye and frame of C.L. Weed.

As they left the coast, C.L. Weed continued to approach each passing landscape and scene with the same stereographic adeptness he applied to the most popular subjects. One image features the domestic landscape of *Mount Diablo, from Lafayette, Contra Costa Co.* (**fig. 10.118**) with the farm set far back against the foothills, focusing on the road which crossed the undulating plains to the stately farm. This image was a less common type to be seen of California, as most featured more spectacular natural scenes or industrial development. These more subtle subjects and individual experience point to a modern practice exemplifying a regional awareness and an individual narrative.

As the team set out east the settings surrounding the Lake Tahoe area provided natural features and activities for the photographer. Some of the natural scenes successfully captured by Weed included *Early Morning on Donner Lake. Placer County*, (**fig. 10.119**) a contemplative perspective taken from a low angle on the edge of the lake. The scene was reduced to an interplay of textures and reflection, with the elements of water, sky, plant, and sand as the subjects. The caption included the phrase "Early Morning," inviting the viewer into the experience of the individual, imposing on the stereograph viewer not just a three-dimensional image involvement, but also a time of day adding to the scene so as to transport the viewer. Far from the geological or the scientific, the

stereographic card as an object with its imposed caption offered the viewer a personal experience to share, which points to an anecdotal motivation on the part of the photographer not merely documentation of the lake's position. *Falls on the Yuba River, near Cisco, Placer Co.* (**fig. 10.120**) portrayed the winding falls of the Yuba, a river often referenced in mining photographs, but seen here as an elegant, picturesque scene. Bridging the geographic and artistic, Weed captured the blurred falling water as it emerged from the forest background. *Donner Peak-From Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road. Western summit Sierra Nevada* (**fig. 10.121**) allows the snowy environs of the Sierra Nevada up close. The wide tonal range of the albumen printed stereoview allowed for the light on the snow to contrast with the dark trees, rocks and shadows. The presence of subtle scenes such as this one were complementary to other photographs which portrayed skiing and snowshoeing, as they established the environment in which the Californians were engaging. *Among the Rocks. View from the shore, At Zephyr Cove, Lake Tahoe* (**fig. 10.122**) presented a beautifully composed photograph of boulders on the edge of Lake Tahoe. The stones in the foreground were mostly submerged except for a small circle which leads the viewer into the underwater stones, large in the foreground and smallest in the center of the photograph before reaching the giant boulders which emerge from the water, their reflections emphasizing their magnitude before noticing at last the snowy mountains far in the distance. The distillation of the lake into a scene of water and rock, in this particular way was seen in the photographs of other photographers of the period including *The Pyramid and Domes, Pyramid Lake, Nevada* (**fig. 10.123**) by Timothy O'Sullivan and Carleton Watkins' 1863 image *Coast View (No.1), Mendocino County* (**fig. 10.124**), alluding to some stylistic exchange among the Western photographers. Once again Weed's accompanying caption including the first person *Among the Rocks* (**fig. 10.122**) brings the viewer back to the narrative involvement of the individual, sharing his experience. Some of the landscapes invoked a more intimate engagement with the landscape, for example, in *Cave Rock-Eastern shore of Lake Tahoe, From the North*, (**fig. 10.125**) the wide and majestic view of Lake Tahoe with Cave Rock framed between the pines included a subject and his dog placed subtly in the bottom of the composition. The otherwise formidable landscape view was brought into a more personal context by including the tiny subjects,

quite small in relation to the grandeur of the scene, and yet their centered position and side lighting featured them in the image as characters in a story. When viewed through a stereoscope the subjects would have been much more prominent in the multi-dimensional image as they stand proudly facing the setting sun. The narrative and the three-dimensional format were complementary in creating a realistic visual story, one that foreshadows Edison's kinoscope in which motion pictures were viewed through a peep-hole viewer similar to the stereoscope. Edison's inspiration for the development of the motion picture invention, it must be noted, was inspired by Weed contemporary and fellow Yosemite photographer, Eadweard Muybridge.<sup>656</sup> By including a character in the landscape the viewer was offered a proxy through which to further imagine their experience in not just the location but in space, as Robert Taft described the augmented viewer experience of the *en relief* compared to a simple two dimensional print: "Placed in the stereoscope, the failure to portray the distant vista is magically removed, and there lies before the observer the original scene in *space*; all but color is there."<sup>657</sup> Taft emphasized the importance for viewers of these images compared to the limited experience of looking at a basic printed photograph in which the viewer was by the augmented reality of the dimensions offered a surreal experience: "It has been transformed from a record of the scene to the original scene itself."<sup>658</sup> The landscapes presented via the stereographic medium, were in the case of Lawrence & Houseworth, innovative in the types of scenes captured as well as the ways in which subjects were placed in the frame. The natural features of the California landscape were the setting for the augmented storytelling via the stereographic medium.

The inclusion of characters and subjects within the stereographs was something that Weed investigated both in capturing what appeared to be organic scenes, but also by posing and mise en scene. Two stereographs titled *Town of Volcano and Valley. Amador County* (**fig. 10.126, fig. 10.127**) placed a family, adults and children, with all of the members posed profile to the camera in the foreground with the town of Volcano set in the background. In one picture the family is posed

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<sup>656</sup> Gordon Hendricks, *The Edison Motion Picture Myth* (University of California Press, 1961), 11–12.

<sup>657</sup> Taft, *Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839-1889*, 166.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

standing on the hillside with a flume in the immediate foreground, while the other, taken from further back has one member of the family standing posed on the elevated flume channel. As an example of capturing subjects within the landscape, this was the most poignant example of an early environmental portrait within the Lawrence & Houseworth collection. These two images were “portraits” because the subjects were posed within the scene in which they were not interacting or participating in any activity. The environment, in this case the town of Volcano, was included as an informational context of their story. The intentionality of the posing within the photographs and the direction in which the subjects were faced signified a difference between these and many of Weed’s other photographs in which subjects were merely placed within scenes. These images fall into the context of 19<sup>th</sup> century Western regional portraiture, and the choices of environment and setting which distinguished those photographs. There are two examples which Rachel Sailor explores in her book *Meaningful Places*, the first being the 1850-1860s era daguerreotypes of Thomas M. Easterly which captured group portraits of Missouri settlers as they destructed a giant Native American earthen mound over the span of two decades. The men were captured in a portrait style, posed atop and surrounding the ever-diminishing mound (**fig. 10.128**). There were also the later 1880-1890s family portraits made by Solomon Butcher in Custer County, Nebraska, in which families were posed in front of their homesteads or sod houses. In the case of these Volcano town portraits, the family isn’t named, rather it was the town. Positioned standing on or near the mining flume and architecture that was the foundation of their settlement and set against the hills of their town, the idea of a community and place was suggested. The subjects were a reflection of not just the natural landscape but also the man-made aspects of their environment. Volcano, California grew quickly from a small placer mining settlement to a bustling town with the arrival of hydraulic mining operations and was a town that established many firsts during the 1850s such as the first theater group, first circulating library and first private law school in California among many others. By placing the subjects against the town, rather than their house, workplace or a mere natural landscape setting, the establishment of their relationship to place was as members of a community. The town was reportedly named because the bowl in which the town was built was thought by early settlers to

have been formed from a volcano, and the myth of the town's origin story lies embedded in the physical aspects of the landscape which form the foundation of the photographs' compositions. These portraits were unique within the work of Weed and Lawrence & Houseworth; they were obviously part of Weed's experimentation with how to relate subjects in a way that connected them to the physical and cultural places they were attempting to settle, but also as Sailor suggests in describing the images of Western local photographers', the photographers were attempting to establish visually the "regional residents' unique response to the physical aspects of the landscape."<sup>659</sup>

Weed's evolving practice included continually changing the ways in which he included human figures within the frame and how to position them within the landscape for optimal and specific effect. Several cases include his capturing of seemingly organic moments, such as *Spearing Trout on Donner Lake, Nevada Co.* (**fig. 10.129**) which shows six figures and a dog in a small vessel while fishing. As a snapshot the photograph is excellent, but the image offers even more as an historical source recording the life of California settlers and travelers prior to the completion of the trans-Atlantic railroad. It's difficult to declare for certain, but it appears as though the passengers on this boat include a Native American, with white settlers and a dog. The photograph could serve as a signifier of inter-racial social interactions during the 1860s. The scene presented both an adventurous and serene outing, by placing the subjects in the center of the frame surrounded by the lake named after the tragic death of previous pioneers, the image isolated the subjects symbolically inside the vulnerable existential position in which they existed. The image, likely captured on the 1864 Lawrence & Houseworth photographic expedition, by naming the lake in the caption recalls the Donner party who perished and resorted to cannibalism in the area of the lake less than twenty years before and the inclusion of a domestic animal illustrates a drastic evolution in the comfort pioneers had acquired in the years since. The subjects, grouped in the boat and partaking in the act of spearing trout in such a civilized scene could be referred to as a "party," an emblematic evocation

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<sup>659</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, 83.



of the Donner party. In *Noyo River and Ferry, looking South, Mendocino County* (**fig. 10.130**) the subjects were placed carefully within a wide composition showing a ferry crossing. The photographer was positioned at an elevated vantage point overlooking the river which provided a picturesque view of the intricate network of the community. The picture evoked a peaceful scene of activity including a wagon with horses grazing in the foreground while human subjects were posed in scattered positions on the wagon, ferry, and a small boat. The subjects were positioned on vehicles of transportation, all of which were powered naturally by water or horse, signs of a slower and smaller scale of life than the one that the locomotive would bring. The objects on which people are posed for portraits say much not only about their way of life, but also serve as a symbolic vehicle for the photographer. In many cases, such as the portraits of Solomon Butcher mentioned above, the subjects were photographed in front of their house, a symbol of their existence in which they were tied to the earth, home, and their allotted piece of land. In this instance, and in many of Weed's photographs, the subjects were posed on or within a means of transportation, bringing an element of transition and movement to the existential depiction of the settlers' existence via the portrait. These were not just river people, they were people of movement, an element of the pioneer identity just as fundamental as the land-bound homesteader. Some other cases include three images (**fig. 10.131, fig. 10.132, fig. 10.133**), which depict the California subjects as men of action and exploration. Much like the spear fisherman, the subjects in these images were engaging in activities considered necessary for survival, but captured in a way that evoked an adventurous lifestyle more than one of struggle. In one image (**fig. 10.132**), the men were described as travelling on "snow shoes" which were actually skis, and transporting a bear trap. The image *Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road-The Summit House* (**fig. 10.131**) depicts another skier with buildings in the background, which were described as "The Summit House." The activities seemed to fall somewhere in between recreation and necessity. The area with the Summit House was likely a mountain destination and the portrayal of the adventurous activities of the men presented a cultural element to California life that was becoming multi-faceted. In *Scene on the Summit of the Sierra Nevada Mts.* (**fig. 10.133**) we see three men on horseback with the mountain range rolling out

behind them. The caption refers to the “scene” rather than the individuals, insinuating a casualness to the moment. This was not a summiting event worth recording specifically for record, but signified a habitual quality for the California settler. More than the dress and appearance of the settlers, the activities of Western pioneers were aspects which would come to shape the ethos and image of American California in contrast to Spanish California. Spanish California was signified by Missions and a more stationary lifestyle, but American California was a place of movement and activity, as seen in these cultural snapshots of the Lawrence & Houseworth stereograph collection.

