

Samuel C. Chester:

Southern New Jersey Photographer

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History professors often warn their students not to rely exclusively on secondary sources, but instead, use primary sources when available such as personal correspondence, photographs, and government documents to verify information found in histories, journal articles, newspapers, websites, and other publications. A good example of how a secondary source misled one historian involves the photographer Samuel C. Chester (1851–1937), who spent much of his long career in Camden, Cape May, and Millville, New Jersey.

Chester produced a substantial body of high-quality work and appears to have been a law-abiding family man and a skillful photographer from 1865 to about 1932. This essay will review the mistakes previously made in published accounts about him and then provide an accurate, illustrated review of his career.

Robert Taft (1894–1955) taught chemistry at the University of Kansas, where he had obtained his Ph.D. in 1925, but his avocation was art history, including the history of photography. In 1938, he published an unprecedented, thoroughly researched, history that scholars still consult today.¹ In discussing the renowned Mathew Brady (1822–1896), who organized the most comprehensive photographic documentation of the Civil War, Taft listed Samuel C. Chester as one of Brady's team of cameramen.² In his long endnote no. 255, Taft thanked Leon Conley of Haddonfield, New Jersey, for furnishing him with the information on Chester and cited Chester's obituary in the April 26, 1937, *Courier-Post* (Camden), that Conley no doubt had kindly sent to him.³

What Taft failed to realize was that Chester's obituary, entitled "Samuel C. Chester, Photographer,

Dies; Man Who Took 1600 Civil War Pictures Succumbs Here at 86," was carelessly written with a misleading title. It was based on an article published in the *Evening Courier* (Camden) on January 26, 1937, for which a reporter interviewed the venerable widowed photographer, living in poverty without gas or electricity with his daughter Linnie (Melinda) Chester in North Camden.⁴ In that interview, Chester stated that he made his first photographs in 1865 at the age of 14, when he lived in Millville, Cumberland County. As a youth, he habituated the premises of Millville photographer J. B. Brown and learned the collodion wet plate process by watching the professional at work.⁵ When Brown asked him to keep an eye on his gallery while he was away in Atlantic City, Chester asked his friend Sam Richards to sit for him. He fixed Richards' head with a clamp called an immobilizer, prepared a collodion glass plate negative, inserted it into the camera, and made a ten-second exposure, followed by development, fixing, and washing. Upon his return, Brown's surprise at Chester's success led to a job, as will be discussed below.

In the January 1937 interview, Chester related how he and Brady's nephew Levin C. Handy (1855–1932) printed three copies each of 1,600 glass plate negatives that the War Department had purchased from Brady. Chester may have been mistaken about the purchase as it was Congress that had paid Brady in 1874 and 1875.⁶ Perhaps the negatives were only stored at the War Department. In any case, this printing was likely done at Handy's own gallery, located on the second floor of a carriage house behind his home at 494 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC. Chester stated that the negatives were so valuable that the War Department



Portrait of Samuel C. Chester, circa 1880. Library of Congress, Brady-Handy Collection, from glass plate negative taken in Mathew Brady's or his nephew Levin C. Handy's gallery in Washington, DC.

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only let them borrow one box at a time. It is clear that Chester did not take any of these Civil War photos because he was only 14 when the war ended and did not work for Brady until about a decade later. Apparently, the obituary misled Taft when it stated that Chester "took 1600 negatives during the Civil War, among them one of General William T. Sherman and his staff."⁷

The obituary conflated Chester's photograph of Sherman and his generals with a well-known one by Brady taken more than a decade earlier in 1865. Chester, who at a still unknown date in the latter 1870s, began working with Brady and Handy, had mentioned in his interview that among his photos was a group shot of Sherman with his generals, including General Alexander McDowell McCook (1831–1903), who was Sherman's aide-de-camp from 1875 to 1880.⁸ After that portrait, recalled Chester, McCook asked if he could change his clothes and leave his valise and uniform at Brady's while he went out on the town overnight.

Before McCook's return the next day, Chester put on the general's uniform and sat for a portrait, probably by Handy, for by that time Brady did little camera work himself. That photo is unfortunately not in the Brady-Handy Collection at the Library of Congress (LC).⁹

That Chester worked with Brady and Handy in Washington is incontrovertible. Although the one of Chester in uniform has not been found, another of a bearded Chester wearing a suit is in the LC Brady-Handy collection.¹⁰ The date of the photo is unknown, but Chester was definitely with Brady in 1879 and 1880 when he was listed in the Washington city directories as a photographer at Brady's studio, 635 Pennsylvania Avenue NW. Brady also lived there and because Chester is not listed with another address, he probably resided with either Brady or Handy.¹¹

In other work for Brady, according to the interview, Chester photographed engineer John Ericsson, who had designed and built the iron-clad ship *Monitor*, which

engaged the *Merrimac* in the famous Civil War naval battle at Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862. Chester also claimed that he took the first picture of Thomas Edison with his phonograph in April 1878, when the inventor was in Washington to obtain patents, although Edison had already received his patent for the phonograph on February 19, 1878. He was in the capital to demonstrate his invention to the National Academy of Sciences, Congress, and President Rutherford B. Hayes at the White House.¹² At least two negatives of Edison alone were made and two with associates.¹³ Although it is possible that Edison had been portrayed with the phonograph before he came to Washington, no such portrait has been found so Chester's claim of priority still stands.¹⁴

In another example of his work for Brady, Chester claimed in his interview to have taken the last photographs of President James A. Garfield and his family shortly before Garfield was shot

SAMUEL C. CHESTER, PHOTOGRAPHER, DIES

Man Who Took 1600 Civil War Pictures Succumbs Here at 86

Samuel C. Chester, 86, Camden's oldest photographer, died yesterday at his home, 517 Fulton place.

He had been a photographer 72 years and was in business in Camden for 30 years at 326 Federal street. He began as a photographer at 14 at Millville, at that time he had to make his own plates.

He took 1600 negatives during the Civil War, among them one of General William T. Sherman and his staff. He also photographed President James A. Garfield and his family shortly before the assassination of the President.

Mr. Chester also took a picture of Thomas A. Edison and the famous phonograph he invented. Another prize "shot" was of John Ericsson, inventor of the *Monitor*, of Civil War fame.

Mr. Chester was at one time a partner of M. B. Brady whose pictures of crowned heads of Europe and celebrities of America hang in palatial studios in Washington and New York.

For 26 years Mr. Chester maintained a studio at Cape May, where he took photos of more celebrities. It took ten-second exposures for photographs when he began. He was photographed at the *Courier-Post* studio last January in 1-200 of a second.

Mr. Chester's wife died several months ago. He is survived by a daughter, Miss Amelia Chester, and a son, Charles Sumner, of East Lansdowne, Pa.

The funeral will be held at 11 a. m. Wednesday at the Schroeder Funeral Home, 715 Cooper street. Burial will be in New Camden Cemetery.

Oldest Photographer Dies



Samuel C. Chester, 86, who had been a photographer for 72 years, died yesterday at the home, 517 Fulton place. He is shown here with his homemade retouching stand.

resident here more than 20 years, who died Friday, will be held at 2 p. m., Tuesday at 212 W. Broadway. Burial will be in Evergreen cemetery, Camden. Mrs. Hutchinson is survived by her husband, John, and two children.

WEST EUROPE SEEN IN NEW PEACE PACT

Samuel C. Chester, obituary, *Morning Post* (Camden), April 26, 1937. The text contains significant errors, including assertion that Chester took 1,600 Civil War photos.



Samuel C. Chester, Thomas Edison with his tinfoil phonograph, April 1878. Taken at Mathew Brady's studio, Washington, D.C. Brady-Handy Collection, Library of Congress.

by disappointed office seeker Charles J. Guiteau at the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station. Garfield had been sworn in on March 4, 1881, and the portraits would have been made before Guiteau attacked the President on July 2 of that year. Sadly, Garfield died of his wounds, exacerbated by infections likely the result of medical treatment, in Elberon, Long Branch, on September 19, 1881.

Chester made several portraits of Garfield, including a close-up of his head and shoulders that illustrates the biography of him on Wikipedia, and two of the President standing with the famous Abraham Lincoln chair. In February 1857, the House of Representatives was refurbished and Lincoln, who had been an Illinois Congressman (1847–1849), rescued his chair and gave it to Mathew Brady, who used it for many years thereafter for sittings by important clients.¹⁵ The Library of Congress' Brady-Handy Collection also includes Chester's portraits of Garfield's family. He photographed Garfield's wife Lucretia (1832–1918) alone and the couple's five surviving children with the same painted background that appears in one of the photos of Edison.¹⁶



Samuel C. Chester, President James Abram Garfield, with Lincoln chair, 1881. From glass plate negative taken at Mathew Brady's studio, Washington, D.C. Brady-Handy Collection, Library of Congress.

