



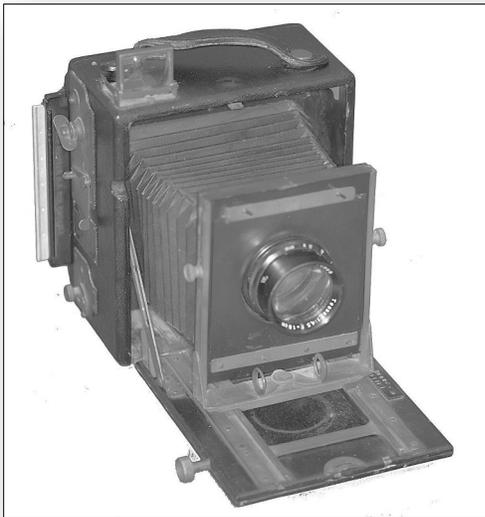
GRAFLEX Journal

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT GRAFLEX AND THEIR CAMERAS

ISSUE 1 2019

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TOP/PRE SPEED GRAPHIC

By Davis Strong

Dating the various models and minor changes to the same model of early Graflex cameras has always been a challenge due to the nature of the corporate record keeping. Determining the date of a specific camera often requires some detective work.

There are also cameras which blur the accepted model designations. Examples of such cameras have resulted in a camera which is part Top Handle and part Pre-Anniversary Speed Graphic. For lack of a better name, we will call it the "Top/Pre Speed Graphic." But first some generally accepted background.

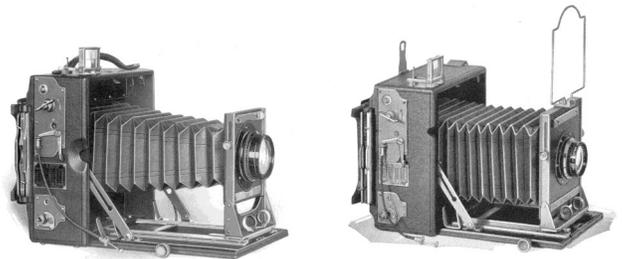
The earliest large format, compact folding camera incorporating a focal plane shutter to carry the Speed Graphic

designation was produced in 1912 by the Folmer & Schwing Division of the Eastman Kodak Company. This camera was available at various times between its inception and approximately 1927 in 3¼x4¼, 4x5, 3¼x5½ and 5x7 sizes. (Paine) There were also 3¼x5½ cameras that were converted to 4x5 by slightly extending the back and changing it to accept the different size film holders.

Though no such designation was given at the time, this earliest Speed Graphic has come to be known as the "Top Handle" Speed Graphic. The obvious reason for the name is that the carrying handle is on the top of the camera, similar to what one would find on a closed Graflex camera.

During the life of the model, there were minor changes at various times, including changing the focus knob cut-out from a simple notch to a large deeply beveled cut-out. In 1924 the shape of the 4x5 camera was changed to make the body shorter and thicker, and this is referred to as the "Special" Speed Graphic.

The model following the "Top Handle" has come to be known as the "Pre-Anniversary," which is again a designation applied in more recent years. At the time, there was no anticipation of the Anniversary Speed Graphic, which the official designation was denoting the 1940 model "Celebrating 50 years of Precision Camera-Making," according to contemporary advertisements.



Left to right, Top Handle and Pre-Anniversary.

There are several major differences between the Top Handle and the Pre-Anniversary models. The most obvious is, of course, the moving of the handle from the top to the side of the camera. While the top handle was only suitable for carrying the camera, the side handle served both for carrying and for steadying the camera while photographing.

The Pre-Anniversary models were smaller and stronger than the previous model. They had square rather than

tapered bellows terminating in a larger lensboard, which could accommodate a wider variety of lenses. With the advent of flash photography, the new model could support the associated leaf shutters and various triggering mechanisms. There was also a wire frame finder on the front standard and a folding peep sight on the top rear of the body. During its life, it became the very definition of a press camera.



However, examples of a transitional model have also appeared. These seem to be essentially a Pre-Anniversary model but with a top handle. Other than the handle, another noticeable difference is that while the front standard and lensboard are Pre-Anniversary, there is no wire frame finder. The fold-down optical finder carried over from the Top Handle to the Pre-Anniversary and was later replaced by the tubular finder in 1939.



Left to right, 160807 and 162909.

The exact dates of production and availability of the Pre-Anniversary model are difficult to determine. Richard Paine variously put the date as 1927 and 1928. Both the 1954 and 1958 editions of Graphic Graflex Photography put the inception of the 4x5 Pre-Anniversary Speed Graphic at 1930.

The two cameras illustrated here are from batches of 200 cameras dated 4/24/28 and 9/17/28. One was made toward the end of the first batch and the other near the beginning of the second. It is unknown if all the cameras were of the Top/Pre type.

