

SUSPENDED CONVERSATIONS

The Afterlife of Memory in

Photographic Albums

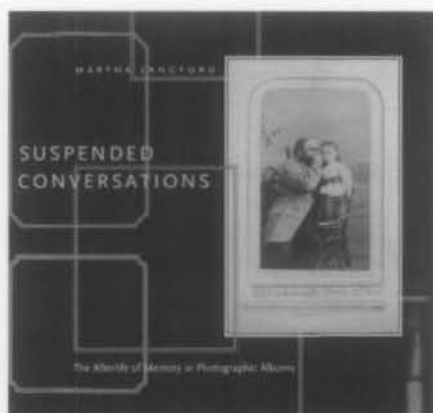
Martha LANGFORD

McGill-Queens University Press

Montreal & Kingston, 2001

241 pp., 82 b/w illus. \$49.95

Although photographic albums are common objects, the meaning of their contents often remains mysterious to those who have not heard the reasons behind the choice and placement of imagery that fills their pages. Albums housed in modern archives or museums are especially challenging to researchers. Because the photographic album is a visual object, it affords little in terms of written information. Traditional methods of biographical research yield scant clues, if any, to the identity of the assembler or the persons depicted in the photographs. Even when individuals can be identified, their connection to those who surround them often remains enigmatic. The historic album places the researcher in the position of an outsider who must be resigned to the fact that certain elements cannot be explained. Given the high degree of intentionality of most albums, it is obvious that their assemblers wished to communicate very specific ideas about family, friends and acquaintances through their choice and arrangement of elements. The question remains as how to make the album "speak" to



modern viewers who have little knowledge of the persons depicted, but recognize the care and consideration exercised in the assembly of its contents.

In *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums*, Martha Langford directly links the meaning of albums to oral presentation: photographs act as touchstones for memories and provoke the recounting of stories, tales and anecdotes (p.21). The album gains meaning through performance, and the performance generated points to the force and endurance of oral tradition in modern culture. The family album, therefore, preserves not simply images of the dearly departed, but the "primary mnemonic formations of orality" that structure oral tradition. Langford's primary research is based on the impressive collection of photographic albums contained in the McCord Museum. Her theoretical position combines Walter J. Ong's concept of the "psychodynamics of orality" as

developed in his 1982 book *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, with interactive techniques formulated through sociology, ethnology, folklore studies and psychotherapy (p.21). Langford argues that, as the structures of oral tradition form the very basis of organization within the album, the researcher has only to engage in their dynamics to unlock the album's meaning.

Unfortunately, these ideas as stated in her introduction are not fully developed until the fourth chapter, "Orality and Photography." Prior to this, Langford addresses a variety of topics concerning photographic albums, ranging from their condition as historic objects to their employment in modern works of art. This encyclopaedic approach represents more than a review of previous literature. Rather it is linked, albeit in a rather unwieldy fashion, to her idea that the album contains an essential component that previous writers and critics have overlooked: a fundamental structuring mechanism, the "oral-photographic framework." Such a premise also necessitates a comprehensive review of the numerous types of albums that exist. The album can take many shapes and forms, and Langford's discussion moves from one to the next at a heady pace. However, even though contents vary, she believes that meaning is always a function of the oral framework which directly structures the choice and arrangement of imagery.

These ideas are then applied to an analysis of an album in the book's penultimate chapter, "'Photographs' 1916-1945." Here Langford's theories of orality are clearly stated, developed and illustrated. More examples would be welcome as they would allow the reader a greater opportunity to appreciate the specific nature of her inquiry, and the viability of its application to a wide range of album types.

