

# 1865 – Fashionable lady, Parramatta

## What we see in this image

This full-length portrait shows a fashionably-dressed young woman, aged in her mid-20s though her identity is unrecorded. Evidence of prolonged exposure to the sun (clearly seen in the tan line across the subject's brow) may indicate that she is a recently arrived immigrant or has travelled in to town from the interior of the colony. She is posed standing next to a leather-upholstered armchair, set on a geometrically-patterned floor cloth, in front of a photographer's backdrop, depicting a balcony scene with a grand column, decorative awning and coastal view stretching to the horizon behind her. The negative also captures part of the interior of the Parramatta studio of native-born photographer Henry William Burgin II, though much of this detail would have been cropped out of the final print.

The woman wears a plain, dark [silk] taffeta day dress which looks to be brand new, exhibiting all the latest fashionable features. The high-necked bodice is worn with a narrow, white collar above a plain corsage, with bands of ruched self-fabric trim forming a V-shape rising up from the round waist over to the sloping, dropped shoulder line, and epaulettes fitted at the upper arm above full 'bishop' sleeves gathered into a centre front seam and worn with narrow white cuffs. The full, bell-shaped skirt is pleated into the waist, above a pair of ornamental patch pockets, and has a moderately full flounce inserted above the hem, the seam trimmed with dark [velvet] flowers.

Her dark, centre-parted hair is covered by a 'spoon' bonnet. The bonnet's brim, rising vertically above her forehead in a spoon-shaped curve and narrowing to sit close to the ears, is filled with a bouquet of fabric flowers and slopes behind to a very small crown which is edged with a 'bavolet' flounce at its base at the back of the neck. The bonnet strings (or ribbons) are tied under her chin, the handsome ribbon streamers are left long and wide to show off their fashionable 'ombre' (shading).

Four significant facts seriously affected fashions of the 1860s and thereafter. Firstly the sewing machine had been invented, secondly synthetic dyes would soon make a wide array of more intense colours available, and thirdly – from this time and into the future – clothing trends would be increasingly led by couture design.

Fourthly, by 1867, the crinoline-domed skirt silhouette had developed a flattened front which began to show a dramatic leaning toward the back of the garment. By this time, a woman in middle class circles might buy a dress ready-made, or buy the bodice ready-made (which was more complicated to fit and construct) with a length of the same fabric to make the skirt herself. She, or a dressmaker, might also use one of the paper patterns distributed free by fashion magazines, such as *The World of Fashion*, from 1850. Bonnets also became shallower and set further back on the head at this time.

## **What we know about this image**

By the 1850s, Parramatta was the fifth largest town in New South Wales, vigorously promoting itself as an alternate shopping destination to Sydney and offering a wide range of

skilled tradespeople, goods and retail services. After the discovery of gold to the west of the Blue Mountains, the town lay at the crossroads of the colonial transport networks, and directly in the path of the frantic movement of people and merchandise between the coast and outlying mining and pastoral settlements.

Henry William Burgin II (1830-1914) was born in Parramatta, NSW, the eldest of three children of Henry William Burgin and Mary (née Gowen). By 1853, H.W. Burgin II was established as an 'ophthalmic optician' in at 183 Church Street North. He also operated a business as a jeweller, watch and clockmaker from the same Church Street premises, before taking up the photography in about 1860. Burgin married Grace E. Curtis at the Parramatta Presbyterian Church on 6th February 1851, and the couple had nine children, before Grace's death in 1868. Burgin then married Ann Sanday in 1870.

It was perhaps H.W. Burgin's interest in optics and mechanics that encouraged his part-time venture into the world of photography, later joined in the watchmaking and photographic business by one of his sons, Henry William Burgin III (1852-1887). The Burgins, father and his son, are believed to have worked as photographers in Parramatta from the early 1860s to the 1880s. The Burgin family lived above their Church Street premises and probably operated their photographic studio from behind the shopfront; as reported in the Sydney Mail, 'Mr. Henry Burgin, of Church-street, photographer suffered much, his gallery being destroyed' during a wild storm at Parramatta on 2 Jan 1872. (Terrific storm at Parramatta, Sydney Mail, 6 Jan 1872, p.19)

With no advertisements known to indicate the extent of their

photographic practice, two surviving collections of prints and negatives document the Burgins' output and record the array of poses and props they used to create the genteel portrait setting recorded in their suburban studio, marking their work as clearly as any photographer's stamp. The collection of wet-plate negatives (ON 58) and cdv portraits (PXA 1036) mainly by Burgin and held in the Mitchell Library, feature studio portraits and show people, many local Parramatta residents, either seated or standing beside furniture props. Different examples of the photographer's stamps of the Burgins (father and son) are also represented along with many images that do not bear a photographer's stamp but can also be determined as having originated from Burgin's studio by their backdrops and studio furniture.

Although photography occupied only part of the daily business of Henry Burgin II, he may well have been influenced by the work of itinerant photographers passing through Parramatta, such as Beaufoy Merlin. Burgin also appears to have continued using his old camera into the 1890s, long past his studio years, to record important local events.

## CARTE DE VISITE

In 1859 the Sydney press heralded the arrival of carte de visite photography in the colony, proclaiming: 'truly this is producing portraits for the million [sic].' Cartes de visite were small photographs, printed from a glass negative onto paper, and pasted onto a slightly larger piece of card. These photographs were cheap to produce and copies could be printed by the dozen from the same negative. Unlike their photographic predecessors, the daguerreotype and ambrotype, no glass was used in the final product, making cartes light and easy to post. For the first time in history, ordinary people could afford to have their portrait taken, and have copies made to

send to anyone living within reach by mail.

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**1865 – Fashionable lady, Parramatta**

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Download Image



Creator
Henry William Burgin II (1830-1914)
Inscription
none
Medium
photograph
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>

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## 1865 – Colonial Family Portrait

### What we see in this image

This watercolour portrait shows a colonial family, comprising an adult male and female with six children – three daughters and three sons, one holding a cricket bat – posed in a rural, pastoral setting. It is reminiscent of the type of informal

group portrait known as a 'conversation piece' which is characterised by the depiction of a number of family members and/or friends portrayed in the act of conversation or some other activity, either in a domestic or rural setting, very often posed outdoors.

This type of image is very rare in colonial art by the 1860s, as photography had largely undercut the market for formal painted portraiture except at the upper end of the market. The awkward composition of this watercolour suggests it may have been worked up from a series of individual photographic portraits. The family are all depicted wearing casual summer clothes. The youngest child, on the far left, can be determined to be a boy of about four to five years of age, as indicated by the side parting of his short brown hair. Following the practice of clothing children of both sexes in skirts until they were thoroughly toilet-trained, he wears a brown cloth dress with military-style epaulettes on the shoulder above long sleeves, trimmed with blue Russian braid in scrolling pattern at the cuffs, peplum and hem of his pleated skirt, worn with short white socks and elastic-sided boots.

The mother wears a two-piece day dress of a fine, gingham-checked brown cotton, comprising a bodice jacket with a centre front button fastening, edged with bands of white lace/braid trim above a round waist, worn with a white collar and bishop sleeves with matching cuffs, and a long, full skirt with narrow red/rust braid trim marking its circumference at the hem. She holds a flat-crowned, narrow-brimmed, round straw hat with a [silk] ribbon band in her lap, her centre-parted dark hair fastened back from her face, with the remainder rolled up and tucked into a hair net, hanging down to shoulder level behind.

The father smoking a long clay pipe wears a serviceable brown cloth three piece sack, or 'sac', suit, cut long and loose through the body with wide sleeves and small notched lapels,



buttoned close to the neck and left open down the front, above a matching single-breasted waistcoat and trousers, and worn over a white shirt with a turn down collar and a black [silk] ribbon tie. His side parted reddish hair is worn long, curling behind his ears over his neck, and he is unshaven with the long, full beard and moustache popular in this period.

The eldest, teenaged daughter, seated near her parents holds a book in her hand, perhaps teaching her younger sisters who stand nearby. She wears a grey beige cloth dress with a high-necked bodice, a sky blue ribbon tied in a bow below a narrow white collar, and moderate bishop sleeves with matching white cuffs above a long full skirt with a round waist.

The two younger girls wear matching sky blue cloth dresses with round-necked square yokes, edged with black piping above pleated bodices with long 'bishop' sleeves, and round waists marked by self-fabric belts above knee-length full skirts trimmed with a single flounce at the hem also piped in black. Both girls wear white stockings and elastic-sided black leather ankle boots, the younger girl's pantalettes just visible below the hem of her dress.

The elder two boys wear collarless schoolboy suits, buttoned to the neck over white shirts with turn down collars and soft sky blue [silk] bow ties, worn with matching long trousers and elastic-sided black leather boots. Both boys wear their short hair brushed into a curled wave at the temple from a side parting. One boy holds a cricket bat with a ball at his feet.

## **What we know about this image**

R. Grindell is thought to have been an itinerant artist who travelled around New South Wales in the 1860s painting watercolours of homesteads and landscape views. Recollected as a 'gentleman swaggie' by a descendant of one of his clients, Grindell may have been a son of James Grindell who was in New Zealand from the 1840s, working successively as explorer, settler, hotel proprietor and government interpreter (from

1848).

In about 1863, Grindell was at Henry and Harriette Wallace's property, Eunonyhareenyha at Wagga Wagga, where he produced a set of three watercolour and gouache views signed 'R. Grindell pinx'; all three works remain with the family for whom they were painted.

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**Hover on image to zoom in**



## 1865 – Colonial Family Portrait

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

Download Image



Creator
R. Grindell, fl. 1863-
Inscription
Lower right: 'R. Grindell'
Medium
watercolour
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>

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## 1864 – Sarah Cross Little and her daughter Mary Emma

### What we see in this image

This full-length double portrait ambrotype photograph shows

Sarah Cross Little, nee Bingle, aged 32, with her eldest daughter Mary Emma, aged about 4 years old. The image looks to have been created by an amateur photographer, possibly Joseph Docker, a close friend and next door neighbour of the Bingle family at Scone, NSW. The subjects are posed in a make-shift studio with a mock room setting comprising dark cloth 'walls' hung with scenic and portrait prints. It offers rare and early documentation of everyday informal dress as worn by female members of a rural colonial family.

Mrs Little wears a day dress of finely-striped gauzy [cotton] fabric with a light-coloured ground, the high-necked bodice worn with a small white collar and a brooch, above the softly-pleated corsage concealing a front opening and fanning up to the fashionable low shoulder line from a round waist, marked by a narrow dark belt with a [metal] clip buckle, above the plain, gathered or pleated full skirt, supported by a hooped petticoat the outline of which clearly is visible above the hem.

Her very wide, bell-shaped sleeves are in the style shown in fashion plates of the early 1860s, flaring from the upper arm into a large, bowed shape with tucks inside the elbow, worn over open puffed, flounced undersleeves above a bracelet (probably one of a pair) with a central medallion of a dark-coloured, open-work carved material (possibly jet). She wears her dark centre-parted hair in the popular 'bandeau' style -check.

Mary Emma Little wears a summery day dress of horizontally-striped [cotton] with a wide shallow neckline, short double-ruffled cap sleeves with ribbon bow trim, the bodice with a loosely-pleated corsage above a round waist band and pleated

or gathered short full skirt with triple bands of ruffled trim. She wears white ankle socks and ankle-strapped, round-toed, flat leather shoes trimmed at the throat of the vamp with silk floss pom-poms. Her clasped hands hold a white flower in her lap and she wears her centre-parted dark hair brushed into long, soft ringlets at the temple.

## **What we know about this image**

Sarah Cross Little, nee Bingle (1832-1909) was the second daughter, and youngest of three children incl. John Rayden (b.1829) and Mary Elizabeth (b.1825), born to John Bingle (1796–1882), and his wife Mary, nee Cross, of 'Puen Buen' on the Upper Hunter River. In 1858, Sarah married William Little (1833-1882) and the couple had eight children, four of whom survived to adulthood including Mary Emma (b. 6 March 1860-1926) who later married Herbert Gardner and bore a family of 12 children, 7 surviving to adulthood.

For two years after their marriage, Sarah and William lived at his father's property, Belmont at North Richmond, NSW. When Francis Little died in 1860, as his eldest son, William inherited 'Invermein' station at Scone, NSW, where the family resided until William's retirement in 1877.

Joseph Docker (1802-1884), painter, amateur photographer, carver, surgeon, pastoralist and politician, owned 'Thornthwaite' estate on the Dartbrook River, situated 11 miles from Scone, N.S.W, and abutting the Bingle family property 'Puen Buen'. Docker was well acquainted with the Bingle and Little families, as recorded in Sarah Little's diary:

'The Honorable Joseph Docker of 'Thornthwaite', Scone, was a great friend of W. Little – also my father. The former used to spend three days every week at Puen Buen, drive (sic) down to attend the Courts in Scone'.