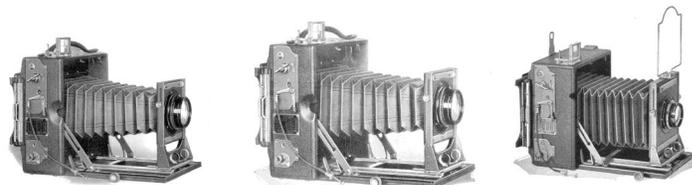
JOB NO.	DATE	QUANTITY	FROM-THROUGH	NOTES
2748	4/24/28	200	160629-160828	"N.M." 160807, Les Newcomer.
3152	9/17/28	200	162842-163041	162909, Davis Strong.
3152	1/19/29	3	164826-164828	"3 Extra."

Production records indicate that the only 4x5 Speed Graphics produced in 1928 were the 400 made in jobs 2748 and 3152. In early 1929, three additional cameras were made as part of job 3152. It is not known if cameras were shipped when made, or if shipped when a job order was completed.

At that time, there were generally a few extra cameras made in case there were any unacceptable cameras made in the larger job. As in this case, the extras generally carried the same job number as the larger run.

Later in 1929, there were an additional 701 4x5 Speed Graphics produced. A sample from the first batch of the late 1929 cameras, 165021, appears to be as shown in the 1930 catalog.

There is no known copy of a 1928 catalog; however, in the 1929 catalog, a 4x5 Top Handle camera is illustrated but describes the Pre-Anniversary specifications. The Top Handle specifications were a 3 1/4 x 3 1/4 lensboard and a 12-inch focal capacity.



4 x 5 Speed Graphic

Dimensions, 6 1/2 x 4 x 6 3/8 in. Bellows capacity, 12 in. Weight with lens, 4 1/2 lbs. Focal length of lens, 6 3/8 in.

1927

SPEED GRAPHIC

4 x 5
Dimensions: 6 1/2" x 3 5/8" x 7 1/4".
Weight: 3 1/2 lbs.
Focal Capacity: 13 1/2"
Size of Lensboard: 4" x 4".

1929

SPEED GRAPHIC

4 x 5
Dimensions, 6 1/2 x 3 3/4 x 7 1/4. Weight, 3 1/2 lbs. Focal capacity, 13 1/2 in. Size of lens board, 4 x 4 in.

1930

It is generally accepted that the 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 Pre-Anniversary became available in 1935. The 5x7 Speed Graphic appears to never have been truly modernized, maintaining the tapered bellows of the Top Handle and a relatively small lensboard. The handle was moved from the top to the side in 1928 (Paine, 1981, [a review of GRAFLEX](#)).

One can only speculate as to the reasons for the generally undocumented Top/Pre. Was it a step in the evolution of a new model, or were there other explanations?

It is possible that the Top/Pre was the intended successor to the Top Handle Speed Graphic. The camera was smaller and sturdier than the Top Handle and had a larger lensboard to accommodate the faster lenses that were becoming available.

Other than the larger lensboard, the other significant change in the Pre-Anniversary was the wire frame finder. A number of British and European cameras from Houghton Butcher, Zeiss, Voigtlander and Jhagee, to name a few, had a wire frame finder usually in addition to a small 90-degree optical finder for use at waist level.

American-made cameras did not appear to adopt the wire frame finder to any great extent. Looking at Kodak advertisements from the 1920s, they show the still cameras being used at waist level.

For action or press photography, for which the Speed Graphic was well suited, the benefits of an eye-level wire frame finder over the eye-level optical finder are obvious. The ability to frame quickly and observe the subject life size, and with both eyes open, are great benefits of the wire frame finder.

Is it possible that this Top/Pre was actually the design for the Pre-Anniversary Speed Graphic? Perhaps the addition of the wire finder was an afterthought in response to the increasing popularity of the Speed Graphic with press photographers. Because of that addition and the necessity of a rear peep sight, the handle needed to be moved to the side. We'll never know.

Speaking as one who used a Speed Graphic for news photography for several years, I can state I never used the tubular optical finder for any photo made with the normal lens. So, it may well have been that in the transition from the Top Handle to the Pre-Anniversary the benefits of the wire finder were realized, and that innovation forced the handle to the side of the camera as it was located on the foreign cameras.

So, I opt for Graflex responding to the needs of their users as the reason for the wire frame finder which necessitated moving the handle from the top to the side. This change, which was significant for users, resulted in the short production life of the Top/Pre.

Les Newcomer thinks, "I'm going to go with a shortage of parts. I suppose there's the other side of the coin: Not a shortage of parts, but a surplus of top handle hardware."

Regardless of the reasons, these cameras remain undocumented oddities.

A PHOTOJOURNALIST'S TIMELINE

By Davis Strong

The Speed Graphic became the dominant newspaper photographer's camera in the 1930s and remained there through the 1940s and 1950s. At right is a Graflex ad from 1955. As an indication of the dominance of the Speed Graphic, in the 19 years between the inception of the Pulitzer prize for news photography in 1942 and the last Speed Graphic winner in 1961, Speed Graphics were used in 16 of the awards.



