The Photographic Historical Society Fall 2021

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Nothing Is Ever Lost...



Steampunk Treasure



Louis Pesha Real Photo Postcards



Soda Shop Throwback



Tessina TLR Spy Camera



Classic Pre-war Contax Family Line-Up

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2021 MIPHS PHOTOGRAPHICA SHOW & SALE

Sunday, October 17 -- 10am-3pm -- Royal Oak Elk's Hall

2401 E. Fourth Street, Royal Oak, Michigan (Southbound I-75 service drive, south of 11 Mile Rd. *Caution: there is road construction in the immediate area of 11 Mile and I-75.*

At the Photographica you can buy photographs, postcards, ephemera, cameras, and photo equipment.

Dealer tables (8ft. x 30") with tablecloth available. **Cost per table:** Before October 10: Members \$55, Non-members \$65 From October 11 - 15: Members \$75, Non-members \$85 Last minute: Members \$100, Non-members \$110

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The Michigan Photographic Historical Society -- (MiPHS) is dedicated to advancing an understanding and appreciation of the history of photography through membership meetings, special events, publications, and shared endeavors with other organizations and the general public. The MiPHS is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation chartered in the State of Michigan. ISSN 1082-6874

The **MiPHS** welcomes new members. Dues are \$35 per year (January 1 to December 31) and \$20 for students with a valid ID. The **MiPHS** has a PayPal link for paying dues at our website "<u>MiPHS.org</u>." The **MiPHS** is on Facebook at "MiPHS Public Group." **MiPHS** mailing address: 19 Chestnut Dr., Chelsea MI 48118-9416.

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Contributions from **MiPHS** members and non-members are welcomed. To submit an article, review, occasional photo ad (free to **MiPHS** members annually), an informational item for publication, or questions about submissions formats, contact **Karen Fehl**, Editor, at: michiganphotohistory@gmail.com. **Submission Deadlines** November 1: Winter Issue February 1: Spring Issue May 1: Summer Issue August 1: Fall Issue

Authors and advertisers are responsible for the accuracy of their contributions to **The Photogram**. The views of the authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society.

Message from the President

We are rounding the bend and approaching the final months of a year of recovery. When you read this some of us will have ventured out to shows, sales, and auctions. Unless you have stayed in the "hunt" via online sales over the past year, it is a welcome return to vigorous collecting and trading.

The Michigan Photographic Historical Society has recovered with newly revised By-Laws, Board members who are committed to making contributions and improvements, and a smaller (temporary, we hope) roll of members willing to lend their support to our Society. We have retained seventy-three members and will work to double that number in 2022. This will be accomplished through regular publication of *The Photogram* with articles of interest by and for members, the return of our Photographica show and sale (October 17, 2021), and the celebration of fifty years as a Society of "photo friends." We hope to add a field trip or two and are planning an annual meeting next spring featuring talks from two members—one dealing with photographs and one on equipment/technology.



We just need to keep our fingers crossed that we have gone far enough around the bend of the river to where the snags of Covid-19 no longer threaten to overturn our craft.

Bill Christen



Around the Bend. An albumen image of the Connecticut River near Dartmouth College at Hanover, New Hampshire (1870). [Christen Collection]

Celebrating Fifty Years In 2022 By Bill Christen

The Michigan Photographic Historical Society will soon be celebrating its 50 year existence starting in 2022. That period spans just a little over of a quarter of the history of photography. Our Society's membership has witnessed many changes in image capturing processes and photographic technology while preserving the history of the other three-quarters of the period since 1839.

Back issues and articles from past issues of *The Photogram* will be re-visited over the next year starting a little early with this issue. The very first issue of *The Photogram* is reprinted on the following pages. This, we hope, will inspire you to share your memories of just a few years ago or 50 years ago. You are invited to share memories of past experiences and fellowship with fellow members.

The Board will be working on a "birthday" present for MiPHS members. By the end of 2022 the Board will create a members-only web location where members can access every issue of *The Photogram* published since 1972.



zation would be composed of individual memberships by collectors all over the country, and (b) local clubs would continue to exist, and to follow their own local or special-interest policies, within the national organization. As a way of getting the national organization started, each of the existing organizations selected a delegate to meet in conference at Columbus. Don Blake (Editor of the <u>Graphic Antiquarian</u>) acted as chairman of the committee which announced the decision to form the national organization. The committee agreed that Don would have the power to call a further conference of delegates from the recognized local organizations to draft the constitution of the national organization.

The participation in the national organization will be a topic for discussion at our meeting on June 24. The national organization is just taking shape, and we have a real opportunity to contribute to its structure and to express our views on what form it will take.

Those at Columbus, selected Nate Skipper to participate in the discussions as national delegate pro tem for our group.

Purpose of Meeting

We hope that you will be able to join us on June 24, but if you can't we would appreciate hearing from you by telephone or by letter as to your views on forming the Detroit society, the structure and participation in the national organization, or any other matter concerning photographic collecting. For those of you who do join us, please feel that nothing is in final form at this stage but that we are meeting to put the Detroit society on a viable basis and to formulate policy for governing the local group and its participation in the national organization.

We hope to see you on Saturday, June 24. (R.S.V.P.; a postcard is enclosed.)

Nathan R. Skipper,

National Delegate pro tem

Richard Wolfe

President pro tem

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Nothing Is Ever Lost, It Is Just Hard To Find By Bill Christen

"Nothing is ever lost, it is just hard to find" is a phrase that my grandchildren have heard me repeat often. So too did the children in the classrooms where I substitute taught for ten years. It was usually followed up with my questions to them: "Where did you see it last"? and "When did you first notice it was missing?"

As a photo-historian and genealogist I have often made that statement and asked those questions while hoping to find that one piece of provenance or primary source data to solve a mystery. Here is an example.