The second chapter, "The Idea of Album," explores the writing, theories and approaches the album has inspired. For Langford, these represent the *idea* of the album perpetuated by artists, scholars and researchers and which, until now, has conditioned viewer reception (p.23). For example, Robert Taft, in *Photography and the American Scene*, recounts how for an immigrant pioneer family, the album and the family Bible were the only objects that maintained links with the past. Taft supports his argument with references to A.J. Dickson's *Covered Wagon Days*. However, when Langford re-examined this source, she discovered that the album does not assume the same importance in the original story as Taft's retelling suggests. There is little evidence that their album ever contained photographs of distant loved ones, nor is there any indication that members of the family ever opened the album to gaze longingly at its contents. Rather, Taft's characterization of the album is based on what Langford

terms "typicality." Taft, she notes, "attributed a *typical* family album to a *typical* pioneer family" and those who have subscribed to his ideas have "built their argument on their agreement with an abstraction" (p.25). For Langford, albums are anything but typical as they contain a "spark of intentionality" which, when reactivated by the oral-photographic framework, makes the album "an instrument of meaning" (p.23).

Langford next addresses how the association of photography and death has conditioned viewer response to the album. For André Bazin, the album contains "the disturbing presence of lives halted at a set moment in their duration" (p.28). Carol Mavor, in her book *Pleasures Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs*, argued that Lewis Carroll used the album to deny the inevitability of his mortality. His desire for perpetual innocence and youth is expressed in photographic displays of young girls who appear as "flattened flower buds... all pressed, pasted, preserved and arranged" (p.28). In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes formulated his idea of the *studium* and *punctum* while grieving the death of his mother, whose photograph, he noted, displayed the markings of having been pasted into an album. Other ideas of the album include what Langford terms the "meta-album." This type takes the form of a compilation that is often fantastic in terms of its

subject matter, as seen in Ralph Eugene Meatyard's *The Family Album of Lucybelle Crater* which Langford characterizes as "an anti-ideal condition, a photographic grotesque" (p.30). The idea of the album as archive has inspired Christian Boltanski, Hans-Peter Feldman, Gerhard Richter, George Legrady and Felix Gonzalez-Torres to explore connections between personal and collective memories. They conclude that the album thus operates as an indexical trace, an object replete with expressions of mortality and loss.

Chapter Two discusses the evocative character of the album and how it has provided inspiration for many artists and writers. However, as these approaches to the album do not demonstrate theories of orality, it would perhaps have been more prudent to reserve their discussion for another time, or book. As Langford notes at the end of that chapter, she is more interested in the private album found in the public collection. The chapters that follow discuss this concern more directly. In the third section, "The Album as Collection," Langford addresses the assembler's personal motivation for collecting and displaying photographs in albums. She observes that collections of photographs can appear eclectic to an outsider viewer, but through the album a "pattern of internal associations" is built up, and thus the personal intentions of the assembler can be linked to oral tradition

(p.42). For example, in the *carte-de-visite* album, the motif of the cut-out windows allowed a certain number of photographs to be formally displayed. The assembler, therefore, could position images within the album for reasons linked to the telling of stories.

Langford examines a number of albums and provides numerous insights into the choice and type of imagery displayed. Yet, what is lacking is a more rigorous sociological analysis. It is recognized that the author wishes to acknowledge the personal voice of the assembler, and thus not reduce the album to an analysis of sociological types. However, one suspects that Langford shies away from such interpretations because they challenge her thesis that oral traditions structure the album's contents. Even the examples Langford reproduces in her book show that other methods of organization exist.

For example, in her discussion of the *Arthur Lindsay Album* (c.1866)¹ Langford considers how the assembler has merged the illustrious lineage of the Royal Family with that of her own immediate and extended family. This presentation was made possible through the massive number of photographs of royalty that flooded the market in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The reader is eager to know more about this phenomenon and about Langford's thoughts on how the organization of an album can affirm

the social pretensions of the assembler. However, the author does not pursue the matter much further except to note that through oral recitation the subject matter and arrangement of the photographs would have produced a "dream place of reception at court," or allowed the assembler to fantasize how those from the upper levels of society could enter her more lowly immediate circle (p.44).