Magazine photographers used Speed Graphics as well, but also used roll film cameras and 35mm increasingly with the passage of time. The smaller cameras were mostly relegated to "special" uses on newspapers. A quote from the 1958 Graphic Graflex Photography book (the final edition) "News and Press Photography" chapter: "The Speed Graphic with flashbulbs or Strobflash is still the basic tool for news photography. Flirtations with small cameras and natural light may be fun, but they should remain infatuations; the cameraman wedded to them alone is assuming too many handicaps."

In the early 1960s, things changed very rapidly, and the Speed Graphic became a thing of the past. The release of the Nikon F in 1959 changed everything. By the mid-1960s, it was the dominant news camera. Who wouldn't love a camera that could fire over three frames a second, could use lenses from ultra wide angle to long telephoto, and the whole kit weighed less than a couple dozen film holders! The Rolleiflex survived for awhile because it had a leaf shutter and could synchronize electronic flash up to 1/500, while the Nikon was limited to 1/60.

There were multiple reasons for the change. Photography itself had changed. The 'old-timers' were retiring and being replaced by younger photographers who had never used a 4x5. Newspapers were switching to offset printing, which enabled much better reproduction of photos. The small cameras were more than good enough. A perhaps apocryphal story relates that a young photog asked an old-timer why he thought the Speed Graphic better than a 35mm camera, and the old-timer proceeded to place his Graphic on the floor and sit on it. I sold my first news photo (a car crash) in 1962 at the age of 15, and it was shot with a Speed Graphic. By the time I started college in 1965, I was shooting Nikon and twin-lens reflex.

GRAFLEX FIRST SURFACE MIRROR

Graflex cameras are now being equipped with the latest Graflex aid to perfect focusing—the new Graflex First Surface Mirror. This mirror differs from ordinary mirrors in that the reflective coating is on its *front* surface rather than on the back. This gives a much brighter image on the ground glass and eliminates the "double images" and undesirable reflections sometimes found troublesome when focusing on a strongly highlighted subject.

The coating used for this special type of mirror is a highly reflective aluminum compound which retains its brilliance in the absence of a protective coating. In order to insure maximum benefit from its use, care must be exercised in cleaning to guard against scratches from dirt or other foreign matter. Loose dust may be removed by brushing with a tuft of clean cotton saturated with water. Any marks left by the drying liquid may be removed by condensing breath moisture upon the mirror and rubbing with cotton. The mirror should not remain wet for any prolonged period as water is likely to contain acid or alkaline which may slowly attack it.

Tipped into 1931 Graflex retail catalog.

ACCORDING TO MAURICE GREESON

First surface mirrors have the mirroring on the front of the glass, ensuring that you don't get a secondary reflection on the ground glass. Checking out my older RBs, I find they have the coating underneath the glass, so the light rays pass through the glass to get to the coating. The downside of first surface mirrors is that you can scratch them by cleaning. You can tell them apart by holding a pencil on the surface and seeing daylight between the pencil tip and its reflection.



George Eastman Museum

3¼x4¼ Graflex Series B (red leather covering), serial number 150991, 1926. Gift of Graflex, Inc. 1974:0037:2399.



CROWN GRAPHIC RESCUE: Or what to do with a smelly Graphic...

By Maurice Greeson

Nearly forgotten after moldering in a dank Ohio basement for a couple of decades, this 4x5 Crown Graphic outfit was in desperate need of some TLC. Purchased in the fall of 1948, this is a very early example. The serial number, (955935), according to Bruce Thomas' list, would indicate that it was made in 1962!

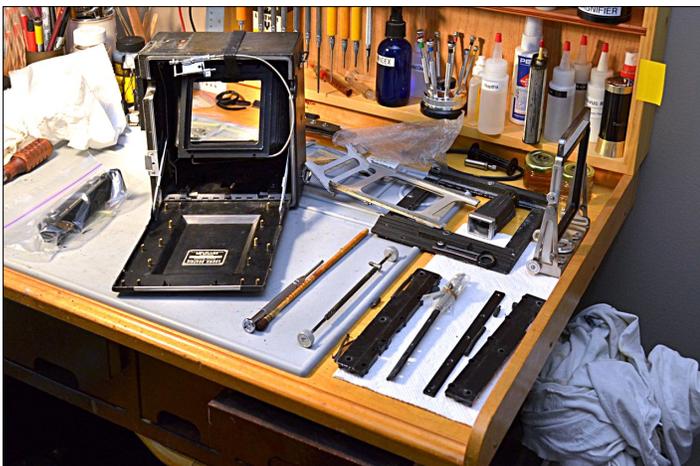


But looking at other Graflex serial number documentation, it seems that there was a large block of serial numbers dedicated to Pacemaker Graphics. Numbers 950000 through 999999 were assigned to 4x5 Crown Graphics. And, the filled out warranty card indicated that the camera was purchased in August of 1948.

When the outfit arrived in Utah from Ohio, the first thing to do was air it out to get some relief from the moldy smell. Emptying the Graflex Vulcanoid case and putting it and the Crown Graphic out in the hot summer sun helped a lot. But it still has a faint smell even after a year.