Ever since moving to Chelsea, Michigan six years ago I became fascinated with the interurban line that passed through the village from 1901 to 1929. The interurban was the "light rail" of its day and provided affordable transportation for those living between large cities who did not yet own an automobile or still relied on horse-drawn conveniences. In tracing the right of way and the equipment passing through the Village (now City) of Chelsea in Washtenaw County, Michigan, I tried to locate photographic evidence to bring the story to life. Realizing that much was "lost" to time, I kept repeating the phrase and dug through archives and newspapers.

Chelsea's population numbered about 1,800 in 1918 when the Detroit United Railway (D.U.R.) line ran through the village. One could board a D.U.R. car about every half hour from sunup to midnight and travel west to Kalamazoo where connections could be made to Chicago, or east to Detroit. At various stops connections to Lansing or Flint were available. The interurban lines gave rural and small town inhabitants a way to connect to the railroad lines or make short trips to place where the railroads did not stop.



The photograph shows the Spirnagle Sisters at an Interurban Stop in Chelsea. Mary Spirnagle (Burg) and her sister, Adeline Spirnagle, at the D.U.R. tracks at Garfield Street in the early 1900s. On that day they were on their way to Hillsdale and Coldwater to visit relatives. [Rob Berg Collection.] The everyday noise of interurban travel—the hard ring of steel wheels on steel rails, the rattle of wooden framed windows coming from the passenger car, the clanging of the bell signaling a stop, and the occasional electrical snaps and pops coming from the trolley pole as it brushed the overhead wire providing power to the car's electric motors—was fascinating to me. After becoming familiar with the sensory aspects of these vehicles including my remembrance of riding a street car in Toledo, Ohio around age five in the early 1950s, riding trolleys in New Orleans a few years ago, and visiting the Lost Railway Museum in Grass Lake, Michigan, I was soon searching for the unusual.^{1.}

That was to be found in accounts of wrecks and mishaps. One in particular incident occurred in July 1918. One mile west of Chelsea along Cavanaugh Lake Road the D.U.R line veered away from the Michigan Central Railroad Line, which it had followed from at least Jackson, Michigan. The interurban line crossed through the village at the southern edge of the town near a marshy area along Main Street (today (M-52). It continued on for about a mile and eventually paralleled Jackson Road on its path toward Ann Arbor. There are two bends in the D.U.R right of way at that point that ran around the edge a wooded area of Catalpa trees before the tracks passed by the Methodist Old Folks home and entered the village limits. It was at the curve that a wreck occurred about 7:45 pm of a rather hot evening on July 21,1918. An eastbound D.U.R passenger car with 60 people on board collided with a westbound freight. The passenger car was occupied by 65 people and the motorman and conductor. At least nine or ten passengers were standing in the aisles. The freight car had a crew of three. Both cars were traveling between 45 and 50 miles an hour.



A freight car and a passenger car identical to these cars were involved in a head on collision one mile west of Chelsea on the evening July 20, 1918. [Arcadia Publishing.]

The motormen and conductors of both cars had no idea that they were on the same track until each car approached the sweeping bends concealed by the Catalpa woods. The electric motors of both cars were shut off and brake wheels were frantically turned, but the disaster could not be avoided. The cars had slowed considerably and the crews jumped off seconds before the impact. The passenger car was filled with 32 U.S. Army soldiers coming home from Camp Custer near Battle Creek on short furloughs as well as citizens returning to Ann Arbor and Detroit and points in between. The passengers had but a minute or two less than the crews to grasp their peril and had no way to escape.





Photographs of a similar interurban wreck that occurred at Michigan Center, Michigan in July 1914. The photos show how the two cars "telescoped" into each other. [Wystan posted on Flicker.]

The passenger car was of an older wood type construction while the freight care was a newer steel framed car. The laws of physic ordained that the heavy metal car would telescope into most of the length of the wooden car. The damage was severe and the loss of life and injures reflected that. Fifteen people were killed and almost every one was injured—45 seriously. Only a half dozen or so escaped with just a few bruises and cuts. There was no fire or explosion as the electric motors has been shut down.

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Mrs. Conrad Hafner was sitting on the porch of her farm house directly across Cavanaugh Lake Road and saw the whole thing. Her husband, Conrad, was working on a haystack near the house and saw the crash. Both hurried to the scene and assisted the motormen, conductors, and uninjured soldiers and civilians getting the injured out of the car.

Soon the road that paralleled the D.U.R. and Michigan Central Railroad tracks with filled with upwards of 250 automobiles and wagons carrying hundreds of people who came within minutes to assist the injured and survivors. The citizens of Chelsea were vigorously praised for their tremendous response to the tragedy in newspaper reports from across Michigan.

Within 48 hours all the injured had been moved to hospitals in Ann Arbor or Jackson. The dead had been taken to two temporary morgues in town, then the bodies removed to Ann Arbor. The D.U.R. had sent a crew in to burn what was left of the wooden passenger cars, and remove the remaining metal wreckage and the freight car. A week later when the Interstate Commerce Commission (I.C.C.) arrived to conduct its investigation of the accident there was little visual evidence that any accident had occurred.

The balance of blame was placed on the shoulders of the freight car crew, some on the passenger car crew and the dispatcher, as unlike the railroad, there were no lights or other signals along the tracks. The traffic was controlled by a dispatcher in Ypsilanti and phone calls to him by the crews of the cars. The freight car crew was charged with manslaughter, a trial was held, and the D.U.R. lawyers managed to persuade the judge to render a "not guilty" verdict. The D.U.R. paid claims to the soldiers who survived.

Today one can stop in front of the Hafner property at Cavanaugh Lake and Conway Roads, and looking across the Amtrak right of way, one may spot a few catalpa trees and see electrical poles where the interurban tracks were located. Any other visual reminders are missing. Now, as an historian, I had hoped to find some photographic evidence of the wreck. There are numerous newspaper accounts including one Sunday *Detroit Free Press* front page published the day after, featuring photographs of injured and the deceased (when they were alive). The I.C.C. took photographs of the area, but none were attached to the printed copies of its final report.