Chester's career started in the collodion wet plate era, when hand-prepared glass negatives, after processing, were used to make monochrome purplish-brown contact prints in the sun on albumen paper sensitized by the photographer.¹⁷ For cabinet cards, about 4 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches, and larger photos, photographers would retouch the faces on the glass negatives to remove blemishes using a retouching stand like the home-made one in the photo of Chester that accompanied the January 1937 article. Enlargements colored in oil, watercolor, and charcoal became a staple of the portrait photography business by 1870, as were inexpensive tintypes. Around 1880, like other professionals, Chester would have switched to gelatin dry plates, known by photographers as "the instantaneous process" because these glass negatives significantly shortened exposure times, as well as being more convenient, since unlike collodion negatives, they came ready to use.¹⁸

In 1889, George Eastman became the first manu-

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facturer of flexible roll film, supplied for simple Kodak box cameras that significantly increased the number of amateur photographers, including women and children, and impacted the professional photography business. In the 1890s, this flexible nitrocellulose film, also called nitrate or celluloid film, enabled the first commercial motion pictures, which Thomas Edison introduced in 1894 and viewed by one person at a time in Kinetoscopes. Despite the availability of roll and sheet film, some amateurs and professionals like Chester continued using glass plate negatives until the 1920s.

The 1890s also saw a profusion of photographic printing papers. In addition to albumen, photographers made collodion and silver gelatin prints, some of which could be printed with gas or electric light on "gas-light papers." To distinguish their work from amateurs, some photographic artists in the early 1900s began offering portraits in platinum, carbon, gum bichromate and other high priced, hand-crafted alternatives.¹⁹ With the advent of photomechanical reproduction, newspapers and magazines, beginning in the 1890s, started routinely reproducing photographs, creating a new market for professionals. In 1907, color photography became commercially feasible with the Autochrome, the first widely used color process. Others followed, including Dufaycolor transparencies and Vivex color prints, and Chester lived to see the introduction of Kodachrome for still photography in 1936.

Although Chester was not a Civil War photographer, he did have a long and remarkable career that began in Millville, Cumberland County. He was born there on September 27, 1851, to Hannah and Asbury Chester, a carpenter who grew up on a farm near Williamstown and settled in Millville in 1847. Born near Haddonfield in 1815, Asbury, the son of a Methodist clergyman, became a Methodist preacher, homebuilder, farmer, butcher, Justice of the Peace, and railroad station agent. Early on, he was known as Mayor of Millville, although his actual title was chairman of the Millville Township Committee that governed until the town was incorporated as a city in 1866. Asbury was married twice and had two children with his first wife, who died in 1849, and eight, including Samuel, with his second, Hannah (née Clunn), whom he married in 1850.²⁰

Chester's mentor, Josiah Burnstead Brown, usually found as J. B. Brown, was born in Massachusetts in 1833. His early life is obscure and evidence has not been found that he was a self-employed photographer before the Civil War.²¹ In the 1860 U.S. Census

for the town of Burlington, New Jersey, he is listed as "Jones" B. Brown, 26, bricklayer, born in Massachusetts, living with his wife Mary C., 26, and daughter Mary J., 3, both born in Pennsylvania. The census listed his personal estate as \$500, worth about \$17,000 in 2022 dollars. How he learned photography remains to be discovered, but in May 1863 he paid for a \$10 license to practice camerawork under the name Josiah B. Brown in the village of Pottsgrove, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, in accordance with the Internal Revenue Act of July 1, 1862, passed to raise money for the federal government's enormous war expenses.²² Since his wife Mary was from Pennsylvania, that might explain his presence there.

Some early carte-de-visite portraits by Brown have an imprint on the back with "J. B. Brown, Photographer, Tenth Regt. N.J.V."²³ The Tenth Regiment, New Jersey Volunteers, which was raised in Beverly in Burlington County, was stationed near Philadelphia between July and September 1863, when it was reassigned to Pottstown, about 50 miles northwest of Pottsgrove. Brown may have followed the regiment there and like other contemporary photographers, set up a tent studio at the encampment. But not long after, with his growing family (another daughter, Cornelia, was born in 1863), Brown relocated to Millville, where under the name J. B. Brown & Co., he paid for a \$10 license in May 1865 and renewed it for \$15 in August, a month before Chester turned 14.²⁴

Brown may have initially operated from a tent as the label on the back of his ferrotype cards reads, "Brown & Co's Wigwam Photograph & Ferrotypes Rooms, High Street, Millville, N.J."²⁵ In 1866, Brown opened a new gallery, this time without "& Co."²⁶ He was still in Millville as late as 1867 when he paid for a \$10 license, the last year the federal government collected this fee.²⁷ Where he operated for the next few years has not been firmly established. He may have stayed in Millville, but he may also have been the J. B. Brown listed as a Warren, Massachusetts, photographer in the 1868 Worcester County Directory.

By 1870, Brown was in Cape May and Samuel Chester was working for him. Chester, then 19 years old, was enumerated twice in the census that year. In the village of Cold Spring, Lower Township, Cape May County, Chester was recorded as an apprentice artist living with Josiah B. Brown, photo artist, 36, his wife Mary C., 36, the three Brown children, and an English-born domestic servant, Rhoda Milin, 18. In Vineland, Chester was recorded without an occupation with his

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own family, including his father Asbury, 50, railroad station agent, his mother Hannah, 38, and six siblings.²⁸ Double counting in the census occurred because the recordings were not taken on the same day. Apparently, when the census taker came around in Cold Spring on June 28, Chester was there, but he was with his family in Vineland on August 8.

In the 1860s, Cape May in the south and Long Branch in the north were the leading Jersey Shore resorts, attracting a high percentage of their visitors, respectively, from Philadelphia and New York. (Later in the century, Atlantic City began to surpass Cape May in popularity.) Cape May, which is at approximately the same latitude as Washington, DC, became a convenient and profitable place for Brown to operate in the summer, in part because the Cape May & Millville Railroad had been completed in 1867. In addition to linking its namesakes with connections, the railroad sped travel for vacationers from Philadelphia and other departure points, although steamboats continued to offer an attractive alternative.²⁹

In Cape May, Brown had a gallery at the foot of Ocean Street where it ends at the beach, not far from the current location of the Cape May Convention Center. There he made portraits, and also sold stereographic views taken in the area, including one, now at the Library of Congress, of six men and women playing croquet at a Mr. McCrary's cottage.³⁰ Other

stereographs by Brown's Gallery featured couples with children on a large lawn in front of McMakin's (Atlantic) Hotel. It is possible that young Chester made some of the photographs credited to Brown as it was quite common in those days not to mention the camera operator if different from the gallery owner. Brown left Millville and Cape May but was still a photographer when he died in 1901.³¹

Between 1870, when Chester was listed twice in the U.S. Census and April 1878, when he photographed Thomas Edison at Brady's, Chester's whereabouts remain an opportunity for future research, with the exception of his activities in Wilmington, Delaware, around 1875–1877, although precise dates for this episode in his career have not been found.³² In Wilmington, Chester partnered with the ambitious Thomas E. Sexton (1835–1913).³³ Sexton was born in Mercer County, New Jersey, where he was raised on a farm. When he was fifteen, his parents moved to Bordentown and by 1859 he became a daguerreotypist and photographer there for about a year before re-establishing his business in Springfield, Illinois. In 1862, he ran a livery stable for five years.³⁴ By 1864, however, he was also conducting a photo gallery in Wilmington, where he patented a photographic printing frame in 1866.³⁵ Meanwhile, Sexton managed a farm that he had purchased in 1859 near Pawnee, Illinois, and periodically he left Delaware for extended periods to live



J. B. Brown, Foot of Ocean Street, Cape May. McCrary's Cottage, stereograph, circa 1870. Marion S. Carson Collection, Library of Congress. From period when Samuel C. Chester was Brown's apprentice.