I wasn't trying to restore the Crown to new condition, just bring it back to good working order and make it presentable.



Next, making a list, or an S.O.W. (statement of work) was in order.

Photograph all sides.

Brush, dust, and wipe down with a water-dampened cloth. I didn't use any cleaner, such as Lexol. (My friend at the local leather store is not a fan of Lexol.)

Take off lens standard, rails, bed blocks, etc. (If I were to work on another Graphic, I would not take off the bed blocks as the springs and plungers are hard to put back.

Take off back and rangefinder housing.

R&R back, cleaning the ground glass and touching up the black paint on the back. (I used flat black modeler's paint.)

Apply neatsfoot oil on bellows. Even though the bellows is made from synthetic fabric, it seemed to work well.

Dye leather with Fiebings USMC Black and polish w/ Venetian Cream after cleaning.

Check shutter speeds and flash synchronization. (Surprisingly, the shutter speeds were within tolerances.)

The most difficult operation was re-installing the bed blocks and the bed brace springs and plungers. The bed brace springs are very strong and very hard to compress. The plunger goes in the springs. Then, after replacing the beam splitter mirror in the Kalart rangefinder and adjusting it while referencing the article in Graflex.org, the camera was ready to go. I had purchased a 50 x 50mm x 1mm beam-splitter mirror and had to learn to cut glass! And since the original mirror was about 1.3mm thick, I had to make a shim to fit the replacement.

I was lucky enough to have a 1954 U.S. Army technical manual that was very helpful in this project. (TM 11-2352B)

It's interesting to note that the Rapax shutter had no internal flash synchronization, flashbulb only sync being provided by the Heiland solenoid. In 1948 electronic flash was uncommon, and a lot of the Rapax shutters did not have internal sync.

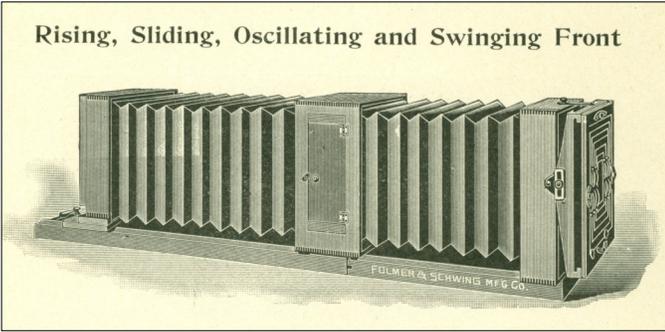
This is not a "Shelf Queen" and is my "Go To" 4x5 Pace-maker Graphic.

However, I do have a dozen or so other Graflex and Speed Graphics of various sizes. See three of them below.





Rising, Sliding, Oscillating and Swinging Front



VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCES

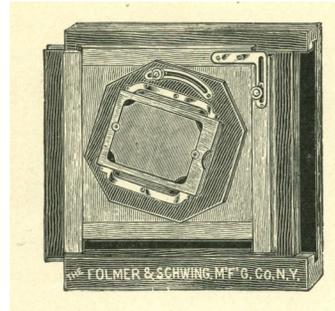
By Saul Schiffman

The Brimley Collection of photographs is one of the state's oldest and most interesting collections of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, and now some of it is available on the Web. The photographs in this collection document many aspects of life in the state and natural science in the pivotal era between the late 19th and mid-20th century and include people both common and renowned, scenes of cities and towns, rural landscapes and farms, museum specimens, agricultural activities and products of every variety found in North Carolina, industrial concerns, and more.

The first curator of the Museum, Herbert Hutchison Brimley and his brother Clement, crossed the Atlantic by steamer from England to Raleigh, NC, in 1880 with their parents, two sisters and one brother. They first attempted farming and teaching, but when that failed, opened a taxidermy and biological supply company, *Brimley Bros. Collectors and Preparers*. As the time of the 1884 State Centennial Exposition approached, H.H. Brimley's reputation as a taxidermist and preparator was noted by the Board. He was hired to mount a series of fishes for a display. In 1890 Brimley was again hired to collect and prepare native animals for the NC exhibits at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. In 1895 Brimley was appointed curator of the State Museum. By 1900 the Museum had accumulated more than 100,000 specimens illustrative of North Carolina. In 1919 he published a profusely illustrated book, *Birds of North Carolina*. Brimley remained at the Museum for his entire career, first as director and later as curator of zoology.

During his years of service with the State Museum, H. H. Brimley traveled and took photographs throughout North Carolina to capture scenes for display in his exhibits. He took the majority of the photographs in the collection himself, and he was involved in all aspects of the work in which the photographs were used. The photographs in the Brimley Collection were used in the state's exhibits at numerous expositions and shows, as well as within the museum itself and in state publications over the years. Some of the lantern slides were colored by Mrs. M.V. Slingerland in New York, who had a business preparing and selling views from nature.