In 1918 cameras such as the ones manufactured by Kodak for general use were readily available. If there were 200 or more automobiles in a town of 1,800, one might expect a few cameras. Chelsea did not have a photographer in town at the time, even though there had been several living there off and on during the last quarter of the 1880s. James McManus did open a studio in 1920. At a point during my research I wondered if any photograph was just lost, but now was simply "hard to find."

That question was answered by Louis William Doll, who as a young boy growing up in Chelsea, became fascinated and obsessed with the village's interurban history, just as I had become. I found his papers in the archives of the Chelsea Area Historical Society. Doll lived on Van Buren almost directly across from the interurban station. He was born in 1911 and by 1918 was quite impressed with the "interurban trolley car" as he termed it.



Chelsea interurban station from where the freight car departed. This was the second interurban station at this location on Van Buren Street in Chelsea, MI. Doll lived on Van Buren Street, to the left of the station in this photograph. [Chelsea Area Historical Society.]

Doll wrote . . .

"... to me, a child, the pathway to the wide, wide world was not the road that went past our house in the country. It was not the horse and buggy or the automobile. It was not the locomotive with its train of cars streaming along behind. It was the interurban trolley car. Like the passenger train and the horse and buggy, it is a form of transportation that has nearly disappeared during my lifetime. But the interurban was different . . . it seemed safe (it wasn't). It jogged along sometimes on private rightof-way, but usually beside a main road. It seemed comfortable, friendly, and intimate. It ran by electricity furnished from a wire overhead, so there was no belching of steam, no snorting and chugging, no grinding brakes, no feeling of tremendous power, which once unleashed by the throttle, was hard to stop."

In July 1918 seven-year-old Doll came jumping downstairs "two steps at a time one summer morning" and discovered that "we had unexpected guests, a young woman and a baby in a stroller." He stopped to hear his mother and the woman agreeing on a price for bed and breakfast. After the guest has left, "Mother told me there had been a terrible head-on collision on the electric interurban line running through Chelsea and that many had been killed." Doll recalled that his mother had a "look of horror" on her face as she said this.²

Doll would long remember his parents discussing the wreck that he never witnessed. Some years later he put an advertisement in the *Chelsea Standard* seeking any photographs related to the tragedy. One friend of his, who was five years old at the time of the wreck, wrote that his parents took him out to the site, thought it was "no place for a child" and took him home with only a brief look at the site from the road.

A second response was from Mrs. Alice Atkinson who lived on West Middle Street a half mile or so from the wreck. Her family also thought her to be too young for such a sight, but she did remember a "procession of dead and injured going past her house headed by a horse-drawn hearse." This was followed with automobiles filled with the injured. Her older sister was allowed to go, but when her sister saw the gruesome procession she went into hysterics.

A third response came from Mrs. Adelma Fisk Weber, who lived with her parents on a farm south of Chelsea. On the day of the wreck they had driven their Model-T into town to do their regular Saturday evening shopping. They needed to get some medicine from Dr. Palmer. As they approached the doctor standing on the sidewalk in front of his second floor office trying to keep cool, a man came running up and excitedly told the doctor that he was needed at the site of the wreck. The doctor grabbed his medical bag and started off and the Fisks followed. Adelma, who was eighteen, remembered that the crowd was all around the railroad and interurban tracks and wreckage. She remembered seeing a woman on the ground with a large, wood splinter driven into her abdomen, and a dead soldier with a crushed face.

It was too much for the entire family, and with plenty of others already helping they went back to town, did their shopping, and went home. They returned the next day and Adelma took one single picture of a few people gathered at the site. She sent the photograph or a copy to Doll. What was lost was now found.



The "lost" Adelma Fisk Weber Photograph, 21 July 1918. [Chelsea Area Historical Society.]

The photograph shows none of the wreckage or gruesome scenes of the dead and injured from the day before. It was taken sometime on the Sunday after the D.U.R. had cleaned the scene and swept away the debris. It is not a terribly good photograph and there are no details if it was a snapshot or a real photo postcard.

Endnotes

¹ The Lost Railway Museum is located at 142 W Michigan Ave, Grass Lake, MI 49240; (517) 522-9500; and https://www.lostrailwaymuseum.org. Among the museum's display is a D.U.R. passenger car similar to the one involved in the 1918 wreck at Chelsea.

²Louis William Doll papers, Chelsea Area Historical Museum. The woman who came to the door seeking a room was Maud Decker, the wife of Private Claude Decker who died in the wreck. She had come to Chelsea from Detroit to identify her husband's body and accompany it back to Detroit.

The 1902 Premo Supreme: Was this the ultimate American self-casing plate camera? By Rob Niederman

As a collector specializing in early camera equipment—the older the better—the inventiveness, variety of designs, and style changes taking advantage of evolving photographic technology fascinates me. My preference are early American cameras made of finished wood with brass metalwork as well as unique designs showing off builders' creativity and ingenuity.

The 1902 Premo Supreme profiled here, showing more than average wear and some minor damage from hard use, fits my collecting themes which also include rarity, being completely original (unrestored), and visually distinctive. Having been marketed for seven years, you would expect numerous cameras were sold and many eventually found by collectors; but overall, there are very few and this might be the only surviving first-year model with brass hardware. Admittedly there could be others, nonetheless I haven't seen or heard of another brass version over decades of collecting.



I believe that rarely seen cameras, such as this Premo Supreme, have unique stories to uncover, document, and share. Why was the equipment made? Who were the target users? What was the value proposition? Are there interesting model variations? And so forth. Additionally, for example, this camera and others support my opinion that—from photography's beginning—many builders strove to create designs balancing form, function, and appearance.

