PART I

The Daguerreotype Presidents
In February 1839 the *Boston Daily Advertiser* published news from France of a “curious invention lately made by M. Daguerre; for making drawings.” The writer noted that while “the manner in which the camera obscura produces images of objects, by means of a lens, is well known,” Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre’s contribution was “a method of fixing the image permanently” that did so “by the agency of the light alone.” The article went on to explain that Daguerre’s “machine” could make “accurate drawings” of “any object indeed, or any natural appearance may be copied by it.” One man who had observed Daguerre’s efforts compared the new technology “to a kind of physical retina as sensible as the retina of the eye.”

As the *Daily Advertiser’s* choice to publicize Daguerre’s efforts illustrates, Americans were keenly interested in the idea of photography. Some enthusiasts in the late 1830s were experimenting with “photogenic drawing,” the process of exposing objects to light-sensitive paper pioneered by William Henry Fox Talbot in England. But it was Daguerre’s invention that most captured the American imagination. In 1839 a few Americans who had read about Daguerre’s experiments before the entire process was made available to the public tried to make the images but without documented success. Famed inventor Samuel Morse experimented with proto-photographic processes for years, visited France to promote his own invention of the
telegraph, and met Daguerre in early 1839. Months before the French officially presented the daguerreotype to the public, Morse wrote a letter about the process to his brothers, who circulated it to U.S. newspapers. In it, he called Daguerre’s invention “Rembrandt perfected.”

After the French government formally presented the daguerreotype to the public in August 1839, copies of European newspapers describing how to perform the new process made their way across the Atlantic to the United States. Once on American shores, the daguerreotype quickly became an open-source, commercially viable technology. For his part, Morse publicized and supported Daguerre’s new invention in the United States while at the same time downplaying the simultaneous photographic discoveries of Talbot in England. The daguerreotype quickly took off in the United States, eclipsing other nascent modes of photography.

A daguerreotype is a one-of-a-kind, fixed photographic image made by the action of light upon a plate sensitized by chemical solutions. According to photo process historian Mark Osterman, a copper plate is coated with light-sensitive silver, the plate is exposed in the camera, and then the hidden image is revealed “by allowing the fumes of heated mercury to play upon the silver.” The daguerreotype is then washed in a fixing solution to make the image permanent and, finally, “toned with a solution containing gold chloride.” The resulting image, which could come in a variety of sizes depending on the plate used, is a “highly polished silver mirror” that, when manipulated by the hand, alternately reveals the highlights and shadows of its fixed image.

Almost as soon as Americans started making daguerreotypes, they made daguerreotypes of George Washington. The fact that he was unavailable to be photographed from life was no obstacle. Though he died in 1799—a full forty years before photography’s invention—the nation’s first president nevertheless appeared as a subject in daguerreotypes of busts, painted portraits, and prints, ironically making daguerreotypes of Washington’s image some of the earliest presidential photographs. Take, for example, a daguerreotype of Gilbert Stuart’s famous, yet unfinished, 1796 “Athenaeum” portrait of George Washington. Roughly three inches tall by two and a half inches wide and easily held in one hand, the lightly tarnished, quarter-plate daguerreotype of Washington is preserved behind glass and a gilded mat, cushioned by red velvet, and protected by a worn wooden and leather hinged case. But its mirrored surface still clearly offers up Washington’s painted gaze, one that is familiar to us today in large part because we carry it in our wallets on the U.S. dollar bill.
When the case is opened, a message appears opposite the Washington image. In embossed letters on a red velvet background, a tiny brass plate reads:

DAGUERREOTYPED BY
JOHN A. WHIPPLE
NOV. 15TH 1847.

The daguerreotype and its tiny brass plate invite several questions. What, precisely, has been “daguerreotyped” here? At first glance, the answer would seem simple: Whipple has made a daguerreotype of a famous painting of George Washington. But why? To share Stuart’s famous portrait with others
who might not otherwise see it? As an experiment or practice for a photographer continually honing his craft? To illustrate to potential customers Whipple’s own prowess in the art of the daguerreotype? To tap into (and perhaps profit from) mid-nineteenth-century Americans’ obsession with the iconic founder? Or perhaps the choice of Stuart’s Athenaeum portrait was one of mere convenience; the portrait got its name because it was held in Boston’s Athenaeum, the local library, so it theoretically would have been accessible to the photographer.10 There are no definitive answers to these questions. Nevertheless, the practice of photographing George Washington offers a helpful point of entry into this book’s exploration of how presidents have helped to shape photography across its history. Because it turns out that once Americans got photography, they needed a photographic George Washington.