It appears the Museum purchased an 8x10" Folmer & Schwing Enlarging, Reducing and Copying camera, serial no. 7797 circa 1905 (fitted with a B&L 6½x8½" Plastigmat barrel lens), before the company merged with Kodak. All the imprints and brass plate on this camera are "Folmer & Schwing Manufacturing Co., New York." The camera was primarily used to make enlargements, reductions and copies of photographs and to produce lantern slides, which Brimley used for his outreach presentations and museum exhibits. The camera is equipped with a spring back for making small and large lantern slides. There was even an entire exhibit room in the Museum of just photographs.



3¼ x 4" lantern slide attachment from 1904 Folmer & Schwing catalog and lantern slide back in museum collection.



A STICKY DIAPHRAGM

By Les Newcomer

In 1906 Brimley purchased a Century Grand Senior camera and tripod (we have the purchase receipts) with wide-angle accessory to use for his photographic work. He outfitted the camera with a Goerz lens Series III/5 with No.1 Auto Shutter, purchased from Century Camera Company (we have the receipt).

The Brimley Collection online is the property of the State Archives of NC and is presented on the NC Digital Collections website courtesy of the State Library of NC. The collection is arranged alphabetically by topic, beginning with Agriculture and ending with World War II. After the subject files, there are also unidentified lantern slides (1900s-1920s) and oversized prints. There is a total of 110 categories in the collection. Most of the collection is black and white, but a few of the oversized prints are hand-colored. A complete listing of each topic and its content is available in the Brimley Photograph Collection finding aid, N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences Photograph Collection.

The Museum of Natural Sciences Library also has several thousand more digitized photographs and lantern slides not yet available on the Web. They are stored on an internal database at the Museum. Contact the NC Museum of Natural Sciences Brimley Library (919-707-9810) for requests to view these photographs.



Colorized lantern slides, possibly made by the F&S camera. Mrs. M.V. Slingerland owned the Slingerland Lantern Slide Co., Ithaca, N.Y. Her husband Mark Vernon (1864-1909) was Assistant Professor of Economic Entomology at Cornell University, and she created many lantern slides depicting his work. He published many monographs and books.

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Collecting Nature: The Beginning of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences by Jonathan Pishney, from work by Margaret Martin, NC Museum of History (2007)
<https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/places/museum-natural-sciences>

<http://www.cowhampshireblog.com/2015/03/12/illustrator-lecturer-social-worker-new-hampshire-politician-effie-brown-earll-slingerland-yantis-1869-1950/>

Citation for the receipts:

N. C. Museum of Natural Sciences Archives, Record Group 1, Box 15, "Bills and Vouchers", receipts 10007401, 10007402, 10007403.

Citation for Brimley Collection

Brimley Photograph Collection, PhC.42. State Archives of North Carolina. Online at North Carolina Digital Collections, <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/home/collections/brimley-photographs> (July 2018).

As first set out on the IDCC site.

To subscribe or unsubscribe via the World Wide Web, visit <http://lists.kjnl.com/mailman/listinfo/idcc> or, via email, send a message with subject or body 'help' to idcc-request@lists.kjnl.com

1. Remove the front element.
2. Right behind the front element is a ring with the aperture indicator on it (typically an arrow). This ring slides straight out, it does not rotate. Sometimes a thin artist's spatula (or a butter knife) slid between the aperture ring and this ring will help move it forward.
3. Next remove the aperture ring. This also slides straight out.
4. Wipe the raw brass barrel with a rag that's damp with your favorite grease remover, mineral spirits, orange cleaner, etc. The rag should be dry enough that wiping doesn't allow grease remover to drip into the aperture blades.
5. While not really necessary, I've been known to put a thin coat of automobile wax on the raw brass sections of the barrel, then polish. I'm not sure it actually helps, but hey, now that I've got it open, I might as well. If you like it messy, you can use a small amount of graphite powder.
6. If (and that's a big if) you feel it's necessary to lubricate, sharpen the end of a toothpick or use a slender sewing pin or needle to put the smallest amount of clock oil (nyoil or the like, NOT 3 in 1) on each pivot of the aperture.

7. Put the aperture ring back on, test for smoothness. if there is a sticky spot, look for a polished high spot on the barrel and add graphite powder to the area.

8. Replace aperture ring.

9. Replace spacer ring.

10. Replace front element (after you clean it).





ADDICTION TO LIGHT

By George Griffin

The process for these images involved setting up the camera, putting a black cloth over my head, and blocking out all the light with the exception of what the lens presented. The image on the 5x7 Compact Graflex offered a good size to work with. The subject was focused wide open but then the lens closed down a few stops. I captured the image on the ground glass with a simple point-and-shoot digital Panasonic camera, albeit with a Leica lens. The approach is known as TTV (Through the Viewer) photography. There are as many variations as there are viewfinders on cameras. Using a minimal of post processing with only tonal adjustments, I created a catalogue of 70 images from the garden. The effect of the ground glass screen enhances the softness and narrows the focus, which works well with the subject of flowers. The garden offered over 40 varieties of clematis plants, 25 rose varieties, as well as many perennial and annual flowering cultivars.