In keeping with Langford's general thesis, it is true that the assembler would have related stories animating the album's contents in terms of her social preoccupations. However, were oral structures the primary factor in the choice and arrangement of photographs? Or can one perceive other, more societal forces at work? The page of an album reproduced in the book offers clues in this regard. One is immediately struck by the fact that the four women depicted assume poses that display their luxurious dresses to best advantage. The women are visually united as a group through their interest in fashion. Moreover, their poses echo those assumed by women in the period's fashion magazines.² These publications informed women's consciousness, especially in terms of their social presentation of self. Such an interpretation is not necessarily reductive. As Anne Higonnet has noted, women's relation to the fashion industry in this period represented an intersection of personal and social factors; women influenced by the dictates of consumer society nonetheless made individual

choices about the articles of clothing they purchased.³ (Such is also true today). The photograph captured these concerns and, more importantly, reflected her success in negotiating private and public spheres.

This type of imagery indicates that visual concerns may have been prioritized within the album to the exclusion of oral explanation. Langford discusses several albums that were devoted to a highly selective collection of imagery. One, assembled by Hugh Wylie Becket, was dedicated to photographs of famous women, mainly actresses but also royalty. In addition to the display of female celebrities, the *Becket Actress Album* (c.1872) also contains other, more risqué photographs of women lounging on couches.⁴ Langford does not discuss these, and only touches on erotic imagery in her consideration of the *Ogilvie Album* (c.1868)⁵ which contains an image of Scottish washerwomen whose skirts have been raised to expose their lower legs. Such photographs indicate how the album also operated as an imagined space activated through vision. This is not to say that oral explanation completely disappears. What is at play here is what Emmanuel Cooper, in his discussion of private albums, characterized as the “pleasure of looking,” at the erotic image which “excites and stimulates perhaps as much as the actual event it describes.”⁶

Langford’s next chapter, “Memoirs and Travelogues,” addresses memoirs,

or albums dedicated to a significant event or circumstance in the assembler’s life, and travelogues in which voyages are the main subject. The author notes that our interpretation of albums is affected by the viewpoint of the present. For example, a page of photographs contained in the *William Hilliard Snyder Album* (c.1916)⁷ shows playful young men, and the pride of a soldier who poses stiffly for the camera. Any appreciation of this album is deeply affected by the knowledge that these men were soon sent off to war, possibly never to return, and furthermore, that the assembler died on the battlefield near Amiens. Others such as the *Cynthia Jones Album* (c.1923) and the *Wagner Wartime Album* (c.1917)⁸ also depict the exploits of those involved in the war effort. For Langford, these contain the spoken, but now suspended tales of those who experienced self-discovery and adulthood within the larger theatre of war and death (p.76). The travelogue album also represents moments of self-discovery through opportunities afforded by Victorian and Edwardian markers of progress: the steamship, railway, and automobile. Although the subject of the album is seemingly circumscribed by travel, Langford notes that hiatuses abound; these photographs represent the fragments of moments that serve as *aide-mémoire* to an oral recitation of the voyage (p.87).

Again, these albums provide dense information about the places and times

of their subject matter and the reader is curious to know more about their contents. For example, the album *Bloemfontein to London. Via East Coast, Egypt and the Continent. M.C.B. and C.J.A./ Feby to May 1910 (c.1910)*⁹ is a fascinating compendium of photographs relating to late colonialism along the coast of East Africa. Langford gives a partial explanation of the journey by referring to Charlotte Cameron's 1913 novel *A Woman's Winter in Africa*, which provides a contemporary account of travel through the area. However, as the relationship of photography to larger colonial processes and to the development of tourist industry is not discussed in detail, one is left wondering why individuals photographed these places and themselves within them. The pictures reproduced in the book hint at an explanation. The two protagonists of the album, a man and a woman, referred to only as C.J.A. and M.C.B., appear in the photograph in the upper left corner. They are seated in a small rail car or "ghari" (gharry) as one caption notes, flanked by natives. The next photograph, to its right, depicts government offices at a distance, while at the centre of the photograph two Africans push the rail car. The bottom left photograph shows the government offices at a different angle, and the final photograph, bottom right, depicts M.C.B. seated alone in the car, C.J.A. presumably the photographer.