During this period, between the years 1850 and 1855, Docker took several amateur featuring the Little and Bingle families and their properties which were collected and stored in albums (ML). After Joseph Docker became a Member of Parliament (MLC, 1851 to 1884) the family lived mainly in Sydney but still travelled frequently.

Both Joseph Docker and his son Judge Ernest Brougham Docker (1842-1923) experimented with calotype and ambrotype (collodion positive) photography, modifying Docker's camera obscura for calotype (salted prints on paper from glass negatives) photography in about 1850 – a early format of which Docker was one of the first in Australia to experiment.

Ernest Docker was also took lessons from Sydney photographer William Hetzer and, in 1858 with his father, began experiments with a wet-plate process. Between 1860 and 1868 Docker was sensitizing his own dry plates by the tannin-collodion-albumen process, although dry plates were not widely used until the early 1880s. Joining the Royal Society of New South Wales in 1876, Ernest Docker did much to promote photography through his articles in overseas and Australian journals, particularly in the British Journal of Photography, and as president of the Photographic Society of New South Wales in 1894-1907.

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# 1864 – Sarah Cross Little and her daughter Mary Emma

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**Download Image**



Creator
[Docker, Joseph] attrib. (1802-1884)
Inscription
none
Medium
photograph
Background
See also: MIN 391 for professional studio portrait
Reference
<a href="#">Open 1</a>
<a href="#">Open 2</a>
<a href="#">Open 3</a>

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# 1863 – Alice and Sarah Stephen

## What we see in this image

This full-length double portrait shows the Stephen twins, Alice and Sarah (known as Saidee) at about 19 years of age. The girls wear matching outfits and are shown standing side by side, their bodies turned toward each other in a front facing pose, in a studio interior with a prop table and curtain drape behind.

The Stephen family are known to have frequented the George Street studio of Edwin Dalton, the most expensive photographer in Sydney at the time, and regarded by Lady Stephen as the best. This carte de visite portrait bears the stamp of Dalton's Royal Photographic Establishment.

The twins wear identical day dresses constructed in a plain dark [silk taffeta] with very high necklines worn with narrow white collars, above pleated jacket bodices with self-covered button front fastenings and dropped shoulder lines, fitted around the upper arms with tight, pointed caps trimmed with two rows of narrow black braid, above plain, full skirts pleated into round waist bands, marked by contrasting dark [velvet] belts, worn over the necessary underpinnings of hooped cage-crinoline with several layers petticoats to conceal the wires.

The girls also wear black [velvet] ribbons around their necks – perhaps suspending a locket or pendant – and long gold watch chains with fobs and winders – Saidee's watch has clearly been tucked into the waistband of her dress.

The other defining feature of the twins' dresses is their large full 'bishop' sleeves, with a line of shirring along their length and worn with narrow white cuffs. Seen in fashion plates from 1857, the bishop sleeve was cut in a curved 'bent elbow' shape, pleated into the armhole and gathered tightly into the wrist. Reaching its greatest width and popularity by about 1862, it persisted far into the decade.

Expensively, if plainly, clothed the twins' readiness to enter society is clearly signalled by the dressing of their dark hair in the customary adult style, neatly and smoothly centre-parted and plaited into thick braids wrapped over their ears and pinned behind at the nape of their necks.

As the girls are not strictly dressed for mourning, it's possible that commissioning of this portrait marking the girls' passage to adulthood at 18, may have been delayed until after the family's official bereavement period (of a year and a day) following the death of their eldest sister 'Nelly' (Eleanor Elizabeth Stephen) on 7 February 1861.

## **What we know about this image**

Alice Mary Stephen (1844-1902) and Sarah (aka Saidee) Consett Stephen (1844-1934) were the twin daughters of Sir Alfred Stephen (1802-1894), legislator and third Chief Justice of NSW, and his second wife, Lady Eleanor, nee Bedford (1810–1886). Born on 18 Feb 1844, Alice and Saidee were the eleventh and twelfth of Sir Alfred's eighteen children, and the fourth and fifth of nine children born to Eleanor Stephen; the arrival of Alice and Saidee was followed by the birth of

twin boys in 1847, one of whom did not survive.

The Stephens twins, neither of whom married, were almost indistinguishable from each other. Doing most things in common and inseparable companions, they were described by their maternal grandmother, Mrs Bedford, as 'bright sensible girls' who cared not for frivolity. In their busy and crowded household, Lady Stephen oversaw the girls' education at home, employing the services of a superior governess and following a strict curriculum, supervising their music practice before breakfast, and escorting them to dancing lessons and extra language lessons several mornings a week.

In 1866, the Stephens moved to 'Orielson', a large, elegant and comfortable house with harbour views at Ocean St, Woollahra. As their father's 'home daughters', following the death of their mother in 1886, the twin sisters were both enthusiastic musicians. Saidee was also a gifted linguist, able to speak five languages fluently; for many years in the earlier part of her life she had also acted as confidential secretary to her father, handling all his correspondence and assisting him in his legal work. After the death of Alice in 1902, Saidee lived on for thirty more years at her Woollahra home until her passing, at 90 years of age, in 1934.

#### PHOTOGRAPHER:

Painter, photographer and lithographer, Edwin Dalton had spent some time in America before coming to Australia in the 1853, possibly in search of gold. He set up as portrait painter in Melbourne. In early 1854 Dalton was living in Upper Hawthorn (Vic.) but by July 1854, he was in Sydney, where he attracted commissions from the city's most prominent families.

He advertised his Dalton's Collodion Portraits at 243 George Street (1855-57), and his studio known as the Royal Photographic Portrait Establishment Gallery at 400 George Street (1858-59) with William Bradley, proprietor, followed by the Royal Photographic Gallery at 320 George (1863-65), and later at 330 George Street (1866-67), taken over by H. Hunt, as proprietor.

#### CARTE DE VISITES:

The carte de visite is a stiff card of about 10 x 6.4 cm, with an attached paper photograph, invented in 1854 by André-Adolphe-Eugène Disderi. They were introduced into Australia in 1859 by William Blackwood with albums arriving in 1860, aiding the collection and distribution of multiple cartes. Cartes were usually portraits and were made by the millions worldwide. Multi-lens, or 'multiplying' cameras were introduced in the 1860s, which were capable of producing from 2 to 32 images in quick succession, dramatically increasing the number of cartes de visite that could be made from a single photographic plate. They were easily reproduced by making paper contact prints from the glass plates, which were then cut and pasted to card.

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Celice & Saidee  
Stephens

## 1863 – Alice and Sarah Stephen

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### Download Image



Creator
Edwin Dalton, fl. 1853-1865
Inscription
below image in ink: 'Alice & Saidee/Stephen' on reverse in ink: 'Photo: Taken in 1863' on reverse photographer's stamp: 'Dalton's / Royal Photographic / Establishment / Sydney'
Medium
photograph
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>

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# 1862 – Sir John and Lady Adelaide Young

## What we see in this image

This full-length double portrait carte-de visite is believed to show Sir John Young, aged about 55, and Lady Adelaide Annabella Young, aged in her late 40s. The couple are casually and affectionately posed in a domestic room setting, the governor seated cross-legged in a high-backed arm chair, a large book resting open on his lap, his wife standing by his side with one hand on his shoulder, the other playfully tapping her frivolously feather-trimmed [ivory] fan on his leg, perhaps to distract him away from his reading.

Lady Young wears a highly fashionable and elaborate summer day dress of thin, white, partially-translucent plain-weave [cotton] fabric known as tarlatan often, as seen here, with a woven or printed stripe. This sheer textile was finished with a starched glaze to add firmness and body without weight, creating an illusion of airy lightness, making it perfectly suited to the frothy styles of the crinoline era. Lady Young's dress has a high-necked, softly draped and pleated jacket bodice with a dropped shoulder line above wide, open three-quarter-length 'pagoda' sleeves, trimmed with two narrow pleated bands of contrasting striped edging, worn with white undersleeves closed at the wrist.

Her narrow waist is marked by a diamond-shaped Swiss belt in a contrasting shade of silk taffeta with self-ruched trim, above a voluminous skirt falling to the floor, and trimmed at the

hem with two tiers of narrow flounces, further trimmed with contrasting striped bands of pleated edging.

Lady Young wears a black velvet ribbon around her neck suspending a jewelled or enamelled pendant, also a long, fine guard chain for the watch tucked into the belt at her waist, and a pair of dark bead bracelets on her wrists – perhaps made of carved or heat-moulded Irish bog oak (ie. wood fossilized in peat marshes or bogs so that it turns hard and very dark in colour) popular at this time and symbolic of her birthplace.

In contrast to the sleek loops of hair depicted in fashion plates, Lady Young wears her curly hair in the naturalistic crimped style favoured by artistic ladies from about 1860, followers of the second phase of the pre-Raphaelite movement.

Sir John wears an impeccably tailored dark wool three-piece suit (probably bespoke) comprising a double-breasted frock coat with wide, notched lapels and fitted sleeves with wide cuffs, matching lapelled waistcoat with gold watch and chain draped across the front, over a starched white shirt with a high, peaked collar and silk neckcloth tied in a flat bow, and well-fitted, tapered trousers worn with highly polished, elastic-sided black leather ankle boots with rounded toes.

Described as erect in stature, Sir John is clean-shaven, with long side-burns, his short grey, side-parted hair curling over his ears and brushed forward around the temples in the style of his youth.



## What we know about this image

Sir John [Baron Lisgar] Young (1807-1876) married Adelaide Annabella Tuite Dalton (1814-1895), a stepdaughter of the Marquess of Headfort, and described as one of the noted beauties of her day, at Kells Church, Dublin on the 8th April 1835.

Appointed to succeed Sir William Denison as twelfth governor of NSW on 18 Jan 1861, the couple arrived in Sydney on the Northam on 21st March 1861, where Young was immediately plunged into an angry and complicated political crisis. An able public speaker, possessed of an easy charm of manner, he and his wife were keenly aware of the social responsibilities of Government House and were active in good causes.

Lambing Flat, a town in New South Wales, was renamed Young, in honour of Sir John Young, but Young found colonial politics tiresome and missed the excitement of the House of Commons.

Returning to England in 1867, the Young's moved to Canada in February 1869 where Sir John served as the second Governor General. He died at Lisgar House, Bailieborough, Ireland, on 6 October 1876, without issue, the Baronetcy descending to a nephew. Lady Young married Sir Francis Turville (1831-1889) on 3rd August 1878, and died on 19th July 1895.

### PHOTOGRAPHER:

Painter, photographer and lithographer, Edwin Dalton had spent some time in America before coming to Australia in the 1853, possibly in search of gold. He set up as portrait painter in Melbourne and was living in Upper Hawthorn (Vic.) in early 1854. By July 1854, Dalton was in Sydney, where he soon

attracted commissions from some of the city's most prominent families.

The photographer advertised his 'Dalton's Collodion Portraits' at 243 George Street (1855-57), and his studio known as the Royal Photographic Portrait Establishment Gallery at 400 George Street (1858-59) with William Bradley, proprietor, followed by the Royal Photographic Gallery at 320 George (1862-65), and later at 330 George Street (1866-67), taken over by H. Hunt, as proprietor.

Empire (Sydney, NSW), Sat 6 Sep 1862, Page 1, Advertising:  
Mr Dalton begs to inform the public that that having had his former gallery together with the whole of his valuable stock and specimens of art in various branches entirely destroyed by fire which took place on the evening of 27 August, he has secured those desirable rooms No. 320 Gorge Street well known as the Old Empire Office, near Hunter Street, where he proposes to immediately resume the practice of his profession and trusts he will be honoured by the continued patronage of his friends. August 26 1862. By Appointment to His Excellency Sir John Young and Lady Young.

#### CARTE DE VISITES:

The carte de visite, or cdv, is a stiff card of about 10 x 6.4 cm, with an attached paper photograph which was invented in 1854 by André-Adolphe-Eugène Disderi. Cartes, usually portraits and made by the millions worldwide, were introduced into Australia in 1859 by William Blackwood, with albums arriving in 1860 which encouraged the collection and distribution of multiple copies. Multi-lens, or 'multiplying' cameras were introduced in the 1860s, which were capable of producing from 2 to 32 images in quick succession,

dramatically increasing the number of cartes de visite that could be made from a single photographic plate. They were easily reproduced by making paper contact prints from the glass plates, which were then cut and pasted to card.

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P/4

## 1862 – Sir John and Lady Adelaide Young

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**Download Image**



Creator
Edwin Dalton, fl. 1853-1865
Inscription
photographer's stamp on reverse: Dalton's Royal Photographic Gallery
Medium
photograph
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>

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## 1862 – Roseina Troughton

### What we see in this image

This  $\frac{1}{2}$  length front facing hand-coloured ambrotype portrait shows a young Rosa Troughton, aged in her late teens, before



her marriage to George Beckett in 1863. She is posed in a drawing room setting, seated on a leather-upholstered side chair, holding a book in her lap with her left hand, her right arm resting on a prop table covered in a foliate-printed [plush] cloth with a dark red curtain draped behind.