I have had exhibits at museums and art galleries over the years, as most of my work is in historical or alternative processes like carbon transfer and hand-tinted silver bromide. I am presently working on a new book, offering observations on how technology is affecting culture. It will be titled Vibes from Technitopia. It covers five decades of work and research in many areas, but with a specialization in printing and photography.

Ed: More about George's work can be found at:
<http://georgegriffinphotography.com/my-experience>



THE LUCK OF THE IRISH

In the timing, discovery and use of the 2¼x3¼ and 4x5 Speed Graphics

By Jim Chasse

Being born on St. Patrick's Day (March 17, 1938), and having an Irish grandmother and father, and a French mother, I became James Patrick Chasse. Chasse in French is "to hunt," or "hunter." My dad changed his name to the French form when he went to college in Canada. All my relatives use the name Hunter.

I grew up in Sanford, a small mill town in Maine, with a population of 7,500. My interest in photography started during the 1940-1950s in grammar school, when it was the most popular hobby in America.

My first camera was a 120-roll-film Spartus, which was equipped with a built-in flash reflector, a very novel idea at the time, and possibly the first "hot shoe." My Irish luck kicked in using a 2x3" Miniature Speed Graphic for my high school years, 1952-1956. As it turned out, the local foot doctor had a 2x3 "Mini" for sale. I grabbed it, not knowing what a marvelous instrument it was. I located a roll film adapter, so my Mini became a roll film camera, saving me a lot of money, as I did not need 2x3 sheet film and sheet film holders. I actually used Anscochrome and developed it myself.



I applied for the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) photography course in 1957-58. It was only a two-year course at that time, because it was a tech college. I found it very expensive, thus I could afford only the first year. It was expected that you would bring your camera and quite a bit of photography knowledge with you, perfect for my 2x3 Mini. I always felt that one year at RIT was the equal to approximately 15 years in the field. More Irish luck.

1959 saw the opening of the Sanford, Maine, airport "Drag Strip." Sanford, because the U.S. government built the airport in WWII as a Naval Air Station. It had a 7,000-foot runway and, being unused, was available. The town rented it out on weekends for this new thing, "drag racing."



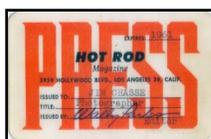
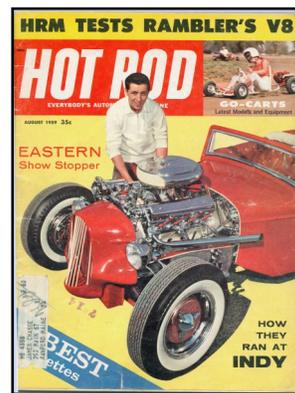
By the way, I joined the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) at 13, not the required 15. I lied because I loved aviation so much, still do. Thanks, Mom, for covering for me. My next-door neighbor was a drag racer and aware of my passion for photography, so he casually mentioned, "Why don't you go to the races and take photos." I did, and it was a life changing revelation, as you will see. Again, what Irish luck!

In March 1959, I bought a used 4x5 Speed Graphic made in 1950. I still have it and the bill of sale. Fortunately, it has a great f/4.5 Ektar lens. My favorite dragster photo, taken with this camera, I made into a 20x24" enlargement. Sharp as a tack, smoke boiling off that big slick, and doing well over 120mph. Drag racing in 1959 was unknown in the northeast. Ed Eaton, from Hot Rod Magazine,



came to Sanford in the summer of 1959, and asked me, "Would you go to West Islip, Long Island, New York, to photograph the best show roadster in the country?" I said yes!

Imagine my first summer at Sanford, meeting Ed Eaton, offering me a featured car that was so good, I got a cover. To get the cover I needed a 4x5 color transparency, which was shot five months after I bought the camera. Irish luck and good timing. I was very surprised and thrilled to get a Hot Rod Magazine press pass card. I now had the run of the east coast, and at 22 years old!



I also submitted photos to Rodding and Restyling magazines. The editor asked me to cover the 1960 national drag races in Detroit, Michigan, and off I went again from Sanford, Maine.

Back at the Sanford track, the New England Hot Rod Council treasurer casually said (more Irish luck and timing) that Western Electric in North Andover, Massachusetts, was looking to hire an industrial photographer. Off I went in my new 1960 Pontiac. When I got there, I was overwhelmed by the size of the building. Because I did not know which door to use, I had to call them for directions. 11,000 people worked under one roof. I walked in, showed my work, all taken with my 4x5 Speed Graphic, and they hired me the same day. Wow, Irish luck and timing again.

Western Electric was not quite fully operational, as they had no darkroom facilities for an industrial photographer. I shared a closet (4x8-feet) with the engineers, who were doing some sort of spectrograph photo stuff that only needed developing. It was just large enough for a basic 3-tray sink and a very nice Omega enlarger. Not yet having print drying equipment, I drove to a photo studio in town, using a company car with a tray full of wet prints, rented a dryer, then drove back to Western Electric with the day's work.

