

[Glenalvin] J. Goodridge

Sixth Plate Daguerreotype of an Elderly White Woman by Glenalvin J. Goodridge, one of only a few African-American Daguerreotypists

York, Pa.: J. Goodridge [circa 1850]

\$1500



Sixth plate daguerreotype of an unidentified elderly white woman in a (probably black) satin dress, a white bonnet, and fingerless lace gloves. Approximately 3" x 3½". Embossed leather case with clasps. Red velvet inset facing image with the daguerrographer's name cut in: "J. Goodridge York Pa." Image professionally cleaned and resealed, case professionally rebacked. Light wear on the case, the image is deep, rich, and crystal clear.

Goodridge was one of only a handful of known African-American photographers (along with Augustus Washington, Jules Lion, James Presley Ball, and John B. Bailey) who professionally produced daguerreotypes in the 1840s. The son of a freed slave, William C. Goodridge, a barber who gradually became a prominent businessman and abolitionist, Glenalvin opened his first studio in York in 1847 when he was 18, running the business for some of his career from his parent's home on East Philadelphia Street in York, which was also a stop on the Underground Railroad (and which now operates as a museum). He also taught at the Colored High School in York alongside fellow teacher Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, now known as one of the earliest published black female authors. Goodridge died in Minneapolis in 1867 from tuberculosis, contracted during his incarceration in Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, where he had been sentenced on trumped-up rape charges and from which he was later released after 18 months. A fire there destroyed a large archive of his work that he had compiled. Additional information about the family, including his sons who carried on the business is available in *Enterprising Images: The Goodridge Brothers, African American Photographers 1847–1922* by J. Jezierski (Wayne State University Press, 2000).

Daguerreotypes were only commercially produced for about two decades, when images on treated paper largely replaced them. The vast majority of the images created by black artists were of white subjects. Daguerreotypes by black artists are very uncommon. [BTC#426904]