The page obviously depicts a short

journey in a rail car which is described in one caption as the "mode of locomotion in Mombasa." The images would have undoubtedly prompted the assembler to recount stories describing his or her experience of the trip. This particular page also strongly demonstrates the power of photography to present both the surveyor and the surveyed. Some photographs depict the colonizers who temporarily inhabit certain spaces in a "natural" manner, while others present the scenes they observe. These images are descriptive of larger colonial processes. Thus, the need to represent oneself in these spaces provides the impetus for taking the photographs and, further, the desired or imagined understanding of oneself in such spaces is reaffirmed through the organization of the images.

This brief analysis of one page in one album indicates the need to be highly selective when researching albums in order to allow for an expanded and detailed discussion of their contents. In the case of *Bloemfontein to London* album, the colonialism of Mombasa has a part to play in both the taking of the photographs and their choice and placement in the album. The methods of organization, therefore, are not determined solely by the structures of orality. In her next chapter, "The Idea of Family," Langford again examines a variety of albums any one of which deserves an entire chapter. As in her section "The Idea of Album," her

intention is to explore different ideas of the family album to relate theories of orality to their contents.

The chapter begins by investigating the relation between the album and the family Bible. Langford notes that writers, such as Halla Beloff in her book *Camera Culture*, have drawn inaccurate comparisons between these two objects. Although both the album and the family Bible may contain a record of family members, the former could not compete with the latter in terms of genealogy; due to the newness of the photographic process only two or perhaps three generations could find a place on its pages. The album cannot be said to objectively confirm what constitutes a family; in some cases the album operated more as a means of establishing the social status of its subjects. The process which informed these placements was often based on the need to both reveal and conceal, as Langford astutely notes in her analysis of the *McCord Family Album* (c.1874).¹⁰ It was most likely compiled by David Ross McCord, whose arrangement of the photographs established himself as the family's patriarch. Many of the photographs were drawn from his sister's personal collection and the messages of love and friendship inscribed on their backs are concealed through their placement in the album. It thus combines both fact and fiction, truths and falsehoods. Langford compares this process to Victor Turner's understanding of

Iceland's historic *Sturlunga Saga*. According to his *The Anthropology of Performance*, seemingly objective statements in the Icelandic saga, are highly value-laden. For Langford the album may operate between genealogy and folklore; it takes on the appearance of the family tree and also expresses highly personal agendas (p.95).

The album, consequently, is a highly unreliable historical document in the traditional sense of the term. Moreover, the very act of assembling the album often follows what Langford terms an "enigmatic script" (p.97). She notes that a number of questions must be asked when dealing with the family album, such as who is the family represented and more importantly, who is presenting the family and why has she or he assumed this role (p.97); as well, individual time, family time and historical time are at play (p.99). Thus, how is family represented? Does the congenial group of young men engaged in a variety of social activities in the *Natural History Picnic Album* (c.1910) constitute a family?¹¹ Or should the photographs in the *Charles-Philippe Beaubien Album* (c.1903)¹² be understood as a representation of the family? This album was assembled by a demanding photographic amateur who wished both the subject matter of his photographs — be it members of the family, or places visited — and the quality of his work, to reflect his education and connoisseurship.

