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The Man and the Studio

Stanley G. Triggs

PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM NOTMAN

William Notman's career as a photographer in Montreal spanned thirty-five years. During that time he built up the largest photographic business in North America, establishing at one time or another seven studios in Canada and, counting seasonal studios at several colleges, nineteen in the north-eastern United States. Over this large enterprise his rule was firm but benevolent. By careful training and selection of managers, operators and support staff, he was able to maintain a consistently high quality of product, one of the key factors in his success. Add to that a wide variety of services, a price range to accommodate everyone, a canny sense of timing when expanding the business, and the winning personality of a man known in his community for his good works, and you have the major ingredients of a success story, one which continued long after Notman's death until 1935, when his surviving son Charles sold the business and retired.

Notman possessed another characteristic that put him far ahead of anyone else in his field: a keen desire to work, to devote long hours of effort to his enterprise. Perhaps in the end this was his undoing. In mid-November 1891, at the age of sixty-five, he contracted a cold which he ignored, continuing to go to work every day. As his condition worsened his doctor

ordered complete rest, but it was too late. Notman died of pneumonia on November 25, 1891. (Extract 1)

NOTMAN FIND HIS NICHE

In the 1850s Montreal was bustling with activity, caught in the throes of a rapid expansion in commerce, industry, housing, canals, and the most recent transportation phenomenon, the railway, which was to make dramatic and far-reaching changes in the city. In spite of a temporary depression in the world economy due in part to the war in the Crimea, jobs were plentiful in Montreal, immigrants were continually arriving and business opportunities were abundant.

One major source of employment was the Victoria Bridge being built for the Grand Trunk Railway across the St. Lawrence River from Point St. Charles to Saint-Lambert. Construction had started in the spring of 1854 and it was due for completion by 1860. The longest bridge ever built at that time, it was often called the Eighth Wonder of the World. The works as they progressed could be seen from many parts of the town and attracted numerous visitors by boat or on foot for closer inspection.

On a day in the fall of 1858, high on one of the iron tubes of the bridge a lone photographer by the name of William Notman could be seen struggling in the bitter wind to set up his huge view camera for another shot in his extensive series on the construction of the bridge. In readiness nearby was his portable darkroom, in which he would prepare and later develop the large 10 x 12 inch glass plates.

Notman had been commissioned by James Hodges, the engineer in charge of building the bridge, to photograph all phases of construction. He had begun the series in March 1858, now had purposely chosen this vantage point high above Number 6 pier to get a full unobstructed view of the works stretching across the river to Saint-Lambert. His artist's eye saw the raking light of the noonday sun bringing out the texture of the masonry and giving

form and substance to the massive stone piers. From here he could illustrate the great extent of the works, the design of the ice breakers and the carefully crafted stonework. Equally important in the photographer's mind was the challenge to create, beyond the needs of an engineer's record, an image to embody the essence of the bridge and become a lasting testimony to human invention and artistry.

Hodges was one of many people who helped the young Scot on his way to becoming an internationally-known photographer. Some influenced Notman's career by recognizing his talent, as Hodges did: others gave support by demonstrating friendship and loyalty in time of need or appreciation for deeds done.

Notman had come from Scotland to Montreal in the summer of 1856 to try and improve the family fortunes after the disastrous bankruptcy of their wholesale dry goods business in Glasgow. On arriving in Montreal, Notman had no difficulty in finding employment with the Ogilvy, Lewis and Company wholesale dry goods firm because of his experience in that field.

As winter approached, heralded by the first ice forming on the river and the consequent reduction of shipping, Notman contemplated the long months of enforced idleness when complete freeze-up would cause most businesses to come to a standstill. It was then that he began to formulate plans to open up his own photographic business. By the time his wife Alice arrived on November 4, 1856 with their daughter Fanny, he had already rented a little house at 11, Bleury Street which had an attached studio in the backyard. He embarked on this enterprise with the support of his employers John Ogilvy (no relation to the James Ogilvy retail store established a decade later) and David Lewis, who guaranteed him his job back if he was not successful.