Another example of how photographic posing and objects created powerful and lasting symbols in the American West were images (**fig. 10.56, fig. 10.134, fig. 10.145**) in which figures were posed creatively on and amongst the Sequoia Gigantea of Calaveras Grove. *Father of the Forest-near view* (**fig. 10.56**) shows a couple posed on and in front of the fallen giant mammoth redwood. This photograph was reproduced and circulated as an illustration for Louis Simonin’s article in the French publication *Le Tour du Monde* (**fig. 10.155**). The caption mentions only the tree, rendering the figures as mere photographic tools to discover the scale and structure of the tree. Two photographs (**fig. 10.134, fig. 10.135**) show male figures posed around two separate sequoias, one a fallen trunk base and the other a standing cavernous trunk. The men provide scale to the massive vegetal forms, and evoked a mythic element to both the pioneer and the tree. The naming of mountains, lakes, and trees was a process by which Western settlers imposed their ideological domination over the land, and the naming of each individual tree distinguished them with an identity, a history, and a mythic status. By placing human figures in photographs (**fig. 10.134, fig. 10.135**) silhouetted against the dark shadow of the cavernous trunk, the human subjects were framed by the structure of the tree, their figures enhanced by the softly illuminated light-colored clothing set against the shadow. The men were scattered across the width of the trunk, clearly posed by the photographer, like characters of a tall tale. Since the tree and photograph were titled *Pioneer’s Cabin*, the men and the tree were tied together in a *mise-en-scène* of the fantastical giant (tree) and the pioneer. Suggestive of the idea that the trunk could serve as a house, the photograph placed the characters in the scene; the photographer was an active player in the visual culture and by

recording this scene on the reproducible format of the stereograph, he was telling a story and creating a depiction of a “tall tale” of California life. As a fundamental literary element of the American frontier, the tall tale was transformed into a visual legend, with the trees transformed into exaggerated versions of themselves, in this case an imaginary cabin. Portraits such as *The Florence residence at Mendocino* (**fig. 10.136**), often placed the home as a signifier of a person’s status and identity, whether it be a noble estate, dugout shelter, or homestead. The question of class or wealth was cast aside in *Pioneer’s Cabin* (**fig. 10.134**), in favor of depicting the brave and expeditious pioneer within a fictional primordial home, elevating his status to that of legend, and creating the pioneer legend in the process. Replacing the traditional social role of the dwelling with the imaginary tree-trunk cabin, the picture has elevated the function of the image from portrait to myth.

The stereographic images presented the figures of California in many different types of outdoor scenes. The indoor portrait was conspicuously absent in the Western American representation at the Exposition Universelle of 1867. The white settlers were made to seem harmonious within the landscape, in stark contrast to depictions of Native Americans and Chinese settlers. Two images (**fig. 10.137**, **fig. 10.138**) portray settlers on horseback and posed on a sailboat on small lakes in the Lake Tahoe vicinity. Echoing the scene of settlers spearing trout (**fig. 10.129**), the small intimate scenes build together an idea of a culture particular to this area, as activity in the mountains and on the mountain lakes provided a divergence from the struggle of mining images and the grandeur of Yosemite and Calaveras. These picturesque scenes were composed similarly and result in similar effect, the impression of a recreational mountain culture developing in the Sierra. Two images (**fig. 10.139**, **fig. 10.140**) present similar elements but in the context of Lake Tahoe, providing a contrast between the idyllic small lake scenes and the wider, less intimate Lake Tahoe views.

The stereographic medium enabled a more abstract expression, as seen in the images created within the Mammoth Grove of Calaveras. The stereoscopic images from the grove reveal the compositional and stylistic freedoms that were found with the more accessible format compared to the more classic compositions on the large format medium of the period. The photograph *Under the*

*Dome of the Forest, Mammoth Grove; Calaveras County* (**fig. 10.141**) presented a modern abstraction and served as evidence of a more versatile practice. In the context of the Exposition Universelle, this style evoked the abstraction and formal experimentation presented by only a few other photographers including the portraits of Julia Margaret Cameron and the seascapes of Colonel Stuart Wortley (**fig. 5.58, fig. 5.59**). The change in perspective and the isolation of form were evidenced most distinctly within the Calaveras Grove images of the Lawrence & Houseworth collection. The photograph provides a counter to the oft assumed style of early Western photography as “indexical and documentary, because of its association with the growth of industry and territorial expansion.”<sup>660</sup> An association that was also formed by the more enduring formats, mostly large format collodion and the USGS photographs more specifically. As the stereograph faded in popularity and recognition over the last century, images such as these and the experimental practice with form, shape, and space that they exhibit have resulted in a more constrained critique of the era. In fact, the lower cost and convenience of the medium allowed for a more advanced and modern practice in which execution of the chemical process could yield to formal experimentation. Since the technical process and apparatus of the stereographic camera was less cumbersome than the large format and mammoth-plate cameras of the time, this resulted in a broader variety of stylistic expressions. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin, from a point 40 feet in the interior of the Big Tree Eagle Wing, Calaveras County* (**fig. 10.142**) showed the base of mammoth sequoia “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” through a jagged opening in the trunk of the Eagle Wing tree. The image presented another case in which shape and perspective provided a less conventional “frame” through which to view and experience the natural environment.

Weed was an experienced and thoughtful photographer. His images placed white settlers in the landscape in a variety of scenes, but all of them suggested a harmony and created a cultural image of what life in the Far West looked like. These images, however, didn’t reveal the reality of all races. Native Americans were primarily shown via studio portraits (**fig. 10.143**), even though

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<sup>660</sup> Rachel McLean Sailor, “Western Landscape Photography: Then and Now,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 116, no. 1 (2015): 93.

that evoked the opposite of their way of life. Native Americans were portrayed in several images of one outdoor scene, a posed, awkward series (**fig. 10.144**). Chinese settlers were only portrayed in mining work (**fig. 10.145**), or amongst their Chinese businesses on Sacramento Street (**fig. 10.146**, **fig. 10.147**) in San Francisco. The images relegated these ethnic groups to restricted environments, in which they were seen as “other.” The white settler was shown in work and recreation, but was the only type of figure shown in natural scenes in the landscape. The images created a story of belonging, but it was only the white settler who was portrayed as the quintessential Californian or Western figure. The visual representation of these communities was insufficient and provides little insight into their reality during this period of Far Western history. The dearth of images of Chinese settlers and Native Americans was due to and representative of the antagonistic relationship between white settlers and both of these groups. It was indicative not only of the violent and existential conflict between them, but also of prejudice against people and cultures that were deemed inferior. This phenomenon also revealed the performative aspect of the portrayal of the white settler who was shown in the process of appropriating a landscape which had been shaped by Native people. The cultural representation of the white settler within these landscapes created a belief and a trope of how the Western settler lived and appeared, including the safety and ownership of a place. Photography then, stereography included, having been almost exclusively in the hands of white men was restricted to a certain point of view and presented a colonialist perspective. That perspective, and the power of photographs, particularly those of the reproducible and portable nature of stereographs, were fundamental in creating an influential impression of the culture of the Far West. The paintings and Indian tours of George Catlin in France had preceded these photographs for the European audience, having created a fictionalized version of the Native American from the colonial perspective. Photographs would come to rectify this impression minimally in the 1870s, by presenting a more expansive collection if always from the same hegemonic perspective.

## 10.9 Yosemite Lifestyle

Finally, the Lawrence & Houseworth collection included many images of Yosemite. The images ascribed a lifestyle to the experience of the Valley and suggested narratives by the simple combination of image and caption. As a group of images, the Yosemite stereographs provided a tour of the area, but rather than document only the most magnificent features as the large format images did, the stereographs included more diverse vantage points and more everyday scenes of life. This quotidian quality was evoked by the capture of moments which evoked the lifestyle of settlers in the Valley. The ensemble of images allowed for a narrative to emerge of the white settlers' lifestyle in Yosemite. *Lamon's Log Cabin-the first building in the Valley* (**fig. 10.148**) conjured a similar feel to Mathew Brady's Civil War images of officers gathered at their encampment tents. This image though, has a more styled *mise-en-scène* and results in an intimate view and enchanting record of the first log cabin built in the Yosemite Valley. The stereograph scene, composition, and angle were copied by John P. Soule in 1870, published as a stereograph (**fig. 10.149**), and entered under copyright with the Library of Congress. The plagiarism of the photograph points to a success and popularity that must have followed the publishing c.1864 of Weed's photograph by Thomas Houseworth. Lamon, according to J.M. Hutchings, built the cabin in the Fall of 1859, and lived the winters of 1862-1863 and 1863-1864 alone in his cabin in Yosemite Valley. The "experiment" was described by Hutchings as both a test of physical survival and but also of the spirit. Hutchings emphasized the isolation in his memoir: "After satisfactory demonstration that a residence at Yo Semite [*sic*] in winter was possible, as narrated in a preceding chapter, Mr. Jas. C. Lamon, who formed one of our setting-out party on that occasion, was the first to try the experiment, and spent the winters of 1862-1863 and 1863-1864 there *entirely alone*."<sup>61</sup> Lamon was a literary man, and likely influenced by the Thoreau's *Walden* experiment, he set himself up with provisions in order to live through winter in the harsh conditions and isolation and according to John Muir "the first of all

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<sup>61</sup> J. M. Hutchings, *In the Heart of the Sierras: Yo Semite Valley and the Big Tree Groves* (Pub. at the Old Cabin; Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing House, 1886), 135.

the early Yosemite settlers who cordially and unreservedly adopted the Valley as his home.”<sup>662</sup>

Weed’s photograph placed several characters scattered around the cabin, and was taken at a moment outside of winter. While the stereograph tells a story other than that of its bold namesake’s winter séjour, it circulated an aesthetic element with which to associate this tale of Californian individualist ardor.

The Lawrence & Houseworth stereographs revealed many scenes of leisure and activity in the Yosemite Valley. *Mirror Lake and Mount Watkins* (**fig. 10.150**) combined the sublime surroundings with a posed recreational moment, representing a glimpse of everyday life in the Valley. The settlers in the boat were framed by the fallen trees and set against the reflection of the mountain in the lake. The inclusion of settlers into the landscape scene established a leisurely lifestyle with which to contrast against the hard work and industrial mining reputation with which California had so closely been associated for nearly fifteen years. Such leisure was sure to be an attraction to Europeans looking to migrate to a place with more space, beauty and existential promise. *Yo Semite[sic] Falls, 2,634 Feet High* (**fig. 10.151**) placed eight or so settlers on horseback in a meadow below Yosemite Falls. As original photographs of what life in the Far West looked like, the aesthetic impressions were being laid for the “Western” style to become known around the world. Critically, Weed has been cast in the shadow of Watkins as having taken lesser quality photographs of features such as Yosemite Falls; less technically successful, and less well composed. The comparison has historically diminished the social contribution present in the archive of Weed’s work and the cultural wealth of the Lawrence & Houseworth stereograph collection more broadly. Few photographers at the Exposition Universelle of 1867 presented such an enlightening view of a developing culture, of which the world had seen little photographic evidence, yet had circulated whisperings of wonder for centuries.

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<sup>662</sup> John Muir, *The Yosemite* (New York: Century, 1912), chap. 14.

## 10.10 A New World for Wondering Eyes: the Carleton Watkins photographs, Yosemite, and mammoth trees of Mariposa

Watkins' appreciation for visual spectacle and his initiative to interact with his surroundings would prove influential as he pursued his photographic work as an adult, finding inspiration and challenge in capturing the undiscovered and little seen Western landscapes.

In 1842 in the Susquehanna River Valley village of Oneonta, New York, the favorite amusement of thirteen-year-old Carleton Watkins and his friends was to improvise fireworks for their own pleasure. Soaking balls of cotton batting in turpentine, the boys would climb the tower of the Presbyterian church, light the balls, and toss them "blazing into the dark void below, illuminating the immediate surroundings with spectacular effect."<sup>663</sup>

Much like the boy who found satisfaction in climbing to a height and by his own chemical industriousness igniting the darkness, the grown-up Carleton would go to much greater lengths and elevations, lugging a (literal) ton of equipment and chemicals via mules to the barely accessible vantage points which would make for the most impeccably executed landscape photographs of fabled, natural wonders. Watkins was described by his friend and biographer Charles B. Turrill as a "New York country boy [...] gifted with a deep love for nature."<sup>664</sup> Turrill emphasized Watkins' overlooked contribution to California and photography in a 1918 biography, two years after his death, stating: "He did more to introduce to the world and to perpetuate the scenic beauties of California than any other man who has lived in our State."<sup>665</sup> His work would be largely overlooked until the 1970s.

