

Cabinet card, backing removed, undated. No photographer label.
Toronto Metropolitan University FRC2002.04.426.
Donated by Patricia Rogal.



THE PATRICIA ROGAL COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

By Dr. Ingrid Mida

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Another significant donation to the Fashion Research Collection was received from Patricia Rogal in 2002. **In donating her personal collection of 984 carte de visite, cabinet cards and photographs dating 1860-1920, Patricia Rogal hoped to help students see “what real people wore” in the past.**

Carte de visite and cabinet cards are albumen prints made from glass negatives, attached to stiff card backing usually printed with the photographer’s name. In this medium, we can revisit the past to see the clothing that ordinary people wore in the latter half of the 19th century.

Cabinet Card, undated. Photographer's stamp cut off. Toronto Metropolitan University FRC2002.04.292. Donated by Patricia Rogal.



This small cache of rare carte de visite and cabinet cards is unusual in that it includes a substantial number of photographs in Canadian studios from Toronto and other Ontario towns. In a few cases, names have been carefully written in blue ink just below the image or on the back of the card. The thick cards are yellowed at the edges and some have faded. **These artifacts are extremely fragile and ideally should be scanned to limit their handling.**

I find these photographs haunting. In studying these cabinet cards and carte de visites, my eye fixes on items of clothing that remind me of the specific historic pieces in the collection, including one of the oldest garments in the collection, a green plaid silk taffeta bodice and crinoline skirt from 1860. In these photographs, I feel like I am looking into the face of the wearer and seeing what is now a fragile artifact reborn. Through the image, the dress comes to life in a way that it will never be again.

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Sadly [Patricia Rogal](#) died in October 2016. I have fond memories of my meeting with her in 2013 when we discussed her work with her friend, the dress collector Alan Suddon.