Before the year 1856 was up, Notman had opened his photography studio. His obvious expertise in this art, learned as an amateur in Scotland, plus the full range of services he offered, led to immediate success. The rapidity with which Notman's work came to public attention was not unconnected with his policy of photographing prominent individuals and offering prints for sale to the public. A note in the *Montreal Herald* of May 21, 1857 advised the public that photographs of the Rev. Mr. McLeod, the Rev. D. Fraser and the Rev. Mr. Cordner were for sale. Notman had recognized the new fad for collecting photographs of notable persons - including royalty, clergy, politicians, entertainers and restaurateurs - and did his best to cater to the demand.

In a few short years his business had grown to such an extent that in 1860 he expanded the studio and increased the staff. It was at this time, because of the popularity of his hand-coloured photographic portraits among the well-to-do, that Notman established a large art department to handle the multiplying orders. To head the new department he hired John A. Fraser, a young artist recently arrived from England. Throughout the next thirty-five years some of the more prominent artists on his staff in the Montreal studio were Henry Sandham, William Fraser (John's brother), James Weston, Eugène L'Africain, C. W. Dennis and G. Horne Russell.

The artists' duties included making the portable backgrounds, retouching negatives and colouring portraits. They also cooperated with the photographers in producing the large composite photographs for which the Notman studio became famous. These were large group photographs produced entirely in the studio, the individuals being photographed separately and the prints cut out and pasted one by one on to a large painted background. The final paste-up or composite, often containing close to 300 figures, was then copied and printed in a variety of sizes to be sold to members of the group and the general public alike.

THE BUSINESSMAN AND HIS NETWORK

The year 1860 was in many ways a turning point for Notman. He moved into larger quarters next door on Bleury Street, established the art department, photographed the Prince of Wales as he toured Montreal, prepared the maple box with its contents of over 500 photographs which was presented by the Canadian Government to the Prince, and as a result was declared "Photographer to the Queen". One of the most far-reaching activities Notman was engaged in that year was the formation of the Art Association of Montreal. The first meeting, which took place in his studio on Bleury Street on January 11, 1860, was organized by a group of citizens interested in promoting an awareness of the arts in the community.¹ Their immediate goal was to organize an art exhibition for the coming of the Prince of Wales in the following August. The display of oil paintings, watercolours and photographs, held in the newly-built Crystal Palace, was a huge success and formed a nice counterpoint to the industrial, manufacturing, scientific and agricultural displays. For Notman it was a personal triumph: his photographs carried off top awards, a silver and a bronze medal.

More important to his business, however, were the contacts he made and strengthened as a founding member of the Art Association of Montreal and through his many years of devoted service to the development of its goals. Members were a cross-section of Montreal's intellectual, commercial and artistic elite. Scientists, geologists, educators, clergymen, artists, doctors, lawyers, industrialists and businessmen were subscribers to Montreal's first organization to promote the arts.² Alexander Henderson, who presided over that first meeting and was later known internationally for his romantic interpretations of Canadian landscape, became a life-long friend of the Notman family. Both he and William contributed photographs to Art Association exhibitions and donated albums of their works as prizes. The two

men also belonged to other organizations, such as the Montreal Camera Club.

Most of the names in the Art Association membership rolls are to be found in Notman's portrait file. Redpath, Drummond, Molson, Frothingham, Stephens, Savage, Lyman, Atwater, Allan, Ogilvie and Greenshields were some of the better-known members whose families were photographed by Notman.

One of these was Sir William Logan, the geologist and founder of the Geological Survey of Canada, who made use of Notman's services for copies of his scientific sketches as well as for portraits. Another member, Sir William Dawson, Principal of McGill College, admired Notman's work and frequently called on him for portraits of himself and his family and to photograph various buildings and classrooms on the campus.

In 1867 Notman bought a large house in Longueuil, a farm village on the south shore of the St. Lawrence which was becoming popular as a location for summer homes. Later he made it his year-round home, adding a large wing that almost doubled the amount of floor space. There was now enough room in the gingerbread house to accommodate the large family of William's brother John as well as his own. Notman was very much involved in community life in Longueuil. An active member of the yacht club, he served as secretary, vice-president and president at various times and donated a silver trophy known as the Notman Cup to be vied for annually. While in Longueuil the Notman family attended St. Mark's Anglican Church, where Mr. Notman regularly sat on the finance committee and served as the minister's warden.

