

Airplanes, Automobiles and Commercial Photography: The Darmstaetter Collection, 1905-1941

By Robert Lowing

When I moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, it surprised me to hear people say the American Depression was not bad here. Some people who had lived through the Depression said it was true, and I believe them. Still, those of us who were born after the Depression or those of us who come from other parts of the country, may find these oral histories contradictory to what we have heard and read. The Darmstaetter Collection from the Lancaster County Historical Society allows us to see for ourselves what Lancaster was like in photographs from 1905 to 1941.

Douglas Darmstaetter donated a collection of commercial photographic negatives and ledgers to the Historical Society after his family's business closed in 1977. The Collection contains more than 4,000 images that promoted business and the standard of living in Lancaster. Our intention is to explore the historical significance of an optimistic viewpoint in a period of economic depression.

The Darmstaetter Collection is unique because it is the product of an independent commercial photography studio that opened for business in March 1905. Early studios of this type are different from portrait studios because they have a variety of subject matter. There are documentary photographs of everything imaginable: people at work and leisure, the natural landscape, education,

farming, community development, disasters, industry, and the urban landscape. Their major function is to promote community values. Besides photographs of the social scene, there are commercial photographs: product shots, copy photographs, group photographs, and graphic arts photographs. There is a ledger that provides a means to identify the clients who made use of their services. The Collection traces the transition of Lancaster from a rural to an urban community and from the prosperity of the 1920s to the Depression.

The Collection is historically significant because we can observe the transition of a positive outlook on the world through documentary photography to a mature commercial style. The positive approach to documentation and the negative approach to documentation grow out of two different points of view, the need to promote a community image and the need to reform society. Both approaches seek social change. I believe the positive approach of The Darmstaetter Collection is similar to the commercial messages of Madison Avenue. Social Documentary photography is traditionally in the service of government programs or progressive institutions, which can be seen in the Farm Security Administration photographic surveys of 1935-1941. Both approaches begin in the early history of photography of the 1840s, reaching their peak of use with the introduction of mass circulation newspapers and magazines in the 1930s. The Darmstaetter photographs give us a collective picture of Lancaster in which business and industry work together with individuals to cure the ills of the Depression.

The story of the Darmstaetter business is the realization of the American Dream of success that captured the imagination of the public during the thirties. In 1905, Mary Fabel Darmstaetter, the widow of Reverend Jacob Darmstaetter, saw an opportunity to purchase a photographic supply business for herself and her two children, Adolf C. and Hugo J. Darmstaetter. She bought the Lancaster Photographic Supply House with a small inheritance (Black Album news clipping, 31 July 1927) and, prepared by the business experience learned from her father, a coal and lumber merchant from Lock Haven, PA, launched into business with her sons. A Lancaster newspaper report in November 1929 wrote of Mary Darmstaetter: "Realizing the pleasure she derived from a camera in her home, she saw the possibilities of commercializing that pleasure and so decided to open a Kodak shop. Investing a small inheritance, she gave her sons the opportunity to be co-partners." (Black Album clipping C, November 1929).

The next twenty-five years were years of prosperity for the Darmstaetters, operating the commercial photography studio, a profitable processing laboratory, and a variety store. They moved from their first shop on 14 East Orange Street to 59 North Queen Street in 1917, adding a picture framing and gift shop. In February 1929, they signed an agreement with Farmers Trust Bank for a \$200,000 mortgage on a three-story building at 35-37 North Queen Street (Interview: D. Darmstaetter, 17 July 1990). On October 29, the stock market