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J. B. Brown, Foot of Decatur Street, Cape May. J. B. Brown and family, stereograph, 1870–1871. Dated by estimated age of Brown's youngest daughter, Rosalee, two years old in the 1870 census. Likely taken by Brown's apprentice Samuel C. Chester. Kenneth H. Rosen collection.

there or in Taylorville in the same state. In 1877, he left Wilmington permanently and went back to his farm. After a few years, he sold it and bought another farm in Springfield Township, and later retired to the city of Springfield, where he died a prosperous and well-respected man.³⁶

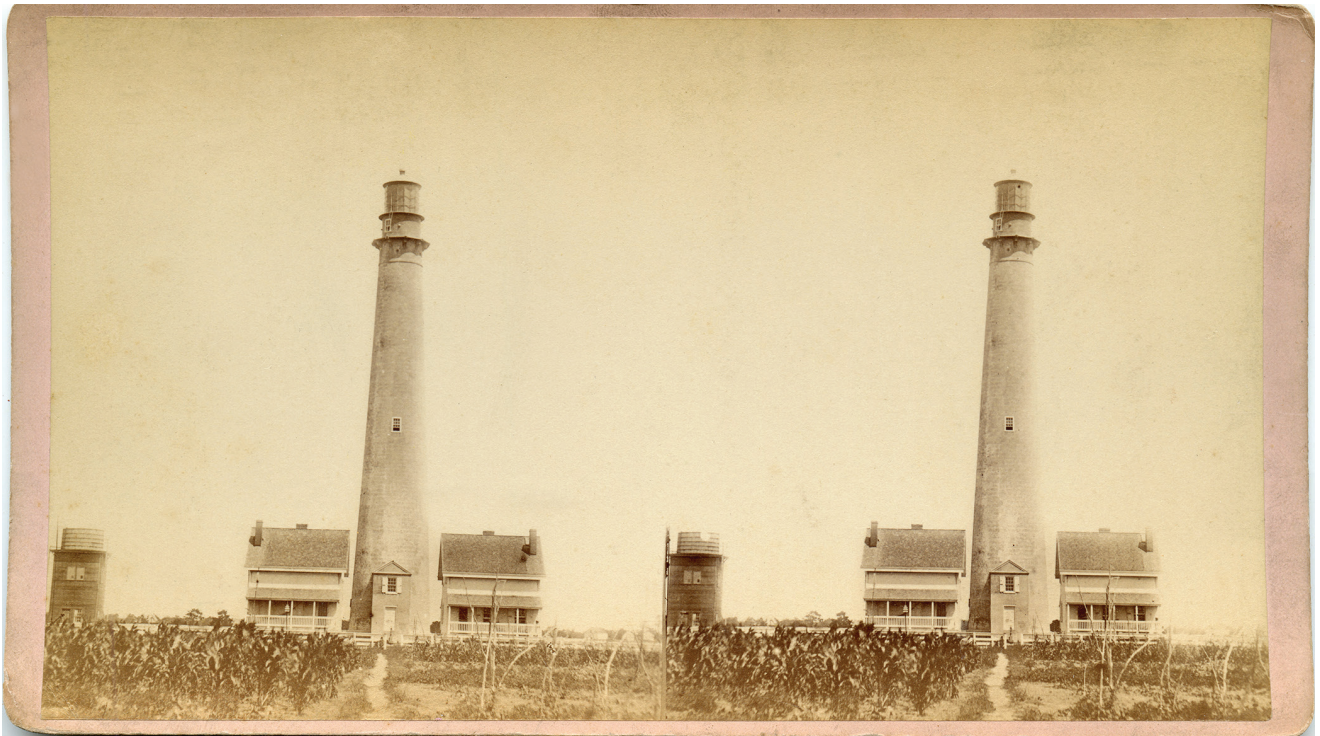
Chester was in Wilmington by September 1875, when the Board of Education authorized him to do group photos of schoolchildren.³⁷ It appears likely that Sexton brought Chester into the business because he was making regular trips to Illinois and planned to go back there permanently. Chester continued operating from Sexton's at 414 Market Street after his partner left, and at some point, moved to 302 Market Street.³⁸ Soon thereafter, he went to work for Mathew Brady and his nephew in Washington, DC.

An obvious question is how Chester, at that time a young man without a national or regional reputation as a photographer, became associated with Brady and Handy. One possibility is that they met in 1876 during the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, which included a major photography exhibit at which Brady won an award.³⁹ Hundreds of photographs by U.S. and foreign photographers were displayed in the Photographic Art Building, a 242 x 77-foot annex to the Art Gallery, one of the five principal buildings. In conjunction with that exhibit, the National Photographic

Association, the professional organization of photographers, held its annual convention there on August 15–17. Considering Chester's proximity to Philadelphia, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that he was among that throng of photographers and may have met Brady or Handy, or both. Another possibility is that Brady, or more likely Handy, vacationed at some point in Cape May and met Chester there.

It is doubtful that Chester met Brady before 1876 as Brady had fallen on hard times after the Civil War. Brady went bankrupt and his Washington gallery, a branch of his main one in New York, was sold in 1873 for \$5, subject to liens of \$5,000.⁴⁰ The sale did not resolve Brady's financial problems, as he continued to be indebted, especially to Levin Handy.

However Chester became acquainted with Brady and his nephew, his work with Handy in the late 1870s led to a Chester & Handy partnership for about five years, with galleries in Cape May, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. Although some sources date this partnership to 1882, when Chester and Handy are first listed together in the Washington, DC, directory, one of their stereo views depicting the Cape May Lighthouse is dated in pencil, August 9, 1880. The imprint on the back reads, "Chester & Handy, Photographers, Next to Stockton Bath Houses, [Southwest] Cor. Beach Avenue and Ocean Street, Cape May, N.J."⁴¹ The partners are



Chester & Handy (Samuel C. Chester & Levin C. Handy), Corner Beach Avenue & Ocean Street, Cape May. Lighthouse, stereograph. Kenneth H. Rosen Collection. Another copy of this view seen, dated August 9, 1880.

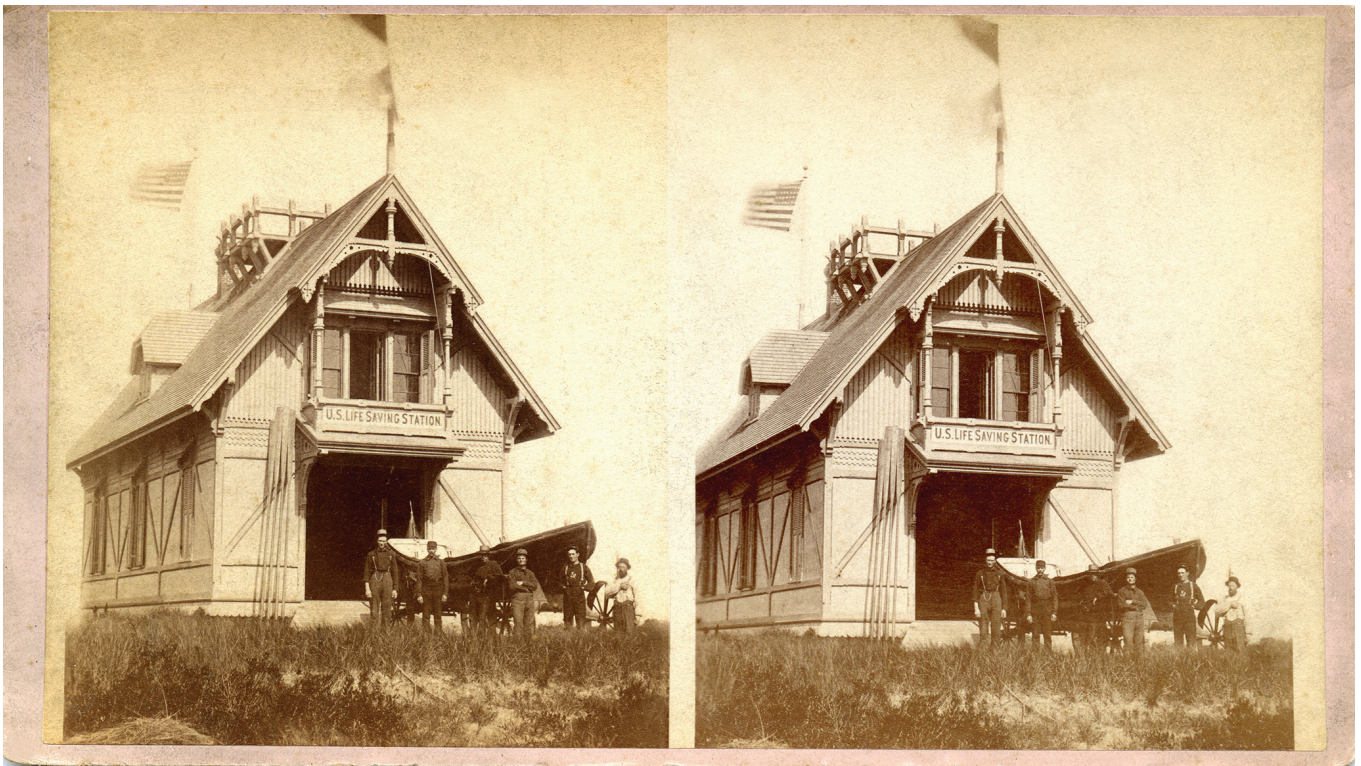


Chester & Handy, Corner Beach Avenue & Ocean Street, Cape May. Large group at Stockton House, stereograph 1880–1885. Kenneth H. Rosen collection.

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Chester & Handy, Cape May. Group under Cape May Pier, promenade card (4 1/8 x 7 1/8 inches), August 1885. Kenneth H. Rosen collection. Note the African American man and children in the group.