Roseina wears a simple ensemble which conforms exactly to casual summer fashions of the early 1860s, as does the use of a graphically-patterned textile like this [cotton] 'gingham' with its dark check on a light ground. Constructed either in one-piece or as separates, the new style of 'skirt-and-waist' seen here comprises a bloused 'shirt-waist' (also known as a 'waist') with a fuller front, gathered or pleated into a very high neckline worn with a narrow white collar, above a plain, full skirt pleated into the round waist band, marked by a contrasting belt fastening at centre front with a decorative buckle, and worn over the necessary underpinnings of hooped cage-crinoline with several layers petticoats to conceal the wires.

The other defining feature of this dress is its large full 'bishop' sleeves, worn with narrow white cuffs. Seen in fashion plates from 1857, the bishop sleeve was cut in a curved 'bent elbow' shape, pleated into the armhole and gathered tightly into the wrist. Reaching its greatest width and popularity by about 1862, it persisted far into the decade.

Though simply clothed, Roseina's readiness to enter society is clearly signalled by the dressing of her dark, centre-parted hair in the customary adult style, brushed neatly and smoothly into a large roll, tucked behind her ears and pinned back at the nape of her neck.

## **What we know about this image**

Roseina, aka Rosa and Rose, Walsh (1843-1929) was a daughter of James and Dorcas Troughton of Parramatta. She is thought to have been married twice: firstly to George Beckett (1863) at Parramatta, and then to James Walsh (1881). She died at 'Ormond', Waterloo Road, North Ryde, the home of her daughter, Mrs Amelia Dorcus (sic) Owen. (Family Notices, Sydney Morning Herald (NSW), Mon 30 Sep 1929, page 10)

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**1862 – Roseina Troughton**

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

**Download Image**



Creator
unknown
Inscription
none
Medium
photograph
Background
none
Reference
See ML 460 for three older Troughton sisters

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## 1861 – Deacons of Pitt Street Congregational Church

### What we see in this image

This large albumen photoprint appears to show the Reverend William Cuthbertson (seated) surrounded by the five prominent Sydney businessmen who were deacons of the Pitt Street Congregational Church, but these gentlemen did not actually pose for this group photograph at the same time. The photograph is in fact a montage of three or four separate

images, joined together, re-photographed and then hand-coloured to complete the illusion.

The subjects of this group portrait are from left to right: auditor Robert Garrett (d.1876), merchant George Rees (d.1862), newspaper proprietor John Fairfax (1804-1877) leaning on a square plinth, the Rev. Cuthbertson (ca.1827-1910) seated, grocer and druggist Ambrose Foss (1803-1862) and draper David Jones (1804-1877) standing next to the length of balustrading.

Almost all of the men are dressed in customary mid-19th century business attire, namely double-breasted black [wool] frock coats with wide notched lapels, several with wide deeply-cuffed sleeves, worn over dark trousers (Robert Garrett's with turned up cuffs), waistcoats draped with gold fob chains and starched white shirts with high peaked collars, encircled by dark cravats tied in a flat bow.

The Rev. Cuthbertson wears a white tie to denote his status as a member of the clergy. John Fairfax wears a signet ring and Ambrose Foss a morning coat, perhaps better suited to the portly physique of this importer of epicurean delights, which 'for excellence of taste and flavour, being in high condition, can scarcely be equalled in the Colony'.

The men all wear square-toed dark leather shoes, with varying degrees of polish, and several hold spectacles. All have longish hair with left or right side partings, brushed back from their foreheads and curling over their ears, and clean shaven cheeks, some retaining side whiskers or a fringe of

beard around the chin.

## **What we know about this image**

In 1861 German-born photographer William Hetzer imported one of the colony's largest cameras, enabling him to produce large group portraits photographs like this. Within 12 months of the taking of this photograph, however, two of the deacons (Rees and Foss) had died and their pastor had returned to England.

The Pitt Street Independent Chapel had opened for worship in 1833, with a congregation comprising twelve members. In 1840 the first pastor, Reverend Robert Ross (1792-1862), arrived with his family to commence his ministry. By 1841 the Chapel was inadequate for the growing congregation, and a new church building was constructed on the site of the present Pitt Street Congregational Church opening in 1846.

Following the retirement of Pastor Ross due to illness in 1854, the young Dr Cuthbertson was invited to Sydney to take up the pulpit at the Pitt Street Congregational Church.

John Fairfax (1804-1877) migrated to Sydney with his family in 1838, joining the diaconate of the Pitt St Congregational Church in the same year as Welsh-born David Jones, who would serve 35 years as a Pitt Street deacon; Jones' eldest daughter Eliza married Robert Ross, son of the first pastor, in 1849. Along with Robert Garrett, Ambrose Foss (co-founder of the Congregational Church in NSW) and George Rees, this network of energetic nonconformist businessmen would grow together in wealth and influence in the colony, closely associated through chapel, commerce and civic responsibility.

## PHOTOGRAPHER:

William Hetzer and his wife, Thekla, arrived at Sydney on 3 February 1850, and began operating their photographic studio in Hunter Street, before moving to George Street (1850 –1867). Hetzer seems to have always specialised in paper photographs and was best known for his wet-plate collodion negative albumen prints of Sydney streets and buildings, in particular a series of up to 60 stereo views of the city which he was producing by subscription in 1859. Hetzer also submitted a large (46" × 24"/ 116.8 × 60.9 cm) coloured composite photograph of the 23 officers of the Sydney Provincial Grand Lodge of Freemasons to the 1862 London International Exhibition.

In 1867, prior to their departure for Europe, the Hetzer's advertised the auction of their photographic equipment (including 3500 registered negatives) and studio at 287 George Street, both of which were subsequently purchased by Joseph Degotardi, Photographer and Photo-lithographer to the NSW Government departments. (Sydney Morning Herald, 14 and 30 March 1867)

Print page or save as a PDF

**Hover on image to zoom in**





## 1861 — Deacons of Pitt Street Congregational Church

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

**Download Image**



Creator
Hetzer, William fl. 1850-1867
Inscription



in pencil, lower edge: 'Deacons of Pitt Street Congregational Church, 1856+'
<b>Medium</b>
photograph
<b>Background</b>
none
<b>Reference</b>
<a href="#">Open</a>

---

## 1861 – Goldminer

### What we see in this image

This unusual painting shows an unidentified Australian bushman, probably aged in his thirties and possibly a goldminer, his occupation suggested by the pick and shovel linked together and balanced on his left shoulder. If so, this is an early example of the goldminer subject moving from popular illustration to the more sophisticated genre of oil painting. The bushman is depicted with his [retriever] dog, standing in front of a bark hut with a blanket draped from the ridgepole, next to the stump of a felled tree used as a table set with a billy can, long-bladed knife and [salt cellar or tea caddy], with an Alpen scene stretching to the horizon behind him. He is recorded in the act of tamping tobacco down into the bowl of an ornately carved 'meerscham'-style pipe

which may indicate his European origins.

The man is dressed in a rather stylised and elegant version of goldfields dress, comprising an unusually spotless and voluminous long-sleeved white shirt left open at the neck and tucked into the waist band of his brown [wool] trousers which are themselves tucked into long brown leather boots extending over the knee. He holds a red flannel 'Crimean' shirt over his right arm and wears a light-coloured [cabbage-tree] hat with a low, round crown, covered with a loosely pleated ['pugaree'], and a narrow brim with a fly veil rolled up at the front. As was the custom in frontier societies, he is unshaven, with a full beard and his dark curly hair left long.

At this time, bushmen and miners wore the type of practical and durable work clothing which had begun to be mass-produced due to increased demand stemming from the California gold rushes (1849-1855) as well as Northern hemisphere conflicts such as the American Civil War (1861-65) and the European 'Crimean' War (1853-56). The so-called 'Crimean' shirt was a wide, collared V-necked flannel shirt without buttons, the long sleeves of which were rolled up during work.

Popular in solid colours (usually red or blue) and often sashed or belted around the waist, it was often layered for warmth over boldly-patterned striped or checked linen or cotton shirts, and worn with a neckerchief that served as a sweat-rag. Straw hats completed the outfit, light-coloured to reflect the sun and broad-brimmed to shade the miners' faces.

Australian bush and gold mining life became the principal subject for popular artists such as S.T. Gill and George Lacy, as the notion of Australians as sturdy independent types defined by the bush experience began to take hold during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

## **What we know about this image**

James Anderson, portrait painter and member of the Royal

Hibernian Academy, emigrated from Belfast, Northern Ireland to Australia in 1852-1853. A prolific portrait painter of the mid to late 19th century, this is an unusual painting for Anderson being a genre image rather than the formal portrait of colonel statement and clergy for which he is now mostly known.

Living in Victoria initially, by 1858 Anderson had moved to Sydney, where he continued to paint portraits advertising his studio premises at 389, George-Street in the 1861 Sands Directory of Sydney, and receiving good notices in the local press. ('..one of the finest specimen of oil painting seen...the likeness unmistakable whilst the colouring and effect of the painting show the executor to be a finished artist...', SMH, 17 Mar 1860, p. 5)

In 1861 Anderson was drawn into the controversy over a proposed portrait of the retiring NSW governor, Sir William Denison. While the local committee could not decide on a suitable artist, its members clearly showed a preference for an English portraitist rather than a colonial painter. This prompted the well-known critic Joseph Sheridan Moore to write a pungent letter to the Sydney Morning Herald in January 1861, championing Anderson's cause and stating that, 'this "sending home to England" has been the ruin of all efforts to promote high art in its various branches amongst us'. Despite Anderson's worsening alcoholism, he formed close associations with several professional colleagues, including S.T. Gill (another alcoholic), and continued to receive commissions and produce portraits into the 1870s.

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**Hover on image to zoom in**



**1861 Goldminer**

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

**Download Image**



Creator
Anderson, James, fl. 1852-1877
Inscription
LHS: signed and dated: "Jms. Anderson / Pinxit / 1861"
Medium
oil painting
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>

---

## 1860 – Sarah Osborne

### What we see in this image

Grieving protocols intensified in the Australian colonies throughout the second half of the 19th century, following the model set by British monarch Queen Victoria, who assumed perpetual mourning after the death of her husband Prince Albert on 14 December 1861. Wealthy widows like Irish-born Sarah Osborne would have commissioned photographic mourning

portraits of deceased loved ones to send home to friends and family.

This painted memorial portrait may also have been based on a photograph, capturing her grief at the death (from stomach cancer) of her husband of 50 years, as well as the loss of her sixth son (18-year old John King Osborne) to consumption just three weeks later.

Sarah Elizabeth Osborne, nee Marshall (c.1807-1874) arrived in Australia from Ireland in 1829, with her husband Henry Osborne (1803-1859); the couple had nine sons and three daughters. An extremely wealthy man for his time, Osborne became a person of influence in the NSW Illawarra/Southern Highlands area. Elected a member of the Legislative Council in 1851, and elevated to the Legislative Assembly in 1856, Osbourne died on 26 March 1859.

Henry Osborne was the youngest of the ten children of Archie Osborne of Dirnaseer, County Tyrone, Ireland. Two of Henry's brothers had migrated to NSW and it was on the advice of one of them that Henry sold his farm and other property for about £3000, investing in a consignment of Irish linen and booking passage to Sydney on the Pyramus. Deeply in love with Sarah Marshall, daughter of an Irish clergyman, Henry's previous proposal had met with her father's refusal. When the Pyramus entered Belfast Harbour, Henry went ashore and immediately headed for Dromore, County Down, to persuade the Rev. Benjamin Marshall to agree to his daughter's marriage, to which he duly consented. Within a week the whole parish had set furiously to work to provide Sarah with a trousseau. This accomplished, the wedding took place on September 11, 1828.

The newlyweds set sail for Sydney where they arrived in May 1829. Osborne sold his linen at a handsome profit and went work on the property of Captain Thompson at Liverpool, where he gained valuable colonial experience before settling down to life as a pastoralist in 1833, on a grant of 2560 acres (1036 ha) in the Illawarra near the present town of Dapto, NSW, naming his property Marshall Mount. The Osborne's first home near Lake Illawarra was known as 'Pumpkin Cottage' (See: ML SV1B/Illa/2: watercolour by Robert Hoddle, 1832).

The Osborne's new residence Marshall Mount House was completed in 1841, built in the 'colonial style' of 'stone with lovely cedar doorways and an elegant staircase with slender balusters, an oval light over the deep set front door and French windows leading onto the stone paved verandah'. Now a suburb of Wollongong, located between the larger centres of Dapto and Albion Park, Marshall Mount house survives to this day, in poor condition.

Sarah died in England on 24 February 1874.