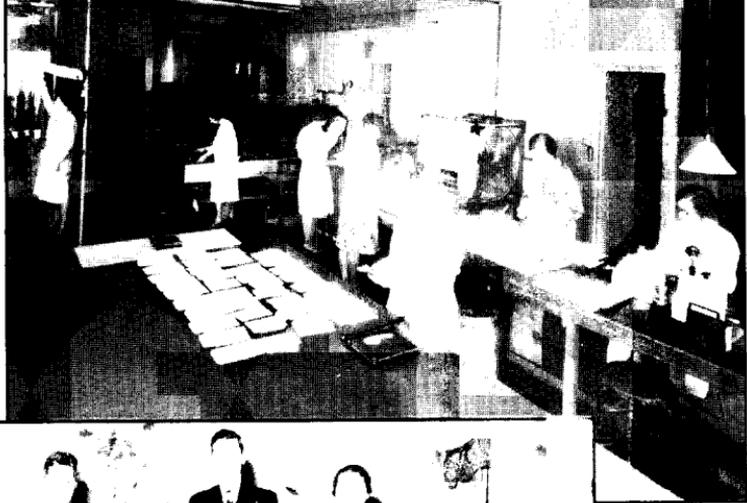
crashed and shortly afterward, the Farmer's Trust Bank failed. In spite of this calamity, they decided to continue in business and opened their store at this new location on Easter 1930. With hard work, they not only survived the Depression, they paid off their bank note as well.

Douglas Darmstaetter is the third generation owner of the business and a graduate of the Harvard School of Business. He attributes their success to diversification in retail marketing. Diversification is the trademark of Lancaster as well, and is a major reason for economic stability. Unemployment and economic recession have more severe effects on communities based on one major industry. He points with pride to his family for introducing the first gift shop in Lancaster, the first to introduce greeting cards, home freezing equipment and radio receivers. They held the original distributorship of the Johnson Outboard Motor in the United States. During the three generations of their existence, they sold everything from Japanese novelties to washing machines. Douglas Darmstaetter said half their income came from photographic services.

“. . . the Darmstaetters are photographers,” declared a writer in a professional journal in 1930, “sidelines assist them in their chosen profession” (Photographers Association of America, 1930).

This article, giving the Darmstaetters national recognition, appears at the beginning of the Depression. They speculate that the Darmstaetters' commercial business accounts for their “yearly income to run into five figures [and their] equipment value many thousands.” The author says that community service, publicity, and retail sidelines are the reason for their leadership and recommends that readers follow their example. There are five feature articles in local newspapers from 1924 to 1977 that tell the history of Darmstaetter's photographic successes. They point to the long association of Darmstaetter's with Eastman Kodak Company, which began when there were only nine other Kodak dealerships in the United States (*New Era*, 27 March 1977).

Darmstaetter's recognized the importance of Lancaster city as a trade center within a network of smaller communities. Their amateur film processing operation reached into three counties, with a potential market of 132,000 people by 1939 (Baker 43). They began processing amateur film in their home, and in 1907, they built a processing plant at the corner of Lime and Green Streets. Around 1916 (Polk, 1916-17), Mary Darmstaetter and her son, Hugo, traveled to Rochester, NY, where he took a course in amateur photographic processing at the Eastman Kodak Company (Black Album news clip). Darmstaetter's employed drivers to pick up film in drugstores in Lancaster and York counties, and to deliver it by automobile to their processing plant. In 1930, they were processing 1,000 rolls of film a day (PAA, 1930). It is no wonder that they decided to invest an additional \$10,000 for a film processor in 1929 and install it on the third floor of their new building. They employed between 20-25 employees during the Depression. The black and white processing operation



Darmstaetter's new film processing facility (1930); the owners and their employees (1937); and a window display of the 1930s.

continued into the 1950s. Douglas Darmstaetter said that they decided it was not profitable for them to compete in the emerging color processing market in the late 1940s. There are over sixty photographs illustrating the various activities of the Darmstaetter store. A series of photographs of window displays illustrates the photo finishing operation at Darmstaetter's from reception to distribution. This series appears in their 28th Anniversary sales promotion in 1933.