Chester & Handy, Corner Beach Avenue & Ocean Street, Cape May. Life Saving Station, stereograph, 1880–1885. Kenneth H. Rosen collection.

found in the 1881 Cape May County Directory at this address. In that year, they were not listed in the Washington, DC, directory, but in the 1882 edition, they can be found at 426 7th Street NW.⁴² The imprints on their cartes-de-visite from the early 1880s mention that the Cape May business was a branch of their establishment at 907 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, or of Cape May with a branch at 426th 7th Street, Washington, "Next door to Ballantyne's Book Store."⁴³

As did other Jersey shore photographers such as Gustavus Pach and William H. Stauffer in Monmouth County and William Long and Gilbert & Bacon in Cape May, Chester & Handy made stereo views with hotel guests, from small groups to more than fifty, who became potential buyers. In particular, they photographed gatherings on the Stockton House veranda near their gallery.⁴⁴ Not surprisingly, given the times, the guests were mostly Caucasian. An August 1885 Promenade card photo by Chester & Handy of a large group on the beach under the Cape May Pier includes one well-dressed African American man and several black children, probably his.⁴⁵ Cape May tried to attract mainly the white elite, however, and relatively few African Americans vacationed there compared to Asbury Park and Atlantic City.⁴⁶

In addition to group photos, Chester & Handy also produced stereo views of local points of interest, e.g., a street scene with the Westmoreland Villa.⁴⁷ Others included the Cape May Life Station, one of a series of such facilities spaced at regular intervals along the shore before the U.S. Coast Guard was established. Another view shows the crowded beach and ocean with a horse-drawn passenger wagon in the foreground. On the left side in the distance can be seen a large frame with photos, apparently marketing photographic services. The pink back carries the imprint, "Chester & Handy Portraits, 907 Ridge Avenue, Phila., Pa. Branch, Cape May, N.J. Views, Samples & Machinery Photographed."⁴⁸ Chester & Handy also sold Cape May stereo views of other beach scenes, a boat on the ocean, at least four different hotels, and the street along the ocean with Denizot's New Ocean Pier on the left. They also made cabinet cards of people sitting on hotel verandas and made portraits at the studio in the cabinet card and carte-de-visite sizes.⁴⁹

The Library of Congress holds an extraordinary Chester & Handy carte-de-visite of a photographer wearing a straw hat, with his camera and a painted backdrop of waves in the background. Under the camera body is a sign with "Chester & Handy" and the

Cape May address. Someone has written, "Welcome The Dude," on the front and on the back, "Good Evening Mr. Handy. It is a Mash you want, Dick." The imprint gives the Cape May address and "Branch of 426 7th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. Groups Photographed Instantaneously Under the Sky Light." A list of names written on the back may be customers of the firm.⁵⁰

On December 21, 1882, the *Evening Critic* (Washington, DC), reported that Mathew Brady "has associated himself with Chester & Handy, where they are prepared to make fine work, any size or style."⁵¹ In 1883, Brady took out a full page ad in the Washington, DC, directory for this "National Portrait Co." at 1113 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. Listed as the gallery manager with Chester and Handy as associates, Brady offered portraits by the aforementioned "instantaneous process," and sold likenesses of government officials, including the President, the Cabinet, Senators, Members of Congress, Supreme Court Justices, and other celebrities. In addition to the standard card photographs, patrons could purchase portraits on porcelain and in oil and watercolors. Although not mentioned in the ad, Brady also sold his Civil War views. The individual listing for Chester in the 1883 directory shows that he lived with Handy at 494 Maryland Avenue SW.⁵²

Brady's National Portrait Co. of 1883 only lasted about a year. In 1884, Brady no longer appeared in the Washington, DC, directory, while Chester & Handy continued at their 7th Street location. Their cabinet photo of a woman, likely from 1884, is on a dark maroon card with a gilt imprint below the image and beveled gilt edges, with the back blank and gray.⁵³ The imprint only gives the studio's 7th Street address in Washington.⁵⁴ Another dark maroon cabinet card by Chester & Handy has been seen of a posed studio shot of ten men and women. As obvious by the maritime backdrop, it was taken in Cape May and its gilt imprint reads, "Cape May, N.J. & Washington, D.C."

In 1885, the partners were listed at Handy's on Maryland Avenue, where Handy remained for many years.⁵⁵ Subsequently, Chester continued alone in Cape May and examples of his portraiture with his imprint, sans Handy, have been found between 1886 and 1896.⁵⁶ The Cape May business was seasonal, and Chester must have felt the need to open at another location during the non-summer months. Not surprisingly, he chose his hometown of Millville, where he would return from Cape May in the fall.⁵⁷ The *Bridgeton Evening News* stated on January 4, 1888, "A large number of people are very much pleased over the advent of so good a

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Chester & Handy, 426 7th St., Washington, DC. Unidentified woman with lace collar, cabinet card, circa 1884. Author's collection.

photographer as S. C. Chester. His arbor and winter background scene receives much praise. Mr. Chester succeeds D. W. Carpenter, High Street, Millville."⁵⁸ The next day, the same newspaper mentioned that Chester was able to make portraits day or night, implying that he had electric light in his studio.⁵⁹ Electricity had come to Millville in 1886, so Chester was able to take advantage of it when he opened on High Street at the end of 1887 or early in January 1888.⁶⁰

The years 1887 and 1888 were important for Chester's personal life as well. On May 15, 1887, at the age of 36, he married Amelia Hunt, 22, who grew up on a farm in West Whiteland, Chester County, Pennsylvania, and was living in Springfield, Ohio. Their first child, Melinda (Linnie) Chester, was born on November 26, 1888, at their Millville home, 424 Oak Street. Their second, Charles Sumner Chester, was born in the same place on December 1, 1890.⁶¹



Chester & Handy, Cape May. Ten adults, cabinet card, 1886. Author's digital collection.

Most of Chester's extant work from the late 1880s and 1890s consists of portraits, usually in the form of cabinet cards, which had replaced the smaller cartes-de-visite and ferrotype cards (tintypes mounted to the size cartes-de-visite) as the most popular card photograph.⁶² In 1866, with the waning of the early 1860s carte-de-visite craze, the cabinet card had been introduced in England and then widely adopted in the United States, although cartes-de-visite continued to be the most popular format until the 1880s.⁶³ Albums to store both card formats were available from photographers and stationery stores.

Unlike other collodion processes, tintypes persisted in the photographic marketplace in New Jersey after 1880, especially at the shore, but Chester did not make any that have come to this author's attention. Because no negative or printing was involved, tintypes could be processed and delivered to the sitter in about

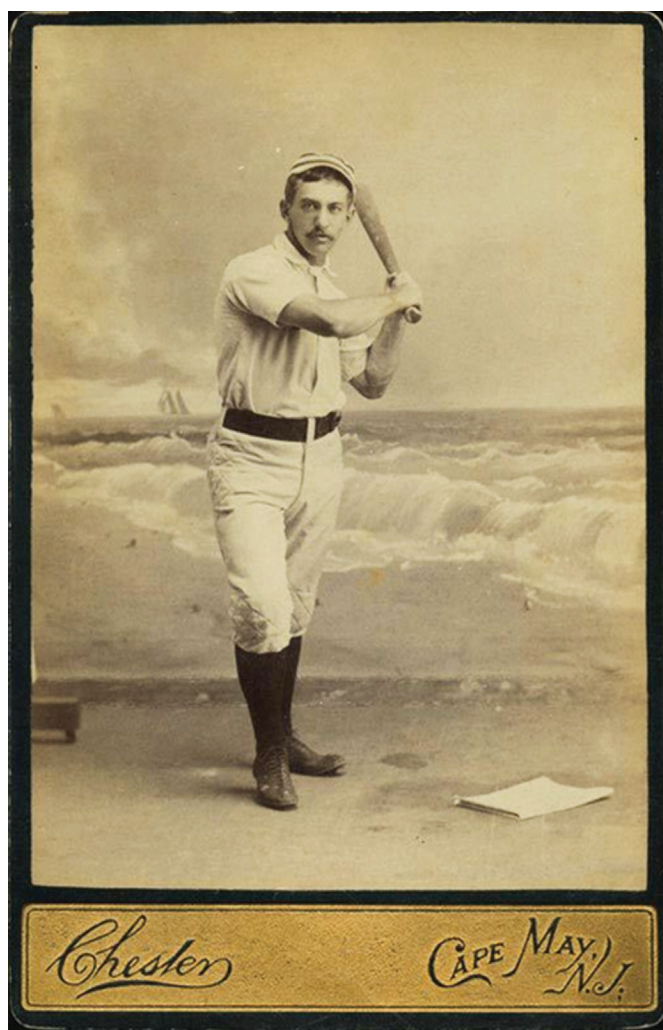
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15 minutes or less and they were the cheapest form of photography available. Chester, it seems, was more interested in the higher end of the market, those he termed the “elegant clientele,” especially in Cape May. Rebuilt with what was then conservative, Victorian architecture after a huge fire on November 8, 1878, that destroyed 40 acres of downtown buildings, Cape May attracted more upscale Philadelphia area vacationers than other shore destinations like Atlantic City.⁶⁴