Watkins proved to be an inferior businessman and publisher but developed a strong vision in his landscape work. He seemed aware that his success depended on finding a wide audience, and so the significance of the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris was not lost on him. Scholarship concerning Watkins' legacy has often placed him as adjacent to other image-makers of similar style.

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<sup>663</sup> Excerpt from Maria Morris Hamburg's introduction, *Carleton Watkins: The Art of Perception*. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, 1999, (8). Quote in Hamburg's text provided by Peter Palmquist from Willard V. Huntington's notes for a history of Oneonta, N.Y. that he had planned to write, and which now reside in the Huntington Memorial Library in Oneonta, New York.

<sup>664</sup> Charles B. Turrill, "An Early California Photographer: C.E. Watkins," in *News Notes of California Libraries*, 1st ed., vol. 13 (Sacramento: California State Library., 1918), 32.

<sup>665</sup> Ibid.



François Brunet has listed him in a group of loosely titled “survey photographers” consisting of Alexander Gardner, Timothy O’Sullivan, William Bell, John K. Hillers, Antonio Zeno Shindler, Andrew J. Russell, and William H. Jackson.<sup>666</sup> Brunet suggests that this group of “operators” created the definitive image of both natural wonders and natives of the West as commissioned amateurs and self-taught experts employed by the governmental institutes and campaigns of exploration of the West. Watkins did work briefly for the California State Geological Survey in 1864-1865, and Clarence King’s USGS Survey of the 40<sup>th</sup> Parallel in 1867, but his skill was honed over years of dedication and his reputation established by his independent projects, largely the 1861 and later Mariposa Grove and Yosemite photographs. While his work can be stylistically associated to the Survey photographs that followed, Watkins had created these images many years before the United States Geological Survey began its expeditions, as well as the California State Geological Survey. It would be more accurate to set him apart as a predecessor to the more general Survey and USGS work, which was likely informed by his mammoth photographs of Yosemite, and the “Big Trees,” some of the earliest, after C.L. Weed’s to be seen in the East. Martha Sandweiss and François Brunet, among others, have placed Carleton Watkins in this group of “survey photographers” but it is important to distinguish Watkins from this label. Brunet remarked that the landscapes of the Survey photographers are “primitives of American photography” and “one of the great moments of American photography.”<sup>667</sup> The “Survey” faction Brunet and Sandweiss allude to specifically consisted of: Watkins, O’Sullivan, Jackson, Hillers, and Bell. Sandweiss stated that the pictures made by this group “would find their way into every corner of American culture, from the halls of Congress and the recesses of the Smithsonian Institution to the nation’s centennial exhibition and the living rooms of California’s new grandees.”<sup>668</sup> This canonization focuses on landscape photography, and even within that broad genre, Watkins merits a separate distinction. The primary reason being that the Survey photographers are commended with bringing a true image of

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<sup>666</sup> Brunet et al., *Images of the West*, 12.

<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–13.

<sup>668</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 154.

the West to the eyes of Eastern Americans for the first time. While that is partially true due to the scope and breadth of the Survey corpus, it ignores the fact that Watkins came before; he only marginally worked for the federal and state Surveys, and his historical and artistic influence was independent of railroad, state, or federal survey impetus, though he worked for those interests by the mid-1860s. He was “the West’s first renowned landscape photographer” and as it follows, he was the premier American landscape photographer, since, as Eva Respini confirms, “[t]he tradition of American landscape photography began in the West.”<sup>669</sup> This distinction was never clearer than at the Paris Exposition Universelle, in the year 1867, when Watkins exhibited the best of his oeuvre prior to the commencement of the photographic projects by William Henry Jackson, Timothy O’Sullivan, William Bell, and John K. Hillers as part of the geological surveys of the West. Not only did he pre-empt their work, he exhibited as an individual artist, just as he photographed as an autonomous photographer, predominantly independent of survey motivation or influence up to that point.

Watkins’ individual vision has been discussed as both a formal and social anomaly in the history of art and photography by critics such as John Coplans, who questioned Watkins’ anachronistic advancement when he wondered “how did this strange genius flame out of nowhere?”<sup>670</sup> His work has often been considered formally ahead of its time, and his technical mastery was acquired astonishingly quickly. It has been argued that he was not ahead of his time, but that he and his audience have long been misunderstood. Watkins’ work was for a long time academically neglected. The historiography of photography has struggled with where to situate it. He continues to be found as an outlier, between two historiographies of photography, having been first included in the social historical narrative of Robert Taft in 1939, but excluded repeatedly from Beaumont Newhall’s international critical history of the medium up until its last edition in 1982. Taft’s pioneer history of American photography, *Photography and the American Scene*, situated

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<sup>669</sup> Eva Respini, *Into the Sunset: Photography’s Image of the American West* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2009), 11–13.

<sup>670</sup> John Coplans, “C. E. Watkins at Yosemite,” *Art in America*, November/December 1978.

Watkins as one of only two significant photographers who persisted with “expeditionary” work on the frontier through the years of the Civil War. Taft attested to the physical demand of Watkins’ Yosemite work, and insisted on the ambition that must have existed inside the young and active man, but also suggested “a love of outdoor life” which compelled his many summers devoted to the photographs which became known around the world.<sup>671</sup> This ambition and outdoor enthusiasm were central to the initiative at the center of Watkins’ excellence, and indicative of his interest to transition from the photographic studio to the outdoors. A distinct aspect of the timing was that Watkins, prior to the Western Surveys, and the Paris Exposition Universelle, depended on no team of geologists, and had no support from governmental sources. He had a singular vision, and he undertook this artistic pursuit, creating the formal photographic landscape model in which the Survey photographers would work. This applies not only to his form and style, but also in his exhibition of the images in series.

Perhaps the primary reason that Carleton Watkins must be distinguished categorically from the Survey photographers was that he was a Westerner and a Californian; having migrated from New York, he built his career in California and photographed the West as a Western artist. This distinction points not only to the dialectic quality of the photographs, it also indicates one of the dramatic differences in the motivation and original vision of Watkins. His motivation as a photographer of his immediate surroundings, placed him in an important role in the context of the Exposition Universelle. Within the international photography exhibition of the 1867 Exposition, and as examined in the previous section concerning this topic, there was a distinction amongst European landscape photographers who captured primarily the scenery of their own country and region, versus those who traveled and photographed foreign lands with the eye and motivation of a tourist and commercial operator. In his 1978 analysis, John Coplans, artist and Watkins collector, contrasted Watkins’ work with that of Samuel Bourne, the Victorian photographer of India who also exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867:

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<sup>671</sup> Taft, *Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839-1889*, 270–71.

Bourne was a romantic imperialist and very clever tourist who went around photographing in a documentary vein to convey information to the public back home about the glories of their empire. Watkins is very different from Bourne in spirit: Watkins became deeply involved in an obsessive fantasy which was simultaneously personal and collective; for him, the world of Yosemite, and the many other places in the West he was to photograph later, became a dreamscape of total possibility. The mountains of India meant little to Bourne except as a romantic backdrop, a marvelous stage setting, whereas to Watkins, Yosemite offered archetypal monuments of the massiveness of American space and of potential energy as yet unleashed. I also think that as with many other American artists, both painters and photographers, there is a sense of history involved in Watkins' outlook, of past chaos and future meanings. It's as if his discoveries hover between these two possibilities.<sup>672</sup>

Watkins' perspective from an invested, Western point of view, set him apart from a large portion of the landscape photographers of the period such as Bourne, who also exhibited at the Exposition, just as it set him apart from the photographers of the Geological Survey operators to follow. It was precisely this and not merely his superior talent that made his work a more pertinent exhibit within the context of the Exposition Universelle than that of Lawrence & Houseworth, a fellow San Franciscan publishing house which exhibited the images of C.L. Weed and others in Paris that year, of corresponding subject matter, including but not exclusively Yosemite and Mariposa. His perspective, or what we can speculate of it, prompted exploratory work on a personal level as a photographer in San Francisco, where photography was primarily a commercial enterprise and predominantly portraits at the time. These points were also expressed eloquently by John Coplans:

The making of his mammoth Yosemite photographs was a self-imposed task not contingent on outside pressures or events, commercial or otherwise. Watkins brought to this task the imagination, flexibility and reflectiveness characteristic of major art. It was purposeful activity in which new answers were sought rather than services rendered; he used photography as a form of a learning process. There is no taint of commercialism in Watkins beyond the mundane circumstances of survival.<sup>673</sup>

The "purposeful activity" of Watkins' landscape work in Yosemite and Mariposa would, by 1867, have taken an even more intentional form. The exhibition of these images at the Exposition of 1867, in a curated collection, framed in local wood, and exhibited on the wall as "art" in a series, signified his artistic intention. This original vision also extended to his technological initiative to have a custom mammoth plate camera built prior to his first trip to Yosemite in 1861. From a mystifyingly

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<sup>672</sup> Coplans, "C. E. Watkins at Yosemite," 101-8.

<sup>673</sup> Ibid.

early stage, 1859 and through 1867, Watkins' purposeful intention included such ambitious ideas as: construction and transportation of a custom mammoth camera and related equipment, large prints exhibited on the wall, wood frames referencing the environment of the images, and foreign exhibition in Paris amongst the world's finest work. Coplans investigated the potential influences which might have contributed to Watkins' modern vision; he was after all, merely a modest shopkeeper who had only recently begun photographic work assisting daguerreotypist Robert H. Vance in the San Francisco area. Francis Frith and his European picturesque romanticism appeared as a potential influence seen in Watkins' 1861 stereograph compositions, but also technically in his execution of mammoth-plate landscape images since the 1850s.<sup>674</sup>

Watkins' important presence in the Paris Exposition was not only his representation of California and the stunning presentation of a novel landscape to European eyes, it was also his presence as a Western artist, exhibiting medal-garnering work that came to inhabit the cultural and aesthetic space that one expected American painters and fine art to occupy at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. His work brought an image of California and of the Far West to the European audience in a way that both neglected the Gold Rush and any other previous images of California, and instead reignited with a novel visual vocabulary the story of California's mythic history. Coplans associated Watkins' work with another Western artist, abstract expressionist painter Clyfford Still, who Watkins preceded by some eighty years. "Watkins' photographs are grounded in the seen world, and a show of basic fidelity to the factual experience of a specific landscape; nevertheless they throb with a powerful mythic quality, a sense of mystical revelation that somehow manages to impart an allegory of American space very similar to the large abstract paintings of Clyfford Still, who also came out of the West."<sup>675</sup> Indeed, it was an audacious comparison, but Coplans insisted that it was a "potency of spirit and ideas" which associated the two, some sense of mythic Western revelation that informed both of their respective visions and inspired their formally dissimilar but spiritually parallel allegories of American space. It was this allegory of American

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<sup>674</sup> Ibid., 217.

<sup>675</sup> Coplans, 101-8.

space, and space of the Far West that emerged in the American display in Paris in 1867. The opinion by John Coplans is not quoted here indiscriminately. His text and ideas concerning Watkins illuminate many of the weaknesses that infiltrate the narrative surrounding the photographer's historical significance and support some of the reasons why his exhibition in Paris was groundbreaking and influential. Coplans even admitted that he assumed a different chronology surrounding the early photography of Yosemite before learning more about Watkins. He assumed, that Edward Muybridge, who also photographed Yosemite, had learned this model from England and New York, only to discover later that Watkins had laid the ground for him.<sup>676</sup> Watkins was of course influenced himself, at least locally, by C.L. Weed who first captured Yosemite and the great trees, as well as by Robert H. Vance, California daguerreotypist, amongst others. While Muybridge and the Survey photographers would follow in the model executed by Watkins, it was his original and revelatory character that set him apart, and played such an integral role in creating a new image for California and the United States at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867.