Lancaster residents seemed to have money for photography during the Depression. The average annual income for a Lancaster worker was \$900 in 1935 (Klein, 188) and \$1,000 in 1940 (Baker, 47). They spent less than other Pennsylvania families for necessities, \$224, and more for luxuries, \$14 (Baker, 37). A Kodak Hawkeye cost \$1.98 (*New Era*, 23 March 1933), including a roll of film. A roll of film cost 15 cents to process (PAA, 1930). Apparently people have more than one reason to look happy in the snapshot albums of the Depression. Eastman Kodak reinforces this activity through national advertising and by offering equipment that is cheap and easy to use. If Depression families needed snapshots to record the peaks of life, then they could get them processed at Darmstaetter's.

The Darmstaetter Collection projects a positive effect. A sampling of the Collection suggests a use of photography to promote a sense of optimism and, significantly, patriotism. There are several rolls of film taken by Adolph C. Darmstaetter, at the Fourth Liberty Loan Drive on September 28, 1919, at Buchanan Park. He also photographed the parade and the installation of a model of the old Lancaster County Courthouse in Lancaster Square. An aerial view of Buchanan Park shows the same model of the Courthouse taken from a World War I Jennie that had landed on the park grounds. This is the earliest aerial photograph in the Collection.

A.C. Darmstaetter risked a flight in a Jennie. He proudly photographed the parade and speeches on the square, producing more than thirty unpublished images. There are photographs of other Liberty Loan Drives in the Collection. A.C. Darmstaetter's interest in aerial photography and enthusiasm for local displays of patriotism is equal to the success of the fund drives. The first drive in June, 1917, raised 3.3 million dollars (Klein, 159). These promotional events helped awaken American business to the importance of advertising.

Darmstaetter was photographing parades and airplanes in Lancaster while Walter Hallowell and another Darmstaetter photographer, John A. Fritz, were in Rochester, N.Y., training to be aerial photographers with the Army Air Corps (Yellow Album news clip).

John A. Fritz was born in Lancaster and worked as a photographer for Darmstaetter before and after the First World War. He enlisted one month before Hallowell in March 1918. When Fritz completed aerial photographic training, he went overseas in August 1918, four months before the end of the War (Application, 26 April 1934). He was discharged in May 1919 and he returned

to Darmstaetter's to become the advertising manager. He left Darmstaetter's during 1925 to open his gift shop, called the "Forget Me Not," at 148 East King Street (Polk 1925-26).

Walter F. Hallowell returned to Darmstaetter's before 1925 after convincing A.C. Darmstaetter that he could improve their commercial photography accounts. According to newspaper accounts (Yellow Album), Walter Hallowell had worked for Darmstaetter's since the age of fifteen, eight years before his enlistment. Hallowell served his entire tour of duty at the Aerophotography School in Rochester, N.Y., receiving his discharge papers in December 1918. His discharge papers and application for veteran's compensation document that he had not suffered any injury or disability (Application, 13 March 1934).

Walter Hallowell took most of the photographs in the Darmstaetter Collection. He worked tirelessly for almost 20 years as Darmstaetter's chief photographer and experimenter in photographic methods. Most of his photographs are 8"x10" glass plate negatives, and 7"x11" cellulose nitrate negatives. Hallowell mastered large format photography, including the Kodak Cirkut Camera for group portraits, which made a negative 8"x48" long. Hallowell also used aerial photography commercially. Evidently Hallowell preferred to use the cumbersome equipment of a previous generation while his employers sold the small format roll film cameras to amateur photographers.

It is in photojournalism that The American Dream came to Walter Hallowell. On June 13, 1927, he photographed the return of Charles A. Lindbergh to Washington, DC for the *Lancaster New Era*. The original thirty photographs that Hallowell made on this assignment are in the Darmstaetter Collection. The *New Era* published six photographs (*New Era*, 13 June 1927).



Col. Charles A. Lindbergh and his mother (left front with hat) are greeted on the speaker's platform, Washington, DC, 13 June 1927.

A cluster of four photographs describes the sequence of events of Lindbergh's voyage up the Potomac River and to the Washington Monument. Another Hallowell photograph is at the bottom of the page, portraying the arrival of Lindbergh and his mother, Evangeline, to the speakers' platform.

