A Daguerreotype of John Quincy Adams
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In 1937 the Metropolitan Museum acquired, by the gift of I. N. Phelps Stokes and the Hawes family, sixty-one daguerreotypes from the Boston gallery of Southworth & Hawes, which had been inherited by Dr. Edward S. Hawes, son of Josiah J. Hawes and nephew of Albert Sands Southworth.

Recent evidence indicates that one of the most striking and historically important daguerreotypes in the collection, a portrait of John Quincy Adams (Figure 1), was taken by Philip Haas in Washington, D.C., in 1843.

At the time the collection was given to the Museum it was assumed, quite understandably because of their provenance, that all sixty-one of the daguerreotypes were taken by Southworth or Hawes, and they were so described in a handsome catalogue of the Stokes-Hawes gift, with collotype reproductions of fifteen of the plates.1


FIGURE 1
The portrait of John Quincy Adams, the sixth President (1825–29), shows him in an apparently domestic environment, described in the catalogue as "Adams's home in Quincy (formerly Braintree), Massachusetts." The daguerreotype, a half-plate, is not dated, but obviously the sitting was during the last years of his life. He died in 1848.

As was the custom, the silver-coated plate bears, in the upper right corner, the hallmark of the manufacturer; only part appears, but it is clearly that of the Scovill Manufacturing Company, of Waterbury, Connecticut, one of America's leading makers of daguerreotype apparatus, plates, and other specialties. Under the style J. M. L. & W. H. Scovill, the firm began to manufacture daguerreotype plates in 1842; the name was changed to Scovill Manufacturing Company in 1850; presumably at that time the hallmark that appears on the Adams portrait was adopted.

If this assumption is correct, the plate itself cannot be the one that was exposed at the time of the sitting, which took place, obviously, prior to 1848. We can only conclude that the daguerreotype is a copy. The
daguerreotype process produced what may be, somewhat incorrectly, described as a direct positive. Like today’s Kodachrome slide, the material exposed in the camera itself is the end product. If copies are required, a picture of the original is taken by the same process. The copying of daguerreotypes was as common as the present-day duplication of color transparencies. Apprentices were assigned the task, which was a tedious one, as exposures with the copy camera were extremely long. Daguerreotypists offered to sell copies of their portraits of celebrities: Frederick DeBourg Richards of Philadelphia, for example, advertised in the professional Daguerreian Journal for August, 1851: “Thinking that perhaps Daguerreotypists in the country would like to have a copy of Jenny Lind, and as it is allowed by all that my picture is the best in America, I will sell copies at the following prices:—one sixth, $2; one-fourth, $4; one-half, $6.”

That Southworth & Hawes published daguerreotype copies of their own work is documented on a label on the back of the frame containing a portrait of Daniel Webster at Dartmouth College:

**PORTRAIT OF HON. DANIEL WEBSTER**
*Printed by Daguerreotype*
*BY SOUTHWORTH & HAWES,*
*BOSTON, .. 1852*

At least three other copies of this daguerreotype exist. Its authorship is documented by William Willard (1819–1904), who stated in an interview that he had taken it in the Boston gallery of Southworth & Hawes in 1852 for the purpose of making several paintings of the statesman, one of which belongs to the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The exchange of portraits of celebrities by daguerreotypists was a widespread custom, to judge from the number of identical copies bearing the names of different daguerreotypists.¹

There is yet another reason to identify the Metropolitan’s plate as a copy: the image is not reversed in respect to right and left. An original daguerreotype is a mirror image, unless an optical device is fitted over the lens—either a plane mirror at 45° to the axis of the lens or a 90° prism. Most sitters accepted the reversed image: after all, we know ourselves by what we see in a looking glass. Portraits of sitters wearing coats conveniently betray the mirror image: it is the custom for tailors to cut a man’s coat so that it buttons from right to left. Ad-

2. The daguerreotype is an image of whitish mercury amalgam on a mirrorlike surface of highly polished silver. When viewed so that a dark field is reflected, the image appears positive; when a bright field is reflected, the image appears negative.


4. Copies, identical or reversed, of two daguerreotypes in the Hawes-Stokes collection have thus far been located:
   - No. 5, Henry Clay
     A collodion copy negative from a daguerreotype attributed to Mathew B. Brady, Library of Congress.
     Reversed image, unsigned: Coll. A. Conger Goodyear.
   - Similar pose, probably made at the same sitting, signed on mount: Lawrence (Martin M. Lawrence, active in New York City). New-York Historical Society, New York.
   - No. 27, John Howard Payne
     Reversed image, signed on back of contemporary frame: Vannerson (J. Vannerson, active in Washington).

**FIGURE 4**
Portrait of John Quincy Adams. Lithograph “Taken from a Daguerreotype by P. Haas,” 1843. Library of Congress
ams's coat is thus shown in the Metropolitan's daguerreotype.

My attempts to locate the original of the daguerreotype having failed, in the first two editions of my book *The Daguerreotype in America* I cautiously captioned the reproduction of the portrait "From the gallery of Southworth & Hawes."

A few years ago, I acquired quite by chance a daguerreotype of a man named Joseph Ridgway (Figure 2), presumably the representative from Ohio in Congress from 1837 to 1843. He is sitting in the very same captain's chair in which John Quincy Adams sat (Figure 3). Every detail is identical, though in reverse; the Turkey carpet, the oil lamp, the mantelpiece. Most unusually, the name of the daguerreotypist appears on the paper mat: P. Haas, Washington City, 1843.

A reattribution of the Adams portrait to Philip Haas thus seemed likely. It became certain with evidence given by Marvin Sadik in his catalogue of the exhibition *Life Portraits of John Quincy Adams* held at the National Portrait Gallery in 1970. Haas was a lithographer as well as a daguerreotypist: he published in 1843 a lithograph of Adams inscribed "Taken from a Daguerreotype by P. Haas" (Figure 4). The former President is seated in the same captain's chair, with the same dedicated, puritanical facial expression, but in a slightly different pose, particularly of the hands. Sadik clinches the evidence by stating that Adams noted in his diary that he sat for his portrait in March, 1843, in Haas's gallery.

Of Philip Haas we know but little. He claimed that he learned of the daguerreotype process in Paris in 1839. About 1845 he made multiple exposures on a single plate with a movable plateholder. He is listed in New York City directories as a daguerreotypist in 1846, '48, and '50–'57. He exhibited a daguerreotype "of an allegorical figure of a family man reading the paper at home" in the New York Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1853.

Was he a member of the firm of Haas & Peale, who photographed Fort Sumter and other Civil War landmarks in 1863? Milton Kaplan so suggests in the *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, announcing the acquisition of 25 original negatives each with the names Haas & Peale scratched in the emulsion.

But the career—and especially the work—of the man who made one of the finest photographs of a President of the United States remains to be discovered.

9. He was a member of the New York State Daguerrean Association, a trade guild to protect prices, in 1851: *Daguerreian Journal*, 3 (1851) p. 58.