Whipple’s Washington

John Adams Whipple worked as a photographer in Boston starting in the 1840s, and by the 1850s he was a well-known and well-regarded practitioner. Whipple grew up with an interest in chemistry and came to photography while working as a supplier of photographic chemicals in Boston.11 By the late 1840s Whipple ran a studio with his partner, James Black, where he participated in most aspects of the photographic trade. The 1848–1849 Boston Directory listed him as one of twenty-two sellers and producers of “Daguerreotype Miniatures” in the city.12 An ad in that same publication advertised “Whipple’s Daguerreotypes—by steam,” noting that Whipple had successfully integrated steam power into the production of his images, enabling him to “furnish my customers with better miniatures in less time than formerly, especially beautiful likenesses of little children, Which I will warrant to make satisfactory to parents, If they will call upon me between the hours of 11 and 2, when the sky is clear.”13 For an art of “sun-painting” that relied on the exposure of its subject to a light-sensitive medium, a clear sky was essential.

Today Whipple is remembered for his contributions to the science of photography and the photography of science. For example, in 1850 Whipple and Black patented a process for making paper prints from glass negatives—what they called “crystalotypes”—which opened the door to the printing of photographs on paper in later decades.14 During this period Whipple
also experimented with photographing the moon and stars using a large telescope at the Harvard College Observatory. After several failures over the span of three or so years, he finally succeeded in making a spectacular daguerreotype of the moon in 1851.\footnote{Photographing George Washington}

Closer to the subject of his Washington daguerreotype, Whipple also showed interest in the photography of art and in images related to the nation’s founders.\footnote{Photographing George Washington} In what may have been one of his early experiments with the crystalotype, Whipple made and printed on paper a vibrant image of a classically themed statue of a male and female pair walking together.\footnote{Photographing George Washington} Later, in 1854, Whipple contributed images to a book called \textit{Homes of American Statesmen}, a nearly five-hundred-page compendium of patriotic biographies of the nation’s founders. Such publications were common during this period. Merry Foresta writes, “In America the nineteenth century was a great period of taking stock, of retrospection and recovery as well as expansion, and photography was considered the truest agent for listing, knowing, and possessing, as it were, the significance of events.”\footnote{Photographing George Washington} Each statesman’s profile was accompanied by facsimiles of his letters and engravings of his home, many of which originated as daguerreotypes. The George Washington chapter featured an engraving of a Cambridge, Massachusetts, house that Washington lived in during the Revolution, based upon a daguerreotype by Whipple.\footnote{Photographing George Washington} Each book was sold with a photographic frontispiece of John Hancock’s Boston home by Whipple; printed directly on paper, the image was, according to a publisher’s note in the book, “somewhat of a curiosity, each copy being an original sun-picture on paper.”\footnote{Photographing George Washington} The frontispiece constituted perhaps one of the earliest examples of a photograph being printed in or with a book.

The daguerreotype of the Washington painting was thus far from unusual for its creator. In many ways it embodied what we know of Whipple’s overarching interest in the art and science of photography and his commitments to technical and aesthetic experimentation with the photography of art objects. Perhaps his choice to photograph Washington was also tied to a patriotic and commercial investment in telling visual narratives of the nation’s founders. If so, Whipple was not alone.

\section*{George Washington as Visual Icon of the Nation}

For nearly all of the nineteenth century, George Washington was \textit{the} visual icon of the nation, its metaphorical father figure and shaper of national
character. This status emerged during Washington’s own life as he took command of the Continental forces during the Revolution and then later assumed the presidency. Publicly circulated visual images played a central role in the emerging iconicity of Washington. The culture more broadly was interested in new topics for visual representation, as the later eighteenth century brought with it a shift from public interest in portraits of religious figures to more secular figures such as soldiers and politicians. In the case of George Washington, those new images came in a dizzying variety of forms, everything from pictures in books and magazines to prints suitable for framing and even sheet music. Writes Wendy Wick Reaves, “Never before in America had a single subject produced such a quantity of visual material over an extended period of time.” Many images came with Washington’s explicit cooperation. For if Washington in his Cincinnatus guise was a famously reluctant general and later a reluctant president, he does not appear to have been reluctant to pose for portraits or busts. His fame and his own interest in visual representation led the most famous artists of the day to seek him out. Washington sat for upward of twenty-eight portrait painters, some more than once. When the images were completed, many of them stayed in the Washingtons’ possession. Furthermore, the president displayed images of himself in his home at Mount Vernon and was known to proudly show them off to visitors.