In an initial address to the public Blake stated a pointed interest in scenic photographs of California to be exhibited: "It is desirable also that some of our unrivalled specimens of the photographic art, especially in the form of views of our grand mountain scenery, should accompany the representation."<sup>677</sup> As an experienced survey geologist with an appreciation for linking art and geology, Blake's role as the Commissioner from California certainly influenced how the state was represented visually in Paris. His request to include California mountain photographs as the artistic representation of the state was certainly a first. The Far West was unique as a region whose first visual medium was photography, and the initiative of the California commission and particularly Blake to have the vision to promote the state by its landscape foreshadowed the use of USGS survey photographs at future international exhibitions. At the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867, there was only one group of California landscapes exhibited on the wall, that of Carleton Watkins. The

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<sup>676</sup> Ibid.

<sup>677</sup> Blake et al., "California at the World's Exhibition in Paris."

focus on the outdoor and landscape element of Far Western life was visible in this most conspicuous display.

### **10.11. A curated collection for the wall: “Photographs of California Scenery”**

This was the product description handwritten by Carleton Emmons Watkins on his application for exhibition to the United States Commission for the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. The U.S. Commission required applicants to fill in a category which asked for a “Detailed statement of products which the applicant desires to exhibit,” (fig. 10.154). His thirty frames measuring 26 x 32 inches were sent via the California delegation under the charge of Prof. Blake, since, as he wrote in a letter (fig. 10.155) to U.S. Agent J.C. Derby on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1866, his views would not make it in time for shipment from New York with the U.S. general envoy.

Watkins’ thirty “photographs of California scenery” were a concise and pointed expression of his practice. The clean and curated collection, already a popular and influential group of photographs within the United States had been seen and sought after on the East Coast of the U.S. In 1861 he created his first series of thirty mammoth plate images in Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove. By 1862 these photographs were on display at the prestigious Goupil’s Gallery in New York City. It was there, in viewing those photographs, that Albert Bierstadt first was inspired to travel to and produce painted works of the region.<sup>678</sup> He would also purchase a series of Watkins’ prints and make paintings from the photographs.<sup>679</sup> In 1864, Watkins’ photographs played an influential role in convincing Congress to pass the Yosemite Valley Grant Act which preserved Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove from commercial exploitation, the first act of its kind and the predecessor to the establishment of the National Parks. By the time of their appearance in Paris in 1867 the photographs had already won awards in the U.S., the award-winning display can be seen in a stereograph (fig. 10.156) at the 1865 San Francisco Mechanics’ Institute Industrial Exhibition.

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<sup>678</sup> F.H. Ludlow, *The Heart of the Continent: A Record of Travel Across the Plains and in Oregon, with an Examination of the Mormon Principle* (Hurd and Houghton, 1870), 412.

<sup>679</sup> Nickel, Watkins, and Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins*, 217.

The photographs were critically respected, popular, and eventually they were pirated and published by East coast firms. A result of many influences, his work was also born of his meticulous attention as a technically skilled and clean worker. His vision was clear, clean, and carefully executed. Maria Morris Hambourg described the novelty of his practice in defining him as “[...] a force of civilization, carving clarity and rational order out of the chaos of the world [...].”<sup>680</sup> Considering his larger oeuvre, Watkins’s subject was not confined to the Edenic nature seen in his Yosemite series, but was as Douglas Nickel described more generally “natural resources and their development.”<sup>681</sup> Watkins’ Yosemite and Mariposa collection shown at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 was, compared to the Lawrence & Houseworth collection, if not reductive then spectacularly specific. Watkins’ photographic capture of California’s natural features in this case, and illustrated by the resulting Yosemite Valley Grant Act, helped create the political dichotomy surrounding the idea of “wilderness” in the American imagination.

While the Civil War had been ravaging in the East, Watkins had been making bold and calculated advances in his photographic work of the West. This vision was not “naïve” nor “ahead of his time,” as it has historically been characterized. It was the most successful and would come to be considered the most viewed photographs of California of the period. Watkins was artistically successful in, as Nickel has articulated, “rendering western spaces, and the scale of western things, for an audience predominantly located back east and in Europe.”<sup>682</sup> Many scholars have described his mastery of the medium in several different ways, but the most recent and relevant descriptions suggest that his genius lied somewhere within his ability to create such a clear photographic concept of California, when confronted with the entirety of the Far Western multicultural experience and landscape.

Rachel Sailor has suggested Watkins’ position as a symbolic predecessor of Ansel Adams. This distinction illuminates the artistic importance that Watkins’ work represented in the 1867

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<sup>680</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid., 22.



Exposition context. In both his landscape vision and execution Watkins was a forbear to Adams, but also in his self-identification as an artist. It does not seem to be coincidence that 1867 was the year that Watkins became commercially successful, winning a medal at the Exposition and opening his “Yosemite Art Gallery” in San Francisco. This was also the year that he would first seek copyright of his own photographs, parting from years of dealing and selling his negatives at times through other firms. As Sailor suggests, the popularization of the photographic medium in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century evolved the conversation from one that sought to differentiate amateur from professional to one that discerned amateur and artist.<sup>683</sup> On an acute level, Watkins had already proven that distinction in the 1860s, as his Yosemite work, particularly in the case of the Exposition Universelle served to illustrate the difference between professional and artist. By curating a collection that offered a specific idea of California, Watkins inhabited the space of artist more than that of documentarian.

The thirty frames sent by Watkins to the Exposition, for which he was not in attendance, inhabited one of the most visible walls of the American section. The framed mammoth prints can be seen in several Petit photographs of the American section (**fig. 10.1, fig. 10.2**). While the images were interpreted as simulacra at the time, mere reproductions of a landscape that was new and exciting to Europeans, Watkins’ photographs were really a carefully crafted tool of cultural mythology. Of course, they would in later years come to shape the tourist experience and industry, but prior to, and leading up to the Exposition Universelle of 1867, these photographs were creating a more fundamental idea of not just the Far West, but of America more generally. Their central and visible position within the layout of the American section, juxtaposed with other non-photographic and non-Western objects points to a more nationalistic intention on the part of the American organizers. Their position on the wall opposite the Washington buildings and portraits of American men reflected the cultural significance as icons which they represented for the Far West.

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<sup>683</sup> Sailor, *Meaningful Places*, 135.

## 10.12 Giants of the West: Yosemite and the Grizzly Giant

The top row of frames included the two photographs from the Mariposa Grove on either end. Both negatives were created on an 1865 or 1866 expedition (which will be referred to as c. 1865) and were framed in ornate redwood frames, different from the frames of the Yosemite Valley photographs. These frames were carved with delicate ornamentation, and the structure of the frame featured crossed log style panels at each corner, setting them apart from the remainder of the photographs. The image [*Section of the Grizzly Giant*] (**fig. 10.157**) was at least the second time Watkins had captured Mariposa caretaker Galen Clark posed at the base of the giant sequoia. In his 1861 version (**fig. 10.58**) the tighter horizontal composition, scattered branches, and Clark's appearance all told a less compelling story than the improved picture captured on the later 1865-1866 trip. The photograph illuminated a more subtle aspect of Watkins' process, in which he was involved in back-and-forth influence with C.L. Weed. Between Watkins' capture of the 1861 and c.1865 images of Galen Clark against the bottom portion of the Grizzly Giant, C.L. Weed captured *Section of Grizzly Giant* in 1864 (**fig. 10.159**), which has an almost identical composition to the c.1865 Watkins image, and with a figure posed in a similar position. In the Weed photograph the figure is Eadweard Muybridge, and he was sitting rather than standing. Weed also changed the orientation of the plate to a vertical orientation, a shift that Watkins was likely influenced by, though Hutchinson has suggested that the orientation shift could have happened because Watkins was photographing illustrations on his c.1865 trip in the exclusively vertical format for Josiah D. Whitney's *Yosemite Book*.<sup>684</sup> Assuming the dates of these photographs is correct, the photographers were likely influencing each other with the lighting, posing, composition, and stylistic elements of the photographs. Watkins' 1861 iteration was the first of this scene, after which it became a compositional cliché, re-iterated in form throughout the ensuing decades, such as by George Fiske (**fig. 10.160**). Watkins clearly favored the circa 1865 version of the photograph since he chose it over the 1861 capture and exhibited that print in the Exposition Universelle as only one of two

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<sup>684</sup> Hutchinson, "They Might Be Giants," 52.

images showing the Mariposa Grove. Having examined in a previous chapter the complex implications of the giant sequoia as a nationalist-heroic monument, there was another critical motive at work within these photographs.<sup>685</sup> The relationship between Galen Clark and the Grizzly Giant was a story that Watkins' was trying to tell, it was also as Hutchinson has investigated, a juxtaposition of three "giants" (Watkins, Clark, and the Grizzly Giant) in an interplay which illuminated how natural and human giants structured an American understanding of the Western landscape.<sup>686</sup> Attempting each time to improve on the previous iterations, he was pursuing purely compositional and stylistic modifications to impart a specific connection within the photograph, in which "the figure of Galen Clark provides a model of the viewer's communion with the vastness of nature."<sup>687</sup> The crystallization of California into this honed and refined portrayal was part of a modernization in the visuality surrounding place and the West. Not just in relation to tourism, but in a more general sense, Douglas Nickel refers to this as the crossroads in which "lens-based media increasingly took on the popular, figurative duties previously arrogated to painting, setting the latter free of its realist strictures to innovate within the pure and exclusive realism we now identify as the avant-garde."<sup>688</sup> The innovative work of Watkins in his [*Section of the Grizzly Giant*] was the implementation of formal devices to convey a subjective vision of California. C.L. Weed had been investigating a range of compositions, positioning figures on, amongst, and within the giant trees of the Calaveras Grove, but it wasn't until Watkins' c.1865 [*Section*] that this mythic scene was achieved, and contributed to a modernization of visuality of the giant sequoias as cultural "giants" of the Far West. As a player in the visual culture of the era, the nature of the photographic print, and the commercial motive for Watkins' to exhibit this image at the Exposition Universelle of 1867 signified a reach with which paintings could not compare. The photograph was falling under the gaze of what Douglas Nickel has described as "a new kind of spectator brought about by a complex

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<sup>685</sup> For an in-depth study on the "Grizzly Giant" photographs by Watkins, see Hutchinson, "They Might Be Giants: Carleton Watkins, Galen Clark, and the Big Tree"

<sup>686</sup> Hutchinson, "They Might Be Giants," 49.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>688</sup> Nickel, Watkins, and Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins*, 22.

of social and technological conditions organized around new ways of thinking and discussing the visual.”<sup>689</sup> The perception Watkins’ was producing was finding a rapidly changing audience, the stereograph viewer as well as the millions who flocked to the Exposition Universelle of 1867. The exhibition environment of industrial fairs and the mutating undercurrents of visual culture in the 1860s manifested in the creation of a modernized perception as illustrated by Watkins’ 1865 [Section]. This photograph’s principal impact was not as an advertisement of California as a tourist destination, rather it played into the myth-building of California in the modern imagination via photography, which as a realist vehicle maintained Renaissance perspectivism and overtook the popular, figurative role previously provided by painting.<sup>690</sup> The spectators at the Exposition Universelle had been reading tales and hearing rumors about the giant sequoias of California, and had maybe seen sketches or paintings, but the Watkins’ photographs of the Grizzly Giant brought more than just proof of the largest trees known to man, they also created a portrait of the tree and the white man together, connecting them allegorically into a tale of frontier harmony. Continuing the literary myth of California from de Montalvo’s 1510 novel, *The Adventures of Esplandián*, and throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a fertile land filled with gold, Watkins was creating a new allegory with his photographs, and in this one the photograph built a modernized myth visually.