It is ironic that the *New Era* began to use Hallowell less as a press photographer after the success of the Lindbergh story. One may speculate that if Lancaster newspapers began to hire staff photographers, the era of the freelance photographer was over. Ominously, the last recorded transaction between Darmstaetter's and the *New Era* appears on the eve of the Depression. From October 1915 to 1929, Darmstaetter's made over 360 transactions for photographs with the *New Era* (Darmstaetter Ledgers). Evidently, Darmstaetter's were not counting upon the growing demand for press photography to support their new business ventures.

This use of a photographic essay in the late twenties has to be considered innovative journalism. The *New Era* filled its papers with stories of Lindbergh's Atlantic flight since his landing in Paris on May 27. The *New Era* gave the story front page coverage for weeks. Area businesses had joined in the excitement by purchasing advertisements congratulating "Lindy." Newspaper editors capitalized on public interest in photographic information to sell advertising and subscriptions, just like the patriotic Liberty Loan Drives ten years earlier.

Popular legend claims this assignment elevated Hallowell to the status of a celebrity. People say he photographed as an insider, with personal access to those who planned the event. A close examination of the original photographs in the collection shows that he was in the company of other official photographers. The *New Era* also purchased additional photographs from its wire service for the picture essay. There is evidence that the editors held Hallowell in high esteem. There is a front page interview with Hallowell recounting his day in Washington. Hallowell also received a byline for his photographs, an unusual concession by newspaper editors. Prophetically, the future looked bright for photography in other areas.

Advertising was a source of income for Darmstaetter's commercial photography enterprise. An inventory of the photographs in the collection reveals that one quarter are pictures of housing developments and real estate, construction, light industry, retail, and service oriented businesses. These statistics show that Darmstaetter's correctly identified those areas of economic growth in the city of Lancaster from 1920 to 1940. The Collection also reflects the importance of business and industry as a source of employment for a growing urban population. Over ten percent of the photographs are pictures of people, with more than 30 per cent of these pictures taken of people at work in their community.

There was money for advertising in the United States. Stimulated by the Wartime Excess Profits Tax, advertising expenses were exempt from business cost from 1919 through 1921 (Marchand, 6).

Was there money for advertising in Lancaster? In 1940, Lancaster workers were the lowest paid in cities of comparable size in Pennsylvania (Baker, 37). The average value of finished products was three times greater than the cost of raw materials and labor in 1943 (Baker, 47). Although the workers were underpaid, the value of industrial products was among the highest in the state and nation. Klein reports that in mid-1935, the city and county were tenth in the value of production (Klein, 187). Baker goes on to say, "Lancaster evidently enjoys a comparatively low cost of living" (Baker, 37). He points out that people have to spend a small proportion of their income for essentials. Low labor costs for workers and high product value could mean more money for advertising. An increased use of photography in advertising could mean a valuable source of income for Darmstaetter's during the Depression.

One factor that may lead local residents to conclude that the Depression was not severe is that its effects were not felt overnight. William A. Mehler, Jr., author of the history of Armstrong Cork Company, writes that Armstrong didn't feel the effect of the Depression until in the last quarter of 1930 (Mehler, 46). Lancaster reached its peak of production in 1933 (Baker, 51). Baker writes that in 1933 Lancaster accounted for 2.5% of Pennsylvania's total production (Baker, 50), a conclusion supported by historian Frederic Klein.

Darmstaetter's took a display ad commemorating their 28th Anniversary in 1933, reflecting this euphoria. The ad is titled: "Looking Forward With Roosevelt," because their business began during the administration of Theodore Roosevelt and was now under the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"President Roosevelt's plans of looking forward to a greater America are heartily endorsed by this establishment . . . We are going to contribute our part by offering the best for the least money." (*New Era*, 23 May 1933)

The advertisement expressed the optimism of many business people that would later change to a deep seated antagonism when Roosevelt's social programs faltered. In the same year, Lancaster newspaper editors John F. and J. Hale Steinman, took the bully pulpit and wrote an editorial that rejected the voices of dissent.

