



1.7: Unidentified Children's Aid Society Child, ca. 1892

Both cartes-de-visite and cabinet-card studio portraits followed strict Victorian conventions. Beginning in the 1860s, the drawing-room theme was the most widely used studio set¹⁹ — often with fashionable furniture in the foreground and a painted column in the background. During the 1890s, the Toronto Children's Aid Society took many of its abused, abandoned, or otherwise uncared-for residents to a local photographer for their portraits, some of which appeared in the Society's annual reports. In these circumstances, the use of the drawing-room setting is jarring in the extreme: a one-legged youth, with perfectly combed hair, foppish neck-scarf, and oversized crutch, poses in the studio of an unknown professional photographer. Was this because the Society didn't want to record conditions at its Adelaide Street residence, or because photographing children in a domestic setting was technically extremely difficult or, because the children looked better cared-for in the studio? Whatever the reasons, the juxtaposition of a one-legged CAS child and elegant surroundings is ironic and disturbing.

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1.8: Toronto Camera Club, 1906

"Amateurs" — i.e., non-commercial photographers — had long been at the forefront of photography, as inventors and as image-creators.²² But the age of amateur photography really took off in the 1880s, with the invention of dry-plate photography, and the lightweight, celluloid film camera; and the age of mass photography was born around the turn-of-the-century with the invention and marketing of the Brownie box camera. Examples from each of these groups are found throughout this book.

In the mid-1880s, serious amateurs began forming camera clubs where they could attend lectures, exchange technical information, share darkrooms, organize field trips, display photographs, and generally have a good time. In Toronto, a group of men (it was only men) gathered in the Gents Parlour of the Queen's Hotel on March 17, 1888 to form an Amateur Photographic Association, which became the Toronto Camera Club in 1891. (It took 50 years for the Toronto Club to finally

accept women as full, active members.) By 1906, when this photograph was published in *The American Amateur Photographer*, the Toronto Camera Club had taken up residence in its third location at 391 Yonge Street / 2 Gould Street. There, Club members enjoyed three darkrooms (with running water and lead-lined sinks), "modern" enlargers, a "well equipped studio," and a large front room (shown here), which served as club lounge, library, and exhibition space.²³ Among its members were future City photographer, Arthur Goss, who pursued soft-focus Stieglitzian "pictorial" photography in his private photographic life;²⁴ future City Works Commissioner, R. C. Harris, who hired Goss as City Photographer in 1911; and future City Architect, John J. Woolnough, who published amateur photographs in the short-lived *Massey's Magazine*.²⁵ Goss caused a ruckus when the Club moved to these new quarters and he covered the walls with selections from Stieglitz's influential photo-magazine, *Camera Work*.²⁶

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