When the Notmans moved back to Montreal in 1876 they bought a house from John Molson, next door to the latter's own residence. They

attended St. Martin's Anglican Church just a few blocks up the street, a new building partially financed by John Molson, where Notman again became a member of the finance committee. When the Notman's daughter Jessie married Henry M. Belcher in this church in 1884, the officiating clergyman was the Rev. Samuel Belcher, the bridegroom's father. Notman and Molson's friendship dated back to 1860 and the founding of the Art Association of Montreal³ and the two were commonly engaged in community endeavours or financial schemes together. With two other partners they held 295 lots in Longueuil which were put up at auction in 1873, and both were members of the syndicate that backed the Windsor Hotel, built in 1878.

The Montreal General Hospital used Notman's services from time to time to make exterior views of their building, and of some of the wards with patients and staff. He also made portraits of staff members and of chairmen of the Board of Directors, which were enlarged life-size on to emulsified canvas, coloured in oil and placed in ornate gilded frames to hang in the board room. Notman himself was a member of the board in the 1880s. He was also involved with the Y.M.C.A., chairing lecture series, and was president of the Montreal Amateur Camera Club, which met at the Y.M.C.A. George Desbarats, the publisher of the *Canadian Illustrated News* and its French-language counterpart, was a frequent user of Notman photographs, transferred into the medium of woodcuts, engravings and leggotypes. In fact the cover picture on the first issue of the *Canadian Illustrated News* was a photograph by William Notman of Prince Arthur, who was in Canada as an officer-in-training.⁴

¹*Montreal Pilot*, January 24, 1860: announcement to form the Art Association of Montreal; *Montreal Pilot*, February 21, 1860: meeting to set up the Art Association of Montreal.

²Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Archives, Art Association of Montreal Scrapbooks, vol. 1, 1864. Membership List for 1863.

³*Ibid*, vol. 2, 1863, p. 1.

⁴This inaugural edition was the world's first mass-produced publication to use half-tone reproduction of photographs. The process used was the leggotype, named after its Montreal inventor, William Augustus Leggo (1830-1915).

NOTMAN EXPANDS HIS BUSINESS

With the growth of the city of Ottawa, the new capital of Canada, Notman decided the time was right for a second studio, which he opened at 90, Wellington Street in the spring of 1868. As manager he put in charge William Topley, a young man of twenty-one who had apprenticed for three years in the Montreal studio and had shown exceptional ability.

In the fall of the same year Notman opened a studio in Toronto at 120, King Street East. John A. Fraser became the managing partner in this studio, which was called Notman and Fraser. It continued to operate very successfully until 1880 when Fraser sold the business to pursue his career as a painter.

Notman's next venture was in Halifax, where he opened a studio under the name of The Notman Studio situated at 39, George Street just below the Citadel. It was first managed by William Webb, one of the chief photographers from the Montreal studio, but in 1876 Oliver M. Hill took over the position. When William Notman died in 1891 Hill bought the business, keeping the Notman name, and carried on until his own death in 1923. 1872 marked the opening of a studio in St. John, New Brunswick, under the management of William's twenty-one-year-old brother James Notman. The building was destroyed in June 1877 when most of the city burned to the ground in one of the most devastating fires in Canadian history. The Notmans re-established the business when the city was rebuilt, this time locating on Princess Street where the studio remained until closing in about 1890.

In the meantime William Notman had established a studio in Boston with his brother James and Thomas Campbell, one of his photographers from Montreal, as junior partners. The studio went under the name of Notman and

Campbell until 1880, when the partnership was dissolved and the branch continued under the name of the Notman Photographic Company. Of the nineteen permanent and seasonal studios of his name established by Notman in New England, this was the longest-running of all. It had great success under the management of Denis Bourdon until it closed in 1930.