In life, and as captured by some of the finest painters and sculptors of the day, Washington’s body was already understood to be a national body that embodied American values. Washington’s status as a visual icon only grew after his death. Barry Schwartz writes that between 1800 and 1860, “American writers produced at least 400 books, essays, and articles on Washington’s life. During this time, Washington’s image was not that of a mere celebrity, it was sacred.” Dramatic illustrated prints such as John James Barralet’s 1802 Apotheosis of Washington, which featured Washington being elevated to divine status by allegorical figures representing Father Time and Immortality, used familiar iconology to confirm and perform that sacred status. Later the 1820s and 1830s brought the rise of the illustrated celebrity biography, followed around 1840 by the first illustrated history books chronicling the founding of the nation. Not surprisingly, Washington’s image repeatedly circulated in these contexts. By the 1840s, when photography was just appearing on the national scene, the profusion of images of Washington continued, even including his likeness on household
wares like textiles and buttons. Yet despite the diversity of places where one could find images of Washington circulating, the images themselves did not differ all that much from one another.\textsuperscript{31} The source images used for this wide variety of material were likely to be a small handful of increasingly accepted canonical images of Washington.

Here Whipple’s choice to make a daguerreotype of Stuart’s Athenaeum portrait comes into sharper focus, for that image became the image of Washington in the nineteenth century and it remains as one of the most visible today.\textsuperscript{32} For example, one popular illustrated biography, John Frost’s \textit{1844 Pictorial History of the United States}, affirmed for readers Washington’s national paternity by featuring an engraved reproduction of the Athenaeum portrait in which Washington was surrounded by other symbols of the nation, including Lady Liberty, an American eagle, the flag, and the Constitution.\textsuperscript{33} In 1847, the year Whipple made his Washington daguerreotype, the government released its first stamps, which featured images of Ben Franklin and George Washington; the latter’s image was based on Stuart’s Athenaeum portrait.\textsuperscript{34} In fact, the Athenaeum portrait became so widely reproduced, in so many forms, that literary and art critic John Neal claimed in 1868, “If Washington returned to life and stood side by side with this portrait and did not resemble it, he would have been rejected as an imposter.”\textsuperscript{35}

In good republican fashion, however, the Athenaeum portrait was not merely coronated as the preferred portrait; it had to be argued for, repeatedly. In the process of authorizing commissions for paintings and sculptures of Washington in the 1820s and 1830s, Congress debated more than once which images of George Washington were the best likenesses. One commission gave the chosen artists freedom to construct their works as they saw fit but decreed that the head must be Stuart’s.\textsuperscript{36} This provision produced a series of counterarguments by those who claimed that the images of Washington by Rembrandt Peale were in fact more faithful likenesses. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the dispute continued between those who favored Peale and those who favored Stuart, carried on largely through family members invested in securing the aesthetic and commercial value of their ancestor’s legacy. As late as the nation’s centennial celebrations in 1876, for example, Stuart’s daughter Jane still worked publicly to convince Americans that her father’s images of Washington were the most authentic.\textsuperscript{37} Yet she need not have worried. Stuart’s Athenaeum painting
continued to dominate. As an 1889 magazine article declared, “The household Washington of the world is Stuart’s Washington.”

But Peale and Stuart had something more important in common than disputes about whose likeness of Washington was the “truest.” The disputes happened in the first place because each had painted the man from life. Thus it would be assumed that their images would be closest to a faithful depiction of Washington the man. Arguably that fidelity gave the Athenaeum portrait much of its rhetorical traction as a vehicle for communicating Washington’s symbolic status. Washington likely sat for Stuart in Philadelphia in April 1796 as a part of a commission to paint both the president and his wife. The portrait, however, was never finished; furthermore, Stuart never even gave it to the Washingtons, despite the fact that they had commissioned it and that Martha Washington requested it from the artist after her husband’s death. While working on the heads, Stuart received a lucrative commission to create a full body portrait of Washington that ultimately became known as the “Lansdowne” portrait. Stuart set aside the unfinished portrait of the president but likely copied the head for the new commission. The image known today as the Athenaeum portrait—famously unfinished but regularly and routinely copied by the artist and others in his studio—was given to the Boston Athenaeum after Stuart’s death in 1828. The original unfinished portrait was copied at least seventy-five times during the artist’s lifetime.