Among Chester’s subjects in Cape May during this period were baseball players. He made a series circa 1889 of ten cabinet cards of young men in baseball uniforms with “Cape May” across the jersey, each standing in front of a painted backdrop depicting the ocean with a sailing ship in the distance. No two poses are alike. In several, a man is catching a ball stopped in midair while in others, players hold their bats. Most of these athletes had attended Ivy League schools—Harvard, Princeton,

and the University of Pennsylvania—and had been active in various leagues in the Philadelphia area.⁶⁵

Individual cabinet card portraits of men, women, and children formed the majority of Chester’s work during these years in Cape May and Millville. In posing his subjects, as did many other photographers of this era, Chester tended to present just the head and torso and the sitter looks somewhat away from the camera. The print is often vignettted to make the customer appear to be floating in a cloud.⁶⁶ Maintaining a generous camera-to-subject distance avoided making the noses look unnaturally large and left ample blank space around the image. A shorter distance would also have exaggerated any movement by the subject during the exposure. Chester made exceptions to these stylistic characteristics when he wanted to show the entire figure, such as the baseball players or a baby in a very long white baptismal dress, and then he would not use



Samuel C. Chester, Cape May. E. O. Wagenhurst, baseball player, cabinet card, 1889. Huggins & Scott Auctions, March 30–April 9, 2015.



Chester & Handy, 426 7th St., Washington, DC. Unidentified woman, cabinet card, circa 1884. Author’s collection.

Samuel C. Chester



Boy with hat and dog, cabinet card, circa 1890. Author's digital collection.



Samuel C. Chester, 326 Federal, Camden. Twin babies, cabinet card, circa 1895. Author's digital collection.



Samuel C. Chester, Cape May. Young girl with big eyes, cabinet card, circa 1890. Author's collection.



Samuel C. Chester, 326 Federal, Camden. Charles Newcomb, football player, cabinet card, 1897. Camden County Historical Society. Footballs were round until 1906, when the forward pass was approved for use in collegiate sports.

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the vignetter. He also occasionally had the subject look directly into the camera, as he did in a striking portrait of a young girl with big eyes at his Cape May studio. Chester also shot portraits outdoors, including a cabinet card of a family next to a house in Cape May.

Chester's career in Millville ended when he moved to 319 Federal Street, Camden, in the second half of 1893.⁶⁷ This address had hosted a long series of photographers since 1874.⁶⁸ Chester did not remain there long, as in 1895 he rented the second floor studio at 326 Federal, where he worked for almost 30 years. This gallery had belonged to photographer J. E. Smith in 1893–1894, and previously by the brothers Frederick and William Fearn beginning in 1883.⁶⁹ Chester and his family also resided at 326 Federal until the 1920s.

As mentioned above, Chester continued his summer gallery in Cape May until at least 1896 and during the rest of the year did portraits in Camden. Four Chester Camden cabinet cards of football players in the mid-1890s are in the collection of the Camden County Historical Society. The cabinet card, ubiquitous in the 1880s and 1890s, gradually yielded

in the latter decade to other formats in a variety of sizes. One Chester portrait on a dark gray card, measuring about 3 x 4 inches, depicts a young woman wearing a turtleneck sweater. There is an embossed design around the photo and Chester's blind-stamped imprint with the 326 Federal Street address at lower right.⁷⁰ Another example from the early 1900s is a boy standing next to a wicker chair with the photo trimmed to an oval and mounted on a dark gray card the size of a cabinet card.⁷¹ In 1912, Chester photographed nearly 50 employees of the Camden-based C. C. Chew Store posing in front of the establishment before they left for a picnic. This group portrait was published in the *Courier-Post*.⁷² After he moved his business and residence to 612 Broadway in 1922 or early 1923, Chester continued at that location until 1924–1925.⁷³ One example seen from his Broadway studio is a real photo post card (RPPC) of a smiling child standing on a chair. Although information on his post-1900 commercial work is scant, apparently, he provided the typical services of a portrait photographer in this era.



Samuel C. Chester, 326 Federal Street, Camden. Young woman with turtleneck sweater, circa 1910. Paul W. Schopp collection.



Samuel C. Chester, 612 Broadway, Camden. Child standing on chair, real photo postcard, circa 1924. Author's digital collection.

Samuel C. Chester

In 1926 and 1927, Chester no longer appears in the Camden business directory as a photographer, although he was still listed as such in the 1926 individual listings that recorded him with his wife Amelia at 500 N. 5th Street.⁷⁴ The 1928 directory indicates that he had become a watchman for Broadway Merchants Trust Co., but he probably continued to do some photography.⁷⁵ In 1929, the couple moved to their last home at 517 Fulton Place. The 1930 U.S. Census and the 1931 directory both record Chester with the same job. After Amelia died at age 69 on November 10, 1934, the aged Chester continued living at Fulton Place with his unmarried daughter until his death on April 25, 1937.⁷⁶

In his January 1937 newspaper interview, the 86-year-old photographer pondered the history of photography and questioned, "I wonder what life will be like 86 years from now?" He reviewed the progress

of photography from his youth and predicted that "television will materialize. There's no limit to what modern photography can do. The progress is so rapid. I can hardly believe they make color pictures—actually, without coloring the prints. Natural colors I mean. Three-dimensional photography? I don't know, it may come."

Considering the state of photographic technology in 2023, 86 years after Chester's interview, one must agree with him that progress has continued to be rapid, if not accelerating. Television was indeed perfected and three-dimensional holographic pictures and 3D video are now routine.⁷⁷ But Chester probably could not have imagined devices such as cell phones with cameras that have made billions of people into amateur photographers, documenting their own daily lives.

EMPLOYEES OF C. C. CHEW STORE HAVE A PLEASANT OUTING AT CLEMENTON PARK



Celebrating the event of the Wednesday early closing scheme, employees of the big C. C. Chew Department Store, held a large outing at Clementon Park.

Picture shows a number of the employees of the C. C. Chew Co. Department Store with General Manager John A. Flick as the "Thorn between two roses" on second row from bottom. The picture was snapped by Photographer Chester just before the employees embarked by trolley and automobile for the first of the summer series of Wednesday afternoon picnics in the woods. Mr. Flick personally supervised the arrangements for the day's pleasure among the employees.