As early as 1869 Notman began to build up a sideline photographing schools in the north-east United States. From the beginning of his career he had photographed the students and professors at McGill College and gained expertise in that line. His first known venture into the States was to Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, in the summer of 1869. During the next decade Notman became the largest producer of school photographs in the United States. Some of his major contracts were with Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Amherst, Smith and Dartmouth colleges. He sent Benjamin Baltzly from the Montreal studio to set up temporary studios at each college and to take and process the photographs. All negatives were sent to Montreal, where the prints were made and mounted for return to the colleges. The excessive tariffs levied on photographs crossing into the United States caused Notman to open his first studio in Boston in 1877.

From time to time Notman borrowed considerable amounts of capital, usually from private investors in his own circle. These loans usually coincided with periods when he was expanding the business or acquiring new property. A familiar name among these backers was his old friend Alexander Ramsay. Wealthy female acquaintances were another important source for businesses needing capital. Marie Anne Claire Symes, who lent Notman \$26,000, was the heiress of George Burns Symes, the wealthiest merchant in Quebec. Miss Symes, who married the Marquis de Bassano, was a great philanthropist and prominent in Montreal social circles.

When he first started his business in 1856, Notman worked alone, with perhaps one assistant to help carry the cumbersome camera, the portable dark tent and its equipment, and the heavy glass plates. But as the business grew he enlarged his staff in the Montreal studio, maintaining the number at an average of thirty-five and in the mid-1870s increasing it to a peak of fifty-five. At any one time he had from six to eight photographers working for him, some in the studio making portraits or doing copy work and others in the field. The latter group worked on assignments most of which were largely speculative in nature: Notman relied on his knowledge of the market for his choice of subjects, and on his faith in his photographers to render the views in a manner of which he approved. Over the years he and his photographers ranged widely throughout eastern Canada to take views of towns, villages, steamboats, railways, landscapes, waterfalls and the activities of the people.

MAJOR COMMISSIONS

Some of the outdoor work, however, such as views of private homes, commercial buildings, livestock, carriages and yachts, was done on commission. Again names from the Art Association crop up among the customers for these commissioned works, such as General William Fenwick Williams, who in 1858 was posted as commander of the British forces in British North America. Notman took a series of views of the General's estate on Dorval Island, friends grouped on the croquet grounds, his yacht and the boatmen. During the next several years Notman made many portraits of the General and his officers. The Honourable Lucius Seth Huntington, another member, had his copper mine in the Eastern Townships photographed and had regular portraits of his family taken as well.

The Allan brothers, Montreal shipping magnates, were frequent customers of Notman. One especially fine series of portraits was taken in the conservatory of Andrew Allan's mansion at the top of Peel Street. His brother Hugh, whose family also sat for portraits at Notman's, owned Ravenscrag, a magnificent mansion on the slopes of Mount Royal above McGill University. Notman successfully portrayed the dramatic lines of the Italianate stone structure and the restrained opulence of the interiors. Impressive also are the photographs of the large estate at the top of Redpath Street which surrounded the residence of George Hague, general manager of the Merchant's Bank.

One extensive series of photographs on the lumber and timber trade was probably a commissioned work. The nickname for Ottawa, the centre of Canada's lumber trade, was "Lumber City", and it was well-named - the sight, sound and smell of sawn wood were apparent at every turn. The lumber trade had first come to the area long before any other settlement had begun. In 1800 Philemon Wright, a lumberman from Woburn, Massachusetts,

brought a group of pioneers to settle near the Chaudière Falls on the north side of the Ottawa River. Wright's early activities in the lumber and timber trades - using water power from the falls to drive his mill and later rafting timbers down to Quebec City - soon attracted to the area other lumbermen eager to exploit the resources of the vast forests.¹

Notman's series of photographs on the lumber trade begins in the early spring of 1871 when the snow is still deep upon the ground. Whether it was Notman himself or one of his photographers who took the pictures is not known, but the job was almost certainly done on commission, perhaps from one of the lumber companies or a government department. The result is the most complete set of photographs on the subject, showing in detail the tools and techniques of the trade and the arduous living conditions of the men. Part of the series shows the lumbermen cutting and skidding the logs and hauling them on sleighs to the frozen lakes. This is followed by photographs of the sawmills in Ottawa and Hull, where the logs were cut into lumber, stacked for drying and later loaded into barges for shipment to Montreal and the United States. Other photographs in the series deal with the rafting of square timbers down to the coves at Quebec City, where they were loaded on to ships for the overseas market.

