

The Shady Side of the Lens

Abstract

In the early 1890s, Peter Walker spent his summers in Beach Haven at the Jersey shore, where he conducted a seasonal gallery. Walker, a popular and respected Mount Holly photographer who sang in the choir at a local church, was sent to jail for beating his wife in 1896 and in 1897 was arrested again in what a local paper described as a “bestly state of degradation.” This lecture traces Walker’s career, as well as that of other 19th century New Jersey photographers who fell afoul of the law: Gideon C. Angle, Edward W. Blake, Frederick Fearn, Edward R. Stoutenburgh, and John C. Tibbels. Their crimes includes counterfeiting, assault, larceny, adultery, and embezzlement. While most of their contemporaries were law abiding, these photographers were accused of crimes that regrettably still occur today.

Bio

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, from which he retired in 2019. Saretzky also 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, including “The Shady Side of the Lens: Six Lawbreaking Nineteenth Century New Jersey Photographers,” *New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (Winter 2023), and reviews on the history of photography, photographic conservation, and other topics, and lectures regularly throughout New Jersey. Saretzky maintains a website, <http://saretzky.com>, which also includes his photographs, lecture schedule, and history of photography resources.