Samuel C. Chester, 326 Federal Street, Camden. C.C. Chew Store employees, *Courier-Post* (Camden), July 12, 1912, page 5.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gary D. Saretzky, archivist, educator, and photographer, worked as an archivist for more than fifty years at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Educational Testing Service, and the Monmouth County Archives. Saretzky taught the history of photography at Mercer County Community College, 1977–2012, and served as coordinator of the Public History Internship Program for the Rutgers University History Department, 1994–2016. He has published more than 100 articles and reviews on the history of photography, photographic conservation, and other topics, including “Nineteenth-Century New Jersey Photographers,” in the journal *New Jersey History*, Fall/Winter 2004, a revised version of which is available at <http://saretzky.com>.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene* (New York City, NY: Macmillan), 1938. Available as a Dover paperback, 1964.
- 2 Ibid., 230.
- 3 Ibid., 485–86.
- 4 W. Oliver Kincannon, “10 Seconds to 1-200th Tells Advance of 72 Years Spent in Photography by Camden Man,” *Evening Courier* (Camden, NJ), January 26, 1937, 11. Kincannon wrote that Chester did not complain about the darkness in his apartment or “the obvious poverty.” The portrait of the aged photographer accompanying the article was photographed using a flash bulb. Chester lived at 517 Fulton Place, a short street that no longer exists. See <http://www.dvrbs.com/camden-streets/CamdenNJ-Streets-FultonPlace.htm>.
- 5 To prepare a collodion negative, the photographer coated a sheet of glass with collodion, a clear sticky liquid, and then immersed it in a silver nitrate solution to make it light sensitive. Exposure and development needed to be made before the negative dried, hence it was known as the “wet plate” process. Similar steps were required for ambrotypes on glass and ferrotypes (tintypes) on iron plates coated with a shiny black varnish.
- 6 Hirst D. Milhollen, “The Brady-Handy Collection,” in Renata V. Shaw, compiler, *A Century of Photographs, 1846–1946* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1980), 44–45.
- 7 Among other errors in the obituary, it stated that Chester was survived by a daughter Amelia, even though his daughter’s name was Melinda. Amelia (née Hunt) was Chester’s wife, who had died in 1934. Chester also had a surviving son, Charles Sumner Chester of East Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, and his family. In the 1940 U.S. Census for East Lansdowne, Charles, 49, an auto salesman, was living with his wife Lillian, 48, and their daughter Lillian, 24, all born in New Jersey.
- 8 This photo with both Sherman and McCook has not been located. Brady’s 1865 portrait of Sherman and his generals, not including McCook, is readily available. Handy became an apprentice for Brady when he was 15 years old in 1870 and remained a photographer throughout his life. He inherited negatives from Brady’s studio that are now at the Library of Congress.
- 9 McCook’s biographer, Wayne Fanebust, stated that he had not seen the group photo with Sherman and McCook, letter to author, March 24, 2013. For McCook, see Fanebust, *Major General Alexander M. McCook, USA: A Civil War Biography* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2013).
- 10 The negative sleeve included an annotation that Chester was of Haddonfield, New Jersey. No other reference to Chester in Haddonfield has been located by the author.
- 11 Chester & Handy have not been found in the 1880 U.S. Census, so it is possible he was traveling when it was taken. As discussed below, Chester & Handy were in Cape May in the summer of 1880. In 1881, they were listed in the Cape May County Directory. Chester reappeared in the Washington directories in 1882, when he was listed as a partner in Chester & Handy at 426 7th Avenue NW. In 1885, the partners were at 494 Maryland Avenue SW, where Handy was listed alone in 1878 and 1886.
- 12 Paul Israel, Executive Director, Thomas Edison Papers, to author, email, March 17, 2013.
- 13 Paul Israel to author, email, March 16, 2013. The associates were Charles Batchelor and Uriah Painter.
- 14 Archivist Leonard DeGraaf, Thomas Edison National Historical Park, reported that a copy of the Edison portrait credited to Brady, taken in April 1878, is the earliest in the Edison archives but he could not verify that it was the first ever made or that Chester was the photographer. DeGraaf to author, email, March 15, 2013. In the portraits of Edison alone, he sits with his machine resting on a table over a patterned rug that extends into the foreground. In one version, there is a painted backdrop behind him that also appears in other portraits by the Brady studio. In another photo, the background is blank.
- 15 Roy Meredith, *Mr. Lincoln’s Camera Man: Mathew B. Brady* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946), 78–79. According to his bibliography, Meredith obtained the history of the chair from a letter to him by M. H. Evans and verified by Will H. Towles, “last owner of the Brady Washington Gallery and present owner of the chair.” Meredith did not provide a date for Lincoln’s gift which was in 1860 according to the Walt Whitman Archive <https://whitmanarchive.org/multimedia/zzz.00034.html>. The distinctive chair with a U.S. shield on the wooden back may be present in a view of Towles’ studio in Will H. Towles, *Towles’ Portrait Lightings: A Practical Method*

Samuel C. Chester

- for Making Photographic Lightings* (Philadelphia: Frank V. Chambers, 1925), 13. The chair sold for \$449,000 at Bonham's auction, October 26, 2015. <https://www.antiquesandthearts.com/brady-portrait-chairbrings-449000-at-bonhams/>.
- 16 The Garfields had seven children (five sons and two daughters). Two had died by 1876, before this photo was made. The children were Eliza Arabella (1860–63); Harry Augustus (1863–1942); James Rudolph (1865–1950); Mary (1867–1947); Irvin M. (1870–1951); Abram (1872–1958); and Edward (1874–1876).
 - 17 Photographers usually bought paper already coated with albumen (egg white) and then sensitized it by floating it face down in a bath of silver nitrate. After drying, it could be kept in the dark for a few days without losing its sensitivity to light. For details on this process, see James F. Reilly, *The Albumen & Salted Paper Book: The History and Practice of Photographic Printing, 1840–1895* (Rochester, New York: Light Impressions, 1980).
 - 18 A committee appointed by the Professional Photographers of America reported in January 1881 that the exposure time for the gelatin dry plate was one-tenth that of collodion and the quality was the same. The only disadvantage was that the cost for a prepared plate was higher than using plain glass and chemicals to make negatives. (Both collodion and early gelatin negatives were insensitive to red, which would print as black.) As more photographers adopted the new negative, the price came down. Taft, *op. cit.*, 370–71.
 - 19 In Camden, the Sherman Studio offered platinum prints. See author, “Careers in Camerawork: Six Photographers of Camden, New Jersey, 1860–1910,” *SoJourn: A Journal Devoted to the History, Culture, and Geography of South Jersey* 6, no. 1 (Summer 2021), 7–25. For a Philadelphia photographer who specialized in gum bichromate, see author, “Elias Goldensky: Wizard of Photography,” *Pennsylvania History* 64, no. 2 (Spring 1997), 206–272, available at <https://journals.psu.edu/phj/article/viewFile/25383/25152> and “Elias Goldensky Collections,” <http://saretsky.com/history-of-photography-images-texts.html>.
 - 20 Samuel Chester's birth, New Jersey Births and Christenings Index, New Jersey State Archives, Volume H-2, 61 (ancestry.com). Information about Asbury Chester from U.S. Census returns and three 1949 newspaper clippings at the Millville Historical Society for which the source is not identified. In 1880, Asbury, Hannah, and four young children were recorded in the U.S. Census in Weymouth, Atlantic County. Walter B. Chester, the couple's last child born in 1872, became a Camden photographer in 1890 with Garns & Co. Walter then worked for Garns at least part time until his death at age 26 on December 20, 1897, in Millville. New Jersey Death Record, New Jersey State Archives. For Garns, see author, “Careers in Camerawork: Six Photographers of Camden, New Jersey, 1860–1910,” *op. cit.*
 - 21 Brown is not listed in *Craig's Daguerreian Registry* (Torrington, Connecticut: John S. Craig, 1996), nor before 1860 in Langdon's List of 19th & Early 20th Century Photographers, <https://www.langdonroad.com/photographer-lists-2>.
 - 22 Cynthia G. Fox, “Income Tax Records of the Civil War Years,” *Prologue* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1986), <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1986/winter/civil-war-tax-records.html>.
 - 23 Carte-de-visite of a soldier, William Frassanito collection, email to author, December 10, 2014. Introduced in France in the 1850s, the carte-de-visite (cdv) is a small photograph on paper mounted on thin cardboard about 2 1/2 x 4 1/8 inches. Tintypes mounted to the back of cards the same size as cdvs with an aperture for the image are usually called ferrotype cards.
 - 24 Ross J. Kelbaugh, *Directory of Civil War Photographers. Volume Two. Pennsylvania, New Jersey* (Baltimore: Historic Graphics, 1991), 23, 73. The license was in the sum of \$10, \$15, or \$25 depending on the annual income of the photographer who was required to pay what amounted to an income tax.
 - 25 Author's collection. The bottom of the front of the gem ferrotype card is imprinted “Patent Pending,” in reference to Potter's patent for mounting tintypes to the back of aperture cards the size of cartes-de-visite for use in albums. Ray W. Potter's U.S. Patent No. 46,699 for Picture-Card Frames was granted March 7, 1865, and thereafter the patent date is often found on ferrotype cards.
 - 26 *Philadelphia Photographer* 3, no. 32 (August 1866), 255.
 - 27 New Jersey State Tax Assessment Lists, RG 58, National Archives and Records Administration, New York, Boxes 360–366. Now available at ancestry.com.
 - 28 Cold Spring is a little more than three miles from the city of Cape May and today is best known for the tourist attraction, Historic Cold Spring Village. The Brown children in 1870 were Mary J., 14, Cornelia, 7, and Rosalee M., 2, all born in Pennsylvania. In 1870, J. B. Brown still had a personal estate valued at \$500. Asbury Chester's personal estate was worth \$150. Samuel Chester's siblings in the 1870 Vineland census were Clara, 17, Rebecca, 15, Emma, 9, Frank, 7, Mary, 4, and Grace, 2. Neither Brown nor Asbury Chester were recorded as owning real estate in the 1870 census.
 - 29 Philadelphians would have taken a ferry to trains from Camden to Cape May until the Pennsylvania Railroad completed the first railroad bridge over the Delaware below Trenton in 1896. The state legislature chartered the Cape May & Millville Railroad in 1863. West Jersey Railroad leased the line in 1869. The Cape May & Millville then merged into the West Jersey in 1879.
 - 30 Both this stereograph and a carte-de-visite seen by author of an African American woman have the “Foot of Ocean