As background, the earliest apparatus were made of wood with minimal metal hardware. Closely following and adapting to major technology shifts daguerreotype, wet-plate, dry-plate, tintype, and filmbuilders looked for opportunities to reduce bulk and weight by substituting metal hardware for wood while adding structural strength and new features. Brass was preferred through the early part of the twentieth century. Polished and lacquered brass hardware also complements the look of finished redwoods such as mahogany and cherry. Additionally, a few designers crafted wood and metalwork to the point of producing attractive equipment exhibiting the same care and detail as fine furniture. A body pattern I enjoy collecting are American selfcasing cameras made from 1890 to the early 1900s. Outwardly looking like plain leather covered boxes, it was only after opening the cases did makers' construction expertise of combining polished wood, gleaming metal hardware, and red leather bellows get put on full display.

In 1890, George Eastman introduced the first commercially successful self-casing camera: The No.4 Folding Kodak. It established a blueprint by which other makers copied the style for their own folding designs targeting beginners, advanced-amateurs, and even professionals.

The majority of American self-casing cameras have bodies covered in black leather accompanied by interiors of polished wood and lacquered brass. By 1904, most makers changed the metal hardware to bright nickel-plated brass. At the same time, fragile red leather bellows were redesigned for a thicker, more durable black leather. Over time, these increasingly popular cameras became somewhat "utilitarian" in construction and appearance: They started looking the same.

At the peak of popularity, if not for their makers' labels, the majority of self-casing cameras were indistinguishable. When reviewing catalogues, I often have to reread listings and compare illustrations several times to fully understand the differences. Not surprisingly, some companies differentiated their products by offering deluxe models with advanced features and better material quality. And in my opinion, a few of these cameras practically became works of functional art; but that's another story!

While the Rochester Optical Company (ROC), one of the dominant builders at the time, was already selling a large variety of red-bellows self-casing cameras, most, if not all, were strikingly similar in appearance and pricing to competitors' apparatus and vice versa. As a departure from this "sameness," the Premo Supreme appears to be a differentiation tactic to reach a highend niche market of amateurs and professionals. The first catalogue listing for the 1902 camera sets a big expectation: "In no way is the marvelous inventive and constructive genius of the age more strongly displayed than the production of the Premo Supreme. Every conceivable requirement and improvement that experience, science, and practical testing have shown of value in a camera are combined in this instrument with the greatest mechanical precision and ingenuity. It is the most advanced type of camera that the world has ever seen. It marks the utmost possibility of excellence and completeness. Amateur and expert alike recognize in this wonderful instrument the very best of best in camera construction." 1

Offered from 1902 to 1908, and available in three formats from 4x5 to 6½x8½ inches, the Premo Supreme was positioned as an upscale version of the company's full-featured Pony Premo No.7. In contrast to the Pony Premo, it was promoted as having superior construction, material quality, and features. Adding to the camera's visual uniqueness, nearly all hardware is decorated extensively with a surface-etched design called "perlage." French for pearl pattern, perlage (or perlée) is a hand-applied pattern of small circles using specialized machinery. It is best known as an ornamental style found in high quality watch movements, but also seen on early car dashboards and the nose of Charles Lindberg's *Spirit of St. Louis* aircraft.



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ROC's 1902 catalogue refers to the decorated hardware as *"rococo lacquered"*² brass. From 1903 on, *"Damaskined nickel"*³ was used; which is probably marketing jargon for perlage patterning applied to nickel-plated brass. The catalogues do not mention if perlage work was performed inhouse or by a third party. Regardless, it is labor intensive and possibly a reason why the later nickel hardware models have fewer decorated surfaces.

Two shutters were standard on the Premo Supreme; a rarely seen feature. Mounted to the removable lens board is Bausch & Lomb's "Golden" Volute diaphragm brass cased shutter which has an etched (engineturned) wavy pattern on its face.



From 1903 to 1908, aluminum cased Volute shutters, also featuring engine-turned faces, were possibly spec'd to match the brighter Damaskined nickel hardware.

The second shutter is a removable Thornton Pickard⁴ (TP) roller-blind model positioned between the body and its ground glass frame. According to ROC's 1902 catalogue, the TP shutter is for photographing fast moving subjects that cannot be captured clearly with the Volute's top speed of 1/150th of a second:

"For those desirous of obtaining instantaneous photographs of subjects having an extremely rapid movement, such as flying birds, animals, and men leaping, jumping, automobile races, etc., this is the shutter preeminent. It gives a shorter exposure and passes a larger percentage of light than any other form." ⁵



Several TP roller-blind shutters are in my collection and, for some reason, the Premo Supreme's version baffles me. I have not cracked its mechanical mysteries.

Genuine seal leather covers the wood body and, in contrast to the majority of cameras with red-leather bellows, black leather bellows was the only option. This was probably because thin red-leather often wore out. ROC catalogues describe the bellows as *"black Persian levant leather."*⁶

Other features include a triple extension bed and bellows for long focus lenses, geared focusing and body movements, reversible back, short accessory bed rail for using wide-angle lenses, large lens board for different lenses, and precision Bausch & Lomb Iconoscope viewer.



Price for this level of quality and workmanship was not cheap. In 1902, the 4x5 inch camera listed for \$146.00 when outfitted with the brass Volute shutter and Goerz Double-Anastigmat Series III lens option. Taking inflation into consideration, this equates to \$4,426 when adjusted for 2020! (Today, \$4,400 could buy a professional DSLR.) In comparison, the similarly featured but less elaborate 1902 Pony Premo No.7 was only \$80.50. Interestingly, the 1903 price for a Premo Supreme model with nickel-plated hardware drops slightly to \$140.00; but still rather expensive.

In total, the Premo Supreme's complex, steampunk appearance could fit well into an alternative reality scifi story. While fancy hardware embellishments don't contribute to making better pictures, it is meant to showcase makers' craftsmanship and artistry. Perhaps cameras with all of these characteristics made their owners feel special or even privileged.