Langford's main argument, in this chapter, appears to be against Pierre Bourdieu's formulaic notion of the family album (p.109). For Bourdieu, photography only served to reinforce class distinctions and solidify traditional middle-class values and therefore the family album reflects the dictates of this dispassionate social ordering. Unfortunately, those unfamiliar with Bourdieu's ideas must leaf back through the book for nearly eighty pages to reacquaint themselves with Langford's brief account of his approach. Langford challenges his idea that the album represents a strict order of accounts by the fact that the assembler can manipulate the representation of family. Moreover, what is seen is not necessarily the entire story. The precise ordering of the world in the above-mentioned *Charles-Philippe Beaubien Album*, is given more fluidity through the voice of the assembler's granddaughter, Gretta Chambers whom Langford has interviewed. Dr. Chambers' recollection of the meaning some photographs had for her grand-father and the connections she draws between the images, stands as a living, feeling and more compassionate counterpoint to Bourdieu's detached and unemotional approach.

Langford's theory that the album depicts one story in photographs and represents another through voice is more specifically addressed in the next chapter, "Orality and Photography."

Here she finally outlines her methodologies and discusses writers on orality, such as Ruth Finnegan, Jack Goody, and most importantly, Walter J. Ong. Adapting Ong's theories on the relation between knowledge, memory and speech to the photographic album, Langford proposes that three types of patterns can be discerned: inclusion, organization, and presentation. In addition to these components, performance and memory also affect the organization of the album's contents (p.127). The pattern of inclusion states that characters and scenes depicted within the album are associated with a clustering of thoughts and descriptions. This idea corresponds to Ong's theory that the hero of a tale is a character type whose personal qualities are created through epithets, antitheses, assertive rhythms, proverbs and other devices (p.128). Langford relates Ong's concept of heroic types to photography of the Victorian period, which, as she notes, was replete with types that expressed a variety of cultural values, especially those of a religious nature. In the studio, individuals represented their adoption of specific values by performing to type; the photograph provided visual confirmation of these qualities.

This process was largely tautological, but was also useful because individuals received a depiction of how they wished to be viewed in the public sphere. Manly men assuming heroic

poses for the camera thus affirmed their embodiment of Carlylean masculinity; mothers attending to their children confirmed their proscribed status in the domestic sphere. The character types represented by such persons could take on enormous symbolic significance. The mother had the potential to attain Marian status; more vigorous characters could become Bunyanesque, as seen for example in an album featuring the exploits of the bicycling evangelist, the Reverend Mr. Wright. His photograph, which depicts him standing proudly with his bike in sub-zero weather, strongly suggests that the photographic moment represented but a slight pause in his mission to reach members of his widely-dispersed flock. For Langford this and other equally forceful photographs of Wright served as springboards for the recounting of yet more tall tales. The album thus contains numerous stories whose telling and retelling can create figures of legendary importance.

In "Photographs' 1916-1945" Langford's analysis includes detailed coverage of how the album provides insights into the compiler or owner's feelings about the persons depicted. The album presents the life of two sisters. The many representations of the two women in a variety of settings underscores their intimacy and affection. Langford argues that by looking at the album in terms of its typological framework (a device afforded by the patterns

of inclusion), it can be seen that the older sister often takes on the role of surrogate mother to her sister and others. The patterns of organization offer other methods of interpretation. The inclusion of many images of the same persons and settings indicates an emotional investment in the association of people and place. In addition, the repeated depiction of specific poses creates a powerful infrastructure that draws connections between people who may have been separated by great distances and long time periods. To "hear" these connections is essential and Langford engages in this process at the end of the chapter by creating an imagined conversation between assembler and viewer. The lives of these women and their intense dedication and devotion to one another and to their family members and friends is realized through the sound and power of voice. More importantly, however, Langford states that the voice is the necessary medium of interpretation, as "it reinstates the oral pattern that first brought the visual hoard to order" (p.155). The album is not assembled through sight, but sound, and more specifically the voice as it engages in the structuring patterns of orality.