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**Hover on image to zoom in**







## 1860 – Sarah Osborne

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

Download Image



Creator
unknown
Inscription
none
Medium
oil on canvas
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>

---

## 1860 – Alexander Smail

### What we see in this image

This front facing  $\frac{3}{4}$  length portrait shows successful Sydney

baker Alexander Smail, aged about 44. The subject is conventionally posed, seated on a brown (probably cedar) wooden chair with a yellowish curtain drapery behind. The artist, Joseph Backler, was an emancipated convict who became a prolific and highly regarded portrait painter. With a client base drawn from those who had prospered in the colonies (publicans, builders, millers, ship-owners, shop-owners and farmers) and using well-established stylistic devices, the most distinctive feature of Backler's work was his careful delineation of his subjects' faces which did not always tend to flattery.

Alexander Smail is dressed, as befits his successful colonial status, in an elegant three-piece suit of dark formal business clothes comprising a well-tailored, double-breasted frock coat of fine black [wool] with a fitted shoulder line and unusually wide, 'square' notched lapels – a type of wide 'M' notch also known as a 'lark' or 'thrush' tongue notch – and fitted sleeves with a seam above the split cuffs. He wears matching black cloth trousers and a low, V-necked waistcoat.

His gold watch chain with dangling fob seal is anchored at the waist through the single-breasted button fastening, below a wide expanse of snowy white linen, the shirt with a starched front and concealed button closure, and a high collar encircled by a dark [silk] cravat tied in a flat bow. He wears his light brown hair brushed back from his forehead, with a side parting and curling over his ears, his long side whiskers extending below clean shaven cheeks and chin.

Although ready-made suits were available in the colony at this time, it is probable that Alexander Smail's suit is 'bespoke' (ie. literally 'spoken for') and tailored to his exact specifications. Tailoring perfection has always comes at a price which, in itself, implies status. The tailor's craft produces perfectly-fitted clothing adapted for each client. Made from the finest cloth, each garment is built to the

customer's exact measurements and requirements.

There were usually three fittings and many hours would be spent in hand-sewn construction to mould and shape garments with padding, stiffening and carefully positioned fastenings. Acquisition of this type of expensive and fashionable suiting (and the commissioning of this portrait) could be seen as indicators of Smail's intention to enter local government politics and public office, an ambition he subsequently achieved in 1864.

## **What we know about this image**

Alexander Smail (1816-1867) was born in Scotland and migrated to Australia on the Herald in 1844 with his first wife Violet, nee McCleod (1821-1847), and two of their ten children, Robert (1840-1871), and Violet Jnr (1843-1844) who died shortly after the family's arrival in February. Another son, Alexander, was born in Sydney (1844-1906) before the death of Mrs Smail on 27 June 1847. Later that year Alexander married Irish-born Margaret Moore (1826-1870), the daughter of a farmer who had arrived in NSW from Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, in 1844. The couple had at least three sons and two daughters including John (1850-1920), Isabella Rhubina (1853-1945) and Fanny Jane (1857-1920).

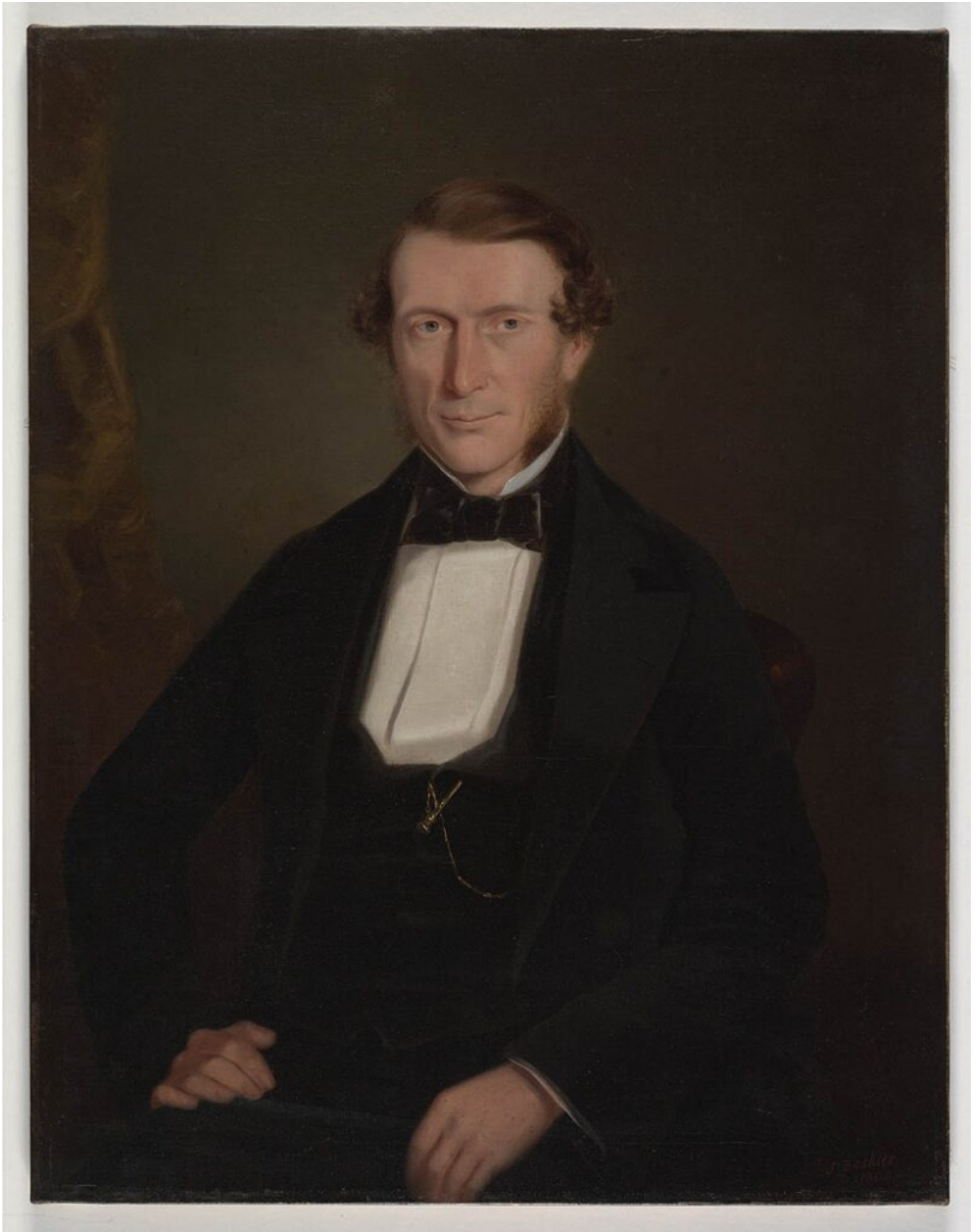
In 1844 Smail set up a bakery business in Bathurst Street, moving the bakery to Argyle Street at Miller's Point in 1851, where he remained in business until his death in 1867. He was elected Alderman for Gipps Ward from 1 December 1864 to 4 September 1867 and died on 8 October 1867. At the time of his second wife's death in 1870, Mrs Smail owned a store and bakehouse and two allotments on the north side of Argyle Street, a parcel of land on the south side of Argyle Street, Millers Point, and 10 acres at Clarence Town, near Maitland.

## ARTIST:

Joseph Backler (1813?-1895), convict artist and portrait painter, arrived in Sydney in the Portland on 25 May 1832. Convicted in 1831 for uttering forged cheques, the 18-year-old was sentenced to death, later commuted to transportation for life. Indents described him as being able to read and write and a landscape painter by profession. Continually in trouble, Backler was eventually granted a ticket-of-leave in February 1842. From 1843 he was assigned to frame makers and carvers Messrs Cetta & Hughes in Sydney and granted a conditional pardon in 1847. In 1843 Backler advertised his services as a 'Portrait, Miniature and Landscape Painter, in oils and watercolours'. Backler was probably the most prolific of all oil painters in early colonial Australia and more than 120 of his works have survived.

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**1860 – Alexander Smail**

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## Download Image



Creator
Backler, Joseph (1813-1895)
Inscription
LLHS: 'J. Backler 1860'
Medium
oil painting
Background
none
Reference
See also: ML 647: [Margaret Moore Smail, and children], 1858

---

## 1860 – Native Dignity

### What we see in this image

ST Gill's caricature 'Native Dignity' is a highly loaded image which may be deciphered on a number of levels. As the title suggests, there is dignity in the challenge presented by this Aboriginal couple as they proudly promenade past a sign

advertising 'Fashion' in their incongruously jaunty array of tatted European garments. Through their simple act of defiance, white pretensions are satirised and the Aboriginal sense of fun is celebrated. Originally painted in Sydney in about 1860, the watercolour was later printed as a black and white lithograph in Melbourne in 1866.

At first glance, this image might be viewed as a humorous comment on the incorrect appropriation of European cast-off garments by an indigenous man and woman in a direct affront to the two 'respectably-dressed' colonial onlookers causing the female pedestrian to deliberately avert her gaze. Alternately, it can be seen that Gill has posed a visual query: who is mocking whom?

Many Aborigines who accepted European clothing were reluctant to adopt garments that masked their gender and scarification. As recorded in this image, Indigenous men, in particular, frequently chose to wear only a shirt or a jacket, seeming to dislike trousers, perhaps because they impeded movement and tribal attire included no leg covering. Often jauntily accessorised with a hat and/or swagger stick (a type of short cane), it was the uncovered legs of Aborigines that offended European sensibilities most.

The Indigenous woman portrayed in this image wears that most ubiquitous of mid-century 19th century fashion accessories, the 'cage crinoline'. Invented in the mid-1850s, this light-weight steel support allowed European women to dispense with layers of heavy petticoats, freeing their limbs for walking. Being cheap and easy to manufacture, it was one of the first fashions to be almost universally adopted though, if not managed properly, it could also be a source of embarrassment –

bobbing up and down unless short steps were taken and swinging wildly on windy days – which inspired more jokes than any other women's fashion accessory up to the time.

Lack of interest in and experience with European clothing and dress codes often led to their misuse by Aborigines. For white Australians, who saw dress and observance of its codes as a sign of civilisation, clothing misuse confirmed the primitiveness of the first Australians. On settling into Sydney Cove, both British and Indigenous people would have expected to trade as a gesture of friendship on first contact.

Traditionally, Aboriginal people wore little clothing though perpetuation of bartering practices did encouraged Aborigines to dress in the settler's cast offs. Comments about what 'pleased' or was 'demanded' by Aborigines record the types of European clothing goods that were 'valued' with hats, in particular, considered 'exotic' and rare.

## **What we know about this image**

Watercolourist and lithographer Samuel Thomas Gill (1818-1880), better known as S.T. Gill, lived in Sydney for period of 8 years, from 1856 to 1862, recording the patterns of social activity in the city and its surrounding suburbs. This image is one of a series of brilliant characterisations of urban life that Gill may have started while resident in Sydney but which were completed after his return to Melbourne.

While Gill left no written statements on his social and political views, the visual evidence provided is overwhelming and, behind the comical facade of his 'Colonial Comicalities',



there lies a serious social critique. In commenting on his subjects' affectations, Gill's art held up a mirror attacking the social structures developing in colonial Australian urban society for more than four decades.

#### ARTIST:

S.T. Gill sailed with his family for Adelaide, South Australia, at the age of 21, arriving in December 1839, where he quickly set up a studio in Gawler Place, advertising that he could supply 'correct likenesses' of people, horses, dogs, local scenery and residences. Far and away the most popular artist of his era, as a visual reporter Gill seems never to have rejected any minor detail. An accomplished horseman, Gill travelled alone on horseback throughout the settled areas of South Australia, before moving to the Mt Alexander (Castlemaine) goldfields in Victoria in 1852.

The excitement and squalor of goldfields' life proved an inspiration to Gill. A skilled lithographer, well able to make his own plates, Gill soon returned to Melbourne with a large collection of watercolours and wash drawings, publishing his first series of prints to great success in August 1852. Gill regularly returned to the diggings, making sketches wherever he went.

At the height of his fame as 'the artist of the goldfields', Gill travelled to Sydney in 1856 hoping to repeat his Victorian success. Unfortunately, due to a slump in wool prices, Sydney was suffering an economic depression. Gill was forced to supplement his income by working for the illustrated newspapers; by this time he was also beginning to suffer the effects of his alcoholism. He quickly produced a set of lithographs, *Scenery in and around Sydney* (1856), and received

several further commissions.

Returning to Melbourne in 1862, Gill worked consistently during his sober periods, making a large number of lithographs from his 'Colonial Comicalities' cartoons, including 'Native Dignity', a series he hoped to release in a publication which did not materialise. Gill continued to produce drawings for the Melbourne Herald until his death. By 1872, his health was failing as the venereal disease he had contracted on the goldfields was aggravated by his drinking. On 27 October 1880, ST Gill died destitute, on the steps of the Melbourne Post Office, and was buried in a pauper's grave in the Melbourne General Cemetery.