Although richly featured and elaboratively constructed, very high prices for Premo Supreme cameras might be a reason they are rarely found today. Maybe professionals did not see value in the excessive decorations and exotic materials. Regardless, its steampunk look attracts me and it definitely stands out when displayed next to my other self-casing cameras.

In regards to this article's title, was the 1902 Premo Supreme the ultimate American self-casing plate camera? It's a question I often ponder when comparing it to some of my other self-casing cameras. But from ROC's viewpoint, it definitely was. Fun Fact: The famous American frontier photographer Edward Curtis, at one point, used a specialized ROC self-casing camera while making his well-known photographs of North American Indians.

Endnotes

² Rochester Optical Company. Premo Cameras. 1902. New York. 28. "Rococo lacquered brass" is only specified in 1902 and not mentioned in the 1903 to 1908 catalogues. See endnote #3.

³Rochester Optical Company. Premo Cameras. 1903. New York. 15. "Damaskined nickel" or "damascened hardware" are specified as the body hardware from 1903 onward. According to the 1905 catalogue (page 28): "The metal is the highest quality brass, polished then heavily electro-plated, after which it is damascened, producing a very rich appearing and permanent finish." The 1904 and 1906 catalogues do not name the type of hardware but it is assumed to be "damascened" because the term is used again in 1907 and 1908.

⁴ Thornton-Pickard roller blind shutters were replaced in 1904 by ROC's own "Premo Focal Plane Shutter."

⁵Rochester Optical Company. Premo Cameras. 1902. New York. 74.

⁶"Black Persian levant leather" is specified in the 1902 and 1903 catalogues. Other bellows materials described in the 1904 to 1908 catalogues include "seal leather bellows" and "black Morocco leather."



¹ Rochester Optical Company. Premo Cameras. 1902. New York. 26.

Follow-up: What Are They Doing With Flint By Doug Aikenhead

In the Spring 2021 issue of *The Photogram*, Leonard Walle wrote about a Louis Pesha real photo postcard¹ captioned *What Are They Doing With Flint* (figure 1). This postcard is one of Leonard's favorites, and one of mine as well. It is a fine example of how the photographer handled complex, active urban environments.



Figure 1: Louis Pesha, *What Are They Doing With Flint,* ca. 1908. Real photo postcard, postmarked Aug 24, 1910 at Lexington, Mich.

The nine-story building under construction in this postcard is the Smith Office Building, formally known as the Flint P. Smith Building. As far as I can determine, there is no connection between the Flint in Mr. Smith's name and the name of the city of Flint. With its all-steel superstructure, the Smith Building was Flint's first skyscraper, and it marked the city's entry into the modern era of architecture. Construction of the building was completed in 1909. Later renamed as the Sill Building, it was demolished in 1984².

Louis Pesha (1868-1912) took particular interest in downtown Flint and the growth of automobile manufacturing in that city. He made at least 165 real photo postcard views of Flint, partly because of the tens of thousands of workers who migrated there for jobs in the expanding automobile industry and needed postcards to communicate with family and friends back home. Several of those views show the Smith Office Building after it was completed and occupied, including figures 2, 3, and 4. When I mentioned Pesha's return visits to the Smith Building to Leonard, he suggested that I write this follow-up to his article.



Figure 2: Louis Pesha, *Smith Office Building, Flint, Mich.,* ca. 1910. Unposted real photo postcard.



Figure 3: Louis Pesha, *Smith Building, Flint, Mich.* ca. 1910. Unposted real photo postcard.



Figure 4: Louis Pesha, *Smith Building and Bryant Hotel, Flint, Mich.,* ca. 1910. Unposted real photo postcard.

Pesha began his photographic career operating portrait studios in small towns in Lambton County, Ontario, about 30 miles east of St. Clair, Michigan in early 1899³. With his wife Lena and their infant daughter, Pesha relocated to Marine City, Michigan in 1901, where he continued his portrait work⁴. In 1905 he began his transition to postcard photography, making views of nearby towns and vessels that sailed up and down the St. Clair River behind his Water Street studio. By 1909 he had broadened his real photo postcard practice to include Detroit, Flint, and other large cities. Pesha was an uncommonly skillful postcard photographer, often filling his views with content and making effective use of sunlight and shadow, foreground and background space, and careful exposure and printing so that his real photo postcards were especially attractive to purchasers.

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Most of his postcards incorporated clear, neatly lettered captions and image numbers at the lower edge. After his death in a fluke automobile accident on October 1, 1912, his widow Lena continued operating the business as the Pesha Art Company. Louis Pesha and the Pesha Art Company were prolific, producing over 6,000 views of Michigan cities and towns, approximately 1,500 postcards of Great Lakes vessels, and at least another 2,000 views in southwest Ontario, northern Ohio, Niagara Falls, and Buffalo, New York, until the company closed in 1923⁵.

On another occasion, Pesha reused his *What Are They Doing With Flint* caption on a postcard showing new houses being built to accommodate auto industry employees and their families (figure 5). Flint photographer Guy Gaines (1883-1971), represented by two photographs in Leonard Walle's article, made at least one view of temporary housing for Flint workers (figure 6, "*Be It Ever So Humble There's No Place Like Home*").



Figure 5: Louis Pesha, *What Are They Doing With Flint,* ca. 1909. Real photo postcard, postmarked Sep 16, 1915 at Flint.



Figure 6: Guy A. Gaines, *"Be It Ever So Humble There's No Place Like Home" in Flint, Mich.,* ca. 1910. Real photo postcard, postmarked Jun 28, 1911 at Flint.

Louis Pesha and Guy Gaines were two among a legion of real photo postcard photographers, both professional and amateur, who produced a vast photographic record of life in the United States in the first two decades of the 20th century. Comparable social documentation was created by postcard photographers in other countries and cultures around the world. That major museums are actively building postcard collections today speaks to the profound value of this visual record.

All photographs collection of author.