Langford's recognition of the importance of the oral transmission of information as one component of an album's meaning is a welcome addition to their study and research. However, her emphasis on voice as the key element in unlocking its meaning seems over-

stated. Although certain elements of orality can be applied to the study of albums, they should be considered as one research tool among many. Her argument also assumes that the primary structuring mechanisms of orality do, in fact, exist and are capable of uniting the modern viewer and original assembler over time and space. More importantly however, her characterization of orality recalls what Jacques Derrida, in his theory of logocentrism termed "the metaphysics of presence." In *Of Grammatology* Derrida argues that in Western philosophy the voice is privileged over writing and is maintained through the binary of the spoken and written. Langford does discuss the dangers of binaries as they apply to Ong's theory which is structured on the dualism of orality and literacy. Even though Ong uses the deconstructive "and" in his inquiries on the interaction of these two modes of communication, his theories default on the side of the oral/aural and not literacy (p.126). However, Langford believes that Ong's approach can be applied to the study of albums in spite of such concerns, as they indicate that the oral and written inform one another in subtle but direct ways.

Yet in photography it is the relation between word and image that informs so much of the medium's history. The album contains little written text and the voice therefore appears to assume enormous importance. Such importance (although fallacious),

would further support the persistent need for "presence" to guarantee original meaning, a process which in turn is defined against the antipodal notion of absence or lack. For Langford, presence is granted by the absent assembler's voice, which spoke for the album's original meaning and granted authenticity and originality to its subject matter. This has further consequences in the study of photography, especially in terms of the indexical aspect of the photograph. The photograph is believed to safeguard presence as it retains the trace of the original event recorded by the camera. The oral process would only reinforce this conviction as the meaning of the image is "activated" through speech. In addition, presence, in both the voice of the speaker and the index of the photograph, is further grounded through the patterns of orality that Langford argues directly structure the album's contents.¹³

In order to move out of this gridlock, the relation of the word to the image must be reconsidered. Although the mimetic character of the photograph would seem to preclude any explanation of its subject matter, the photograph is often subject to explanation, either verbal or textual, in order to ground its meaning. Yet, as has been noted, Langford's insistence that oral tradition is the main structuring device causes her to overlook other means by which the album transmits messages to

viewers. As Martha M. Sandweiss has argued, the idea that the viewer should approach the image in a quiet, reverential manner was developed through the various tenets of modernism. Henri Cartier-Bresson, Ansel Adams, Minor White, and Edward Weston have argued that, as the photograph contained an essential message everyone would understand, words were unnecessary, even detrimental to an appreciation of the work.¹⁴ Prior to this understanding of the medium, viewers were not content to view the image in isolation. Sandweiss notes that photographs were often grouped together to create a narrative or that textual information was included on the back of images to explain their subjects. In much the same vein, Maren Stange has demonstrated that a photographer such as Jacob Riis conveyed his message of social reform not only through displays of photographs, but also through lantern-slide shows that combined imagery with anecdotes, moral lectures, prayers and gospel music.¹⁵ This idea of supplementing the image is a general condition of the medium and one not necessarily tied to oral tradition.

With this in mind, analysis of the album can include other methods assemblers employed to communicate information about their subject matter, most importantly those of a visual nature. In this respect it is necessary to consider the format of the photograph. For example, two basic types of pho-

tographs were available in the nineteenth century: those mounted on card, as seen in the *carte-de-visite*, and those that were unmounted, often called "scraps." The former could be inserted into pre-cut windows or withdrawn as circumstances dictated; the scrap photograph however could be cut up, glued onto the album's pages and manipulated.

Although Langford briefly discusses some examples, such as the *Emily Ross Album* (c.1869)¹⁶ and the *Becket Actress Album*, she does so without considering the message conveyed by such manipulations. In some cases assemblers used strong formal designs to organize their photographs. The career of an army officer could be visually expressed through geometric patterns as in the *100th Regiment, Royal Canadian Album* (c.1884), in the collection of the National Archives of Canada.¹⁷ Other patterns express more quotidian influences. For example, in the *Sewell Family Album* (c.1870-1880), in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada,¹⁸ the assembler pasted cut-out photographs on painted images of playing cards and arranged them like a game of solitaire. Another group of photographs appears to have been inspired by the composite works created by the Notman and Livernois studios.¹⁹ Other visual influences include embroidery patterns and floral motifs.²⁰