The rumors are absurd; consider the background of Lancaster, its conservative policies, its well being founded upon an agricultural community unsurpassed in the nation; business establishments which run back 100 years or more, transmitted from father to son, with a heritage of tradition and sound policy which makes them notable institutions, a thrifty population which never forgets the fundamental principles of good business or good housekeeping . . .

The editors denounce these rumors as, "treasonous to the community":

Would that we had in Center Square the wooden stocks of olden days where the gossips could be pilloried to the gaze of the public. What a sight it would be. But better than that, we will set them up on our own wooden stocks in the *New Era*, for the people to know and gaze upon.

Challenge these rumor mongers to give you proof. If they cannot—and they cannot—let us know their names.

They argue that economic conditions are improving and offer a solution to the lack of faith in private enterprise.

Glance at the automobile show in NY . . . and again a trustworthy barometer is the scope of National Advertising in newspapers. The men who place that advertising must keep in very close contact with all parts of the nation. Their fingers are on the pulse of sentiment and they are as well informed as it is possible to be. (*New Era*, 12 January 1933).

The vehicle for economic recovery is advertising. For some reason, they overlook their self serving motives. Everyone knows what they mean. From now on, the subject of social problems is taboo. The business community is elevated to the status of policy makers. Advertisements are the chosen medium of communicating values of mobility, individual freedom, speed, and power. Hard news and commercial advertisements are to be regarded as interchangeable sources of information. Some aspects of reality are to be suppressed. The photograph will play an important role in this new system.

The editorial points to a healthy area of the economy. By 1939, Lancaster ranked ninth highest in retail automobile sales in Pennsylvania, generating 5.1 million dollars of income per year. Lancaster ranked sixth in Pennsylvania in service station sales, producing 1.9 million dollars a year. Lancaster was first in the state to show modern improvements in agriculture: more automobiles, trucks, tractors, and radios on farms (Baker, 45.) The agricultural community embraced the ideology of modernity as much as the cities. The Darmstaetter Collection has many photographs of automobiles and automobile related subjects.

A review of the automobile photographs in the Collection shows the convergence of two historical developments. First, photographs replaced older methods of advertising illustration. Secondly, the automobile overtook the landscape of rural Lancaster County. There are over 250 negatives of automobile related subjects in the Collection that trace the introduction of the automobile into Lancaster County to 1939. The photographs display an enthusiasm for the automobile in Lancaster County that is hard for us to understand today. Let us turn our attention to the invented reality of advertising photography that came out of the Depression.

Walter Hallowell's use of aerial photography for commercial photographs is revealed in the Collection. There are over 100 aerial photographs in the Collection that remind us of his passion for automobiles and his training as an aerial photographer in the Army Air Corps. He applied his knowledge of aerial photography to photographs of factories, real estate, housing developments, farms and automobile service stations. These photographs typically include three different points of view: an aerial shot, a panoramic view and an interior view of the business. A multiple point of view gives readers the impression that what they see is all they need to know about the subject. An examination of these photographs as a sequence illustrates how photography introduces mobility into the picture story.

The effect of the aerial photograph is to provide the reader with an unobstructed view of the subject, eliminating unwanted details. The wide angle shot, taken at street level, gives the reader a view of the subject as if one were riding along in a car. The interior shot gives the reader the personal point of view of a pedestrian. Of the three, the aerial photograph is shockingly modern, a desirable characteristic in commercial photography.