The second Mariposa Grove photograph exhibited by Watkins was at the far right of the top row and was also a circa 1865 negative of the Grizzly Giant sequoia. The image was taken from a vantage point looking up and showing the entirety of the tree as it reached up to the open sky at the top of the frame. The composition was similar to Watkins’ 1861 version of the same scene, with noticeable differences including a vertical orientation. This perspective of the Grizzly Giant was influential on Albert Bierstadt who made his 1863 sketches in Mariposa Grove and 1873 painting *The Grizzly Giant Sequoia, Mariposa Grove, California* from the same position and with similar composition. Watkins’ photographs inspired Bierstadt to travel out to Yosemite in 1863, after seeing

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<sup>689</sup> Ibid. See Jonathan Crary’s *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* for his reconceptualization of the history of modernism; see Nickel, Watkins, and Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins: The Art of Perception* for Nickel’s study of the modernization of visuality in relation to Watkins’ work.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid.

the photographs in Goupils Gallery in New York in 1862. This photograph would have acted as the first time many people saw the size of a giant mammoth sequoia in a legitimate fashion. In Galen Clark's *Big Trees of California*, he described some of the trees and offered his opinion and speculation on the history behind these noble giants. Concerning the Grizzly Giant, he states: "It is not so tall and graceful in general outline, nor is its cubical contents as great as some other trees in the grove. It is located on more comparatively open and dry ground, and has a unique individuality of majestic grandeur all its own, different from any other known Sequoia."<sup>691</sup> The tree was positioned in such a way that made for its ideal selection as a photographic subject, and as a result, also an ideal painting subject. The designation of the tree's "unique individuality" points to a subjective preference on the part of Clark, and in the Western mind. The anthropomorphism of the tree became such that the tree was no longer an organic, inanimate plant, but rather a character, with a history which garnered respect as "still living, grizzled with age, defying old Time with his legions of furies."<sup>692</sup> The imperial occupation of Western land, and the eradication of existing history from the region resulted in the imposition of Western heroic legends on the landscape.

The other twenty-eight images exhibited by Watkins were mammoth prints chosen from his Yosemite collection, the best images from his visits to the Valley, prior to 1867, most were from his c. 1865 expedition. The top three frames contained photographs of the Yosemite Valley beginning with *Yosemite Falls from Glacier Point* (**fig. 10.161**), a negative captured c.1865 which looks down from the rim at Glacier Point with a dramatic view of Yosemite Falls on the far side of the Valley. Beside that was a rare print titled *North Dome, Front View, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.162**), which departs from the high angle vantage of the preceding photograph, and opts for a low angle from the Valley floor, with the Merced River in the foreground, the image looks up through the trees to a slightly overexposed North Dome in the upper-third of the frame. The adjacent image was *Yosemite Falls from Below* (**fig. 10.163**), a picturesque scene, looking through the trees from the Valley floor up to both levels of Yosemite Falls in the center background of the frame. Over the years Watkins

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<sup>691</sup> Galen Clark, *The Big Trees of California: Their History and Characteristics*, 1907, 32.

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

experimented with compositions and vantage points in which he portrayed the subject of Yosemite Falls. In contrast, a later photograph from c. 1878, *Yosemite Falls, View from the Bottom* (**fig. 10.164**) illustrates how Watkins' practice evolved from its agency as a modernized visuality of place, to a modernized formal practice, within a simple study of the subject of Yosemite Falls. These introductory images present the Valley with a feel of how one might experience of entry into the Valley from the dramatic perspective gained from the rim at the Glacier Point overlook, to the imposing falls and features seen from the Valley floor. All five of the top row were vertical orientation, which signified that all of those negatives were captured on trips later than the initial 1861 visit, during which Watkins only captured horizontal images. The vertical orientation, and the selection of those images signified improvements in the composition of the photographs over the 1861 versions, many of these because of how the vertical frame accentuated the verticality of the features. Watkins was dedicated to the Yosemite Valley as a subject and would evolve in his style over the next several decades, providing a traceable artistic progression to his style.

The center row of images included several vertical images at either end, the furthest left of which was *Cathedral Spires, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.165**). This privately owned print most closely resembles the one seen in the exhibition view bearing deep shadows and clear highlights, while most extant prints of this negative are much brighter, and many are faded. The next image *Outline of Cathedral Rock* (**fig. 10.66**) features very good tonality, proof of Watkins' mastery of exposure in which he captured a wide range of both the deep shadows and cloud detail. This image illustrates, along with many others, the effect of Watkins' new wide-angled landscape lens which he procured for the trip which according to Hambourg, "allowed distant objects to be approached more closely, broadened the pictorial scope, and entirely covered the negative with high-definition information."<sup>693</sup> This vastness of space, which appeared as a technical entrance in the 1865 images, was an alteration from those in 1861. As Hambourg continues: "Compared with the concisely composed 1861 views, these photographs stretch out horizontally; objects in them tilt away from

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<sup>693</sup> Nickel, Watkins, and Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins*, 11.

one another as the space between them distends, making everything more legible [...].” Watkins’ practice was evolving in both formal and technical ways, and the 1865 pictures which composed the majority of the collection exhibited at the Paris Exposition contained an enlarged sense of space. This vision of the space of the Far West was a part of the power which endured in representations of the frontier. The next image is not visible in Exposition photographs but was likely the c. 1865 vertical photograph, *Nevada Fall, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.187**) according to *Carleton Watkins: The Complete Mammoth Prints*, which states that the photograph was exhibited at the Paris Exposition.<sup>694</sup> The next image to the right was *Mirror Lake, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.167**). A detailed image which featured Watkins’ namesake mountain captured in crystal clear reflection; the full descriptive title was *Mount Watkins, Fully reflected in Mirror Lake, Yosemite*, and with it the photographers’ impact was already apparent during this 1865 trip. The vertical reflection of Mount Watkins, named after the photographer during the same year (1865) within the image serves as a meta self-portrait of sorts. The image of the Californian landscape was being shaped and selected by image-makers, none less than Watkins himself, the only photographer with a mountain yet named for him. Watkins’ subjective view was shaping the image of California with the creation of his images and the influence of his perspective is captured with Mount Watkins in *Mirror Lake, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.167**), wherein the mirror image of his namesake mountain was a reflection of Watkins, the man. The peak is a large mountain, but one of the least recognizable among the Valley’s features, and to fully appreciate the size of the monolith one must take specific trails and viewpoints such as from the summit of Half Dome, or from Tenaya Canyon. This subtlety of presence, but eternal stature of the mountain represents Carleton Watkins and the immeasurable imprint he left on the history of the West and Yosemite. As Gardner’s portraits of other American icons were exhibited just across the gallery in the *Exposition Universelle*, Watkins was exhibiting his own gallery of portraits, except his subjects were much more figurative than those of Alexander Gardner. The Grizzly Giant, El Capitan, Yosemite Falls, Mount Watkins and Watkins himself were the subjects he chose to

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<sup>694</sup> “Nationalism, the Need for History and the 19th Century Obsession with Classification, Is All Associated with Tourist Pho,” n.d., 109.

represent California, but these ended up overshadowing the men and buildings of Washington and came to represent the U.S. more generally at the *Exposition*.

The next image began a grouping of horizontal images, the first one an 1865 negative *The Royal Arches, Close View from the Foot, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.168**). Advancing to the right the images can be identified as *Yosemite Valley from Mariposa Trail at Inspiration Point* (**fig. 10.169**); *North Dome, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.170**); *The Three Brothers, 4480 ft., Yosemite* (**fig. 10.171**); *The Domes, Close View, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.172**). The most expansive and valuable resource concerning Watkins' mammoth photographs is *The Complete Mammoth Photographs*, an incredible resource that includes several errors concerning Watkins' presence at the Exposition. The book claims that it was Watkins' 1861 Sentinel Rock mammoth print that was in Paris, but Exposition photographs clarify that it was the 1865-1866 Sentinel Rock image. The book fails to acknowledge that the photographs of *Up Yosemite Valley, El Capitan*, (**fig. 10.184**) and [*Down the Valley*] (**fig. 10.185**) were exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1867.<sup>695</sup> The book also incorrectly states that Watkins won a gold medal at the Exposition of 1867, when in fact he won a bronze.<sup>696</sup> The book goes on to declare that Watkins' images exhibited at the Exposition were created as works for hire for Houseworth and exhibited by the firm, when this is also known to be false, as seen by Exposition application documents and by the Exposition photographs which confirm that Watkins had his own separate display from the Lawrence & Houseworth firm.<sup>697</sup>

The second row continues with five vertical frames including *El Capitan, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.54**); *Bridalveil Fall, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.174**); *Lower Yosemite Falls* (**fig. 10.175**); *Upper Yosemite Falls* (**fig. 10.176**); and *The Sentinel, Yosemite* (**fig. 10.177**). The bottom row, from the left includes all horizontal images, the first of which *Piwyac, the Vernal Fall, Yosemite, 300 feet*, (**fig. 10.178**) was from a negative produced on Watkins' initial 1861 trip to Yosemite. The next image was *Half Dome, best close view, Yosemite*, (**fig. 10.179**) with the following image not visible or known. The

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<sup>695</sup> Carleton E. Watkins, Weston J. Naef, and Christine Hult-Lewis, *Carleton Watkins: The Complete Mammoth Photographs* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 85.

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid.*



following frame shows *The Domes from Sentinel Dome*, (**fig. 10.180**) a rarer print which looks down over Half Dome from the high viewpoint of the Sentinel. The next print was from another 1861 negative *El Capitan, Yosemite Valley*, (**fig. 10.53**) exhibiting the softer contours and more ethereal quality of the 1861 series. Watkins distilled the Valley into a graduated tonality of three levels of tone, illustrating what Hambourg has described as an “art of modulation” providing this controlled clarity for the first time in American photography.<sup>698</sup> The following image, *Three Brothers, North Dome, Sentinel, Yosemite Valley, California, 1865* (**fig. 10.181**) also titled on other prints of the same negative as *Up Yosemite Valley from the Foot of El Capitan*. Despite its dome-topped shape, usually considered a signifier of an 1861 image, this negative has been dated to the c. 1865 trip, and differs slightly from the dome shape of 1861 prints.

The next photograph was positioned center of the bottom row, at a height close to eye-level for most and endures as one of Watkins’ most well-known captures, *Best General View Yosemite Valley* (**fig. 10.183**) was taken from a location which was called “The Stand-point of Silence” as dubbed by the travelers’ account in *Hutchings California Magazine* during their 1859 expedition. Peter Palmquist has suggested that this was the same location along the trail from the town of Mariposa which would come to be known as Inspiration Point, now called Old Inspiration Point and just to the left of present-day Stanford Point. Watkins photographed a map (**fig. 10.182**) which includes the location of the Mariposa trail and on which the author has marked the location of Inspiration Point. This is clarified because this viewpoint is no longer a marked or known location, but merely a loosely defined position found by the author by hiking up from what is now the popular viewpoint in this area known as “Tunnel View,” an easily accessed overlook along the road. This general location was the first point from which the Valley could be observed by those travelling on the Mariposa trail and was previously captured in a photograph by C.L. Weed (**fig. 10.10**). The following horizontal print *Cathedral Rock, Yosemite Valley, Calif.* (**fig. 10.186**) was captured on Watkins’ ca. 1865 trip and was taken looking south-southeast from El Capitan meadow.

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<sup>698</sup> Nickel, Watkins, and Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins*, 15.

