

**#48 March, 2020 Cameraderie
Louis Daguerre (1787–1851)**



Louis Daguerre (full name Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre) is not so well-known as a photographer, as essentially for the invention of modern photo printing. He called the process and image he invented the daguerreotype. It differed from other processes of the time in that it required less exposure time to make the “latent image” that was afterward “developed,” as many of you may have done in your darkrooms. Earlier processes required longer exposures to create a fully finished image.

Here is the Wikipedia article on Daguerre:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Daguerre

And here is the article on his process, the daguerreotype:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daguerreotype>

If you Google “daguerreotype” and select “images,” you can see hundreds of images, including the samples I have selected to show below.

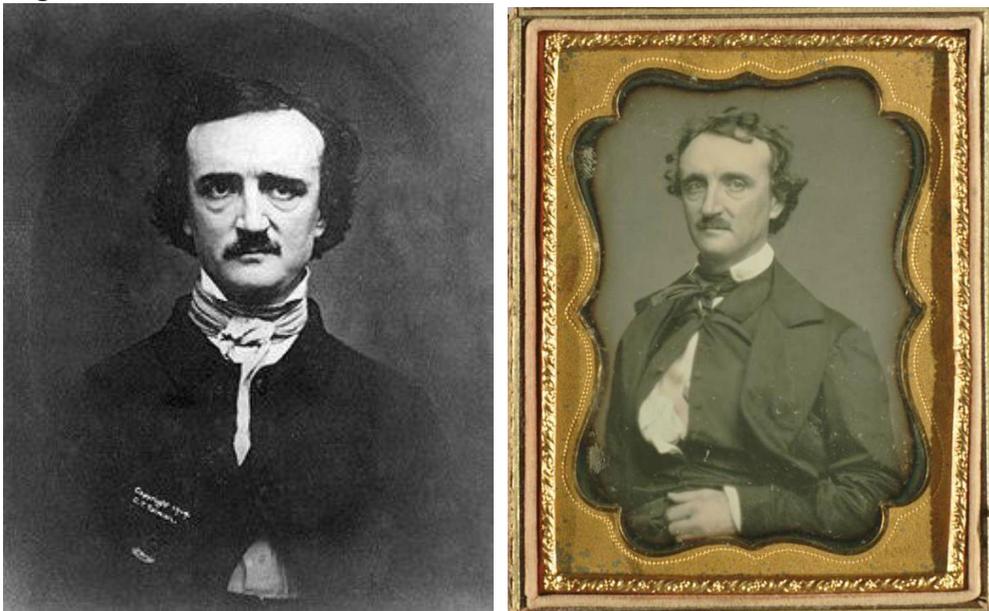
Here, from the Wikipedia daguerreotype article, is the basic process Daguerre invented:

To make the image, a daguerrotypist would polish a sheet of silver-plated copper to a mirror finish, treat it with fumes that made its surface light sensitive, expose it in a camera for as long as was judged to be necessary, which could be as little as a few seconds for brightly sunlit subjects or much longer with less intense lighting; make the resulting latent image on it visible by fuming it with mercury vapor; remove its sensitivity to light by liquid chemical treatment, rinse and dry it, then seal the easily marred result behind glass in a protective enclosure. The image is on a mirror-like silver surface, normally kept under glass, and will appear either positive or negative, depending on the angle at which it is viewed, how it is lit and whether a light or dark background is being reflected in the metal. The darkest areas of the image are simply bare silver; lighter areas have a microscopically fine light-scattering texture. The surface is very delicate, and even the lightest wiping can permanently scuff it. Some tarnish around the edges is normal.

Several types of antique photographs, most often ambrotypes and tintypes, but sometimes even old prints on paper, are very commonly misidentified as daguerreotypes, especially if they are in the small, ornamented cases in which daguerreotypes made in the US and UK were usually housed. The name "daguerreotype" correctly refers only to one very specific image type and medium, the product of a process that was in wide use only from the early 1840s to the late 1850s.

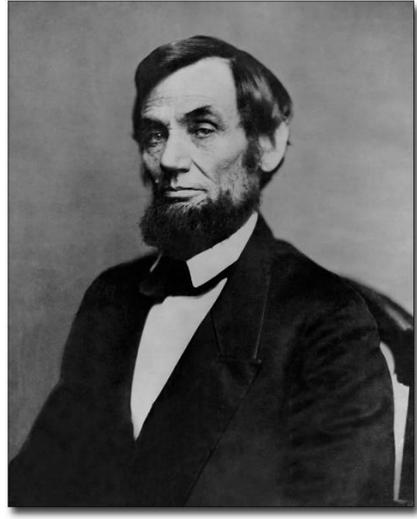
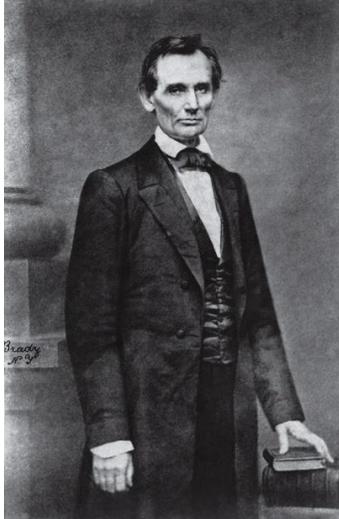
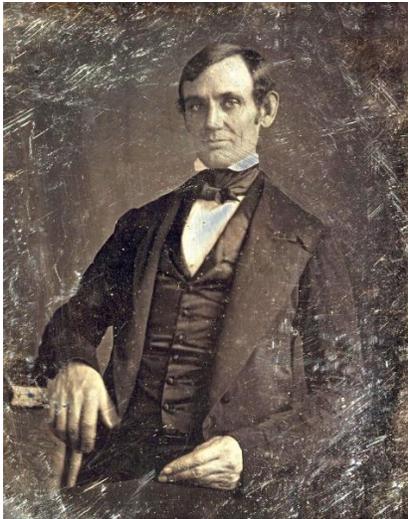
I selected some daguerreotype images of famous people, and grouped them for interest:

