



Fig. 3-11 The photograph on the left is covered with fine scratches. Applying DIGITAL GEM Airbrush, with the settings shown in Figure 3-10, eliminated most of the scratches (right photograph). Normally, you should apply this filter with a History Brush so that you can avoid altering areas with important fine detail that might be damaged by the filter.

DIGITAL GEM Airbrush Pro (<http://www.asf.com>)

DIGITAL GEM Airbrush Pro (Figure 3-10) is a more specialized kind of grain and noise reduction tool than DIGITAL GEM. As its name suggests, it's meant as more of a retouching tool, to soften blemishes, creases, and lines in people's hands and faces. If your restoration objectives include "prettifying" the subject, this plug-in makes that work go much faster.

I have found, however, that GEM Airbrush has uses beyond the mere cosmetic. Many old-time portraits had rather heavy-handed retouching done to them. Faces will show obvious cross-hatching or stippling marks that to the modern eye look more like disfigurement than enhancement. GEM Airbrush sees them as not much different from facial wrinkles, and it can help eliminate them. GEM Airbrush can also suppress fine scratches and scuff marks (Figure 3-11). This plug-in tends to destroy moderate and fine detail, so you want to apply it carefully. There are three detail-controlling sliders for fine, medium, and coarse detail. Increasing the adjustment from 0 to 100 increases the amount of that kind of detail that is retained in the filtered photograph.

GEM Airbrush is a tricky tool to learn to use well; its behavior isn't exactly intuitive. Still, I have found that its unique noise-filtering abilities make it worth one's while to spend the time to understand it. I think it's best used with masks or the History Brush, so that its effect can be applied only where desired.