Endnotes

¹ Real photo postcards are actual black and white photographs printed onto postcard-weight photographic paper that generally has a preprinted "Post Card" back. Pesha made his photographs using a view camera that produced 5" x 7" glass plate negatives, which he contact printed onto standard-size $(3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $5\frac{1}{2}$ ") manufactured postcard paper. Real photo postcards were especially popular from 1907 through the World War I years, the prime era of postcard production, and continue to be produced on a far more limited basis using contemporary photographic materials and processes.

² https://emporis.com/buildings/227665/smith-building-flint-mi-usa

³ Tinder, David V. Directory of Early Michigan Photographers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan. 2013: online edition. https://clements.umich. edu/files/tinder_directory.pdf, Pesha, Louis James.

⁴ Tinder

⁵ Dates referring to Pesha's work, and estimates of his and the Pesha Art Company's output, are based on continuing research by the author and Donald R. Wilson.

Kingsley, Iowa Soda Shop

From the Motzenbecker Collection



This RPPC is of a soda shop in Kingsley, lowa, seemingly just prior to opening up for the day. (No sticky tables yet!). Note the stuffed hawk on the back counter. The town of Kingsley is still there today. To town's mascot is a black squirrel, so why a hawk?



IOWA

Left: Close-up of the right side of the image (top), also scanned. Note the Ansco film and camera counter. The poster says: *"The Picture Way of Making Memories Last Forever."*

The Tessina, a Miniature 35mm TLR By Dietmar Haenchen

In the Spring 2021 issue of *The Photogram* I wrote about the Contaflex TLR (Twin Lens Reflex) camera. Here I am writing about another engineering marvel, the Tessina, distributed by Concava S. A. in Lugano, Switzerland. This camera is smaller than a regular pack of cigarettes, yet it is a fully functioning TLR using 35mm film. In fact, it is the smallest camera using standard 35mm film ever built. Image 1 shows the Contaflex TLR and the Tessina for size comparison.



Image 1.

I had read about this camera in the early 1960s and saw pictures of it. While the specifications and the small size of the camera looked interesting, it is much more impressive when one holds it in one's hand. This is because one cannot imagine that such a small device contains so much technology. I had a chance to see and examine one in the mid 1960s, when a colleague of mine had purchased one. I was totally impressed with its function and workmanship.

The camera was patented by Austrian chemical engineer Dr. Rudolph Steineck in Lugano, Switzerland, and was manufactured by Siegrist in Grenchen Switzerland. Steineck patented it as "Twin-Lens Mirror-Reflex Camera" in 1954. It was introduced in 1957 and was distributed by Concava SA. It remained in production until 1996, when production cost made it noncompetitive.

The cameras were hand assembled from almost 400 parts and contain ruby bearings for low friction, like Swiss watches. They were designed to be durable for 100,000 pictures. I believe that they match Leica quality. Three models where produced:

- Tessina Automatic 35mm Tessina 35
- Tessina L

These were available in different colors and finishes. The Tessina 35 and L can be focused to nine inches and the Tessina automatic 35 to 12 inches. The L comes with an extremely compact exposure meter. Otherwise the cameras are very similar. Different finishes were available, including anodized aluminum, black, gold and red, with the chrome colored anodized aluminum being by far the most common. Incredibly this little marvel has a built-in spring motor drive, good for 5 to 8 consecutive images.

The Tessina measures $68 \times 55 \times 25$ mm (29mm with viewfinder in stored position) [2.7 x 2.15 x 1 inch]. It weighs about 190 grams (6.6 ounces). Image 2 shows the Tessina 35 with its standard folding view finder and film cassettes. How was this small size and low weight possible in a camera which uses standard 35mm perforated film?



Image 2.

The Tessina produces 14x21mm negatives (or slides). This is substantially smaller than full frame 35mm (24x36mm), but not much smaller than on half frame cameras (18x24). One significant space saving comes from the use of special cassettes, which are much thinner than standard 35mm cassettes (Image 2).

Two mirrors account for most of the space savings in this camera design. The finder lens image is reflected upward by a 45-degree mirror to a ground glass viewing screen. The taking lens image is reflected downward to the film at the bottom of the camera (Image 3).



Image 3.

The camera has two identical 25mm f 2.8 Tessinon lenses. The finder is parallax corrected, even though the finder lens is very close to the taking lens. The taking lens can be stopped down to f 22. Shutter speeds range from half a second to 1/500th second, plus a B setting. The thinner cassettes allowed for 44cm (17") black and white film, good for 24 exposures. Alternatively, thicker color film of 38cm (15") length could be used for 18 exposures.

Originally cassettes preloaded with Adox or Kodak Tri X black and white film were commercially available. Color film could be purchased in cassettes with Ektacolor S or Ektachrome film. This was a long time ago. The alternative is to cut the film to the proper length in the darkroom and insert it into the special cassettes. This is not as difficult as it may sound, because the core has two slots which easily accepts the film and the cassettes are easy to open and close. However, a Tessina daylight self-loader was available, which allowed one to load film from a standard 35mm cassette into the Tessina cassette in daylight (Image 4).

Taking Pictures

Since the Tessina is a TLR, the finder image is on the top of the camera in similar fashion as on a Rolleiflex. This reversed finder image is a lot smaller than on a Rolleiflex, but can be seen with reasonable clarity with the standard folding finder because of the small black barndoors on each side (as long as there is no direct sunlight on the ground glass). However, because of the small screen size, the focusing and evaluation of the composition is often difficult. But this standard finder can also be used as an Albada finder. This finder makes it a lot easier to photograph moving objects than using the reversed image on the ground glass.

The standard finder can be removed by sliding it backwards. An 8x loupe finder or a 6-power prism finder can be used instead. The latter is the best alternative for taking pictures, but its height also doubles the size of the camera (Images 5 and 6). Focusing the 25mm lens is not critical (except for close-ups) as the depth of field at f 8 is three feet to infinity.

