

Start Your Own Tradition.

For over 25 years, Falmouth Country Club has offered a premiere private club experience. Golf, tennis, swimming, fitness, fine dining, functions... in all things, a true tradition of excellence.

Out of that excellence have come traditions of family and sport... of friends and special times. Social Membership starts at \$95* a month. A limited number of Full Golf Memberships are available. Club tours may be arranged by appointment.

The value of a Club is measured by its traditions. At Falmouth, we believe these are traditions worth keeping.

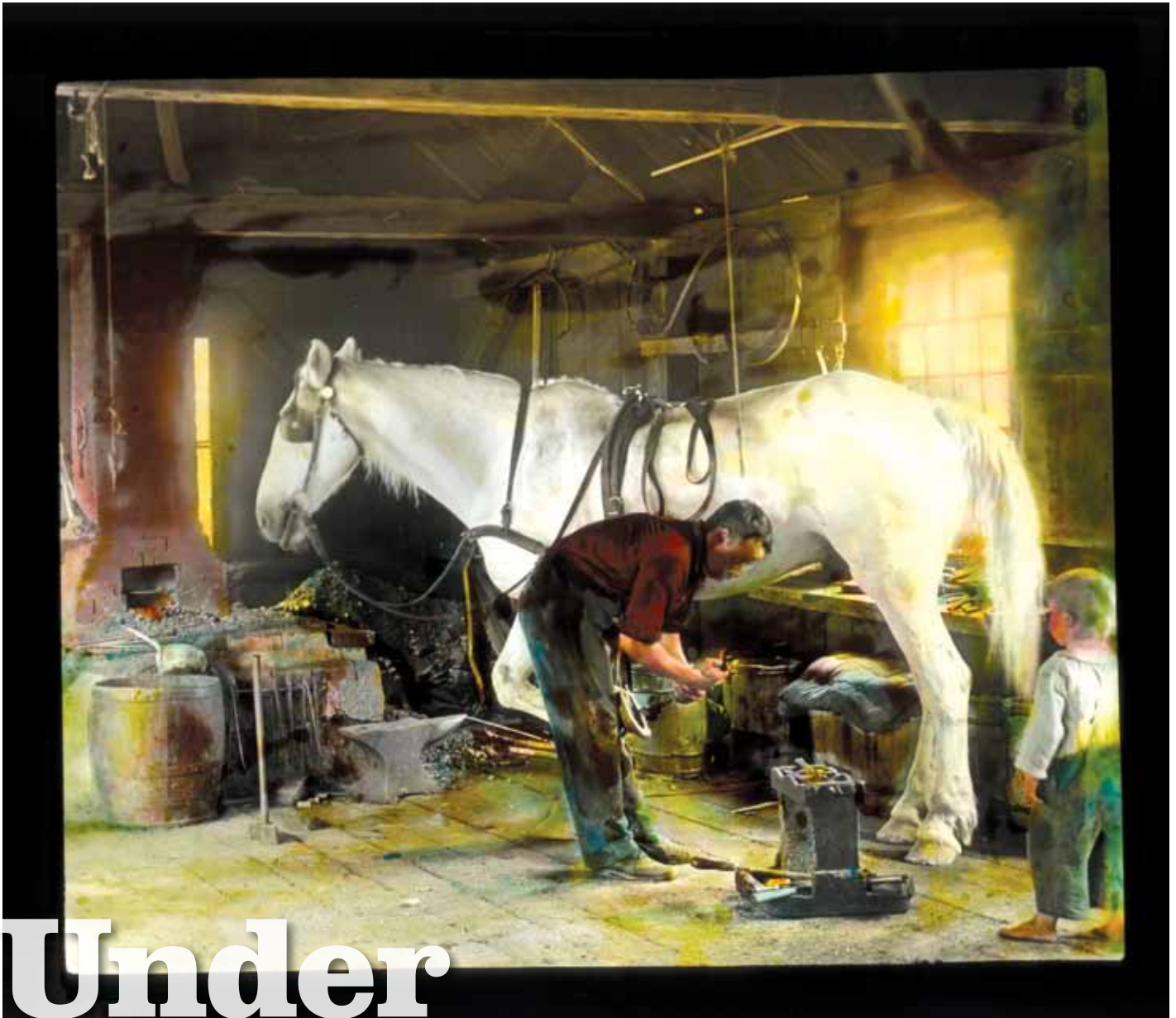


FALMOUTH COUNTRY CLUB

One Congressional Drive • Falmouth, ME • 04105

(207) 878-2864 • www.falmouthcc.org

Traditions Worth Keeping.