The engineers had a rarely-used 3-lens set 4x5 Linhof, so I gave my Speed Graphic a rest, using it only for drag strip photography, where I needed a focal plane shutter, and weddings shot in black and white.

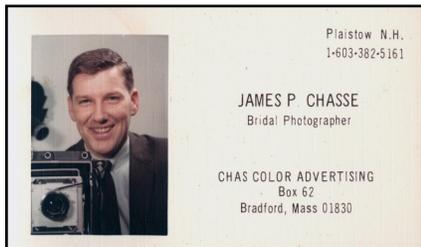
Being an outdoorsman, I met many people interested in firearms. I read an article, "Lugers for Sale," and, though not quite a game hunting gun, I contacted the seller, Ralph Shattuck, and he asked me to come to Birmingham, Michigan, to photograph his guns for a book (Lugers at Random by Charles Kenyon, Jr.). Off I went with my Speed Graphic and equipment. Irish luck and timing again.

At my request, Western Electric bought a 2¼x2¼ Rolleiflex for candid work, in the shop where politicians were looking for votes. I photographed Gerald Ford, Vice President Spiro Agnew, Senator Kennedy, and Massachusetts governors, as well as Miss America, who was appearing at a local hospital.

My assignments only got better when I did a swimsuit shoot for the in-house magazine. Yes, we had our own magazine, and one of the models became my first wife!

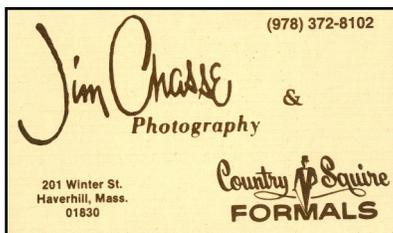
In 1964 I started doing weddings in color with the f/2.8 Rollei, while other professionals were mostly still using black and white film.

I was told, actually lectured, "What if the color prints fade?" It was new and revolutionary at the time. A Rollei, a fast lens, and an electronic flash, replacing flash bulbs, made it possible to now do true candid wedding photography in color. I was on the ground floor of this type of photography.



In the early 1970s, Western Electric's Linhof was stolen on new years eve by one of our security guards. My boss said to buy another Linhof, but I said "no, let's purchase a Hasselblad." I ordered a 500EL, as I had just purchased a 500C for my wedding work. What an upgrade from the Rolleiflex! The Graflex SLR principal really makes a huge difference. My work just got better.

My Western Electric years ended in 1977, when Western Electric was divested from A.T.&T., and I was laid off. I went on my own with my Hasselblad, opened a photo studio, and bought a formal wear shop, and ran both at the same time. What a combination...wedding photography



and tuxedos offered as a package! Irish luck again.

I rode the post-WWII baby boom, as many couples married after finishing high school did. Many came from large families, which generated many wed-

dings. The 21st century saw marriage gradually go out of style. Photography studios closed, as they heavily relied on wedding traffic. So did tuxedo shops. Digital cameras, then smart phones, became popular, and now everyone is a photographer. It really was a brief run, 1964 to 2000. I was there.

The Photographic Historical Society of New England (PHSNE) started in 1973, which was about the time nationwide camera collecting started.

I have the first edition of J. McKeown's 1974 price guide, with just 59 pages. A new guide is in preparation that will be available in four volumes, with 100,000 illustrations, in

both hardbound and digital formats. In the beginning, they had 2-day shows twice a year, with buyers from as far away as Japan. Probably the best show in the country. Amazing! At a show, I noticed a 2x3 Miniature Speed Graphic for sale. It brought back memories, and I bought it for \$65.00, my best purchase ever. It got me started in camera collecting, specializing in Graflex, early Hasselblads, interesting accessories, and Kodaks. My favorite is my complete Kodak Ektra outfit. I still am collecting the 2x3 Miniature Speed Graphic, and have over 40, with many of them being the early Minis.

Several years ago, one of my "gun buddies" told me about his very wealthy friend that had a gun and camera collection. They were both for sale. I said I would like to meet him, and I did. He operated and owned a large mill in upstate New Hampshire. He lived in a grand old Victorian home that had three floors of boxes of camera stuff. Even the cellar was full, but damp, a very bad place for firearms and cameras. Fortunately for me, he had a special interest in Graflex cameras, but unfortunately for me, many were in the damp cellar. My Irish luck kicked in as one of his favorite Graflexes was a NIB 2x3 Miniature that he kept in the kitchen. He had bought it for his wife, but she never had used it before she died years ago. This Mini was not for sale at that time. A few years later, he died, and I got a phone call from his son. He said now everything is for sale. Oh, boy! I rushed up, and the first Graphic I looked for was the 2x3 NIB Mini. I found it, tripped over much more camera stuff, and found another 2x3 Mini, tricked out with all the accessories a 2x3 Mini could accommodate and more. A beautiful modern Scopar (post WWII) synched for flash. Prewar Minis did not have this feature available. The new optional Graflok back, rangefinder with Focuspot, Grafmatics and a stainless-steel clip that attaches to focus hood to hold dark slides (first one I had ever seen). Wide angle lens, tele lens, and a beautiful leather case I had never seen. Graflex embossed, but not the standard black pebble case, larger and dark brown.