Through these designs, assemblers created complex statements about

those depicted using patterns based on visual formats rather than on oral traditions. Such designs often served to create a visual metaphor of the individuals depicted: the flower motif in the *Sewell Family Album*, which combines images of children with men, shows the family in terms of procreation and value.²¹ Another composition suggests a pile of coins, representing the family as a source of worth. Such groupings would aid assemblers in their recounting of tales about the subjects and provide a means to create new arrangements and statements. The playing card motif would allow the assembler to "shuffle" imagery and thus record the changes that the family experienced through birth, marriage, absence or death.²²

Suspended Conversations is an engaging, sometimes frustrating, inquiry into the meaning and value of photographic albums. In some cases, arguments are difficult to follow as theorists are cited without providing a larger context for their ideas. Moreover, Langford assumes that readers can remember references separated by scores of pages of dense argument. However, it is critical reading for anyone engaged in the study of oral tradition, the history of photography, and cultural studies in general.

ANDREA KUNARD

Ph.D. Candidate

Department of Art, Queen's University

Notes

- 1 MP 2146.
- 2 Many nineteenth-century women's magazines included a dress or fashion section. Examples of high-quality illustrations of women's dress can be found in magazines such as the *Journal des Dames et des Modes*, the *Allgemeine Muster-Zeitung*, and *La Saison*.
- 3 Anne HIGONNET, "Secluded Vision: Images of Feminine Experience in Nineteenth-Century Europe," *Radical History Review* 38 (1987): 16-36.
- 4 MP 189/78. Such photographs were not easily obtained, thus suggesting that Becket had an obsession with certain types of women. For a contemporary account on the business of selling risqué photographs see "Conviction for Selling Indecent Photographs," *British Journal of Photography* 19:652 (1 Nov. 1872): 525-26.
- 5 MP 032/81.
- 6 Emmanuel COOPER, *Fully Exposed: The Male Nude in Photography* (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd, 1990), 129.
- 7 MP 016/92.
- 8 MP 079/86 and MP 033/80, respectively.
- 9 MP 2152
- 10 N 060
- 11 MP 582
- 12 MP 042/90
- 13 For more on the relation between photography and the notion of presence, see David PHILLIPS, "Photo-Logos: Photography and Deconstruction," in *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, eds., Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 155-79.
- 14 Martha SANDWEISS, "Undecisive Moments: The Narrative Tradition in Western Photography," in *Photography in Nineteenth Century America*, ed., Martha Sandweiss (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1991), 98-129. Also, note the above mentioned article by PHILLIPS and his analysis of modernist aesthetics, and its emphasis on presence, as applied to the photography of Alfred Steiglitz.
- 15 Maren STANGE, *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- 16 MP 107/82, the *Alicia Whitehead Album*, MP 2154, is another example of this type of album.
- 17 National Archives of Canada, 1988-021.
- 18 National Gallery of Canada, P81: 003: 1-36.
- 19 On one page, photographic portraits were cut out in the shape of coins. This design mimics the composite images created by large studios that depicted members of professional institutions. For example, the 1866 Livernois studio work, "Galerie des Contemporains" in the collection of the Bibliothèque centrale de la ville de Montréal. See Michel LESSARD, *The Livernois Photographers* (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1987), 84.
- 20 Andrea KUNARD, "Assembling Images: Interpreting the Nineteenth Century Photographic Album, With a Case Study of the Sir Daniel Wilson Album," M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1996.

21 *Ibid.*, 90.

22 The elaborate frames surrounding the portraits in *carte-de-visite* albums augment the image and provide a creative outlet for the assembler. Two excellent examples of such albums are the National Gallery's *Topley Album Botanique* (c.1880) (NGC P67: 178: 1-93), and the McCord Museum's *Ceramic Album* (c.1880) (MP 123/81).