Edgar Allen Poe



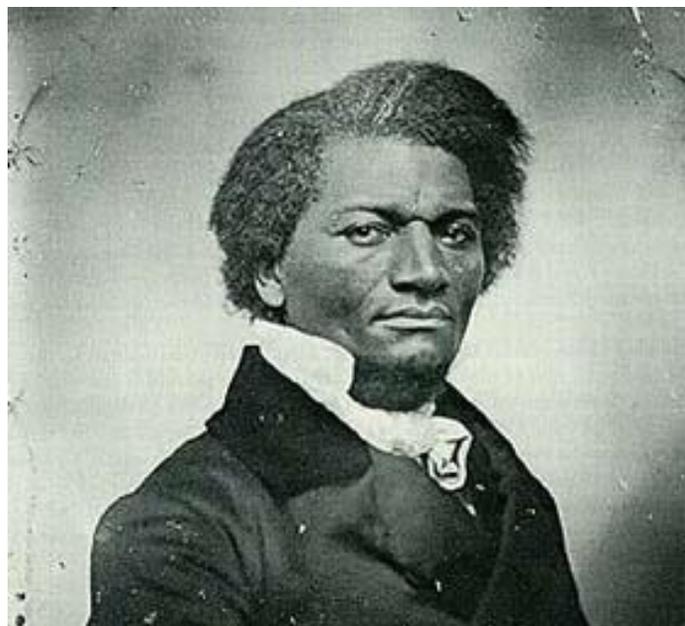
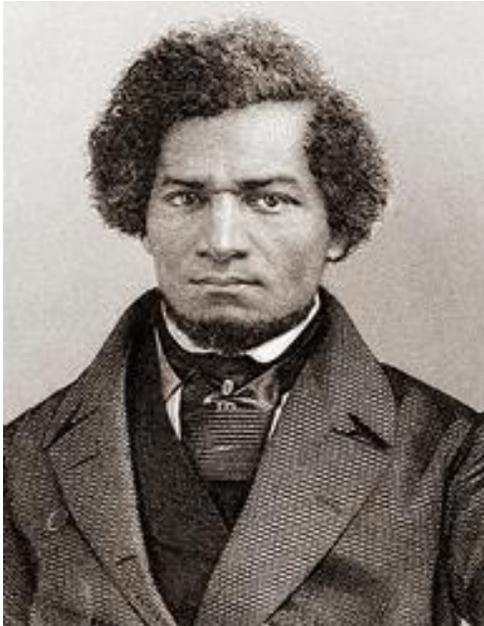
These two images show variations in lighting, and one of them show the framing presentation of the time.

Abraham Lincoln



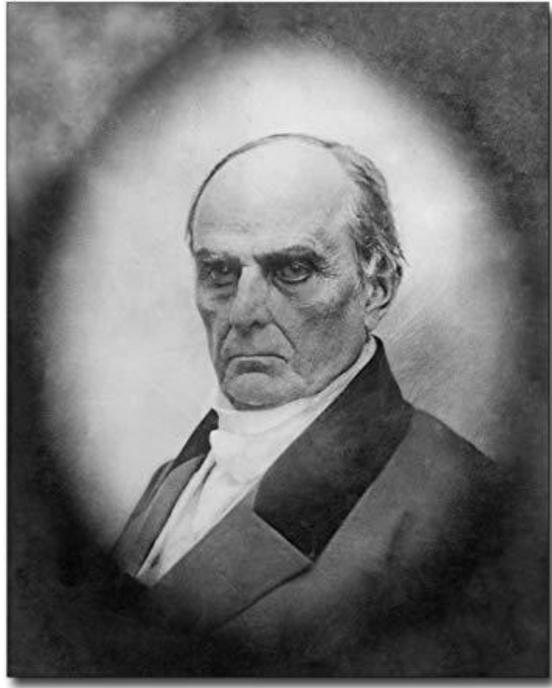
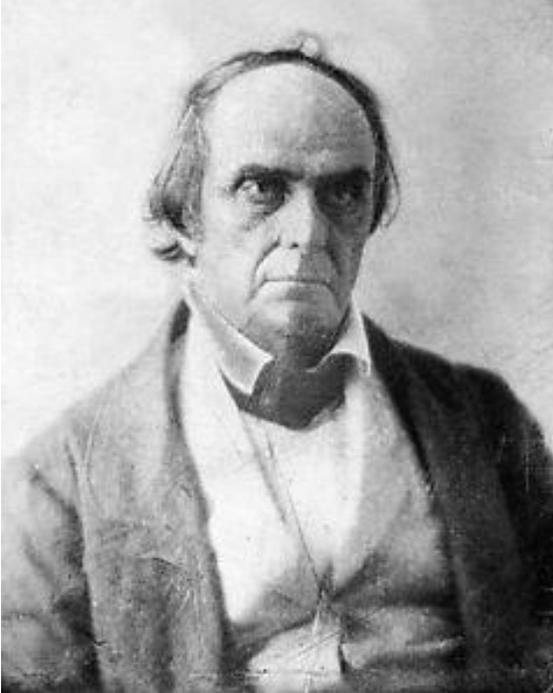
Here are three stages in Lincoln's life.

Frederick Douglass



A man of such determination!

Daniel Webster



No relationship to Noah Webster, the dictionary guy.