I feel you really had to be a very wealthy and dedicated camera hobbyist to put all this together. What fabulous two additions to my 2x3 Mini collection! These at the time were the best that money could buy. So nice he kept the original boxes NOT in the damp cellar. What Irish luck! I spent the day going through many boxes of cameras on all three floors.

Working on commission, I sold the valuable ones at a PHSE show. Many, many boxes had just junk, Polaroids, etc. The commissions covered the cost of my two 2x3 Minis.

There were also many Graflex accouterments (a fancy word, but I like it) everywhere. NIB sheet film holders, bag mags, optical viewfinder, and the original instruction book for the original Mini.

Without the firearm and camera hobby connection, I never would have known about these two Minis, favorites of my Mini variations.

My wife Gemma walked into my life through the doors of the shop. She was the maid-of-honor of a customer. Boy, was she cute...she is Italian, but still my Irish luck again prevailed. We are still very much in love, 34 years later.

The photography/tuxedo shop made it possible to pursue my camera collecting, as well as writing articles for the Graflex Journal and Camera Shopper. My cameras were very good to me, allowing me to fully enjoy my vocation and avocation simultaneously. My epitaph will read, "It's been a great run." I could never be this lucky again. I share this thought with the late great Jimmy Doolittle, aviation pioneer and legend. Irish luck? Timing?



Landscapes by Juraj Tomik

Being from Slovakia, a small post-communist country in central Europe, I heard about Graflex for the first time in 2006, and I immediately fell in love. I had a feeling that especially a 'baby' Crown Graphic would suit my needs perfectly. And this small 'baby' indeed does - with 6x9 rollback, wooden film holders for 2 1/4 x 3 1/4 sheet films and two lenses: 65mm and 135mm, is light and small enough to carry, even for longer trips, lasting a few hours. It's a great field camera, surprisingly able to use very wide lenses (soon I hope to test 47mm SA).

I also have a new ground glass, made by Mr. Maxwell - it's especially great in darker forests and with a wide angle lens (65mm).

As for the materials, it's mostly ISO 100 film (Ilford Delta or Fuji Acros), developed in Ilfotec HC. But I was happy enough to find out that Czech company Foma still produces also sheet film in proper size (!) - it's great to be able to shoot one or two pictures and immediately develop it, not waiting for the end of the roll.

After I develop the film, I usually make a quick scan or contact print for selecting the best shot. Then I print it in my small 'darkroom' (bathroom with improvised space), on a Kaiser System V enlarger. Mostly I use 24x30cm fiber based papers, sometimes also larger 30x40cm. I especially like products of Foma: Fomabrom and Fomatone. This 'Spring' series of photographs is made on Chamois paper, with very characteristic structure and yellow tint.

Being an amateur photographer, I'm shooting mostly on film. I also had two small exhibitions, as well as a part of a few joint ones. Currently, with two small kids, it's difficult to find the time, but I am trying; you can see some of my work on my web: www.durotomik.sk or follow me: Instagram/durotmk.



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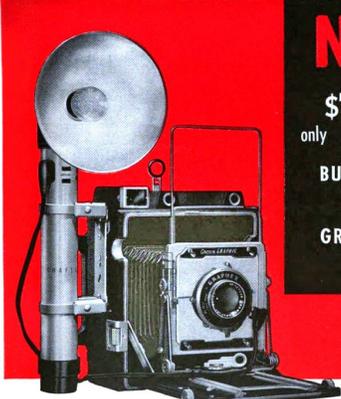
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Masthead Picture

VICTOR HASSELBLAD AT AGE 20/21 IN LAPPLAND, SWEDEN USING A GRAFLEX CAMERA

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Portrait of Arnold Crane by John Minnicks. "I worked on a Graflex model C body, so it could fill a 4x5 image, close up...a bit of cropping at infinity."

John is presently restoring Jeff Yost's Press Graflex, including a new focal plane shutter. John can be reached at 203-247-3833, or johnminnicks@gmail.com.



In issue 2 of 2018, the image at left was shown in an article by John Fleming of John Beattie and his camera, published in Back Focus.

Although it looks much like a Graflex, Chris Cooper provided us with the answer: "The large mystery reflex camera is a Kershaw half-plate. A heavy camera. Made over many years and in many sizes and also in stereo and tropical form. [Rather expensive today!]"

The plate on top right is the distinguishing feature. It shows fractions of a second and is set from the other side by a knurled knob driving a rod.

When the mirror is set, or raised during exposure, it takes a backwards course in a curved track on both sides of the mirror. This means that the mirror would not hit the rear of any protruding lens, such as those with a short back focus. The mirror was also "damped" to obviate the jolt of the rising mirror. Other manufacturers used a two-part hinged mirror to circumvent this problem.

Kershaw eventually fell into the hands of Rank [of cinema fame], and died of what was known as 'Rank Neglect' "

See www.earlyphotography.co.uk for this and other UK cameras.