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## 1860 – Native Dignity

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**Download Image**



Creator
Gill, Samuel Thomas (1818-1880)
Inscription
titled lower right: 'S.T.G.' lower left
Medium
watercolour drawing
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open 1</a>
<a href="#">Open 2</a>

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# 1859 – Eleanor Elizabeth Stephen

## What we see in this image

This right facing  $\frac{3}{4}$  length portrait miniature shows Eleanor Elizabeth 'Nelly' Stephen in evening dress, at about 20 years of age. She is posed seated on an upholstered arm chair in a studio interior with a prop table to one side, covered in a green baize cloth and holding [writing] materials. Compared to daywear, Victorian evening dress was very revealing with low cut bodices intended to show the neck, shoulders and upper bosom, or décolletage, and shorter sleeve lengths exposing the arms.

Eleanor wears an elaborate, if somewhat austere, ball gown in a black and white colour palette which may be indicative of half-mourning – given the size of the extended Stephen's clan, it would have been rare for members of the family not to have been in mourning periodically. The silk taffeta dress has a low cut décolletage, trimmed around the wide neckline with a band of ruching, and a fitted bodice ornamented with an 'eschelle', or ladder, of ribbon bows above a pointed waist, the fullness of the skirt enhanced by triple-tiered flounces with scalloped edges. Her sheer white chemise is visible at the neckline and a pair of layered, gauzy undersleeves sit below short puffed sleeves trimmed with large, square handkerchief-like oversleeves, or 'jockeys'.

She wears her centre-parted light brown hair in the fashionable 'bandeau' style, with smooth sections wrapped over her ears and pinned behind, the remainder rolled and tucked into a hair net, or 'snood', of black [chenille]. She also wears a gold locket, suspended on a black ribbon, and a bracelet of wrought gold, perhaps one of a pair as her other wrist is obscured by the volume of her skirt.

This miniature portrait may have been commissioned to mark

Nelly's 20th birthday on 19 August 1859.

The Stephens are known to have frequented the George Street studio of Edwin Dalton, most expensive photographer in Sydney at the time and regarded by Lady Stephen as the best. Dalton was also known to be a miniaturist. On her last visit to the Dalton studio, Nelly also posed for two hand-coloured ambrotype portraits of varied size and casing, which show the subject in the same pose and wearing the same outfit as recorded in this miniature painting. It seems likely that all three likenesses were created in the same session or in sequence – it seems unlikely that the ambrotypes are the basis for the miniature, as the detail recorded in the painting is far superior to that of the photographs, but the photographs may have been used by the artist as a memory aid. Given the circumstances of Eleanor's untimely death just one year later, all three portraits were subsequently transformed into treasured 'memento mori'.

## **What we know about this image**

Eleanor Elizabeth Stephen (1839-1861) was the eldest daughter of Sir Alfred Stephen, third Chief Justice of NSW (1844-1873), and his second wife Lady Eleanor Stephen, nee Bedford (1810–1886), who was mother to a large family of eight children of her own and seven stepchildren. While her husband was away in England for a year, Lady Stephen suffered the double deaths on the same day of her first born child and her own mother.

The events leading up to Nelly's sudden death on the 7 February 1861 are described in some detail in Lady Stephen's diary (MLMSS 777/3). Though her mother does not specifically define the fever as typhoid, Nelly's fatal bout of illness is documented as lasting from 26 January to 7 February 1861.

Initially, her sisters were allowed to sit with her but, by Sunday 3 February, Lady Stephen had banned them from the sick room for fear of infection. As Nelly's weakness and delirium intensified to the point of danger, the doctors considered removing her hair to lower her head temperature – an alarming sign to the family of her imminent death. Nelly's hair was cut off on 5 February and on 6 February the doctors 'seemed...to think there was hope for recovery'. But by the final morning they 'merely looked on...saying little' as about a dozen members of the family assembled in the sick room while prayers were read; 30 minutes later Nelly quietly ceased breathing. Mrs Bedford, on hearing of the death of her grand-daughter, succumbed to 'one of her spasms of pain' and died within the hour. Afterwards, Lady Stephen recorded that the family took their last looks at the two corpses 'again and again'.

See: Birth notice: 19 August 1839; Obituary, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1861, p 7.

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**1859 – Eleanor Elizabeth Stephen**

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## Download Image



Creator
Dalton, Edwin, fl. 1853-1865
Inscription
none
Medium
watercolour on ivory
Background
none
Reference
<p>This miniature appears to be modelled on an ambrotype at MIN 202.</p> <p>See also: MIN 194: daguerreotype, c.1854; MIN 203: hand-coloured ambrotype, c.1859</p>

---

## 1858 – Unknown Man

### What we see in this image

In this right facing,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length hand-coloured ambrotype portrait, the unknown male subject is posed seated on a floral upholstered chair with one hand on his thigh, and his other

arm resting on a small table covered in a similarly distinctive floral-patterned plush cloth – both the chair and the plush cloth are known studio props of the Sydney-based (American-trained) photographer Thomas Skelton Glaister. From April 1855 Glaister's American and Australian Daguerreotype Gallery was located at 100 Pitt Street, and concentrated its studio portraiture on Sydney society's elite. Although Glaister's photographs were expensive, he offered hand-colouring for no extra charge and quickly garnered a reputation for high photographic standards. The sitter wears a well-tailored, three-piece 'ditto' suit of light-coloured tweed cloth comprising a single-breasted frock coat with long narrow, sleeves, a turn back collar and large self-covered buttons, fastened high at the base of the throat and then left open to reveal a matching single-breasted vest and pair of well-fitted trousers. He wears a fine white linen shirt with a stand collar and a pale blue silk neckcloth. A gold watch chain is draped across his torso from the pocket in which his watch has been placed, looped through a button hole at his waist and anchored with a T-bar in the shape of a [sword or rifle]. All outer garments for men were generally made of wool at this time and wrinkled easily without extraordinary care; the trouser press was not invented until the 1890s. Men were usually clean shaven in the 1850s, when soldiers returning from the battlefields of the Crimean War (1853-56) made beards acceptable in polite society; in the colonies miners, too, came back from the goldfields unshaven. Though hair length shortened through the decade, by the mid-1850s most respectable men were sporting long side burns or a fringe of beard around the cheeks and along the jawline.

## **What we know about this image**

Thomas Glaister was the finest exponent of the ambrotype in Australia. In 1857 he advertised that his ambrotypes were twice the size of any other in Sydney and impervious to fading due to his exclusive enamelling process which, he claimed, not

only fixed the colours but added a 'brilliancy to the picture...having all the transparency of miniatures on ivory.' SMH, 21 November 1857. PHOTOGRAPHER: Thomas Skelton Glaister (1825 – 1904) worked for the Meade Brother's photographic studio in New York from about 1850 to 1854, when he arrived in Australia to work for Meade Brothers' Melbourne branch, located at 5 Great Collins Street. Glaister moved from Melbourne to Sydney in April 1855, establishing his own studio which he called the American Australian Portrait Gallery. On Tuesday 4 Dec 1855, Thomas Glaister advertised on the front page of Sydney's The Empire newspaper describing his 'American and Australian Daguerreotype Gallery', as having: splendid Photographic Rooms, with one of the best arranged and largest skylights in the colonies, at 100, Pitt-street, next door to the Royal Victoria Theatre, where he is now producing likenesses which are pronounced by good judges to be vastly superior in delineation, boldness, and the most lifelike to any ever before taken in this colony...Mr. G. has one of Haydon and Co.'s quick working cameras (the quickest now made), the only instrument of the kind in this country, by which pictures are taken in one fourth of the time required by other cameras... On 5 January 1856, the People's Advocate reported: Having recently paid a visit to Mr. Glaister's American and Australian Portrait Gallery, next door to the Victoria Theatre, we must pronounce it as the most complete and best arranged studio for taking likenesses in the photographic style, we have yet seen in Sydney... Glaister also provided advice for sitters on clothing that would reproduce well, including the suggestion that '...For gentlemen gloves should always be omitted; [and] dark vests, scarfs or handkerchiefs are preferable...' AMBROTYPE: By 1856 the daguerreotype had been superseded by a new wet-plate photographic process on glass known as the 'ambrotype' which quickly became the more fashionable process. Brought to Sydney in 1854 by James Freeman of Freeman Brothers, photographers in George Street, this special type of collodion process was faster than previous methods, with an exposure time less than 10 seconds,

and produced a glass negative which, when placed against a dark background, created the optical illusion of a positive image without the reflective issues of the daguerreotype. It could also be coloured and was a quarter of the price. The ambrotype proved popular with the middle classes but, as with the daguerreotype, it was destined to be short-lived as copies could not be made. COLLODION: The collodion positive, or ambrotype, was made by coating glass plate with a viscous liquid known as 'collodion', made by dissolving guncotton in alcohol and ether which, after the chemicals in the emulsion evaporated, left a thin clear light-sensitive film on the plate. This process required photographers to coat, expose and develop their plates while still wet (hence the term 'wet-plate' photography) working quickly before the collodion dried and lost its light-sensitivity. Photographers were slow to realise that the collodion negative could also be used to produce multiple positive prints which, once they did, would change portraiture for ever.

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**Hover on image to zoom in**



**1858 – Unknown Man**

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## Download Image



Creator
Glaister, Thomas, fl.1855-1870, attrib.] NB: identified by studio props
Inscription
verso: '6776'
Medium
photograph
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>
See also DLPa 63

---

## 1858 – ‘Unknown Woman’

### What we see in this image

In this right facing,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length hand-coloured ambrotype portrait, the unknown female subject is posed with one hand holding a small posy of [silk] flowers in her lap. She is

seated on distinctive floral-upholstered chair with the other hand resting on a small table covered in a similar floral-patterned plush cloth – both the chair and the plush cloth are known studio props of the Sydney-based (American-trained) photographer Thomas Skelton Glaister. From April 1855 Glaister's American and Australian Daguerreotype Gallery was located at 100 Pitt Street and concentrated its studio portraiture work on Sydney society's elite. Although Glaister's photographs were expensive, he offered hand-colouring for no extra charge and quickly garnered a reputation for high photographic standards, producing portraits which were guaranteed never to fade.

The unidentified sitter wears a summer day dress in a fashionably gauzy, tartan-patterned, light-weight cotton fabric (possibly organdie) with the stripes arranged in a horizontal placement to accentuate the breadth of the silhouette – across the bust at the shoulder, around the width of the sleeves and the fullness of the plain, bell-shaped skirt. Her softly-pleated jacket bodice is buttoned to the neck, worn with a narrow lace collar fastened with a [gold] brooch, and caught in a series of tucks below the bust, bringing the fullness in at the waist and sewn down to form a deep point. The sleeve caps and cuffs of her  $\frac{3}{4}$  length 'pagoda' sleeves are trimmed with contrasting bias bands of plain [organdie] and left open below the elbow above full white cotton undersleeves, or 'engageants', with white-work embroidered cuffs. The long, fine-linked gold chain around her neck may suspending a watch which would usually be tucked into a small 'watch' pocket set into the waistband of her dress.

She wears her centre-parted dark hair in the popular 'bandeau' style with smoothed front sections wrapped over her ears and pinned behind. The remainder of her hair is arranged in a large, twisted roll forming a 'halo' around the crown of her head, its shine suggesting that it has probably been oiled.

## What we know about this image

The fashions of the 1850s demanded a horizontal emphasis, enhanced by the use of light-weight fabrics with patterns printed or woven in horizontal orientations. The invention in 1856 of the light-weight steel 'cage-crinoline' – hooped bands concentrically suspended from the waist by a series of tapes or sewn onto a single petticoat – reduced the weight of women's clothing by replacing layers of horsehair-stiffened (crinoline) petticoats without any loss of volume. As cage-crinolines could be produced quickly and cheaply they became the first fashion to be universally adopted by all ages and classes. Light-weight fabrics ensured a buoyancy of movement that enabled crinoline-supported skirts to attain an imposing width by the end of the decade.

### PHOTOGRAPHER:

Thomas Skelton Glaister (1825-1904) had worked for the Meade Brother's photographic studio in New York from about 1850 to 1854, before travelling to Australia to work for Meade Brothers' Melbourne branch at 5 Great Collins Street. Glaister moved to Sydney from Melbourne in April 1855, establishing his own studio which he called the American Australian Portrait Gallery.

On Tuesday 4 Dec 1855, Thomas Glaister advertised his 'American and Australian Daguerreotype Gallery' on the front page of Sydney's The Empire newspaper, describing his: splendid Photographic Rooms, with one of the best arranged and largest skylights in the colonies, at 100, Pitt-street, next door to the Royal Victoria Theatre, where he is now producing likenesses which are pronounced by good judges to be vastly superior in delineation, boldness, and the most lifelike to any ever before taken in this colony...Mr. G. has one of Haydon and Co.'s quick working cameras (the quickest now made), the only instrument of the kind in this country, by which pictures are taken in one fourth of the time required by other cameras...