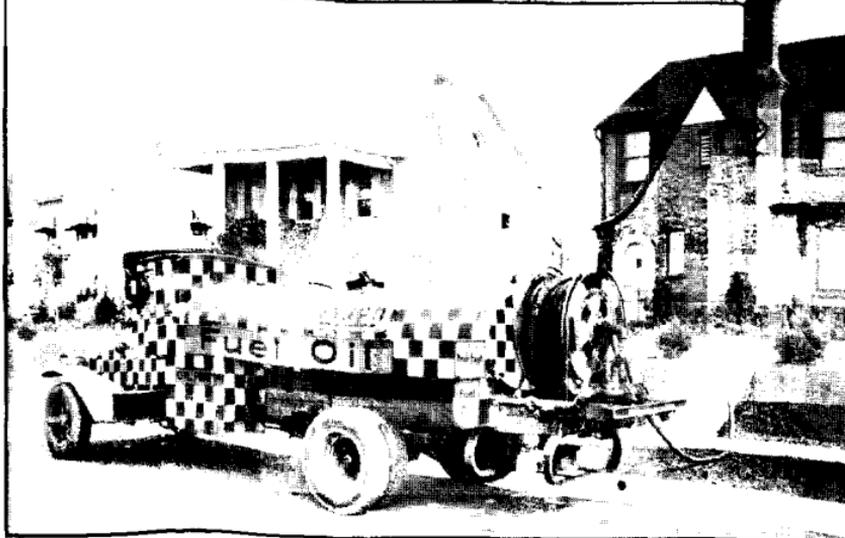
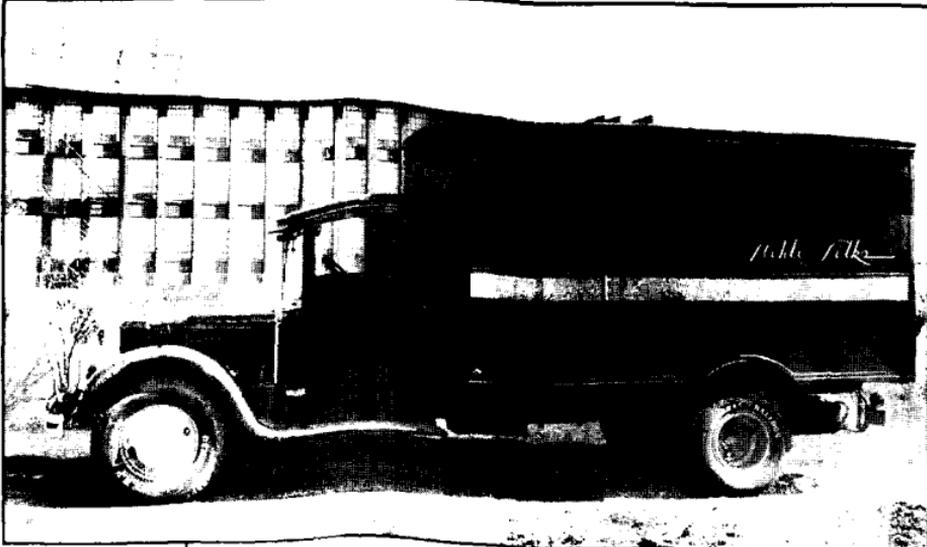
His attention to the background shows an effort to naturalize the product. A photograph of the Stehli Silk truck is elegant with cursive letters and an austere horizontal band. Hallowell includes the Stehli Silk factory in the background with its electric sign repeating the calligraphy on the truck. The General Balloon tires punctuate the quiet presence of the truck, the factory and the sign. He is not always successful. In another example, a truck from the Heidelbaugh fleet delivers oil to a modest suburban home. The gaudy checkerboard pattern on the fuel oil truck looks silly in contrast to the modern revival architecture of the homes in the background.

It is common practice for the art editor to mask out the background of the photograph for publication. Retouching and masking flatter the product, simplify the message, and eliminate the real by removing the product from its original context. There are many photographs in the collection that use this commercial masking technique. In these photographs we can see what is suppressed and also what is emphasized. The manipulation simplifies the photograph and has a direct influence on the emergence of a new style of photography.

By 1930, Hallowell attains his mature, modern style, Commercial Realism. His photographs of trucks are direct, a perfect match for truck designs. The language and body design of trucks promises instant recognition from the viewer. Object and image become one. A sausage truck looks like a sausage. Bricker's Bread Truck looks as much like a loaf of bread as it does a kiln-fired brick. An ambiguous truck represents a vehicle for general hauling.