Watkins experimented with many vantage points looking up the Valley, and his 1861 capture *Up Yosemite Valley*, (**fig. 10.184**), resulted in the bright sky tones which can be seen in many of the 1861 series. The composition represents a complete distillation of the scene into a symbolic gateway form. The modulation of forms and tones that Watkins carved from the chaos of the landscape on this initial trip would not be repeated as his technical acuity and style developed, but his attention to the purity of forms was established.

The final Watkins image (**fig. 10.185**) was *View down Yosemite Valley from Ferry Bend*, otherwise titled [*Down the Valley*] from 1865-1866. Like many of these scenes, including this photograph, Watkins would return to the Yosemite Valley for decades to come and repeatedly place his mammoth-plate camera in the same or similar positions, attempting to improve upon his earlier photographs, and rarely succeeding. The photographs were never the same, always expressing completely different moods depending on the slight changes in light, composition, or weather. These dramatic differences in the pictures, taken by the same person with the same camera, signify the vulnerable and transitory reality behind the creation of the photographs. This transitory element was not just within the ephemeral conditions present before Watkins' camera, but within his sensibility to the subject and to his perceived audience. As Maria Morris Hambourg states: "The differences between the three periods of Yosemite photographs demonstrate how permeable was Watkins's art to the prevailing atmosphere of his feelings."<sup>699</sup> His early work, exhibited at the Exposition of 1867 embodied the elements of novelty, wonder and surprise that Hambourg affirms were lacking in his later images as he came to approach his projects differently as a result of the shifting reception of his work and the commercial and stylistic demands of the then clichéd Yosemite scenes. Watkins exhibited in several known international exhibitions during his life, but in few cases is it known which surviving prints he exhibited.<sup>700</sup> The 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris, and the knowledge that we have about it is truly unique since it was the only international

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<sup>699</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>700</sup> Watkins, Naef, and Hult-Lewis, *Carleton Watkins*, xxii.

exhibition in which Watkins exhibited of which we have visual documentation.<sup>701</sup> It is also stated that there is visual documentation for only four exhibitions that were open to the public in which Watkins was represented, the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle and the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute industrial fairs of 1868, 1869, and 1889. As such, the only visual record of Watkins' public exhibitions was as a result of the organizational element of the World's Fairs and trade fairs of the period.

The contribution of Carleton Watkins to the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 was by far the most visible of the California exhibit. Surpassing the context of California, and exhibited separately from other California items, the images came to represent an enduring illustration of American expansion. The photographs established the iconic level of Yosemite and Mariposa's natural features, which would eventually develop into the sacred concept of "wilderness" that embodied not only California, but the idea of the American West.

### **10.13. California as the West**

The representation of California at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 was an expressive moment. The products and images which were chosen to represent the state were a highly curated affair, representative of the trade and resources of California at the time. The dichotomy between the photographs of Edenic nature and the agricultural and extraction industries were indicative of a modern interpretation of the region's potential. The modern idea of the West was being created in venues like the trade fairs and universal exhibitions of the period, and it turned out that the idea of the Far West emerged around the outdoor space and an idea of adventure. The absence of Far Western studio portraits and interior images or objects was indicative of this emerging regional style. Agriculture, mining, and outdoor photography were not the only genres of

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<sup>701</sup> Ibid.

interest in the Far West of the 1860s, but they were the primary elements upon which the California commission founded its exhibit.

The third collection of visual work from California accepted by the California commission but lost on route to the Exposition, was a set of six albums by Edward Vischer, which also included representations of the same California landscape subjects. Described as “photographic albums,” this collection was likely an early version of his book *Vischer’s Pictorial of California*, published in 1870. The albums were composed, in part, of photographic reproductions of Vischer’s and other artists’ original artworks, many of which were created from Watkins’ and Muybridge’s photographs.<sup>702</sup> The final publication included an amalgamation of California images, images by photographers and firms from San Francisco including Watkins, Lawrence & Houseworth, and Bradley & Rulofson. Some of the images were taken after the Exposition in 1867 and would not have been part of the albums that Vischer and the California commission intended for the Paris fair, such as the Watkins photograph of a gold nugget exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1867 (**fig. 10.49**) and the famous 1869 Andrew J. Russell photograph taken at the meeting of the transcontinental railroad (**fig. 10.50**), published in Vischer’s book. Many of the pictures, though, were likely the content of those lost six albums that were intended for the Exposition.

The Vischer albums resembled the Exposition in their encyclopedic style. The artwork of Edward Vischer was, I speculate, included in those albums alongside photographs and drawings that ended up in his 1870 volume, such as the photograph of Pioneer Officers of the Russian extension of the Western Union Telegraph company (**fig. 10.51**), photographed in their “native and Russian” winter travelling suits. The drawings and photographs, including Vischer’s stormy marine painting (**fig. 10.52**), would have been promoted within the volumes, not for the appreciation of their artistic or photographic mastery, but as an ensemble source of visual information to promote California. They did not make it to the Exposition, but if they had, they would have served as a source of a California iconography which includes the religious, geographic, and topographic features that were

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<sup>702</sup> Edward Vischer, “*Vischer’s*” *Pictorial of California: Landscape, Trees and Forest Scenes, Grand Features of Californian Scenery, Life, Traffic and Customs* (Winterburn, 1870), 6.

particular to California, and were expressed in the volumes' engravings, artworks, photographs, and maps. Vischer was most known for his large production of pencil sketches made throughout the 1860s and 1870s, which focused primarily on the ruins of the Spanish missions, the Washoe mining region, along with landscapes of and scenes of California life. The acceptance of Vischer's albums as a part of the California display strongly support the idea of an intention to promote a visual representation of California, rather than including a varied selection of image makers working within the California market. All images that would be accepted by the commission were focused on creating a geographical aesthetic of California.

Landscape and nature were the subjects around which a modern focus was established and around which the American California image would be based. The focus on the land as an artistic subject was not new, but the eventual progression of the realist portrayal of California landscape into an idea of protection and conservation certainly was. This idea was invoked by the photographic representation of California's natural features and was indicative of a political and cultural attitude stemming from the Californian concept of the landscape. As Rosalind Krauss has stated "this constitution of the work of art as a representation of its own space of exhibition is in fact what we know as the history of modernism."<sup>703</sup> This analysis of the California exhibition relies on a separation of the photographs from a purely aesthetic discourse all the while acknowledging the powerful role that they inhabited as elements of an emerging mass visual culture. The interest is less to illuminate the specific elements which contrast the superiority between photographers, but more to see the experimental way in which the exhibition space of the Exposition Universelle provided the canvas on which a specific cultural expression of the Far West appeared. At their creation some photographs were intended for technical use while others were meant to stand alone as works of art, but the intention behind the images themselves must be separated from their influence at the Exposition Universelle. The perspective which appeared on the walls, cabinets, and floors of the Exposition in Paris was the combination of many different Californian interests, and the picking and

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<sup>703</sup> Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," *Art Journal* 42, no. 4 (1982): 313.

choosing of which perspectives to combine was made on both a regional and national level. The juxtaposition of images of natural scenes beside giant silver nuggets, just beyond the pianos of Steinway was less ironic than it was calculated. The modernization of 19<sup>th</sup>-century vision was everyday taking place, and photographs were players alongside avant-garde art on the same distinct social surface.<sup>704</sup>

Flying over the Western U.S. today permits one to see the expanse of wild, uninhabited and uncountable dramatic features in the middle of a vast landscape. The cultural construction of the Far Western landscape was based, at its outset, on a few specific locations by a few motivated individuals. This occurred for the first time in the 1860s, and this perspective was exhibited within the contextual modern exhibition space of the universal exposition. The photographic prints which were exhibited were visual elements, just as the wooden samples and products, the metalliferous treasures, and the agricultural goods which were compiled. The Exposition Universelle was an ephemeral exhibition in which these elements must be considered in isolation as visual components of a constructed cultural image separate from their intrinsic value. This image established the appeal of the Far West as a culture that was taking place outdoors, and that was built on the materials and experience with the land. The modern vision in the West was this spirit more than any figures or features, and this realist illustration of the outdoor experience would continue to be expressed in the government-sponsored work of the United States Geological Survey which would appear internationally in universal expositions for decades to come. In the context of the Exposition Palace everything became a visual object, and within this necessity of a discourse between object and viewer the commissioners' interests can be found. The Eastern U.S. depended on the visibility of created and engineered products, but the West depended only on the understanding that the Far Western space was distinctive, and within that singularity the entirety of ideal American hopes and values would be found for a century to come.

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<sup>704</sup> Nickel, Watkins, and Hambourg, *Carleton Watkins*, 22.

The evolution of the visual image of California over the centuries was indicative of the medium and the methods of communication. The exhibition space of the universal expositions of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were events in which commercial and cultural interests were exchanged in the same marketplace of ideas. The modern viewer had to be culturally equipped to resonate with the photographic perspective of the photographer.<sup>705</sup> The image of California progressed radically from the sketches published in French explorers' journals. The representation of the California that was presented in Paris in 1867 was illustrative of the industrial and cultural fair in which it was found. The Exposition Universelle was fertile ground for the modernization of vision, the modernized image of California was not created there, but it provided a cultural space in which images and objects found their audience.

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<sup>705</sup> Ibid., 21.

## **Part 5. The Far West after 1867**



## Chapter 11

### 11.1 An “American landscape”: The West after 1867, USGS, Buffalo Bill, Westerns

The Exposition Universelle of 1867 marked a moment of transition within American culture. Emerging from the horrors of the Civil War, the nation was entering an era in which Western promise would serve as a visual salve on the division of the country. 1867 marked a mid-point between the political turmoil of the Civil War schism and the geographical union of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. While the Civil War was still in full force, Congress was approving the protection of Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove. It was already a haven for the spiritual turmoil of the East, and the sought-after model of a quintessential “American landscape.”<sup>706</sup> The years following the Civil War unearthed inspiration in this Western landscape and the imperial promise of Manifest Destiny, beginning with this moment around 1867. On an administrative level this played out in the visual realm, as François Brunet described the years immediately following the Civil War: “[It] was above all the federal government’s campaign of exploration, an old enterprise to which Congress gives new life at this time, that would define the collective consciousness and image of this idealized West.”<sup>707</sup> The government-sponsored promotion of this landscape aesthetic found a large audience at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris. While the photographs exhibited in the Exposition were not part of government work, they were curated and displayed on behalf of the U.S. Commission. Separately, the U.S. Government sponsored a campaign of geological surveys of the American West beginning around 1867. These surveys included photographers employing collodion methods, allowing for reproducible photographs of even more of the Far Western landscape than was on display in Paris of 1867. This period of production by the United States Geological Survey photographers is what Brunet has called “photographic policies of American Exploration.”<sup>708</sup> A precursor to the era of survey photography, the popularity of Western landscape images and materials, along with the concerted

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<sup>706</sup> Brunet et al., *Images of the West*, 15; Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 188–96, 570–75.

<sup>707</sup> Brunet et al., *Images of the West*, 12.

<sup>708</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

exhibition of the American West at the Paris Exposition Universelle, correlated on some level with the U.S. Government's revival of its Western explorations.

This post-Civil War era of Western exploration by the United States federal government has been distinguished from the earlier phase of expeditions by Martha Sandweiss.<sup>709</sup> The initial phase of federal expeditions in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including those by Lewis and Clark, Benjamin Bonneville, Joseph R. Walker, Frederick W. Lander and John C. Frémont, were part of a process of charting and exploring. Lander's 1859 Survey included Albert Bierstadt who painted *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* upon returning to New York, a work idealizing the romantic West and promise of the frontier destined to be claimed by white settlers, exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. The primary focus of those trips was to find a navigable route across the continent, eventually for rail transportation. In the era following the Civil War and beginning around 1867, the government surveys were more comprehensively built on established geographical knowledge and focused on the surveying and cataloguing of the West's resources. Rather than searching for paths west, as Sandweiss explains, these surveys were instrumental in showing Americans "how they might inhabit and *use* [sic] the western landscape."<sup>710</sup> By the 1870s, photography had become an instrumental element of the Western Surveys, with Ferdinand V. Hayden testifying to a congressional committee in 1874 that they had found the Survey photographs to be:

Most essential in the preparation of our geological reports and maps, and we have also found them to be very attractive to the public. [...] We all know that it is through the eye that we acquire most of our knowledge, and these pictures help the eye very much, giving, as they do, clearer conceptions of mountain forms than pages of description could do.<sup>711</sup>

Photography had become as essential an element of the surveys' production of knowledge as the geological, topographical, or biological observations that they produced. Sandweiss argues that the story produced by the survey photographers was one that affirmed the developed and fictitious

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<sup>709</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 180.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid.