On 5 January 1856, The People's Advocate reported:

Having recently paid a visit to Mr. Glaister's American and Australian Portrait Gallery, next door to the Victoria Theatre, we must pronounce it as the most complete and best arranged studio for taking likenesses in the photographic style, we have yet seen in Sydney...

Glaister also provided advice for sitters on clothing that would reproduce well including the suggestion that '...figured dresses with strong contrasts take well...[but] bonnets seldom should be worn, as they shade the face, and the style changes...'

#### AMBROTYPE:

By 1856 the daguerreotype had been superseded by a new wet-plate photographic process on glass known as the 'ambrotype' which quickly became the more fashionable process. Brought to Sydney in 1854 by James Freeman of Freeman Brothers photographers in George Street, this special type of collodion process was faster than previous methods, with an exposure time less than 10 seconds, and produced a glass negative which, when placed against a dark background, created the optical illusion of a positive image without the reflective issues of the daguerreotype. It was a quarter of the price and could also be coloured. The ambrotype proved popular with the middle classes but, like the daguerreotype, it was destined to be short-lived as copies could not be made.

Thomas Glaister was the finest exponent of the ambrotype in Australia. In 1857 he advertised that his ambrotypes were twice the size of any other in Sydney and impervious to fading due to his exclusive enamelling process which he claimed not only fixed the colours but added a 'brilliancy to the picture...having all the transparency of miniatures on ivory' (SMH, 21 November 1857).

#### COLLODION

The collodion positive, or 'ambrotype', was made by coating

glass plate with a viscous liquid known as 'collodion', made by dissolving guncotton in alcohol and ether which, after the chemicals in the emulsion evaporated, left a thin clear light-sensitive film on the plate. This process required photographers to coat, expose and develop their plates while still wet (hence the term 'wet-plate' photography) working quickly before the collodion dried and lost its light-sensitivity. Photographers were slow to realise that the collodion negative could also be used to produce multiple positive prints which, once they did, would change portraiture forever.

**Print page or save as a PDF**

**Hover on image to zoom in**



**1858 – ‘Unknown Woman’**

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

Download Image



Creator
Glaister, Thomas, fl. 1854-1870 (attributed)
Inscription
Verso: 'm/a 6776' in pencil
Medium
Photograph
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>
See also DL Pa 64

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**1858      –      Middleton      family  
portrait**

## What we see in this image

This large, full-length hand-coloured ambrotype studio portrait is believed to depict three members of the Middleton family, dressed in fashionable 'at home' attire and posed with studio props to replicate a domestic setting. It shows one woman (left) standing next to a posing table covered in a patterned cloth, and another woman seated (centre) with a book in her lap, who is probably the wife of the man standing to her left with his arm reaching behind her, his other hand resting on the top rail of a chair set on a [patterned] carpet against a plain backdrop.

Both women appear to wear fashionable summer day dresses of similar [silk] fabric – but this may be an enhancement of the hand-colouring – with the wide, mid-arm length, bell-shaped 'pagoda' sleeves customary from the 1850s into the early 1860s, generally worn over white undersleeves, either closed or open at the wrist.

The sleeves of the woman on the left are fitted with tight, pointed caps around the upper arms, a style particularly fashionable in the late fifties, and trimmed with rows of black 'soutache' braid. Her loosely-pleated, high-necked jacket bodice is cut in the elegant style known as a 'basquine-body' which extends over the hips, the waistline marked by a [ribbon] belt with floating ends above a plain, pleated or gathered full skirt. She wears a deep [crocheted] white lace collar, fastened with an oval brooch, and a long black [jet/ribbon] suspending... her smoothly centre-parted hair is arranged with side ringlets and ribbon bows which may indicate her youth. Earrings??

The seated woman wears a much plainer style of gown, the high-necked bodice with elbow length sleeves, worn with full white undersleeves gathered into a band at the wrist, above a pleated corsage, tightly fitted through the torso and deeply pointed at the waist, over a plain, pleated or gathered full skirt. Her accessories comprise a white lace collar, fastened

with a [small] brooch, gold earrings and a long gold watch guard. Her centre-parted hair is arranged in the fashionable 'bandeau' style with smooth front sections wrapped over her ears and pinned behind. The full skirts of both female subjects would usually be supported by cage-crinolines worn with several petticoats to conceal the wires which may, in this instance, have been removed to accommodate the tight grouping of the portrait.

The male figure in this group wears an array of unmatched [wool] suitings typical of the period, comprising a single-breasted dark jacket with wide notched lapels worn with dark trousers and a light-coloured, single-breasted, shawl-collared waistcoat draped with a gold watch guard chain and fastened over a white shirt with a peaked, stand collar and black neck cloth tied in a flat bow. He wears his curly hair with a side parting and brushed back from his forehead above clean-shaven cheeks with a fringe of beard around the chin.

This new, looser style of jacket was known as the 'sack' and became available from the mid-1850s, identified by a more generous cut through the body and broader sleeves attached to a higher 'armscye' allowing greater comfort and movement.

## **What we know about this image**

Sergeant John Middleton (1825-1894), baker, soldier and policeman, came to Australia in 1852. In 1861 he was wounded in the process of arresting the bushranger, Frank Gardiner, who subsequently escaped.

John Middleton (1825-1894) was born in Foulsham, Norfolk, England. Having worked as a baker, he enlisted in the 5th Regiment in 1843. He served in Ireland and later in Mauritius, where in 1848 at Port Louis he married Ellen (1827-1904), née Hartley of Lancashire. They sailed with two children in the *Alecto* as steerage passengers and arrived at Melbourne on 13 October 1852. Middleton later joined the Victorian Police

Force.

In November 1854, at Diamond Swamp, NSW, Middleton became a trooper with the Western Road Patrol, promoted to sergeant in 1855. Serving at Blackheath from 1857 and at Hartley from 1860, he was keen and ambitious, recording his daily movements and those of other officers in his diaries (MLMSS 1876). The outbreak of gold-mining on the famous Turon fields resulted in turbulent times and conflicts with bushrangers who infested the country. In 1861 Middleton was sent to Tuena, NSW, close to the hide-outs of 'highway-men' in the Abercrombie Ranges.

In May-June 1861 with Constable Hosie he looked for Bathurst-born bushranger, Johnny Peisley (1835-1862), considered by many to be the first true Wild Colonial Boy. On 15 July the troopers rode to Bigga and next day went to William Fogg's sly-grog shop where they surprised Frank Gardiner who shot Middleton three times, in the hand, mouth and hip. Middleton managed to arrest Gardiner and left for Bigga to get help and reinforcements. In the meantime Hosie allegedly took a bride and allowed him to escape. In 1864 Middleton was a main witness for the Crown in the trials of Gardiner but contradicted himself in evidence. In 1875 he was awarded a silver medal by the government for gallant and faithful services in capturing bushrangers.

Middleton made his home in Orange in 1865, where he became an alderman and mayor in 1891, and died aged 68, on 6 November 1894. He was survived by his wife, and a family of five sons and four daughters.

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## 1858 – Middleton family portrait

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Download Image



Creator
unknown
Inscription
none
Medium
photograph
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>

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**1858 – Sergeant William Ormrod**

## What we see in this image

This front facing  $\frac{3}{4}$  seated 'ambrotype' shows a male subject who looks to be aged in his 50s, which may place some doubt on its attribution as Sergeant William Ormrod. As the identity of the photographer is also unknown, this portrait is best dated by its photographic format and the sitter's clothing. The subject is posed in the act of paying a social call, as indicated by the top hat placed crown side down on the table beside him, though this clothing accessory may also be a studio prop.

At the time this image was made, Sergeant William Ormrod would have been aged about 35, and it is possible his wartime service in Crimea may have taken a toll on his appearance. Whatever his true identity, however, the man in this portrait wears an ensemble of mismatched suitings typical of the 1850s, including the typically generously-cut 'sac' coat which only emphasises this sitter's thinness. This wider, looser style of coat was popular from the second half of the decade into the 1860s. The subject of this portrait wears his longline version fastened high at the neck with a single button below a narrow collar, over dark wool trousers, a [matching] single-breasted waistcoat with a gold watch chain and fobs, and a white shirt with a turn down collar and ribbon necktie.

He wears the full beard of a returned soldier, his longish greying hair brushed back from his forehead with a side parting, and curling over his ears.

## What we know about this image

Sergeant William Ormrod (c.1823-1878) is thought to have served in the Crimean War (1853-1856) and to have come to Australia from India, to buy horses. Staying on with Governor Fitzroy, he later started the first brickworks in Ryde. In 1858, he married Amelia Dorcas Troughton (1835-1914), who is believed to be a daughter of Dorcas (c.1808-1880) and James (c.1809-1873) Troughton of Parramatta.

At the time of his death, aged 55, in 1878, Ormrod's profession was given as foreman at Stewart's cedar yard, Pitt Street. Buried in the graveyard of St Anne's Church, Ryde, he left an estate that included a substantial amount of property in Glebe.

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**1858 – Sergeant William Ormrod**

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

## Download Image



Creator
unknown
Inscription
none
Medium
photograph
Background
none
Reference
See also: MIN 99; ML 459: Amelia Dorcas Troughton, later Ormrod

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# 1858 – Margaret Moore Smail, and her children

## What we see in this image

This charming family portrait shows Margaret Moore Smail, aged

about 32, with two of her five children: John standing to her right, aged about 7, and Isabella Rhubina, aged about 4, on her left. Emancipist artist Joseph Backler was a prolific and highly-regarded portrait painter, with his client base drawn from those who had also done well in the colonies: publicans, builders, millers, ship-owners, shop-owners, and farmers. The most distinctive feature of Backler's work was his careful delineation of the faces of his subjects which did not tend to flattery. Mrs Smail and her children are conventionally posed in a domestic setting furnished with a [cedar] sofa, probably of colonial manufacture upholstered in black [horsehair], an architectural column with red curtain drapery and a landscape vista behind.

Mrs Smail wears a one-piece home dress in a soft, light-weight gauzy, floral-patterned grey fabric, made closed to the throat with a pointed white work collar, fastened by a large triple-lobed chased gold brooch, above the bodice with its sloping shoulderline and wide, double-layered capelet trimmed with braid and fringing, applied over the bust pointed waistline, full spreading skirts and pleated, split 'pagoda' sleeves, the whole ensemble trimmed with rosettes, bows and streamers of grey [silk] ribbon. She wears her centre-parted dark hair in a moderate version of the 'bandeau' style, wrapped over her ears above pendant gold earrings, and tucked into a low bun at the nape of her neck, around which is draped a long, gold watch chain hanging well below her waist, and suspending a heavy gold watch with which the two children are playing.

John wears typical attire for boys during their toilet training years and before they were breeched (ie. put into breeches or trousers) at around 5-6 years of age. His full-skirted, short-sleeved dress is constructed in a jaunty combination of grey and pink fabrics with military style trims and a wide shallow neckline above a fitted, pleated bodice with a narrow peplum at the waist, his white undergarment just visible at the neck and edges of his sleeves. He holds a toy



whip in his right hand, a suitably masculine attribute, and his short blonde curly hair has been brushed into a side parting – a useful indicator of gender in an era when all girls wore their hair with a centre parting.

Isabella wears a toddler's dress of yellow fabric with bands of black ribbon marking its v-shaped plastron bodice above a loose skirt and short, shirred sleeves; her curly blonde hair is arranged with a gender-appropriate centre parting.

## **What we know about this image**

Irish-born Margaret Moore (1826-1870) was the daughter of a farmer. She arrived in NSW from Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, in 1844. Alexander Smail (1816-1867) was born in Scotland and migrated to Australia on the Herald in 1844 with his first wife Violet, nee McCleod (1821-1847), and two of their ten children, Robert (1840-1871) and Violet Jnr (1843-1844) who died shortly after the family's arrival in February. Another son, Alexander Jnr, was born in Sydney (1844-1906), before the death of Mrs Smail on 27 June 1847. Later that year Alexander Snr married Margaret Moore. The couple had at least three sons and two daughters including John (1850-1920), Isabella Rhubina (1853-1945) and Fanny Jane (1857-1920).

Alexander Smail set up a bakery in Bathurst Street in 1844, moving the business to Argyle Street at Miller's Point in 1851, where he remained until his death in 1867. He was elected Alderman for Gipps Ward from 1 December 1864 to 4 September 1867, and died on 8 October 1867. At the time of her death in 1870, Margaret Smail owned a store and bakehouse and two allotments on the north side of Argyle Street, a parcel of land on the south side of Argyle Street, Millers Point, and 10 acres at Clarence Town, near Maitland.