- Street" address. Chester & Handy's Cape May gallery in the 1880s was also at or near this location.
- 31 In the 1870s or 1880s, Brown probably partnered briefly in Millville in Brown & Beaulieu at the "New Daylight Gallery," and made a stereo view of an unidentified hotel. In 1874–1876, he made at least seven views of Vineland. He may have traveled in subsequent years, as his whereabouts have not been determined. (Stereo views by photographers named Brown, whose first name is not known, were made in a wide variety of locales.) T. K. Treadwell and William C. Darrah, *Photographers of the United States of America*, 1994, last updated 11-28-2003, National Stereoscopic Association, 108, <https://stereoworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/US-PHOTOGRAPHERS.pdf>. In 1894–1895, Brown photographed for the United States View Co., 1215 Race Street, Philadelphia. The 1900 U.S. Census listed him as a photographer living in Ocean City, Cape May County, with his married daughter Mary J. Hutchinson and her physician husband Dr. [Y.?] C. Hutchinson. After suffering from lung disease for two years, Brown died at age 67 of "phthisis pulmonalis" (pulmonary consumption) on April 19, 1901, in Vineland and laid to rest at West Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia. On the death record, his parents' names were Valantine [sic] and Mary Brown, both born in Massachusetts. His last address was 103 Landis Avenue, Vineland, and he had been a resident of New Jersey for five years. Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803–1915, <https://familysearch.org> and State of New Jersey. Transportation of Dead Human Body, Josiah Burnstead Brown, No. 8253, New Jersey State Archives.
- 32 Chester may have operated seasonally in Cape May in the early 1870s. Between 1870 and 1874, a shoemaker named Samuel C. Chester was listed in Philadelphia city directories, not likely Chester the photographer, although the shoemaker's wife's name was Amelia. In 1891, there was a locomotive engineer named Samuel C. Chester listed in the Camden directory. Three Samuel C. Chesters are in the 1900 U.S. Census for Camden: the engineer, the photographer with his family, and a 72-year-old man.
- 33 William A. McKay, *A Directory of Delaware Photographers 1839–1900 and Beyond* (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press), 2018, 53.
- 34 John S. Craig, *Craig's Daguerreian Registry, Volume 3* (Torrington, Connecticut: John S. Craig), 1996, 513. Carte-de-visite by Sexton in Bordentown in author's digital collection.
- 35 U.S. Patent #54,416, May 1, 1866. In July 1867, Sexton acquired U.S. Patent #66,964 for an Improved Railroad Rail-Coupling.
- 36 A versatile and successful entrepreneur, Sexton at various times also ran a butcher business and a grocery store and had another farm in South Fork Township, Christian County, Illinois, where he raised horses. Briefly, he also was postmaster in Zenobia, Illinois. MacKay, 200–202.
- 37 *The Morning Herald* (Wilmington), September 14, 1875, 1.
- 38 McKay, *A Directory of Delaware Photographers*, 53.
- 39 *Philadelphia Photographer*, No. 156 (December 1876), 384.
- 40 *Daily Times* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), August 29, 1873, 2.
- 41 Stereo view seen on eBay, March 17, 2022. "Southwest" is from the 1881 Cape May County Directory studio address.
- 42 Milhollen, 44, asserts the 1882 establishment date, as does Wilson, 219. The Yale University guide to its Brady/Handy Collection states, "Around 1880, Handy entered a photographic partnership with Samuel C. Chester. They operated a studio in Cape May, New Jersey, in 1882."
- 43 Example from the Washington, DC, studio in author's collection.
- 44 The author has seen four different stereo views of groups by Chester & Handy taken at the Stockton House. The author thanks Kenneth Rosen for sharing several Chester & Handy stereo views in his personal collection. For Monmouth County, see author, "Gustavus W. Pach: A Nineteenth-Century New Jersey Photographer," *The Daguerreian Annual 2021* (Cecil, Pennsylvania: The Daguerreian Society, 2022), 158–177, and George H. Moss Jr. and Karen L. Schnitzspahn, *Those Innocent Years, 1898–1914: Images of the Jersey Shore from the Pach Photographic Collection and Victorian Summers at the Grand Hotels of Long Branch, New Jersey* (Sea Bright: Ploughshare Press, 1993 and 2000). The *Ocean Grove Record*, August 24, 1889, reported that Stauffer (1848–1935), who had a gallery in Asbury Park (1880–1917), took a group of about 100 guests at the Howland House, including more than a dozen New Jersey preachers. Born about 1826, William Long was based in Philadelphia (1853–1882) and was active in Cape May in the 1870s and 1880s. Conrad M. Gilbert & W. F. Bacon were Philadelphia photographers from 1875 to the 1900s, with a branch in Camden in the 1890s, when they also produced some Cape May stereo views.
- 45 Kenneth Rosen collection. Promenade cards (4 1/8 x 7 1/8) and Boudoir cards (5 1/4 x 8 1/2) were two of the more common larger versions of cabinet cards in the 1880s.
- 46 In the 1880s, Atlantic City and Asbury Park welcomed all classes and races of visitors, including Sunday excursions by black church and fraternal organizations, although like some other Jersey shore towns, they tried to segregate beaches and other facilities that attracted both African American visitors and, on their time off, black hotel workers. Segregated lodging was prohibited by the 1875 U.S. Civil Rights Act until it was found unconstitutional in an 1883 Supreme Court decision, but New Jersey passed its own Civil Rights Act in 1884, banning discrimination in public accommodations. Nevertheless,

Samuel C. Chester

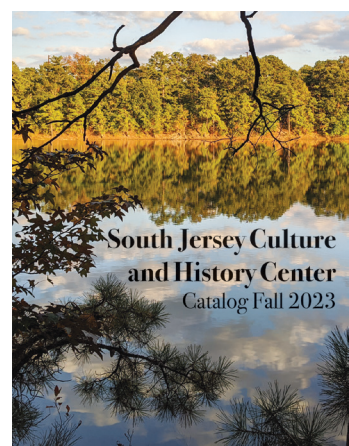
- white-only hotels probably remained typical at the shore. The manager of the traveling Fisk Jubilee Singers commented in 1885 that while performing at New Jersey resorts, “we have been treated more shamefully than we ever were in a southern state.” In Cape May, the first upscale black resort, the Dale Hotel, opened in July 1911. In part, David E. Goldberg, *The Retreats of Reconstruction: Race, Leisure, and the Politics of Segregation at the New Jersey Shore, 1865–1920* (New York: Fordham University, 2017) 48, 74.
- 47 Mentioned in George H. Moss Jr., *Double Exposure Two: Stereographic Views of the Jersey Shore (1859 to 1910) and Their Relationship to Pioneer Photography* (Sea Bright, New Jersey: Ploughshare Press, 1995), 184. Moss listed the following as producers of stereo views of Cape May: J. B. Brown (Cape May), Chester & Handy (Cape May), James Cremer (Philadelphia), Henry H. Hall (Sea Grove, Cape May), E. F. Hovey (publisher, Philadelphia), Levi D. Johnson (Vineland), William Long (Cape May), R. Newell (Philadelphia), [George?] Williams (Cape May, “late with Brady”), and Oliver H. Willard (Congress Hall Lawn, Cape May). Other nineteenth-century producers of Cape May views include Continental Stereo View Co., Chase & Bachrach, and Spader & Nowell.
 - 48 Stereo view seen on eBay, March 17, 2022.
 - 49 In part, Kenneth Rosen to author, email, March 29, 2022.
 - 50 Other subjects of cartes-de-visite by Chester & Handy in Cape May include a woman with elaborately gilded embroidered appliqué trimmed bodice and large, ostrich plumed hat; two lifeguards; a little girl with a doll; and a soldier in uniform with a long rifle.
 - 51 *Evening Critic* (Washington, DC), December 21, 1882, 2.
 - 52 Curiously, in the 1883 directory, Brady is also listed with Chester & Handy at 450 Pennsylvania Avenue NW.
 - 53 Cards this style are included in the *Price List of Photographic Card Stock of the Manufacture of A. M. Collins, Son & Co.*, [Philadelphia], included in catalog, *Scoville Manufacturing Co., Manufacturers, Importers & Dealers in All Articles Pertaining to Photography* ([New York]: September 1884). Collins was the major manufacturer of photographic card stock in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
 - 54 Author’s collection. Dark maroon cards were in use from 1884 to 1895, according to Gary W. Clark, *19th Century Card Photos Kwik Guide: A Step-by-Step Guide to Identifying and Dating Cartes de Visite and Cabinet Cards* (n.p.: PhotoTree, 2013), 40.
 - 55 *Plainfield Daily Press*, August 1, 1888, stated that Handy had completed a “remarkable feat,” an album of 500 photographs of federal government officials, including the President, Cabinet, Supreme Court, Senate, and House of Representatives, completing more than half of the portraits himself. It took him a year to prepare.
 - 56 In his interview, Chester mentioned that he had photographed in Cape May for 26 years. Since he was in Cape May by 1870, this would indicate an end date of 1896.
 - 57 *Bridgeton Evening News*, November 25, 1891, 4: “The popular Millville photographer, Chester, is on duty again at the old stand.” In 1892, he returned from Cape May at the beginning of October. *Bridgeton Evening News*, October 4, 1892, 4.
 - 58 January 4, 1888, 4. Born about 1841, Daniel W. Carpenter grew up in Homer, Cortland, New York. During the Civil War, he enlisted in the 76th New York Infantry Volunteers and was wounded in the Second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862. Later he transferred to the Marines and served as an orderly in the Naval post office in Brooklyn until he was discharged in July 1865. By 1870, Carpenter had a photography gallery in Millville, where he specialized in portraits. After selling out to Chester, Carpenter became a photographer in La Junta, Colorado, by 1891. He continued there until 1898, after which he worked in various towns in Arizona, California, and Colorado. In June 1902, he, and his wife Mary M. (née Hogate), moved to Haddonfield, New Jersey. Whether he did photography after his return to the Garden State is not known. In the 1910 census, he was listed as a brush agent in Pitman. Carpenter died there on March 3, 1913, age 71, and was buried in Cedar Green Cemetery, Plot B, Clayton, New Jersey. In part, email to author, March 17, 2022, from photo historian Carol Johnson, specialist in early Colorado photographers. *La Junta Tribune*, June 25, 1902, 1, mistakenly stated that Carpenter was located in Haddonville instead of Haddonfield.
 - 59 January 5, 1888, 1. Photographs using electric light had been made as early as August 6, 1863, by John A. Whipple, when he photographed Boston Commons at night using exposures of 90 seconds. William Kurtz of New York began producing studio portraits by electric light in the fall of 1882, shortly after the city was electrified. Taft, *Photography and the American Scene*, 383. Kurtz’ cabinet cards were imprinted “Electric Light” under the photo. The Edison Electric Illuminating Company of New York turned on electric lights in the city on September 4, 1882.
 - 60 “Wires Under Ground,” *Morning Post* (Camden), January 7, 1885, 1, reported that plans for electricity in Millville were underway. Street electric lighting was installed in Millville by October 1, 1886, by the Franklin Electric Light Co. *Morning Post* (Camden), September 4, 1886, 1. Cabinet cards with Chester’s 121 High Street address are in the author’s collection, although the Cumberland County Directory in 1889 and 1893 listed the address as 125 High Street.
 - 61 Birth records of children, New Jersey State Archives. Marriage record, Samuel C. Chester, photographer born in Cumberland County, New Jersey, resident of Washington, DC, and Amelia Hunt, born in Pennsylvania, in Ritchie County, West Virginia, West Virginia State