¹Fernand Ouellet and Benoît Thériault, "Philemon Wright." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. VII (1836-1850). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, pp. 926-928.

NOTMAN HITS THE RAILS

Throughout Notman's life, railways were of help to his career. They enabled him to expand his business into other cities in Canada and the United States and to keep in constant contact with the branch studios once established. Trains provided fast transportation to scenic spots such as Niagara Falls, the Thousand Islands and Lake Memphremagog. Notman also received many commissions and entered into various other arrangements with railway companies to photograph their rolling stock, stations, yards and locomotives, as well as scenes along railway lines.

Beginning with the Victoria Bridge construction, Notman made frequent photographs for the Grand Trunk Railway. When the Marquis of Lorne came to Canada in 1878 to assume the duties of Governor General, he and his wife Princess Louise were carried from Halifax to Montreal on a special "vice-regal" train. Notman photographed the train as it was standing on the approach to the Victoria Bridge, and made detailed studies of the ornate interiors of the dining car and the parlour car.

The Notman camera was also trained on the lines and bridges of the Intercolonial Railway in eastern Quebec and New Brunswick, showing the scenic beauty of the countryside through which the line passed. There is no record of whether this work was done on commission, but the photographs taken later for the Canadian Northern Railway in the Lake St. John district may have been prompted by a request from that company or from the provincial government. As the district was being opened for settlement, both the government and the railway were interested in obtaining good photographs of established farms, large well-built barns, healthy livestock, productive fields and growing towns. Notman's son William McFarlane Notman made several trips in the 1890s and in 1906 to the Lake St. John district for this purpose. On one of the later trips he was accompanied by an

assistant, William Haggerty. At about the same time the Trans-Continental Railway was being built from Quebec City through LaTuque, Parent and Amos towards northern Ontario. The Notman firm made a similar documentation of farms and villages in this area, but this time included photographs of the line under construction and of the lumber and pulp industries.

The largest group of railway photographs Notman produced, however, was the series taken earlier for the transcontinental line being constructed from Montreal across the western plains and the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. It was William Van Horne of the Canadian Pacific Railway who realized the potential of photography as a promotional device and exploited its use to the fullest. In the agreement made between Van Horne and Notman, the railways promised to provide transportation, with stopovers at any station desired, while Notman agreed to supply a set of photographs to be used in railway promotional programs. Notman would keep the copyright and the negatives. In 1884 Notman's eldest son, William McFarlane Notman, made his first trip to the west in connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway, returning on subsequent trips in 1887, 1889, 1897, 1901, 1903, 1904, and 1909.

The photographs brought home to Montreal from these expeditions - western scenes of mountain grandeur, gigantic trees, Native people and tepees, as well as other views taken in Eastern Canada - were very popular with tourists and local populations alike. Prints were sold in hotels, stationery stores and railway depots across Canada in much the same manner as postcards today, bringing in a substantial return for the investment of time and money. But however glamorous this side of the business may have seemed, and however much it served to spread the Notman name to an ever-widening and admiring public, it was portraiture that was from the first and continued to be the solid basis upon which his business was built.

THE BLEURY STREET STUDIO

When Notman opened his studio at 11, Bleury Street, he had chosen an advantageous location. Being central it was easy to get to, whether the customers came on foot (as most did) or by carriage: if by the latter, the broad but uncongested streets offered plenty of room for the carriage to stand while the owner was in the studio. The commercial and retail centre of Montreal along St. James and Notre Dame Streets was just two blocks away. Along these two major arteries stood impressive edifices symbolizing wealth and influence, such as banks, trust companies and insurance buildings. The streets were lined with shops of all varieties and populated with pedestrians buying groceries, fruits and vegetables, dresses, coats, top hats and jewelry, books, guns and fishing rods. There were restaurants and taverns serving meals and drinks, and sidewalk vendors selling ice cream, cool drinks and quick snacks. The district was the heart of commercial and social activity in Montreal.