"Old Blacksmith Shop"

Before they called them selfies: "Photo of Herself by Herself" (1904)



Under Exposed

Leave it to **Chansonetta Stanley** to capture magical realism while her brothers were out back building cars. **BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER**

The Stanley family of Kingfield is remembered today for the Stanley Motor Carriage Company, manufacturers of steam-powered vehicles between 1902 and 1924 that became known as Stanley Steamers. Twin-brother inventors Francis E. (1849-1918) and Freelan O. (1849-1940) Stanley were Renaissance men. Beyond the cars, they built violins, innovat-



MAINE IMAGING 207-380-6343
MaineImaging.com

Wiscasset, Waterville and Farmington
Railway Museum

COME VISIT US
THIS SUMMER!

Trains run on
Saturday and Sunday.
Call for schedule.

97 Cross Road, Alna
207-882-4193
www.wwfry.org

YANKEE INGENUITY AT WORK

JUNE THROUGH OCTOBER, TUESDAY TO SUNDAY – 1 TO 4 PM



40 SCHOOL STREET
P.O. BOX 77
KINGFIELD, MAINE 04947
207.265.2729

Stanley
MUSEUM

ed dry-plate photography (Eastman Kodak bought out their process), and refined the patent for the airbrush.

Their talented sister, Chansonetta (1858-1937), is much less remembered despite the impressive body of work she produced. Her photographs are almost otherworldly in their strangeness and rudely stare at the viewer, verging on the postmodern with a faint whiff of the occult. Among her admirers was legendary photographer Berenice Abbott, who wrote the introduction to *Chansonetta: The Life and Photographs of Chansonetta Stanley Emmons, 1858 to 1937*, written by Marius B. Péladeau and published by *Maine Antique Digest* in 1977.

“I thought one or two may be lucky accidents,” writes Abbott, “but no—on looking further, they were not. Here was consistency—the sensitive, restless eye.”

The Stanley Museum, established in Kingfield in 1981 to “preserve the heritage of the Stanley family genius,” has most of Chansonetta’s surviving photographic legacy.

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG REBEL

At age 18, Chansonetta was sent to the Western State Normal School in Farmington (what is now UMF), which the twins had attended before her, to study to become a teacher. Instead, she discovered fine art, left school, and willfully went her own way, first teaching drawing in the Kingfield area. By her 20s, she was teaching art in Boston schools and studying painting. In 1887, she married James Emmons, an apparently unsuccessful shoe salesman. Bankrolled by her brothers, who were by this time wealthy from their inventions, the Emmonses lived in a Victorian mansion in Dorchester, Massachusetts, and had one child, Dorothy, in 1891. Chansonetta took up photography seriously, extensively chronicling her domestic life and, on a trip south to the Carolinas with Dorothy in 1897, produced images of the people and scenes she encountered en route, which she turned into a photo album.

James Emmons died suddenly of blood poisoning in 1899; his widow and daughter downsized to a duplex in Newton. In the ensuing years, they spent time in Kingfield. With Dorothy driving, the two of them toured New England in cars supplied by F.O. These were “Fords, not Stanleys,” says archivist Jim Merrick at the Stanley Mu-



"Grist Mill, Maine"

seum. Which "would seem to be a strange choice for a steam-car manufacturer, but they were fairly solid, utilitarian vehicles—and more modestly priced. A Stanley would have cost five times as much."

The mother and daughter's auto travels resulted in supernaturally ravishing images of people and the rural countryside as we upshifted from life in the 19th century to the 20th. Chansonetta's photographs were carefully staged—due to the long exposures required—and painterly, but not sentimental. She meticulously colorized some of these glass plates; her artistic training is evident in black-and-white images that seem transformed into paintings. Biographer Pé-ladeau writes that she "captured on film a rapidly changing America," and compares her to her contemporary, novelist Sarah Orne Jewett, for her laser insights into the soul of "the undaunted Yankee."

Like Alice James and 'Judith Shakespeare,' Chansonetta Stanley Emmons was a sharp kid sister to bigshot brothers.

