

## **“The death of Henry E. Insley,” reported 1 September 1894**

(keywords: Henry Earle Insley, George W. Prosch, Insley & Prosch, blue glass, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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WE have also to record the death of Henry E. Insley at his residence at Nannet, N. Y., on August 7th, at the advanced age of eighty-three. He was the oldest photographer in America, if not in the world. He began business at the corner of Broadway and Fulton street, in 1840, being associated with his brother-in-law, the late Geo. W. Prosch, under the firm name of Insley & Prosch. In later years he moved to Jersey City. He used double mirrors for reflecting sunlight into his studio, and also blue glass for softening the light. He also patented the process for the “illuminated daguerreotype,” a vignettted bust surrounded by a colored halo. He took the first instantaneous picture of a man walking in the street, which picture was noticed in the New York *Sun* of that time.

**[End of text.]**

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### **EDITOR'S NOTES:**

A ca. 1839 daguerreotype portrait of Insley—now in the collection of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art—is viewable on the museum's web site, *Developing Greatness: The Origins of American Photography, 1839–1885*.<sup>1</sup> The portrait of Insley is included among several Insley family daguerreotypes in Jane L. Aspinwall, “Henry Earle Insley: Artist and Entrepreneur,” *Daguerreian Annual 2007* (Cecil: The Daguerreian Society, 2008):76–87. See also Keith F. Davis and Jane L. Aspinwall, *The Origins of American Photography : from Daguerreotype to Dry-plate, 1839–1885* (Kansas City: Hall Family Foundation, 2007): 12–17; Joan M. Schwartz, “The Enigmatic Henry E. Insley,” *History of Photography* 16:1 (Spring 1992): 70–72; Roy Blankenship, “Henry Earle Insley: Pioneer Photographer,” *South of the Mountains: The Historical Society of Rockland County* 29:1 (January–March 1985): 16–21.

Insley exhibited his “illuminated daguerreotypes” at the New York Crystal Palace. See *Official Catalogue of the New-York Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations. 1853* (New York: George P. Putnam & Co., 1853): 50, 51–53.<sup>2</sup> A brief description of the method is provided in Samuel D. Humphrey, *American Hand Book of the Daguerreotype* (New York: S. D. Humphrey, 1858): 171.

See also the obituary for Insley in *Appletons' Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1894*, vol. 19 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895): 582.<sup>3</sup>

1. <http://www.nelson-atkins.org/art/Exhibitions/DevGreat/CollectionDatabase.cfm?id=51000>

2. [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/B8530003\\_CATALOGUE\\_NY-CRYSTAL\\_1853.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/B8530003_CATALOGUE_NY-CRYSTAL_1853.pdf)

3. [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8950002\\_INSLEY-OBIT\\_APPLETONS\\_1895.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8950002_INSLEY-OBIT_APPLETONS_1895.pdf)

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