Because the internal mirror(s) reverse the image on the film, projection/enlargement must be done with the film emulsion facing the light source, or the result will be a left to right reversed image. It even says in the instructions "to remind your film processor of this every time processing is needed".



Image 5.



Image 6.

continued next page



Image 4.

continued from page 19



Image 7.

Accessories

The following accessories were available:

- Folding view finder with Albada finder (standard equipment)
- · Folding sports finder without optics
- Prism view finder with 6x magnification
- Magnifying view finder with 8x magnification
- Neck chain and tripod adapter (Image 7)
- · Hot shoe adapter
- · Aperture priority coupled exposure meter
- Flashgun
- · Wrist bracket for inconspicuous photography
- Leather carrying case (Image 8)
- · Accessory shoe mounted Swiss watch
- Film loader (Image 4)
- Filters

Significance in the Marketplace

The Tessina is one of the few camera models ever built in Switzerland. Its greatest attraction is the small size, which makes it ideal for inconspicuous photography. Its unusual shape and rarity helped as well, because few people would realize that the user was taking pictures. In addition, one of the most popular ways to hide the camera was to put it into a regular pack of cigarettes (Image 9). The built-in motor drive allowed for taking multiple pictures without removing the camera from the enclosure and provided the advantage for making images in rapid succession.

During the cold war the camera was popular for observations by the East German Stasi (secret police). In 1972 it was also used by the "plumbers" during the Watergate break-in. It also was used by other spy organizations.

The Tessina was advertised as a camera you could always take along easily and be ready to take photos. Why then was it not more successful in the marketplace?



One reason was that it was fairly expensive. At the end of production in the 1990s the price was about 1,000 Euro. More importantly, the camera is very awkward to use. It is not a tool for creating quality images on a regular basis. Also, the image quality is significantly inferior to full frame 35mm cameras. This was the reason why no other film cameras with smaller than full frame negatives were successful in the market. They all eventually failed, while full frame 35mm is still available. Of course, digital photography changed all of this and is now the dominant method with all kinds of different sensor sizes.



Image 9.

However, the camera is an engineering marvel and very interesting for collectors. Because not many were built (one source claims that a maximum of 100 per year were built), used Tessinas usually are quite expensive with prices from \$400 to well over \$1,200, depending on condition, model rarity, color and accessories.

I thank Chuck Fehl for providing very useful additions and comments to my first draft and for providing images 5, 6 and 8.

Remembering Robert Lansdale By Cindy Motzenbecker

How does one start to eulogize a long time, good friend? Robert Lansdale may have preferred being called Bob, but his knowledge of photography, handling stray human behavior, plus lighting, deserves the respect of being called Robert. He also was instrumental in instilling a "world view" as he was Canadian, "training" some ego-centric Americans that think the world ends at their border.

His experience of being able to take group shots of over 100 people at the Daguerreian Society symposiums over many years, in a photographically suited location, is an evolution in understanding of what a photographer needs to do.

Robert Lansdale was an early photographic mentor for me, dating from the late 1980s, going to the Canadian shows. Bob also came when he could to the Michigan Photographic Historical Society Shows as his one son lives in the Detroit suburbs. Bob was also an avid collector of chromotypes. He would also have been a mentor to anyone who could understand the "hardware" and the "software" of photography in the wide world he encompassed. He was the yin and yang of the photographic world. To quote his son, Bob also had an "outright unselfish generosity" in helping other people. That is a rare attribute in this day, let alone any age.

Robert Lansdale was a "good friend" to many people that were "under the radar". There are a lot of people that value historical photography that are taken for granted and Bob never did that. His background was "thrifty" and he still managed to go to the U.S. Daguerreian Society symposiums, even when the exchange rates weren't good for him.

At one of the symposiums that Bob attended with his grandson Christopher, the grandson realized that Bob could be too "enthusiastic" and could run out of cash. He "salted" the grandson, Christopher, with some funds so they could make it home with a meal or two. (I discovered this as I had lent Bob some money also!) Christopher could run the GPS and Bob could drive.



Bob was a regular at the Brimfield, MA flea market, even camping there to save on hotel expenses. His reach extended to anyone who asked, probably somewhat to his disadvantage. He had an inordinate belief in the goodness of humanity. He is one of those people that are easily taken for granted in their self proclaimed duties.

Bob had been a "pillar" in recording the history of international photohistory in all the places he was able to visit in person. (He had a fabulous time in Paris.) He had unabashedly taken on the role of documentarian of anything he was involved in. (Carlos Vertanessian has now "instinctively" stepped up to the plate. Continuity by instinct is important.)

Maybe Bob didn't even realize it that his "mission" in life was to document all these events and he did it out of habit. He also passed along all his massive collection of the Daguerreian Society's history, including the non-digital images from other sources. They are now at the Daguerreian Society Pittsburg offices.

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Zeiss Ikon's Pre-War Contax Family Tree By Chuck Fehl

To compliment Dietmar Haenchen's excellent article on the legendary Zeiss Ikon Contaflex TLR camera of 1936 which appeared in our Summer 2021 edition of *The Photogram*, I offer descriptions and discussions of Zeiss' other 35mm offerings of the classic pre-war period.

Camera miniaturization was in full swing by the 1930s, empowered with the improved quality of 35mm "cine" film leading the way. Although there were others, the Leica camera manufactured by Ernest Leitz of Wetzlar Germany (best known for its microscopes) was the first 35mm camera to make a commercial success of it starting in 1925. Its popularity and growth was exponential and by 1930 Leica was producing well documented large quantities of quality cameras and accessories to suit wealthy travelers, scientists, and professional photographers. Thus, the small E. Leitz firm boldly invented and popularized the 35mm system camera with interchangeable lenses, viewfinders and a wide variety of useful accessories. Without attempting to, it also ushered in the new concept of candid photography which continues to grow in popularity today.