John Moore Smail was chief engineer for the Water Board, in charge for 20 years of both Sydney's water supply and its sewerage system. Educated at Fort Street and Sydney Grammar,

through the influence of his father, a City of Sydney alderman (1864-1867), John was apprenticed to the City Engineer whose department controlled Sydney's water supply. In 1879 he was appointed the first engineer of the newly created Sewerage Board; he also later became engineer-in-chief for the Water Board. John Smail was the first president of the Institute of Local Government Engineers of Australasia and its first Life Member, a member of the Association of Municipal and County Engineers of Great Britain, and a member of the Royal Society of Australia. He conducted routine biological testing of the Sydney sewerage network and inspected similar systems in Europe and America. An officer in the army reserve and a magistrate, at the time of his death on 17 June 1920, he was engineer-in-chief to the Metropolitan Board of Water Supply and Sewerage.

Isabella Rhubina Smail married William Davidson in 1883, and died at Drummoyne in 1945.

#### ARTIST:

Joseph Backler (1813?-1895) arrived in Sydney in the Portland on 25 May 1832. Convicted in 1831 for issuing forged cheques, the 18-year-old was sentenced to death, later commuted to transportation for life. Indents describe him as being able to read and write and list his profession as a landscape painter. Continually in trouble, Backler was not granted a ticket-of-leave until February 1842. From 1843 he was assigned to Sydney frame makers and carvers, Messrs Cetta & Hughes, and in that year also advertised his services as a 'Portrait, Miniature and Landscape Painter, in oils and watercolours'. He was finally granted a conditional pardon in 1847. Probably the most prolific oil painter in early colonial Australia, Backler made his name as a portrait painter and more than 120 of his works survive.

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## 1858 – Margaret Moore Smail, and her children

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**Download Image**



Creator
Backler, Joseph (1813-1895)
Inscription
LLHS: 'J. Backler 1858'
Medium
oil painting
Background
none
Reference
<a href="#">Open 1</a>
<a href="#">Open 2</a>
See also: ML 646: Alexander Smail (1816-1867)

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## 1858 – Dr Edward Swarbreck

# Hall

## What we see in this image

This  $\frac{3}{4}$  length standing, professional or 'occupational' portrait shows Dr Edward Swarbreck Hall, aged 54, who was house surgeon of the Hobart Town Hospital. He is posed next to a piece of scientific apparatus with two large anatomical illustrations (one human and one zoological) behind him with diagrams relating to herpetology (snakes) and lepidopterology (moths/butterflies).

Dr Hall is dressed in a two-piece 'business' suit of dark wool, comprising the more formal style of double-breasted tail coat with notched lapels and turn back collar, and matching trousers, worn with a double-breasted waistcoat in a darker fabric (possibly silk) buttoned over a white linen shirt with a high collar and a black silk neckcloth. He is clean shaven and wears his greying hair with a side parting, brushed back from his forehead and curling over his ears.

This image is a rare example of a 'chromatype' photoprint – a direct positive print onto paper from a glass collodion negative using chromium salts as the sensitive ingredient – of which only a few dozen specimens survive. It is signed and dated by Tasmanian photographer Frederick Frith who invented the process in 1856. An early demonstration of the potential of paper photography (though perhaps looking more like a painting than a photograph) the size and vitality of this new photographic format, in comparison with the miniature scale of daguerreotypes and ambrotypes, would have been quite stunning at the time.

Frederick Frith (1819-1871) was always more interested in painting than in photography, and throughout his career his

most memorable images were his carefully composed and delicately overpainted portrait photographs which, though these images look very much like watercolours, were actually created photographically:

Taken...[in] a sitting of 5 seconds...portrayed in the very aspect and attitude of the instant of depiction and with the most minute expression of the moment...truly a gallery of living portraits of our most distinguished citizens and colonists, and may be seen in the manner as they lived...' (The Hobart Town Daily Mercury, August 12 1858, pge 6)

## **What we know about this image**

Pioneering medical scientist and moral activist, Dr Edward Swarbreck Hall (1805-1881) studied medicine in Dublin and London, becoming a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and a licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries. Coming into contact with the poverty, filth and unhealthiness of slum life in the backs streets large industrial cities like Liverpool, where he also saw the devastating effects of outbreaks of disease like smallpox and typhoid fever, Hall became aware of the peculiar problems of large numbers of orphan and destitute children herded together in charitable institutions and realised the importance of diet and nutrition in relation to health.

Arriving at Hobart Town with his wife in November 1832, Hall took up duty as a medical officer, advertising his services in the Courier on 27 September 1833. Appointed as house surgeon to the Hobart Hospital early in 1853, it was during this time that Hall began to make a comprehensive statistical study of Hobart with a view to sanitary reform. In July 1856, Hall's scientific approach to problems of public health based on objective statistical enquiry were documented in his article, 'On the Medical Topography and Vital Statistics of the City of Hobartton, Tasmania, and its Southern Sub-Districts for 1855', published in the Australian Medical Journal in a series of parts between 1856 and 1858.

It was through Hall's efforts that questions of sanitation and public health in Hobart Town soon became matters of world-wide scientific discussion and investigation – recording 883 deaths out of a population of 26,095 and equalling a mortality rate 34/1000 which exceeded the 25/1000 deemed acceptable in European cities like London – proving that Hobart was statistically pre-eminent for its excessive mortality.

In 1861 Hall became chairman of the executive committee of the new Benevolent Society. His untiring advocacy of public health reforms was chiefly aimed at assisting helpless children, and he was largely responsible for the compulsory Vaccination Act that, at his death, was being rushed through parliament.

In 1923, J.H.L. Cumpston (1880–1954), the first Director General of the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health writing in the periodical Health (Dec 1954), named Hall 'The First Australian Sanitarian':

The honour of being the first man in Australia to preach the gospel of public health with an inspired intelligence and courageously to fight for health reforms in the face of great obstruction belongs to [Dr Edward Swarbreck Hall, M.R.C.S., of Hobart.](#)

## CHROMATYPE

In colonial photography, the term 'chromatype' referred to the process of creating direct positive prints onto paper from glass collodion negatives made by using chromium salts as the sensitive ingredient. It produced a type of thin, matt olive-toned albumen or salted paper print which was usually subtly overpainted in oil or watercolour. Even when the colouring medium is delicately applied, in some cases the overpainting completely obliterates the photographic base and it can be hard to distinguish an image as a chromatype.

## PHOTOGRAPHER

Frederick Frith (1819-1871) was a successful portrait painter and professional photographer in colonial Melbourne and



Hobart. Born in the UK, he was from an English family of miniature painters and silhouettists and worked as a painter in Melbourne in 1853 where he claimed to have practiced in London, Brighton, Scotland and Ireland. Initially establishing himself as a portrait and animal painter, in 1854 Frith moved to Hobart Town where he collaborated briefly with the Duryea brothers and Archibald MacDonald, and then with John Matthieson Sharp from 1855 to 1856; Sharp had just bought a short-lived Calotype Gallery established by English photographer Walter Dickenson. Together, Frith and Sharp made coloured portraits and landscape views, Sharp taking the photographs and Frith colouring them and advertising their Chromatype Gallery at 110 Collins Street in the Hobart Town Advertiser on 20 July 1855.

Establishing his own studio in 1856, Frith's brother Henry had joined his enterprise by 1857. Marrying Emma Golding in Holy Trinity Church, Hobart Town on 11 October 1858, Frith continued the Hobart Town studio as well as advertising his abilities as a painter, but the firm's painted photographs seem to have been far more popular with the public. This was hardly surprising given Frith's painting prices, although his coloured photographs were also expensive.

By August 1858, Frith was advertising:

...The great advantage of these processes is the striking accuracy of their results; thus we have the statesmen, the warrior, the poet all portrayed in the very aspect and attitude of the instant of depiction and with the most minute expression of the moment...truly a gallery of living portraits of our most distinguished citizens and colonists, and may be seen in the manner as they lived... (The Hobart Town Daily Mercury, 12 August 1858, p. 6)

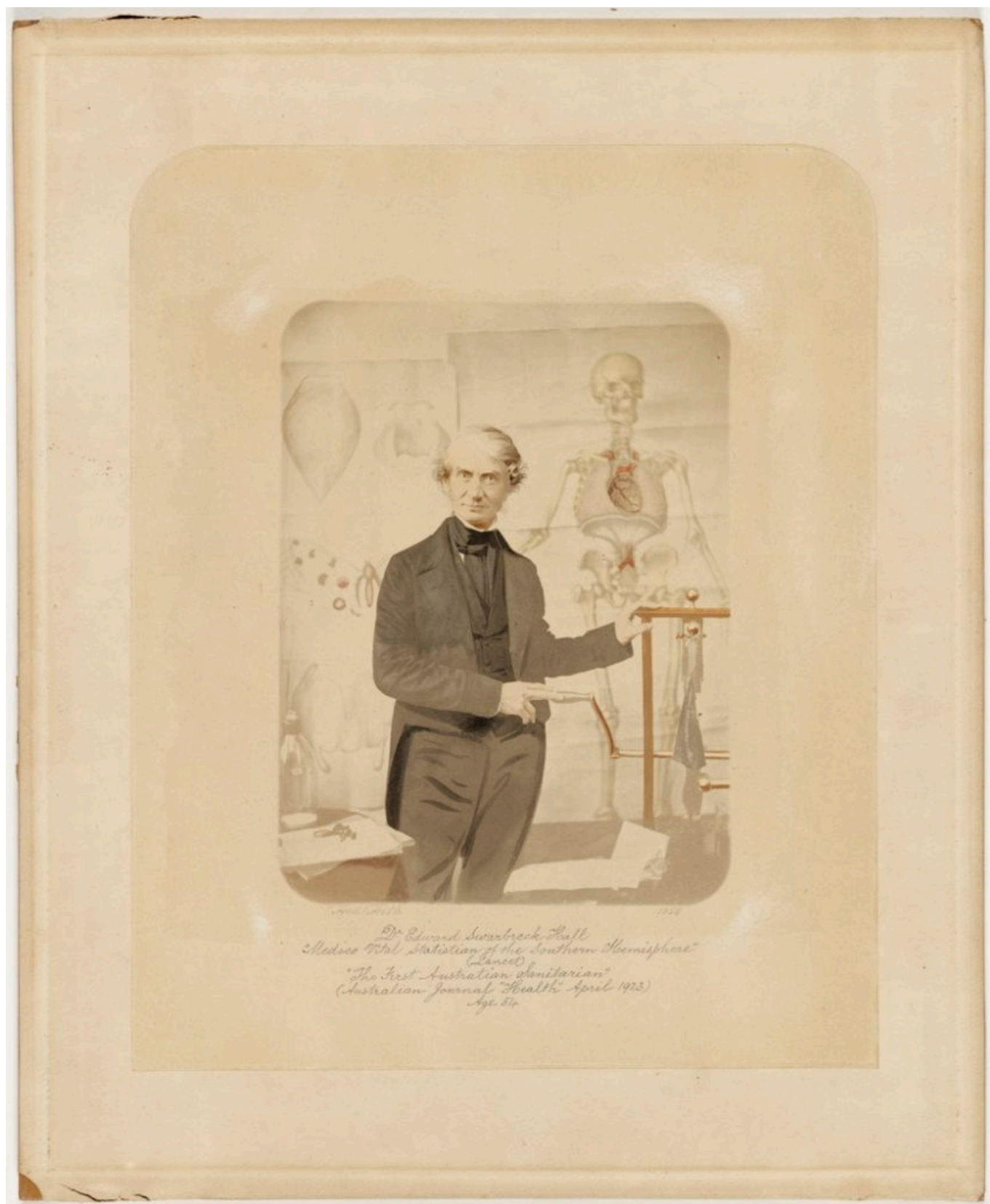
In December 1858, The Cornwall Chronicle was reporting that 'portraits of the elite of the Tasmanian community...any subject whatever can be taken so quick ['a sitting of 5 seconds'] in the new process of Messrs Frith & Co. (25 December 1858, p.

6).

In 1859, operating as Frith Brothers with an additional studio in Launceston, the pair produced the first commercial albums of views of the state, entitled Tasmania illustrated, and by 1861 Frith was claiming he could produce his images on plates (china), ivory, paper or leather. In 1862 Frith moved back to Victoria, while his brother Henry remained in Launceston, where he was involved in a public stoush with Alfred Bock over the correct use of the 'sennotype' process. Frith continued to operate until in 1867, when he sold his negatives to George Cherry and moved to New Zealand.