Berenice Abbott: "Here is living proof of a true photographer whose eye and brain react naturally to the old familiar, the now, the importance of life under our very noses. It is inherent in the medium that photographers see significance in ordinary happenings."

Chansonetta earned a bit of income from her photography, from painting col-

ored miniatures, and giving slide lectures. A few photographs were published in *Country Life* and included in an exhibit at Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1927. She produced a book, *The Old Table Chair*, which was reprinted in 2009 by the Stanley Museum. A woman photographer in those days was unusual but not unheard of. But in Chansonetta's case, her brothers continued to provide support, which freed her for the rest of her life to explore photography without needing to seek commissions like a commercial photographer, or working much at all. Archivist Merrick says, "As far as we can tell, Chansonetta and Dorothy lived rather comfortably."

Although F.O. and F.E. (until his death) were in effect patrons of her art, Chansonetta's circumstances may have been modest, according to research by Shawn Michelle Smith,

UNVEILINGS

a professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. “Letters suggest that money was tight, and at times family relations were strained,” she writes.

After Chansonetta’s death in 1937, Dorothy’s trove of her mother’s photographic negatives and glass plates was nearly lost. Dorothy’s husband, Irl Whitchurch, be-

“I thought one or two may be lucky accidents...but no—on looking further, they were not.” —*Berenice Abbott*

came annoyed by space required to store the boxes of glass plates and prints.

“The story I heard is that he called a younger Stanley descendent [Raymond W. Stanley, Chansonetta’s nephew] and said, ‘If you want any of this stuff, come and get it or it’s going to the dump,’” says Cally Gurley, Director of Special Collections at the University of New England in Portland. “We think probably all of it was rescued because the boxes of glass plates, each with its own paper sleeve, that they transported to their slide shows were saved.”

Jim Merrick says, “Whitchurch also sold numerous prints and donated a group of 50 prints to the Colby College Museum of Art. Another substantial collection of Chansonetta’s work was discovered in the Farmington Public Library where they were apparently transferred for safekeeping.”

It was in 1977 that Chansonetta’s work was brought to light, which led to the Péladéau biography and the attention of Berenice Abbott and others.

In 2000, the Portland Museum of Art held a spring exhibition of “Recollected Images—Chansonetta Stanley Emmons.”

Hundreds of Chansonetta Stanley Emmons’s prints and glass slides have been on long-term loan from the Stanley Museum to the University of New England since 2007. “We offer a setting for scholars to be able to study them here,” says Cally Gurley.

Chansonetta’s devoted daughter Dorothy Stanley Emmons Whitchurch became a painter; some of her paintings are on exhibit at the Stanley Museum. Dorothy died in 1960. ■




**945 Forest Ave., Portland, ME
(207) 797-7100**

Delicious Hand Foods To Go
Perfect for your summer excursions

Hours:
Wednesday
through
Sunday
8am to 3pm

little
BIGS

Located just across Veteran's Bridge!
340 Main Street (Route 1) | South Portland, ME
207-747-4233 



"Old Mystic Stable Chair"

Psychic Visions

Struck by the sense that Chansonetta seems to have photographed her subjects with one foot in the supernatural, we asked psychic Sue Yarmey of Biddeford to describe each of the astonishing images.

Psychics work with energy. That energy is light, frequency, sound and resonance. It is interpreted through the senses and heightened through psychic ability. When I view these photographs, what I sense is that the photographer had the ability to see not just with her physical eyes, but with her third eye.

Photo of Herself by Herself: Looking at the first photo, what I see is

the photographer's ability to capture something more than appears to the naked eye. There is a feeling, a sense, that there is something more in this photo. That something more will be interpreted by each viewer in his or her own way. What intrigues me is she has captured something of herself, revealing that psychic nature I mentioned.

Grist Mill: In the second photograph, she has captured a moment out of time—at least in how we currently measure time. Looking at this begs the question of who is really 'there' in the photo and who is outside of time, perhaps visiting from the past or the future.

Old Blacksmith Shop (Horse): The third photograph speaks to me of ancestry. Without needing to point to a specific area in order to interpret what is being seen, there is an overall sense or feeling of 'more'—as if all who came before are there to continue the traditions of family.

Old Mystic Stable Chair: Psychics and photographers learn to work with light and dark (or shadow). The fourth photograph is a stunning look at that concept. Even though the subjects are children, you can feel the burden of responsibility and the sense of the consequences of the light/dark struggle.—Sue Yarmey