A clever photographer can suppress details in the camera to get an effect similar to editing. Whether the manipulation takes place on the drawing board or in the camera, the conclusion is the same. This style of photograph doesn't take chances with misinterpretation. Sometimes, Hallowell's early photographs allow social reality to slip through. Hallowell's later photographs subordinate detail and lack ambiguity. One could argue that these "slips of the tongue" are desirable, because they will tell us the truth about the Depression. This philosophical interpretation of reality is likely to be received with skepticism. Advertising is meant to be a fake language, something which is widely understood, even if it is not discussed. It doesn't make sense to argue that Hallowell was a bad commercial photographer who let reality slip through. We want to know what kind of reality commercial photography refers to.

If the Collection represents a history of commercial photography, we must ask if the Collection also can represent a history of society. Hallowell was



Two ways to promote corporate awareness (1930).



The Keystone Express and Storage truck has been emphasized by masking its background so that the photo could be used in an advertisement (1928).

trying to learn what would sell, he was not a reform photographer like Lewis Hine. There are not many photographs that document social tensions or labor unrest, but there are enough photographs over a long period that often reveal a surprising amount of social content. This content becomes obvious in a sequence.

If we place the photographs of filling stations in chronological order, we can see how the automobile changed the social landscape. Early service stations were rural in character, often converted barns and barnyards acting as service areas, approach ramps and parking lots. Later filling stations have a more specialized architecture, imitating the Spanish Colonial and Carpenter Gothic homes of the suburbs. The Marathon Oil Company introduced a modular designed gas station that seems tailor made for each location. Modern stations made of enameled steel promise cleanliness and comfort away from home. Filling stations had sculptured signs that told speeding motorists when to slow down so they could turn into the gas pump lane. Bright lights marked the filling lines and illuminated the newest logotype. The bold, black letters on one concrete block wall identified itself not as a service station, but as a super service station with a greasing palace. The General Tire filling station presents itself in a mixture of Spanish Colonial and Moorish revival. It has a Lubritorium.

Other sequences reveal class and social status. His early photographs show assembly line workers bent over rows of machines. His later photographs show the worker as an individual, servicing one automobile in a well equipped workspace. Often advertising photographs include poses of women as consumers. In 1937, Hallowell photographs a woman listening to a well groomed mechanic talk about the dangers of poor wheel alignment. The consumer appeal of the advertisement traces the norms of automobile culture from assembly lines to a hierarchy of auto mechanics courting the women consumers of society.

In the social text we observe a change in the status of the automobile mechanic. The clothing of auto mechanics in the early photographs is unkempt and dirty, while later photographs show the worker in a clean uniform. Hallowell's mature commercial style makes mechanics seem more skilled, better groomed, and more professional. He photographs them sporting precision instruments in well-lit environments. If we were to examine only the one photograph from 1930, we might conclude that the auto mechanic was successful. In a comparison of the photographs between 1925 and 1930, it is unlikely that a thinking person would conclude that the auto mechanic's lot in life had gotten better during the Depression.

Although commercial photographs suppress social issues, there are some rare photographs in the Darmstaetter Collection that reveal the negative side of urbanization. Walter Hallowell photographed automobile wrecks for insurance companies, body repair shops, and possibly courtroom evidence. These pictures present automobiles in a different light. There are less than 50 of these photographs. He composes them with the same clarity and logic as commercial



1926 and . . .



. . . 1930 auto mechanics.

realism. Here, the best angle is the one that shows the most damage to the automobile and, by implication, its passengers. These solidly built cars could go very fast, and when they crashed, the effect on the passenger was lethal. Empty passenger seats leave much to the imagination. As Hallowell moves the camera to the dashboard of one car, we see the speedometer needle stuck at 101 miles per hour. These photographs are tragic reminders of the price a community must pay for power, mobility, and personal freedom.

Even in these photographs of wrecked cars, Walter Hallowell has mastered modern photography. The subsystem of commercial photography and the subsystem of automobile culture intersect in a flattering composition of a wrecked automobile that allows us to miss the point that it is a deadly piece of junk.

