

Special Kinds of Photographic Prints Expert Group: Stereograph, Cartes de Visite, Cabinet Cards

A **stereograph** comprises two nearly identical photographic prints that have been recorded with a specially designed camera that has two lenses that are eye-width apart. Stereograph negatives are exposed simultaneously and later printed on heavy card stock. When a stereograph is viewed through a special viewer called a stereoscope, the viewer sees the image with a third dimension, giving a sense of depth and "reality" to the scene. They were a popular form of entertainment from the 1850s to the 1920s. In the 20th century stereography found renewed popularity in the form of Viewmaster reels and viewers.

The **cabinet card**—a popular format for 19th-century photographs—is a photograph mounted on heavy card stock and measures approximately 6-1/2 x 4-1/4 inches. Cabinet cards are usually studio portraits, and cabinet cards of celebrities, a favorite subject, were widely collected in the last quarter of the 19th century.

The **carte-de-visite**—a paper photograph mounted on a thin card measuring approximately 4 x 2-1/2 inches—was the most popular format for portrait photography in the 19th century. A carte-de-visite was roughly the same size as the visiting cards that gave the format its name. Cartes-de-visite were often exchanged between friends and family members and were collected in specially made albums. The term is of French origin meaning “visiting (or calling) card.”