The portrait was especially ripe for daguerreotyping because it was known to be painted from life. If one could not directly photograph Washington, the logic might go, one could at least photograph an image known to be painted from life—especially one conveniently hanging in the local Boston library. That would give one’s daguerreotype something close to the status of what the new medium promised: fidelity to its subject, a perfect likeness. Furthermore, the specific visual qualities of the Athenaeum portrait conformed to the evolving norms of photographic portraiture, which themselves had come from portrait painting. After the Revolution the nation needed a new mode of visual representation for its leaders, and Stuart’s Washington fit that bill. Paul Staiti points out that Washington’s expression in the painting embodied “prudence, self-control, and sincerity, a premeditated presentation of an ideal self” that found later echoes in the norms of daguerreotype portraiture in the United States. Stuart’s image from life depicted its subject with a “sense of dignity, of seriousness, even melancholy.” Whether viewed in its original unfinished state or in its
myriad painted “finished” copies, the Athenaeum portrait was not all that different in tone from the daguerreotype portraits photographers were making of elites in the 1840s: clear, crisp, and austere.47

Which brings us back to the act of photographing George Washington. Whipple was not the only Bostonian who thought to photograph the Athenaeum portrait. One of Whipple’s Boston competitors, the studio of Southworth and Hawes, created at least six daguerreotypes of the Athenaeum portrait in the early 1850s.48 Like Whipple, Southworth and Hawes regularly copied art objects and advertised the quality of their copies.49 The daguerreotype, Albert Southworth wrote, “is admirably adapted to the copying of sculptures, crayons and engravings, and also to paintings, many of which can be well done.” Writing specifically of the Athenaeum portrait, he continued, “The most of Stuart’s portraits lose nothing in character by daguerreotype, and are far more perfect than any engraver could represent them.”50

At least one visitor to Southworth and Hawes agreed. The photographer and writer Marcus Aurelius Root visited the studio in 1855 and offered his impressions in an article published in the August issue of the Photographic Art-Journal, one of a small crop of photography journals that appeared after 1851.51 Root praised the work of Boston daguerreotypists as among the very best, writing that they “occupy a higher place of intelligence, energy and personal reputation, than those of any other city in the United States.”52 He singled out the work of Southworth and Hawes, in particular “a photographic copy of Gilbert Stuart’s original portrait of Washington, full size, and decidedly the best photographic copy of that celebrated portrait I have ever seen.”53 Root’s statement implied that he had seen and examined others, hinting at the broader practice of photographing Washington.54

Southworth and Hawes did not only copy the Stuart portrait by itself, however. Following the path of earlier photographers with more allegorical interests, they also used a finished copy of the painting in an original daguerreotype composition. A whole-plate daguerreotype made by Southworth and Hawes in the early 1850s features a young woman gazing at the painting behind her. She is turned three-quarters toward the viewer but gazes over one shoulder at the Athenaeum Washington. The direction of her gaze, coupled with the nearly perfect eyeline match between painted subject and live subject, seems to invite the viewer to gaze along with her.55 Echoes of the familial connotation of founding father and child may also be found in earlier daguerreotypes that juxtaposed Washington with live
subjects. One dated to the mid-1840s pictures what looks to be a mother and daughter. The mother looks out at the viewer while the daughter gazes down upon a print of George Washington resting in the mother’s lap; closer inspection reveals it to be a print of the Athenæum portrait. New York photographer Gabriel Harrison posed his children with busts of Washington to construct heavy-handed allegories of patriotism. Harrison earned public acclaim in 1845 for a daguerreotype portrait he made of his son in which the young boy, aptly named George Washington Harrison, gazes upward while hugging a white marble bust of the founding father. Ten years later Harrison made a similar daguerreotype of his daughter with a different bust of Washington. Laura Wexler argues that images like these constituted the