Walter Hallowell deserves credit for making most of these photographs. He also deserves credit for their distribution. He made many unsolicited photographs and then offered them to a consumer, sometimes for nothing. (D. Darmstaetter, 8 October 1991). He begged pilots to take him up in a plane to photograph (W. Krantz). Richard N. Bomberger remembers taking him up in an airplane and then grabbing his belt when he tried to walk out on the

wing to photograph. Schoolchildren remember seeing him standing in a cloud of smoke after he ignited his flash powder. (Mrs. Harcourt Darmstaetter) He was a barnstormer in the air and a P.T. Barnum on the ground. A.C. Darmstaetter approved of his eccentric behavior, and it is likely that he influenced Hollowell to pursue a photographic history of Lancaster. This would explain the number of social tableaux in the Collection. The social tableau authenticates the American Dream. It shows people that others are working hard to end the Depression, that there are people who are comfortable with machines. These photographs raise morale.

In July 1939, Hollowell's wife writes to his friend, Sam W. Kuhnert, a Harrisburg photographer, that Walter suffered a nervous breakdown (L. Hollowell letter, 9 July 1939). Admitted to the Coatesville Veteran's Hospital on May 17, 1939, Hollowell died there on January 29, 1964, at the age of 68 (*New Era*, 30 January 1964).

Darmstaetter's survived the Depression because their creativity expressed itself in business, when there were few other areas of creativity. They assumed social responsibility for their community. Mary Darmstaetter was active in the Quota Club. A.C. Darmstaetter presided over the Chamber of Commerce and the Welfare Board in times of prosperity and poverty. A journalist attributes his success to one thing: "Publicity." A.C. Darmstaetter's understanding of public relations is evident in his lectures to social organizations and radio talks on the topics of movies, radio and television communication (PAA, 1930).

Dr. Henry H. Apple, president of Franklin and Marshall College, delivered the commencement address to the graduating class of 1935, which included Harcourt Darmstaetter.

If it is true that this is the greatest Depression, the most ignoble failure the world has ever known, then it is the grandest opportunity that could ever be given to those who have been adequately trained to lead us out of it and turn failure into success (*New Era*, 5 June 1935).

These brave words from the older generation, coming at the depth of the Depression in Lancaster, must have inspired those who did have the opportunity to create success. A.C. Darmstaetter's two sons, Harcourt and Douglas, and his brother, Hugo J., could bring their individual talents to the business and had the opportunity to do so. Harcourt and Douglas purchased their Uncle Hugo's share in 1954. Douglas continued in his family's footsteps and served as president of the Chamber of Commerce in the mid 1960s. They continued in business until it passed from the family hands in 1977, after seventy-one years of business (*New Era*, 22 March 1977). They sold their hard won property to Burger King in 1988 (*New Era*, 17 June 1988).

This business family worked hard for their community caught in a Depression. They took the moral leadership in their community. The automobile workers are photographed as individuals who are also hard at work in their community. They have jobs. Their jobs are in familiar, but changing, neighborhoods. They

are showing us how to make local products in the Machine Age. These photographs do not carry the product message of an age of consumerism, they advocate a message of community identity through social tableaux. The automobile series is an example of a general theme of the Darmstaetter Collection, that it is possible to retain a sense of identity as a community in spite of the certain future of urban anonymity.

As the people of Lancaster experienced the reality of the Depression, their leaders created the illusion of the American Dream through promotional advertising. The Darmstaetter Collection is an early example that business can succeed as a political force where a government will fail. This is the viewpoint we hear today when long-time residents remember the Depression. The rubric of modernity suppressed the realities of the Depression. Modernity is to the machine as tradition is to the land. The values of modernity include speed, mobility, freedom, and power. The values of tradition are neighborliness, stability, hierarchy, and responsibility. The people of the Lancaster Depression seem to find both the rural past and urban life unacceptable. Therefore, they created a new reality out of modern photography, including the cinema, the snapshot, the animated cartoon, and advertising.

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