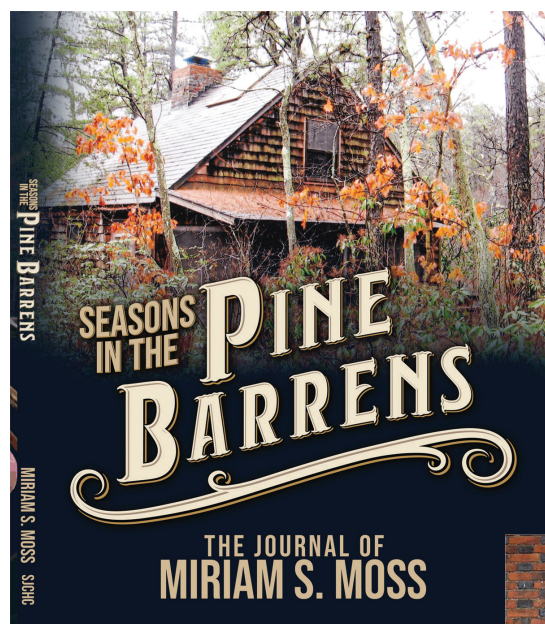
- Archives, http://archive.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view.aspx?Id=11540178&Type=Marriage. Why they married in West Virginia is undetermined. The 1880 U.S. Census, West Whiteland, Chester County, Pennsylvania, listed Amelia Hunt, 15, born in Pennsylvania, with her Pennsylvania-born parents, Jesse, 45, farmer, and Matilda, 42, as well as three siblings, Joseph, 20, Matinda, 17, and James, 12.
- 62 In part, Welling, 185, citing *Philadelphia Photographer*, October 1866, 311–13, 357. Note that Brady and some other New York photographers had made photographs in this format by 1865, calling them Imperial cartes-de-visite. Imperial was sometimes used thereafter to refer to cabinet cards, although the term was also used for much larger photographs, from about 7 x 10 to 11 x 14 inches.
- 63 John Rohrbach, ed., *Acting Out: Cabinet Cards and the Making of Modern Photography* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 2020), 14–16.
- 64 “Cape May on Fire,” <https://www.capemay.com/blog/2003/11/cape-may-on-fire/>.
- 65 Huggins & Scott Auctions, March 30–April 9, 2015. The auction description listed each man with affiliations and provides additional detail about the set. Not in this auction, another cabinet card with three baseball players wearing the same uniforms has also been seen by author.
- 66 Vignetting is the gradual diminution of tone around the figure towards the color of the paper. There were various methods in the nineteenth century to achieve this effect, either during exposure in the camera or while printing. By 1880, at least seven U.S. patents had been issued for vignetting devices. Janice G. Schimmelman, *American Photographic Patents: The Daguerreotype & Wet Plate Era, 1840–1880* (Nevada City, California: Carl Mautz, 2002).
- 67 Chester took out an ad for six months in the *Camden Daily Telegram*, November 21, 1893, reading, “Chester New Photo Studio, 319 Federal Street. Special attention given to children.”
- 68 Almost a dozen previous galleries at 319 Federal in author’s database, abstracted at <http://saretzky.com/history-of-photography-indexes-to-photographers.html>.
- 69 For the Fearn brothers, see author, “Careers in Camera-work: Six Photographers of Camden, New Jersey, 1860–1910.” J. E. Smith was likely John E. Smith, Bordentown photographer from 1869 to the early 1900s. According to the 1891 Sanborn insurance map of 1891, the first floor of 326 Federal housed a telephone office.
- 70 Paul W. Schopp collection.
- 71 Samuel C. Chester. Portrait of a Boy. 4 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches. Instead of 326 Federal, the blind-stamped imprint erroneously reads 826 Federal. Collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia. Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, <http://libwww.freelibrary.org/diglib/searchItem.cfm?itemID=pdcp00111>.
- 72 July 12, 1912, 5.
- 73 *Camden County Directory*, 1923 and 1924; ad, *Morning Post* (Camden), January 11, 1923, 3.
- 74 The author thanks Bonny Beth Elwell, Library Director, Camden County Historical Society, for retrieving information from several directories in the mid-1920s that are not available online.
- 75 In his interview, Chester, who moved to Camden in 1892, stated that he photographed in Camden for 30 years, which would suggest 1932 as his retirement date from photography.
- 76 Death record, New Jersey State Archives. Chester died from chronic myocarditis with contributing cardiac asthma and was buried in Camden. A copy of this document was one of several kindly provided by archivist Bette Epstein before her retirement.
- 77 To ask questions of a Holocaust survivor in a holographic video, see Dimensions in Testimony, <https://sfi.usc.edu/dit>.



The South Jersey Culture & History Center Local history press

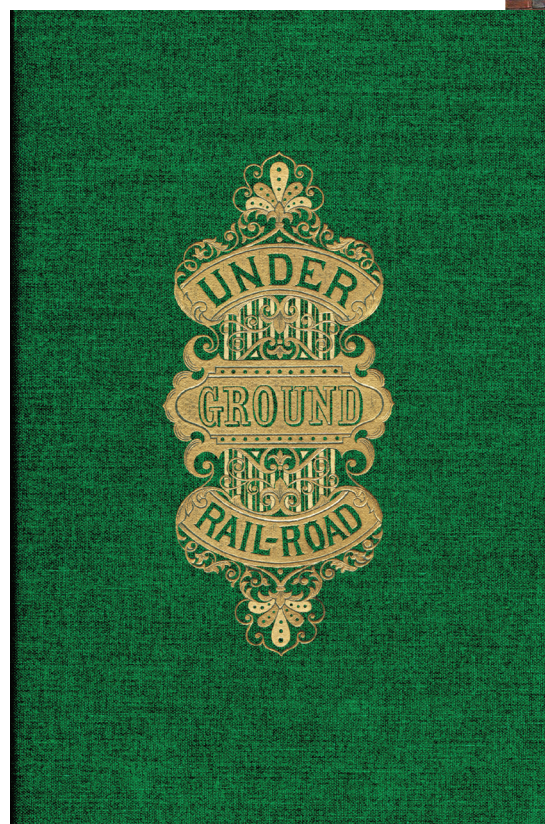
The student-staffed local history press at Stockton University has produced over thirty titles related to South Jersey, along with this twelfth issue of *SoJourn*. Titles cover many topics including the history and culture of the Pine Barrens, the environmental history of South Jersey rivers, architecture, Jewish farming communities, literature, and more. For an up-to-date catalog, please visit stockton.edu/sjchc/publications/





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