

## Partners With the Sun

Until this spring there had not been a single book published on the history of South Carolina photography. Now we have Harvey Teal's newly published "Partners With the Sun, South Carolina Photographers, 1840-1940." It is a fascinating account of the men and women who pioneered studio photography in this state. Many examples of the pioneer work are reproduced in the book.

William H. Ellet, a professor of chemistry, mineralogy and geology at South Carolina College, produced the first photograph in the state in May 1840. Ellet was to be soon followed by others. By the end of 1840 the first commercial studio was set up in Charleston.

Teal, who spent ten years on his project, identifies the photographers of the 1840s as mostly itinerants who traveled from town to town seeking customers. He found 52 men and one woman who produced daguerreotypes in that decade. One of that group was John R. Schorb began his work in 1846 in made pictures in a number of SC towns before settling in Yorkville (now York) in 1853. Schorb operated a gallery in Yorkville for the next 55 years.

E. Elliott was in Chester in 1852-57 operating a gallery and advertising "Sky Light Daguerreian Rooms—Miniatures put in neat Cases, Frames, Breast pins, Rings & Locketts, at prices to suit all classes."

Lancaster's first photographer was J. H. Cousart who arrived in September 1852. His daguerreotype of Jane and Simon Beckham is reproduced in the book. The 1850s saw at least 5 more photographers operating in Lancaster.

After the Civil War broke out in 1861 most of the photographers either enlisted or moved out of the small towns to photograph war scenes and the likenesses of the soldiers. In 1862 John Schorb closed his studio to serve as a chemist at the Confederate Hospital in Columbia. By 1866 Teal could discover only 8 SC photographers, including Schorb, back in business.

In 1874 John R. Schorb & Son operated a studio in Chester. The son was George T. Schorb. Apparently John R. was a silent partner. Within a year George T. was operating alone and stayed in Chester until 1885 when he returned to Yorkville to operate a tin store and sell household goods.

In order to make ends meet, the photographers frequently took on a second line of business. Even John R. Schorb, more successful than most, taught classes at the Yorkville Female Academy and in 1884 he was selling sewing machines.

In the late 1860s there were at least three photographic firms in Lancaster. One of the firms was a partnership of "Riddle, Marks & Bailey" who advertised that they were expert in Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes, Ferrotypes and Cameotypes.

The 1880s saw a tremendous leap forward in photography with the introduction of the hand-held Kodak, invented by George Eastman. As Teal puts it: ". . . photography was now open to the masses and no longer just the domain of professional photographers."

In 1890 there were 75 photographers in SC, including 4 females; in 1900 there were 134 photographers.

The first professional photographer of record in Rock Hill was R. E. Steele who showed up in 1882. C. S. Moore operated a gallery in 1890.

Teal has separate chapters on women photographers and black photographers. Isabel Davis, daughter of a photographer, stands out for her work in Lancaster. Susan N. Steele, who was probably related to R. E. Steele (above) shared a Hampton Street gallery in Rock Hill with a Wheeler from Greenville.

Ida R. Massey of Chester was both black and a woman. She was a long-time cook for the family of Judge J. Lyles Glenn. During the Depression she received instruction from Henry O. Nichols who owned a studio. But she lost her studio to fire a year later. Ida Massey was also a gifted painter and in 1976, in her late 80s she published *Ida Massey's Cook Book*.