<sup>711</sup> F.V. Hayden, "Statement to the Committee on Public Lands, May 14, 1874," in *Notes Relating to the Surveys in the Western Territory of the United States* (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1874), 35; quoted in Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 181.

legend of 19<sup>th</sup> century western history, predominantly one that placed the white settler as protagonist in a rhetoric of Manifest Destiny that considered western expansion, necessary, inevitable, and unprecedented. These photographs would be exhibited at future World Fairs, notably in the 1873 Universal Exhibition of Vienna, within Group XVII. “Education, Teaching, and Instruction,” in an exhibit organized by F.V. Hayden as the “Geological Survey of the Territories” through the American Geographical Society. The photographs were not exhibited within the separate Group XVII for Graphic Arts and Photographs, but rather in a sub-group “Instruction in the More Limited Sense.—Government Departments and Scientific Establishments” of the group dedicated primarily to governmental and educational documents.<sup>712</sup> From the outset the photographs were cast in a scientific role, but as Hayden testified, he knew they were “attractive to the public.”<sup>713</sup> Photography of the Western lands had entered a new phase with the federally sponsored surveys.

The U.S. Geological Surveys produced a massive output of photographs which, by the 1870s were arriving in Europe in greater numbers. Reproduced in the illustrated press, appearing at the 1873 Vienna Exhibition, and in 1875 on the occasion of the International Congress of Geographical Sciences, initial donations to the photographic collection by the government of the United States began what later formed the core of the photo archive of the French Société de Géographie. This collection would grow through at least 1889, during which time gifts by the U.S. Geological Survey, Élisée Reclus, and Société Secretary James Jackson combined to form a vast trove of handmade albums, large prints, and more.<sup>714</sup> The photographs of the USGS were created by a group of different photographers, on separate surveys, influenced by a number of personalities, interests, and ideas. In the case of the Survey led by Clarence King, photographer Timothy O’Sullivan was directed to photograph geological evidence that supported the theory of “catastrophism,” in which the earth’s formation had been caused by periods of violent and sudden upheavals, parting from the more widely accepted geologic theory of uniformitarianism. This

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<sup>712</sup> United States. Commissioners to the International Exhibition held at Vienna, 1873, *Vienna Universal Exhibition, 1873. Official Catalogue of the American Department*, ed. Eben Brewer (London: J.M. Johnson & Sons, 1873), 114.

<sup>713</sup> Hayden, “Statement to the Committee on Public Lands, May 14, 1874,” 35.

<sup>714</sup> Brunet et al., *Images of the West*, 124.

theory, with its anti-Darwinism and deeply socio-religious implications, found its way into not only the writings of King, O’Sullivan, and accompanying geologist S.F. Emmons, but also shaped many of the photographic images from the 1867-1868 Survey, as well as William Bell’s photographs from the 1872-1873 Wheeler Survey, which also included Emmons. Critics have examined this extensive interaction between science and its creative offspring, the art of photography, and in this instance the resulting aesthetic effect of catastrophism on the work of early Western photographers.<sup>715</sup> This practice resulted in an aesthetic of violence and conflict, turning the Western landscape into a “series of awesome arenas, settings for spectacular undertakings, possibly for ultimate conflicts,” according to François Brunet.<sup>716</sup> The Survey photographers and scientists, considered by Sandweiss as more civilian than the gentlemen-soldiers of earlier expeditions, travelled out past the Mississippi to tell a specific story and create many intentional narratives.<sup>717</sup> Their motives were considered scientific but they were anything but objective. The photographs continued the imperial narrative of discovery, and established the aesthetic of the West as a place for future events to unfold. The views and monuments were named after white men, and the photographs portrayed a dramatic and conflictual narrative.

Not all images inspired the ideas of battle and conflict through their violent natural phenomena. Other scenes were of the sublime and inviting nature, the dwellings of the Canyon de Chelly, the Hopi and Zuni pueblos, and the majesty of the Grand Canyon to name a few, were obvious for their tourist appeal.<sup>718</sup> The imperial motives behind the images imposed a perspective of domination on the views, a narrative in which Trachtenberg suggests “there are no views without names—no nature except what can be seen through the lenses of culture.”<sup>719</sup>

In the proximate future, this conflict would be co-opted by the Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and other touring wild west shows, popularizing the narrative of frontier conflict and “Indian Wars.”

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<sup>715</sup> Naef and Wood, *Era of Exploration*; Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs*.

<sup>716</sup> Brunet et al., *Images of the West*, 36.

<sup>717</sup> Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 180.

<sup>718</sup> Brunet et al., *Images of the West*, 36.

<sup>719</sup> Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs*, 162.

These shows visualized the ideological messages of Western dime novels, capitalizing on the public's fascination with the Far West and creating a mass cultural product. The reason that wild west shows, dime novels, and vaudeville were able to disseminate subtle or even overt ideological messages of white supremacy and American progress, according to Rydell and Kroes, was the cumulative effect of a growing cultural principle that "seeing is believing."<sup>720</sup> The growth of this mass culture, evidenced by the Buffalo Bill paradigm, was built on the collective consciousness and fascination with the Western myth as it had been established by photography, paintings, and literature. The visuality of the live performance was more directly an offspring of the setting of the West established by photographs in America and in Europe.

The "Set" of the Western had been established by the 1870s, a visual aesthetic created by many forms, but most directly popularized and disseminated via photography. This was the setting in which wild west shows, dime novels, and the Western films would find their inspiration and their success. The genres capitalized on the established aesthetic of the Western landscape, as its wide-open and vast grandeur provided an endless landscape for dramatic potential.<sup>721</sup> This idea was also illustrated in a 2017 Terra Foundation-supported exhibition co-organized by the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts and the Denver Art Museum entitled "The Western: An Epic in Art and Film." The exhibition was formed around a structure which examined the elements that composed the cinematic genre of the Western: set, characters, and story, etc. The "Set" was established by the curators as a collection of photographs and paintings. Surrounding a Bierstadt painting of emigrants crossing the frontier within the picture collection that illustrated the visual foundation of the Western aesthetic were two photographs by Carleton Watkins captured in 1865, one of which was exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. Stereographs and prints by Survey photographers' William Bell and Timothy O'Sullivan also illustrated the establishment of the Western "set" created by the photographs of the era within the display. The photographs by Watkins were noted generally to have served as points of reference and inspiration for filmmakers such as

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<sup>720</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922*, 38.

<sup>721</sup> Jones, *The Dime Novel Western*, 128.

Raoul Walsh, with a corresponding clip from his film *The Big Trail* (1930) shown nearby. The exhibition described the post-Civil War era and the existential search for Western promise as visually established during years surrounding 1867.

The photographs of the U.S. Geological Survey departed from the essence of those exhibited by the photographers at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. The Survey images took on the onus of political dynamism, becoming images of exploration but also proof of appropriation. This phase of “photographic policy” took the aesthetic established by the individual initiative of local Western photographers, and created the scene for future American prosperity, but also future conflict. The landscape elements established in the photographs and paintings of the period, would begin to form the tropes of the Western aesthetic, popularized in live shows and films over the next century. While no causal link can be made to the Exposition Universelle in Paris, the trans-Atlantic exchange, circulation of images and the pursuit of knowledge surrounding the American Far West exploded in Europe following 1867. Serving as the “Set” and participating in the creation of a Western visual appeal for mass cultural spectacles to come, the photographs and the objects of the Western displays at the Exposition Universelle of 1867 marked the beginning of a period in which the American image shifted toward a more popular and more appealing association than the former “American images” and their negatively connoted P.T. Barnum-style clichés.

## **11.2 An American modernity: from written culture to a visual culture**

Few moments in history have provided such a comprehensive collection of cultures and genres in one physical location. The palace design provided for a context in which the visitor would inevitably experience and learn about more than the subjects or displays that had initially brought them there. The visitors encountered messages, images, smells, and sounds that were new, informative, and enlightening. From the perspective of the organizers and exhibitors, there was an opportunity to educate with knowledge, indoctrinate with values, or sell with expertise. From the perspective of the visiting public, the Exposition provided a world of amusement, fascination, and

abundance. The visual nature of the Exposition Universelle resulted in its appeal as a site of entertainment. Hans Christian Andersen adapted the revolutionary appeal of the Exposition Universelle of 1867 for the participating visitors into a fantastical work of fairy tale in his 1868 story *The Dryad*:

We are going to Paris to see the Exposition: Now, we're there! It was a speedy journey, done completely without witchcraft – we went by steam, in a ship and on a railroad. Our time is indeed a time of fairy tales. [...] A new wonder of the world drew the people to Paris. What was this new world wonder? "A gorgeous flower of art and industry," people said, "has sprung up on the barren sands of the Champ de Mars. It's a gigantic sunflower, and from its leaves you can study geography or statistics, or become as wise as a councilman, or be inspired by art and poetry, or learn about the products and greatness of every country. "It's a fairy-tale flower," others said, "a colored lotus, spreading its green leaves like a velvet carpet, the leaves that shot up in the early spring. Summer will see it in its greatest glory, and the storms of autumn will blow it away, leaving neither leaves nor roots." [...] There was an endless array of halls in marble and many colors. The giant with bloodless veins moved his steel and iron limbs there in the great circular hall. Works of art in metal, in stone, in tapestry, loudly proclaimed the powerful genius that labored in all the lands of the world. There were picture gallery and flower show. [...] There was the royal palace of Egypt, and a caravanserai from the desert. The Bedouin from the land of the hot sun galloped past; and there were the Russian stables, with beautiful fiery horses from the steppes. Over there was the small thatched cottage of a Danish peasant, with Dannebrog, the flag of Denmark, next to Gustavus Vasa's beautifully carved wooden cottage from Dalarne. American log cabins, English cottages, French pavilions, mosques, churches, and theaters were all spread about in a wonderful manner. And in the middle of all this was the fresh green turf, with clear running water, flowering shrubs, rare trees, and glass houses where one might imagine oneself in a tropical forest. Complete rose gardens, brought from Damascus, bloomed in glory under glass roofs. What colors and fragrance! Artificial grottoes contained specimens of various fishes in fresh- and salt-water ponds - it was like standing at the bottom of the ocean there among the fishes and polyps. [...] Word spread that all these things were now being exhibited on the Champ de Mars, and an immense crowd of human beings crawled all over this richly decked feast table like a swarm of ants on a journey. [...] All this has happened and been experienced. We ourselves have seen it, at the Paris Exposition in 1867, in our time, the great and wonderful time of fairy tales.<sup>722</sup>

For Andersen, the Exposition Universelle of 1867 became a fantastical setting inside his fairy tale, but this description provides sensorial and imaginative insight into the public's experience at the fair. The event provided an immersive and utopian experience for the visitor which spoke to the intellect as well as need for dreams, beauty, and wonder, all while diminishing national and local borders.<sup>723</sup> The Exposition provided an early example of the belief that combining amusement and education could be used to attract and convince a large population.

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<sup>722</sup> Hans Christian Andersen, *The Dryad*, trans. Jean Hersholt, 1868.

<sup>723</sup> Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight*, 17.