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**1858 – Dr Edward Swarbreck Hall**

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

## Download Image



Creator
Frith, Frederick (1819-1871)
Inscription
Signed and dated, lower edge, either side: 'Fred. Frith 1858'; below image in [later] calligraphic hand: 'Dr Edward Swarbreck Hall / "Medico Vital Statistian [sic] of the Southern Hemisphere" / (Lancet) / "The First Australian Sanitarian" [sic] / (Australian Journal "Health" April 1923) / Age 54'
Medium
Photograph
Background
Given to J.H.L. Cumpston in old age by E.S. Hall's son on seeing Cumpston's article about Hall published in Health, v.1, no.4, April 1923.
Reference
<a href="#">Open 1</a>
<a href="#">Open 2</a>

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## 1858 – Jane Allen

## What we see in this image

This front-facing,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length oil portrait shows Jane Allen, aged 53, seated in an easy chair, richly upholstered and buttoned in a colourful silk [brocade] fabric, and set against a masonry wall with a view on the right, behind her, suggestive of a domestic garden. In 1861, a Sydney Morning Herald review had reported that the portrait artist, James Anderson, 'had portrayed on canvass many of our citizens, and always with the greatest success—his works being as much esteemed for their artistic finish as for their correct likeness'.

For this portrait, Mrs Allen has chosen a striking [silk] afternoon gown, providing clear evidence (contrary to the opinions expressed in many nineteenth century sources) that some older woman did continue to wear fashionable attire, even after 35 years of marriage. As befitting a woman of her elite financial and social position in the colony, Mrs Allen would have had access to expensive materials and a very good dressmaker; this dress through its 'bespoke' manufacture certainly represents a generous outlay of time, money and skill.

Boldly-striped silks like this were extremely popular at this date. With its pattern of broad and narrow stripes and strongly contrasting colour combinations, the imported fabric was probably woven rather than printed and, in this instance, possibly from France rather than from China. Cut in the latest shape – a new shorter type of corset without a centre 'busk' was introduced in 1853 – this lessened the restrictive fit and length of earlier styles allowing the dress bodice to sit closer to the natural waistline. The dressmaker has also maximised the vivid geometric arrangement of the fabric, making a highly effective use of different directional placement of the stripes to emphasise the fashionably fuller bust and narrow waist of the style.

Jane wears a narrow flat lace collar at the neck of her gown, fastened with a large oval [agate/hair] brooch in a chased gold setting, rimmed with seed pearls or diamonds, above sheer dark red [silk organza] ribbon streamers cascading over a panel of carefully-aligned chevrons pieced along the centre front seam of the bodice corsage, with pleats fanning up from the waist on either side forming a V-shaped 'plastron' spreading over the sloping shoulder line and strengthening the overall geometric impact of her dress, the chevron band continuing down the front of the full spreading skirt with panels of vertically aligned stripes on either side pleated into the pointed waistline.

Her 'pagoda' sleeves are cut on the cross grain, again maximising the boldness of the overall design, and worn with white undersleeves closed at the wrist. Adding to the richness of the textile display, draped around her lower back and forearms Jane wears an expensive imported wool shawl of variously-coloured woven striped bands patterned with paisley motifs. She also displays an engagement ring and wedding band in her left hand and a long, fine gold chain around her neck, hanging below her waist, perhaps suspending 'pince-nez' spectacles.

Her centre-parted grey hair is arranged in long side ringlets in a somewhat dated style – perhaps holding onto the hairstyle of her youth which was a common affectation of older women – and covered with an elaborate indoor cap of white silk (blonde) lace, trimmed with silk floss fringe and a pair of long [handmade] lace lappets [possibly antique] hanging down over her shoulders on each side.

## **What we know about this image**

Jane Allen, nee Bowden, (1807-1893) was a daughter of Wesleyan schoolmaster Thomas Bowden, and came to Sydney in 1811, aged 4. On 24 July 1823 she married George Allen (1800-1877) who had arrived in the Mary Anne in January 1816. The first

solicitor to receive his legal training in the colony, Allen was the founder of the oldest legal firm in Australia (Allen, Allen & Helmsley). Articled to Frederick Garling in July 1817, George was admitted to practise as a solicitor on 24 July 1822. His first office was on the corner of George and Hunter Streets, and later in Elizabeth Street from 1825. He was appointed an MLC in 1856.

George Allen joined the Methodist Society in 1821, and was soon a leading member, becoming intensely religious. By 1831 he owned three houses in Sydney, held an estate of thirty acres (12 ha) at Botany Bay, and had acquired ninety-six acres (39 ha) three miles out of town at the Glebe, where he built a large house known as 'Toxteth Park', in which he would live with his family of fourteen children – comprising five sons & five daughters surviving to adulthood – for the rest of his life. A visitor to the estate in the 1870s described 'a large gathering of distinguished people, the ladies dressed as well, perhaps as expensively as the ladies of New York' and Mrs Allen as 'the pleasantest, most amiable and motherly lady'. Jane Allen lived on the Toxteth Estate for 60 years and survived her husband for 16 years.

See also: George Allen journals, 1819-1875 (MLMSS 477)

## ARTIST

James Anderson (d. 1882) was a prolific portrait painter of many important colonial subjects in the mid to late 19th century. Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, by 1858 Anderson was in Sydney, exhibiting a portrait of the American consul, Mr Merrill, at Buist's shop in George Street which the Sydney Morning Herald praised as a 'clever and effective portrait ... by an artist who has only recently arrived from Victoria to follow his profession in this colony'. (30 October 1858)

By 1860, Anderson's studio was above Peek & Fotheringham's George Street Auction Rooms. Inspecting Anderson's portrait of William Macpherson, a reporter from The Southern Cross stated that it had, 'all the accessories of skilled art, careful



drawing, delicate manipulation, masterly effects, of light and shade, [which] render the study ... valuable as a work of art independently of its worth as a faithful likeness'.

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**1858 – Jane Allen**

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Creator
Anderson, James (fl. 1852-1877) d.1882
Inscription
J. Anderson, Pinxit., [1859]
Medium
Photograph
Background
none
Reference
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<a href="#">Open 2</a>

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# 1857 – ‘Anne Namoi [Ann Naomi] & Jane Nobbs’

## What we see in this image

This  $\frac{3}{4}$  length double portrait shows Jane Agnes Nobbs, aged 21,

and Ann Naomi Nobbs, aged 19, great-granddaughters of Bounty mutineer, Fletcher Christian. The image is one of a series of photographs of the Pitcairn Islanders taken, following their removal to Norfolk Island in June 1856, at the time of the visit of the Governor-General Sir William Denison in late 1857; the specific circumstances of this quite extraordinary photographic session, on 25 September 1857, are described in a letter from the photographer to the Rev. Thomas Boyes Murray, dated 27 November 1857.

In this portrait, Jane Nobbs is seated on the right, with Ann standing on the left. Both sisters wear loose-fitting day dresses of printed cotton made with a square yoke set in across the shoulder line, with a centre front button closure and narrow band collar, over a voluminous front panel gathered into the yoke above the bust to create a cascade of fabric falling to the floor. In a surprising concession to current trends, the  $\frac{3}{4}$  length sleeves are cut in the fashionable 'pagoda' shape and the women wear their dark hair in the popular 'bandeau' style, with smooth front sections wrapped over their ears and pinned behind into a low bun at the nape of the neck. They also wear a plain or patterned scarf tied around their necks. Perhaps to aid the photographer in achieving sufficient contrast in the image, Jane has draped a plain dark [silk/polished cotton] shawl around her shoulders.

According to the Rev. T.B. Murray, 'The features of the Pitcairners, both men and women, were more strongly European than I had expected. They were tanned and brown skinned, but most were no darker than sunburned, brown-haired Englishmen. The women looked more Polynesian than the men... [and] wore loose cotton dresses..', Pitcairn – The Island the People and the Pastor, 1859, London, England.

From the early-nineteenth century, missionaries introduced Pacific communities to highly modest versions of a type of European women's 'undress' known as the 'Mother Hubbard' – so called after the nursery rhyme illustrations of 'Old Mother

Hubbard' published from 1805 – in the belief that the adoption of such clothing by indigenous groups was a sign of civilised Christian behaviour. These long, loose-fitting dresses with full sleeves and a high- yoked neckline were customarily made from dark serviceable materials for weekday wear and white for Sundays. Designed to be worn unbelted, this relaxed style of 'housedress' eliminated the need for restrictive corseting and was routinely worn indoors by most women, especially during pregnancy, and invalids. It helped revolutionize women's fashion through its reference to freedom of choice for women, not just in fashion but also in other spheres of life.

## **What we know about this image**

Ann Naomi Nobbs (1838-1931) and Jane Agnes Nobbs (1836-1926) were two of the ten children of George Hunn Nobbs (1799–1884) and Sarah Christian (1810-1899), grand-daughter of Bounty Mutineer, Fletcher Christian. On December 25, 1857, Ann marry Caleb Quintal (1837-1873) on Norfolk Island, raising a family 9 children; Jane married John Quintal on August 25, 1861; the couple had 7 children.

George Nobbs had first arrived on Pitcairn Island on 5 November 5, 1828, at age 28, and married Sarah Christian in Tahiti on 18 October 1829. By 1838 he had become the acknowledged leader of the Pitcairn community. For over twenty years he taught the youth, ministered to the sick and consoled the dying on the Island. Travelling to England, he was ordained as a minister in 1852.

It was largely on the advice of Nobbs and Admiral Moresby (father of the photographer) that the Pitcairn community elected to migrate to Norfolk Island on 8 June 1856, following the suggestion of the Colonial Office that Norfolk Island was 'fit for the reception of a small body of settlers now existing at Pitcairn Island'. Sir William Denison (1804-1871),

Governor-General of Australia (1855 to 1861), was authorized to control the removal and resettlement of the whole community of 194 persons.

On 25 September 1857, the 'Iris', arrived at Norfolk Island with Sir William Denison and naval officer and photographer Matthew Fortescue Moresby (1828-1918) aboard. Denison recorded that, since 'Moresby had brought a photographic apparatus on shore, I decided to get good likenesses of as many of the islanders as we could ... After a good deal of trouble we got several groups of both males and females; and here and there single photographs'.

Moresby had visited Pitcairn Island several times during the early 1850s, and enjoyed 'taking walks over the Island, sketching, talking and singing', becoming very fond of the Pitcairners: 'truly a more innocent and delightful race could not exist'. On this occasion Moresby himself reported that, 'I turned Mr Nobbs' study into an impromptu dark room and then took some pictures. Of course in taking groups with children, some of them moved'. In 1859, the Rev. T.B. Murray, confirmed that 'ten well executed photographic groups and simple portraits, accomplished by Mr Fortescue Moresby under the above disadvantages, have since reached the author's hands'.

Nobbs continued his former work as pastor and teacher on Norfolk Island until 1859, when Denison sent Thomas Rossiter to act as schoolmaster and store-keeper, increasing Nobbs's salary as chaplain. A century and a half later, the descendants of Nobbs and his wife Sarah are among the largest and most influential of the 'founding father' families which still dominate most aspects of life on this self-governing island territory.

Ref: (See ML A 2881: G. H. Nobbs papers, 1836-79, <http://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110362728>

Pitcairn Island Recorder, 1838 (SLNSW)

Sir William Denison was Governor General of Australia from 1855 to 1861. Married in 1838, to Caroline, nee Hornby, daughter of a naval officer, Denison took up the post of Lieut. Governor of Tasmania In 1847, bringing with him to Australia his wife and four children, including the sketcher Mary Charlotte Denison.

#### PHOTOGRAPHER:

Matthew Fortescue Moresby (1828-1918) (known as Fortescue or 'Forty'), sketcher, amateur photographer and clerk, was the second of the three sons of Admiral Sir Fairfax Moresby and Eliza Louisa, née Williams, of Bakewell, Derbyshire. Sir Fairfax was commander-in-chief in the Pacific in 1850-53 and all his sons served in the region. Moresby was secretary to his father on board HMS Portland in 1852-53, and In 1856-60 Moresby was based at Sydney, as paymaster-in-chief under the command of Commodore William Loring of the flagship 'Iris', where he seems to have begun taking photographs; it is not known from whom he learned the art of wet-plate work but it may have been from his friend E.W. Ward.

NB: Photographs taken by M.F. Moresby on a number of South Pacific islands visited with the Iris, including the Solomon's, New Hebrides and the Pitcairners of Norfolk Island are found in the Macarthur Family's Camden Park albums: ML PXA 4358/Vol.1: Album of views, illustrations and Macarthur family photographs, 1857-66, 1879, by various photographers. <http://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110326756>

[Two unidentified groups on a veranda possibly Pitcairn Islanders]

[Four unidentified groups possibly Pitcairn Islanders]

These were, however, not the first photographs to be taken of the islanders. (See A.P.R. October 1956, pp. 588-597 for an illustrated article on Moresby by K. Burke.)



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*Ann Namer & Jane Nobbs*

## 1857 – ‘Anne Namoi [Ann Naomi] & Jane Nobbs’

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Creator
Matthew Fortescue Moresby (1828–1918)
Inscription
Lower edge: M F M
Medium
Photoprint
Background
To follow
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>