![Figure 1.2: Southworth and Hawes, girl with portrait of George Washington, ca. 1850. (Metropolitan Museum of Art; gift of I. N. Phelps Stokes, Edward S. Hawes, Alice Mary Hawes, and Marion Augusta Hawes, 1937.)](image-url)
nation as a family, with Harrison’s children as loving proto-citizens, literally wrapping their arms around the father of the nation. Other scholars suggest that Harrison used the busts and portraits of Washington to add “visual interest.” Harrison’s portraits tapped into conventions of theater to tell allegorical, patriotic stories of good citizens properly worshiping the father of their national family.61

Figure 1.3: Unknown maker, American mother and daughter with print of George Washington, ca. 1845–1848. Daguerreotype, half-plate, 5 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches (14 x 11.4 cm). (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri; gift of Hallmark Cards Inc., 2005.27.70. © Nelson Gallery Foundation. Image: Thomas Palmer.)
Harrison’s daguerreotypes prompted one writer to reflect upon the relationship between the Washington of the daguerreotype and the viewer of it. A terribly overwritten poem published in the *Photographic Art-Journal* in 1851 by Eliza C. Hurley includes these two verses: “Look up,—Look up, ’tis Washington! Oh! fix on him thy gaze, His noble, his heroic mind Fill’d Nations with amaze! / Strain every nerve to reach the mark, The height to which he soar’d; Who proved the glory of his day By the whole world

![Figure 1.4: Gabriel Harrison, Helia Harrison with bust of George Washington, ca. 1855. (Courtesy of George Eastman Museum.)](image)
The writer urged the child to look up, to not only see but to emulate George Washington as well. To “photograph” Washington, then, meant to recognize both his patriarchal greatness and the requirement for the daguerreotype’s viewer to “fix” her own gaze, to aspire to that same character, to “strain every nerve to reach the mark.”

Returning now to my original set of questions about Whipple’s choice to photograph the Athenaeum portrait—instead of asking why George Washington emerged as a subject of early photography, it may be more appropriate to ask Why wouldn’t he? The visual icon of the nation symbolically transformed from the national body of the revolutionary and presidential periods to something akin to a white national father. Furthermore, at least in his Athenaeum portrait form, Washington was also the ideal representative for daguerreotype portraiture, a kind of aesthetic touchstone for carrying the presidential image forward into the photographic age. He was both of the past and relentlessly present. Washington’s own bearing, combined with Stuart’s skill, offered mid-nineteenth-century viewers a serious, calm presence to emulate, an image made from life and a model of citizenly gravitas.

Daguerreotyping the Revolution and Early Republic

The need for models of citizenship seemed especially urgent because photography appeared precisely at the moment when the generation of the American Revolution and early republic was dying out. While George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson were long gone, James Madison’s widow, Dolley Madison, lived long enough to be photographed, as did John Quincy Adams, a literal child of the Revolution and himself a former president. Photographers were so eager to get a daguerreotype of an elderly and ill Andrew Jackson before his death in 1845 that they more or less staged a months-long (and eventually successful) stakeout at his home in Tennessee. Perhaps the best products of that desire for a direct link to the Revolution and early republic are the daguerreotypes of Dolley Madison, who more than anyone stood as a living symbol of them. Newly returned to living in the nation’s capital in the 1840s, she remained a celebrity. The apocryphal story of her rescue of Gilbert Stuart’s portrait of George Washington from the British army descending upon the White House in 1814 still circulated, fanning the flames of her fame. She was
given her own seat on the floor of the House of Representatives, and when she died in 1849 she received a state funeral.65

Daguerreotypes made by Mathew Brady in 1848 of Madison posing alone and with her niece Anna Payne suggested both continuity and change. In her portraits, Madison wore the very-out-of-fashion turban of her earlier era of national prominence, her dress in sharp contrast with that of her younger, more fashionable niece. Madison’s symbolic continuity with the nation’s founding is perhaps best illustrated in a group photograph likely made in the summer of 1846 at the President’s House (as it was called then). The daguerreotype made by the painter George P. A. Healy recorded what might have been a chance, and certainly fortuitous, photo opportunity at the Polk White House. The photograph condensed into one image the nation’s past represented by a somewhat out of focus yet still clearly identifiable Madison, its present represented by the current president, James Polk, and his wife, Sarah, and its future in the form of then–Secretary of State James Buchanan, who would become president less than a dozen stormy years later.66