This new and popular didactic method was effective because of an almost exclusive transfer of information by visual methods. According to Wesemael, the universal exhibitions “reflected the switch from a book culture to an image culture in the Western world.”<sup>724</sup> For the American West, which was entering a phase of unprecedented development and population, the parallel popularization of universal exhibitions and photography played a powerful and omnipresent role. What resulted in Paris of 1867 was an emergence of “visual and material cultures of modernity,” to borrow Brunet’s phrase. These were not cultures confined to nations, and for that reason the international exhibitions came to form a cradle for these expanding modern concepts. A primary modern concept that showed its face at the Exposition was a shift toward a more visual world of communication. Brunet used the working title “the birth of an American Modernity,” to describe the nation’s presence at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. This American modernity then, occurred at the intersection of two major movements, and many minor ones. The two major factors were, it seems, a period of intense cultural enthusiasm surrounding Western expansion following the Civil War and an emerging visual culture on an international level. The visual impression that was created by the American West in this Paris Exposition Universelle was the first international display of its kind. While it is not the only factor that contributed to the emergence of what Brunet calls an American modernity, this was one moment when the Western American aesthetic revealed its visual forms. These visual forms came to embody the closest definition of an enduring American aesthetic and ideal. The influence and modern genre of landscape became developed as well in the period of this exhibition. With a Western display that offered arguments for and against exploitation of the landscape, the dualities of modern progress were on display. Watkins’ images that were hung in the walls of the Exposition Palace had already played a direct role in the conservation and idea of state and national parks.<sup>725</sup> The concept of landscape was engaged in a fluid but dynamic engagement,

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<sup>724</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>725</sup> Kate Nearpass Ogden, “Sublime Vistas and Scenic Backdrops: Nineteenth-Century Painters and Photographers at Yosemite,” *California History* 69, no. 2 (1990): 139.



existing in a moment of complexity that would become diminished as the Western landscape became a simplified and popular trope.

## Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the representation of the American Far West within the context of the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. The Western display brought together photography, natural specimens, and material culture in a way that shifted the aesthetic identity of the American West for the French and European public. Following the close of the American Civil War, the Paris Exposition provided a valuable opportunity for the U.S. organizers to renovate the American image for French and international viewers. Existing research on the U.S. presence at the 1867 Exposition has focused on the so-called “failure” of the American artists. This study revealed that the novel aesthetic that was expected by Europeans, and which American artists failed to provide, was found instead within the display of Far Western photographs. The displays of the Western territories and states contributed to the U.S. effort in pivoting from what was primarily a literary and abstract understanding of the American West by employing material objects and photographs to create a more concrete aesthetic. The organizers chose not to focus on the wilderness and the Native people, promoting instead the Western lands and resources. This effort pushed geographical imageries of the American Far West into greater visibility, part of a longer trend that would emerge in the year following the 1867 Exposition Universelle with the United States Geological Survey photographs. This appearance of Western images at the Exposition was introducing a more positive impression of what had been disparagingly referred to as “American images,” in France.<sup>726</sup> Following the conclusion of the fair the Western photographs were reprinted as engraved drawings in French travel publications, and circulated as stereoscopic cards, extending their influence beyond the time and space of the Exposition.

The first part of this dissertation explored the political ideas and organization from the French and U.S. organizers. This contrast allowed for the international relationship to be explored via a specific moment in time, during an event of heightened visibility, engagement, and

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<sup>726</sup> Hamon, “Images à Lire et Images à Voir: ‘images Américaines’ et Crise de l’image Au XIXe Siècle (1850-1880),” 235–48.

documentation. The U.S. was in a state of political turmoil internally, and yet the correspondence and organizational effort revealed how crucial it was to make an appealing impression on the world stage. This era of Universal Expositions delivered a world-view that was curated and structured by a small elite, and which offered with its attractions of wonder and fascination, an entertaining and convincing message for the middle and lower classes. This message convinced and persuaded a conservative and expanding middle class of the inevitable changes taking place in the realms of technology and progress. The Exposition of 1867 provided a panoramic view of the world at the time, where high-brow and low-brow intermingled, and undercurrents of modernity emerged. This study attempted to look at a very thin wedge of the Palace layout, and examine the pre- and post-Exposition historical context of the American section's influence.

The Exposition offered photographic abundance in many realms. The study of the French photographic coverage of the Exposition revealed a narrow point of view, and cemented how incomplete that method of documentation proved to be in these nationally organized fairs. Yet the photographs served as valuable evidence of some aspects of the Exposition. Photographic coverage was sometimes the only record of displays, assisting as valuable primary sources to reveal evidence not found in exhibitor applications, diagrams, or textual references. The photographic presence at this Exposition and the visual messages that those photographs disseminated during and after the fair were certainly indicative of the larger cultural shift taking place, in which the universal exhibitions “reflected the switch from a book culture to an image culture in the Western world.”<sup>727</sup> This was certainly true of the American Far West. This period began a visual representation of the region which shifted from the cultural acceptance of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, and replaced that imaginary and literary West with a visual image. The exhibition of landscapes and geographical imagery by the Western states and territories, despite the more abundant portrait production in most areas, resulted in a visual image of the West that focused on its landscapes and geographical appeal.

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<sup>727</sup> Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight*, 18.

The examination of the American Midwest at the Exposition revealed a material appeal which evoked a midpoint between the cultured American Northeast and the scarcely inhabited Far Western region. The silver “America” locomotive, agricultural machines, and pre-fabricated housing were some of the most prominent objects, and elicited considerable interest as publications of the time revealed. The locomotive was promoted in articles, photographs and engravings, with descriptions of its technical features eliciting mental images of wide-open spaces and adventurous journeys to the new lands of the West. The McCormick reaper and pre-fab farmer’s cabins visually embodied the hard work and potential prosperity that those Western lands offered.

The next section explored the Colorado exhibition and how the organization of commissioner J.P. Whitney resulted in a highly visible and popular display, utilizing minerals, maps, and photographs to present a particular image of the struggling Territory. Taking up a strategic corner at the center of the U.S. section, it seems that Whitney, with his lavish display and accompanying photographs, was attempting to align the material appeal of the West, visually and categorically, with the more artistic displays that occupied the center of the French Exposition. The display of otherwise little-known photographer George Wakely’s photographs was comprised of landscape and geographical photographs, public images that communicated Colorado life and culture, leaving behind private portraits of miners and figures. This was rare at the Exposition Universelle, where most areas brought an assortment of the best work, and where portrait photographs were the most abundant. The study of Wakely’s mining and landscape photographs revealed a domestication and idealization of the mines and mining towns, an intimate perspective that was published in France during the following years. His landscapes of the Garden of the Gods presented imperialist tropes of a gateway to the West, while his Monument Creek images provided evidence of how now-destroyed features provided a place for nostalgia and imagination. The Colorado exhibit foreshadowed the use and popularity of landscape photographs to come, while introducing Colorado to Europeans as beautiful place with a promise of prosperity.

The California study first laid out the literary and visual idea of the place that had been evolving over the previous decades in Europe. Though still isolated from the East until the

transcontinental rail connection in 1869, the objects sent by California formed the largest and most varied collection from the West. California had already come to embody a specific place in the mind, and the material and photographic display at the Exposition Universelle brought this to a new level. By way of Carleton Watkins' photo installation and the work of Charles L. Weed published by Lawrence & Houseworth, the landscapes and geographical features of the region came to wave in a California image based on its dramatic nature. By studying both the large format images and the abundant stereographs, it was possible to identify stylistic and compositional divergence between the formats. The portable stereoscopic camera prompted C.L. Weed to experiment with the more abstract composition while in the midst of the giant redwoods of the Calaveras grove. The study exposed further value of stereographs in stylistic evolution and documentary practice. Carleton Watkins' mammoth-plate prints of Yosemite views and giant Sequoias were prominently displayed on a wall opposite from the Washington, D.C. buildings and portraits by Alexander Gardner. The juxtaposed icons, Western landscapes versus Eastern establishment, revealed a deeply dichotomous image of the East and West Coasts. Leaving the portraits of San Francisco behind, the California display, at the request of Commissioner Blake, exhibited the magnificent views of California nature. The decision created an image of California that only sparsely pictured people, creating an image of a largely uninhabited, natural space of wonder.

The photographs of Far Western landscapes exhibited in Paris introduced to European audiences a new aesthetics of the West, which extended to the whole of the American republic.<sup>728</sup> While the romantic fascination with the native people would return in coming decades, popularized in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and in many forms thereafter, the 1867 moment marked part of a transition toward a more material and geographical aesthetics of the American West. It's important to emphasize that this transition was more of a complexification than a revolution of perceptions, as there were many Wests offered to many audiences during and after the Exposition Universelle of 1867. It does appear that the more tangible portrayal of Western lands, orchestrated by Western

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<sup>728</sup> Brunet and Talley, "Exhibiting the West at the Paris Exposition of 1867: Towards a New American Aesthetic Identity?," 4.

American organizers did take over some of the space formerly relegated to more undefined ideas of a Romantic West. The Western displays introduced a material and geographical visuality in the imaginary place where, particularly for Europeans, had only previously existed an abstraction. Although one cannot draw a direct causative link to the Fair, the production of what came to be called geological photographs would increase greatly in the U.S. after 1867 under the aegis of the United States Geological Surveys of the West. The massive output of photographs produced by these USGS surveys—especially landscape views—would come to Europe in large amounts in the 1870s, being widely reproduced in the illustrated press and making repeated and remarked public appearances, particularly at the Vienna World’s Fair of 1873. As part of the evolution of the French and European view of America, the 1867 moment contributed to a shift toward a more aesthetically appealing reception to American images and culture. The Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 was, a seminal moment for Western American iconography, in establishing the geographical imagery as a fundamental aesthetic in the future of the American West. The display of these Western photographs and resources from so-called new lands, inaugurated a trend that pushed geographical imageries into greater visibility.

This study sought to interrogate the ways in which American exhibitors at the Paris Exposition tried to fashion their primarily economic and political motives in artistically-minded objects and images, particularly in the representation of the Far West. Such attempts to please, and perhaps transform the French imagination appear to have been especially prominent among exhibitors who promoted the “new” landscapes, along with the new riches of the trans-Mississippi West. Of course, none of these lands were new, except in the eyes of settlers and Europeans, and the presentation of these lands as “new” and conquerable contributed to the imperial nature of the Universal Exhibitions while promoting the conquest of Manifest Destiny. The visual component of the American Far West was not seen only via photography, but was also displayed by a symbolic collection of its valuable resources. The use of geographical images alongside industrial, agricultural, and mineral displays was a sign of their ability to link aesthetic and economic values. Images and objects from Western states and territories, particularly Colorado and California played

a significant role in shaping a new aesthetic identity that extended to the entire U.S. exhibition.<sup>729</sup>

This shift was the result of messages dispersed through diverse channels over a period of many years, and the visual display at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 served as one concentrated and consequential platform through which this aesthetic construction occurred.

The state of California already existed as a fantastical facet of the imagination, and up to this point that identity was almost exclusively built on a literary foundation. The display of gold nuggets, photographs of majestic Yosemite landscapes, and the agricultural evidence of prosperity, initiated a new level of power in the visual exhibition and mass cultural consciousness. This exhibition utilized educational and entertaining methods to form an idea that surpassed diversion and communicated layered messages of economic and aesthetic value. The photographs of quaint Colorado mining towns, with unique mountain landscapes and an opulent show of mineral wealth provided a powerful early impression of Colorado on European visitors. The reproduction of the exhibited images in French and American publications following the fair increased the dispersal of these messages about the American Far West. Individually these exhibits told their own regional stories, but together they laid an aesthetic foundation for the American West for years to come. Ushering in the first real visual identity of the American West, the Exposition Universelle represented the beginning of a new era of consciousness about America.

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<sup>729</sup> Ibid., 4.





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