Notman's enterprise itself was first set up in a small red-brick house with a studio annex behind. This studio was so small that occasionally when the camera was moved back to frame a group of people, the cast iron stove for heating the room appeared at the edge of the picture. But although restricted as to work space and storage space, Notman, even at that early period, had assembled a variety of backgrounds and props to vary the look of each portrait. There was no room for expansion in that location. When the annex burned down in July 1858 he replaced it with a building no larger than the original, but two years later in the spring of 1860 he expanded into the two large and quite new greystone houses next door. This became the headquarters of the extensive photographic company he was soon to

develop, and remained so until after his death. As a showpiece, the studio had no equal in Montreal and few in other countries.

Visitors walked beneath the Grecian-style portico bearing the title "Photographer to the Queen" and through the front door into a reception room seventy-five feet in length and thirty-five feet wide, taking up almost the entire depth of the house. If the size of the room alone was not sufficient to impress the visitor, the sight of dozens of large coloured photographs and paintings matted in gold or velvet and surrounded by ornately carved and gilded frames glowing in the soft light from the windows must have been breathtaking.

(Extract 2)

To further inform the visitor and add to the stunning effect, showcases and tables displayed a variety of viewing instruments in mahogany and rosewood or glistening brass. Samples of the daily production of the studio stood on shelves and counters. A large counter to the right enclosed an office space where the receptionist greeted the visitor and dispensed the finished orders of photographs. On the same floor, continuing through the reception rooms to the back of the building, rooms were set apart for colouring and copying. A contemporary visitor describes other rooms of the studio.

(Extract 3)

In the late 1860s Notman published a booklet called *Photography: things you ought to know*.¹ Designed as a handout to customers, it is full of advice on what to do in order to help the photographer make a good portrait. He talks about making an appointment, feeling at ease at the moment of posing, assuming a natural expression, and so on. Particularly helpful is the advice on what to wear.

(Extract 4)

The restriction on certain colours, particularly in wide areas such as women's dresses, was necessary because of the limitations of the slow emulsions of the time. Light colours would become overexposed on the negative and therefore difficult or impossible to print. Red, on the other hand, would come out much darker than its true colour because the emulsion was insensitive to red. Thus in the finished print a red uniform might look black and freckles might be unnaturally pronounced. To tone down a wruddy complexion Notman offered a makeup service. "The temporary use of some white powder for a red countenance, or of some cosmetic to darken light eyebrows, moustache, or beard will be found useful. These will be supplied if asked for and assistance given to apply them if necessary."² One of Notman's staff was available to assist the female patrons with hair styling and change of costume. Presumably she doubled as a makeup artist as well.

¹A copy of the booklet is found in the Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History.

²*Ibid.*

THE OPERATING ROOMS

By the mid-sixties, Notman had not one but three "operating rooms" (or studios in modern parlance). The main studio, used for "ordinary portraits" and groups, was in a large annex attached to the premises behind. Its size, fifty by twenty and a half feet, meant it could accommodate groups of fifty people with ease, yet single portraits could be made to look as though taken in a private study or parlour. The fourteen-foot high ceiling held a large flat skylight for general illumination, while the north wall contained a sidelight ten and a half feet high by fifteen feet wide which provided the strong modelling light required to give the subject form and depth.¹ In this room the camera was generally facing west, with the north light falling from the photographer's right.

The room was also a storehouse for the wide variety of portable backgrounds, furniture and props used by Notman. A painted background showing a cosy library might be thought best for one customer, a seat by a parlour window for the next. Grecian or Roman pillars could be quickly brought in on command. Outdoor settings could as easily be simulated by rolling in the appropriate background and changing the props or furniture. An outdoor patio, forest dell, rustic stream or mountain landscape could all be had for the asking at a minute's notice. No two photographs were alike, and with Mr. Notman's artistic eye and deft adjustment of the furnishings and drapery, each patron was assured of a fresh and original scene and, most important, "a good likeness".