Figure 1.5: Mathew Brady, daguerreotype of Dolley Madison, 1848. (Library of Congress.)
The Madison daguerreotypes were both similar to and different from photographs of Washington in painted or sculpted form. They also provided citizens with visual memories of the founding, but as images of living people they offered a poignant, bodily connection to the earliest years of the nation. The desire to capture elite figures for posterity drove early portraiture in the United States, especially in the nation’s capital. An 1845 editorial in the Washington, DC, *National Intelligencer* extolled the virtues of the work of the photographers Edward Anthony and J. M. Edwards, who had spent the last few years trying to photograph every member of Congress, along with other dignitaries, from a makeshift studio inside the U.S. Capitol: “We can hardly imagine an exhibition more attractive to the public than the accurate likenesses of all, or nearly all, the eminent individuals of our country.” The writer recognized the future value of the images as well, adding, “It must also soon be of great value, as one and another of those who have lived long enough to attain celebrity are passing from this stage of life. How priceless would be a good daguerreotype of Washington, Franklin, or any of the fathers of our country.” Implicit in the editorial’s lamentation about the impossibility of ever having a “good daguerreotype” of Washington and
others was the recognition that photography made it possible to preserve figures for history. To make a daguerreotype of Dolley Madison was in many ways to photograph the Revolution itself.

**Daguerreotypes in the Washington Monument**

Beyond the desire to capture the image and spirit of the Revolution, the urge to photograph George Washington exemplified the immediacy and intensity with which photography and the presidency came together in the public mind. Perhaps no single event of the 1840s illustrated this blending more clearly than the public celebrations surrounding the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Monument. On July 4, 1848, after many decades of deliberation, partisan wrangling, and often ineffectual fund-raising, the cornerstone of the Washington Monument was laid in an elaborate ceremony in Washington, DC. Just as the group daguerreotype of Dolley Madison with a current and future president bridged the nation’s past and future, the laying of the cornerstone served as a symbolic bridge between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Newspapers reported that a procession some forty-five minutes long brought President Polk, members of Congress, justices of the Supreme Court, and special guests to the monument site, where an estimated fifteen to twenty thousand people gathered for the event. Eighty-year-old Dolley Madison was joined as a special guest by ninety-one-year-old Eliza Hamilton, widow of Alexander, and they rode together in the procession to the ceremony. Both women, along with Louisa Adams, the widow of the recently deceased John Quincy Adams, had helped with fund-raising efforts for the monument. (Months earlier, Adams himself had been invited to give the oration at the event but turned down the request because of ill health.) In keeping with the intergenerational nature of the event, a young, new congressman from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln, was also in attendance.

The masonic ceremony opened with a prayer and an oration, and then came the main event:

The brethren came under the masonic arch into the excavation, and surrounded the corner-stone during the speaking. After which the various plates, books, pamphlets, newspapers, maps, charts, &c., having been deposited in the stone, Major French came down and a hymn was sung. He then
poured the oil, and corn, and wine, emblems of prosperity and happiness, into the stone, and after the usual examination of the order, pronounced it “true and trusty”; had the cap-stone let down, and the stone sealed up; and the clapping of hands . . . finished the work.74

Dozens of artifacts and objects were deposited inside the cornerstone as a kind of time capsule. These objects recalled aspects of Washington’s life, chronicled the history of plans for the monument, and described aspects of the present day. Copies of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence were placed inside, along with a book of presidential messages and copies of current magazines and that day’s newspapers. Among the items the writer above termed “&tc.” were a “portrait of Washington, from Stuart’s painting, Faneuil Hall” and “Daguerreotype likenesses of General and Mrs. Mary [sic] Washington; with a description of the Daguerreotype process by John S. Grubb, Alexandria, Va.”75 The choice of these particular items is telling. When the Washington Monument committee decided what it wanted to communicate to posterity about George Washington and about the United States in 1848, it chose an image of Washington, one of Stuart’s that recycled the famous head of the Athenaeum portrait.76 And it chose to feature the new relatively technology of photography. Furthermore, in choosing to place daguerreotypes in the cornerstone, it chose not portraits of living Americans—the very feature that made this miraculous new art so miraculous—but “daguerreotype likenesses” of portraits of two people dead for some fifty years. In 1848 the nation still needed Washington, but so, apparently, did photography: to authorize its value, to connect it to the nation’s past and present, and to establish its own norms of portraiture for decades to come.