When a photographer uses daylight coming through a skylight and window for illumination, the direction of the light source obviously cannot be changed. But by turning the sitter and moving the camera the orientation of the light can be changed at will. It can be made to fall on either side of the

subject, on the back or full face. Such a large room allowed the photographer to face the sitter in any direction and still have enough space to set up the camera and the background.

The other two studios were on the second floor of the main building, each with a skylight on opposite ends of the same north wall. The earlier of the two, built when Notman first moved into the new location, was not as large as the annex but roomy enough, measuring eighteen and a half by thirty-four and a half feet.² The skylight consisted of a sidelight, nine feet wide by ten and a half feet high in the north wall and a sloping top light. The camera in this room faced to the east, with the north light falling on the photographer's left. Here Notman did a lot of his experimental work. He would have stones brought in, trees planted, wooden fences set up and dirt or sand scattered around. In season he would create a winter scene of tobogganers on Mount Royal or snowshoers in the Laurentian Mountains. Sheep's fleece was used to simulate deep snow and rough salt for snow on coats and trees. A sheet of polished zinc magically became a skating rink or a setting for a group of curlers.

It was in this same studio that Notman created his well-known series *Cariboo Hunting*, *Moose Hunting*, and *Trapping*, prize-winning items in every international exhibition in which they were entered. Between 1867 and 1869 the third studio was built at the other side of the building, with the light falling from the right. Here a new winter scene was built, as the second studio was needed for regular portraiture because of the rapid increase in the number of sitters. In 1861 (the first year for which records are available) Notman took 3,000 photographs, in 1867, 5,500 and a total of 14,000 in the year 1873.

¹*Philadelphia Photographer*, vol. 3, no. 32, August 1866.

²*Philadelphia Photographer*, vol. 3, no. 29, May 1866.

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Extract 1

Perhaps he had a premonition of what was to come as he penned these last words to his son Charles in Boston:

Montreal, 19 Nov, 1891

My dear Charlie,

I got your letter a few days ago, and was glad to hear how you were getting along - The cold I caught about a week ago has proved rather stubborn to dislodge - and the D^r insists I keep to the house for a few days. I do not think there is any thing serious - but I go on the principle of being careful.

Your aff. Father,
W^m Notman¹

¹McCord Museum of Canadian History, Notman Photographic Archives.

Extract 2

A contemporary visitor describes it:

... the walls are completely covered with the finest specimens of the [photographic] art, comprising portraits of celebrities, foreign and local, many of which are exquisitely finished in water colors and oil; here will also be found some very fine paintings by Vicat Cole, Deerman, Jacobi, Way, etc., with many choice proof engravings which give diversity and add to the interest of the whole. There is also an interesting relic of the visit of the Prince of Wales to the Province, in a duplicate set of the photographs presented by the Government to H.R.H. comprising views of the most noted points of interest in Canada, from the Saguenay to Niagara.¹

¹*Montreal Business Sketches* (1864), p. 25.

Extract 3

Continuing the narration of the contemporary visitor we learn that:

At the extreme right of the reception rooms are dressing rooms for ladies and gentlemen respectively from which you ascend to the, what is commonly termed, operating room on which Mr. Notman has bestowed the utmost attention, and the result is a room of admirable proportions with a soft agreeable light and finished with many elegant and choice accessories.¹

¹*Montreal Business Sketches* (1864), p. 25.

Extract 4

The best materials, and those which look the richest, are silks, satins, reps and winceys.

The most suitable colors are black and the different shades of green, brown, drab, grey, or slate, provided they are not too light. Those to be *most avoided* are white, blue, mauve, and pale pink. Dark checks and plaids take very distinctly, sometimes too much so, as they form too prominent an object in the picture.

Lace scarfs, open mantles, shawls, etc., greatly assist in securing graceful flowing lines.

Avoid opaque white shawls, such as china crepe, avoid also dressing the hair in any style unusual to the individual, or wearing any unfamiliar kind of head dress.

The above precautions apply only to plain Photography, where colored pictures are required, the painter can restore or add to the Photograph any color necessary.¹

¹A copy of the booklet is found in the Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History.