This success did not go unnoticed by Dresden Germany's giant Zeiss Ikon consortium, which made its primary business manufacturing scientific instruments and folding roll film cameras. Zeiss answered the miniaturization call with an equally amazing 35mm system camera – the Contax, which first appeared in 1932.



Contax I with 5cm f/2.8 Tessar lens compared to Leica II with 5cm f/2.5 Hektor. Notice square shape of the Contax and rounded shape of the Leica, which weighed 25% less than the Contax.

Pre-war Contax (I) (1932-36)

Zeiss Ikon's first 35mm camera was a marvelous effort which exceeded the Leica in every measurable performance attribute except compactness and ease of handling. In 1933 it had shutter speeds from ½ to 1/1000th second (the Leica only went from 1/20th second to 1/500th second); the rangefinder ("RF") was far more accurate as its effective triangulation was supported by a four-inch (wide) base as opposed to Leica's two-inch base; and its lenses could be changed in an instant as they were bayonet mount as opposed to Leica's laborious screw mount set up. Also, in loading the film, the Contax back was completely removable, allowing easy access to spindles and sprockets for verified film loading, whereas loading the Leica is still a mystery to many. It had a fiddly bottom entry loading process sometimes resulting in a blank roll of film! Oh, and the best part of the Contax was its superlative RF coupled lens lineup with widely acclaimed formulas like Tessar, Biotar and Sonnar of between 2.8cm and 18cm focal lengths. Leica only went up to a 13.5cm telephoto coupled to its less accurate RF system.

The Contax was a slightly larger and much heavier package than the Leica, weighing in at 1.6 lbs. as opposed to a Leica II weighing less than 1.2 lbs. with comparable lenses. This is one disadvantage of the Contax. Others are the confusing four range shutter speed arrangement (like on the Contaflex TLR) where you needed to remember which escapement range the desired shutter speed you are looking for is located, as well as the microscopic speed engravings on the Contax's concentric shutter dial(s). This control weirdly doubles as the front facing film advance knob. The Leica has one or two speed dials that are legibly marked and easily manipulated. The Contax also focused differently by a finger articulated idler wheel geared to the lens mount as opposed the Leica's direct focus lug/lock on each lens. There are advantages to both, but the Leica is faster to operate-a desirable characteristic for candid photography.



This was the bad boy! The notorious shutter speed, film advance and shutter cocking control on the Contax's front. Great engineering, but bad ergonomics. The slow speeds had an unmistakable wheeze.

Overall, the "Contax I" (as it is now referred to) was a valiant effort to produce a Leica killer that was technically superior in many respects, competitively priced, but relatively heavy and clumsy to use. The Contax I was certainly an impressive looking camera as all were produced in rich black enamel with satin nickel hardware.



Contax I outfit with Helios light meter attachment, 13.5 cm f/4 Sonnar telephoto lens with black Albada (early bright line) sports-finder for 5 and 13.5cm lenses.

Pre-war Contax II and III (1936-40)

Many of the bugs in the Contax I were worked out in its successors—the Contax II and III of 1936. Experts regard this complex camera of over 700 parts (23 assemblies) as one of the greatest camera designs ever envisioned. The II and III were the same camera except the III had an uncoupled light meter built atop the camera body—unique for its day. You may recall that the 1936 Contaflex TLR had a similar device and was credited as being the first camera with a built-in selenium exposure meter.



Contax II outfit with 5cm f/2.0 Sonnar (yellow filter) and 13.5cm f/4 Sonnar (in case) with chrome sports-finder. Notice new self-timer cocking lever on front of body.

The big news here was that the camera was a blaze in chrome as Zeiss was one of the first major manufacturers to break away from black paint as the standard finish. Leica was toying around with chrome bodies a year earlier with its IIIa, but did not switch over entirely until late 1937 (and they charged a premium for it). Other Contax II innovations include its life-size viewfinder combined with a bright prismatic rangefinder spot within one eyepiece, and the camera came standard with a self-timer. The screw mount Leica body never did offer a combined eyepiece, and only a few cameras offered self-timers (much later in its development).

In addition, Zeiss' all metal vertically traveling shutter was tweaked to a top speed of 1/1250th second—still faster than Leica's. A note about the Zeiss focal plane shutter—it was made of brass, and traveled vertically as opposed to Leica's horizontally traveling rubberized cloth shutter. Both worked reliably when new, but my experience has been that the Leica shutter holds up better over time. The Achilles heel of the Zeiss Ikon shutter is that the tapes that actuate the metal blinds

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stretch and/or become uneven and end up jamming the action. Another expert maintains that the shutter lubrication type varied by production batch—causing another reliability variable independent of usage. There are only a few repairmen in the U.S. that have the skill and parts for these repairs. For \$1,000 I will give you the name of mine (Frank Marshman).



Contax II with back removed showing film stage and all metal vertically traveling focal plane shutter. This arrangement was much easier to load than the Leica's annoying bottom-load process.

Contaxes were mass produced, but their production numbers are not certain due to using non-sequential and letter-prefixed serial number ranges (unlike Leica's raw numbers) and the fact that the Dresden, Jena and other Zeiss Ikon plants (and their records) were destroyed or captured by Russians at the end of WWII. By interpolating known serial number ranges (and with many assumptions), my educated guess would be that the pre-war Contax (I, II and III) camera production was probably in the 140,000-150,000 range, whereas Leica had produced almost 350,000 camera bodies by the end of 1939.

Pre-war Super Nettel and Nettax (1934-39)

Back in the Depression, hardly anyone could afford the \$350 to \$500 Contax price tag in 1936 when the price of a Contax (or Leica) with a couple of lenses cost as much as a new Ford DeLux V8! Although not particularly well received, Zeiss offered a couple of less expensive 35mm cameras which still took great pictures but offered a lower entry price and a less complete system sometimes called "The Poor Man's Contax".



Super Nettel fixed lens folder compared to Nettax interchangeable lens cameras.

The Super Nettel of 1934 was one example of the slightly lesser specification 35mm camera compared to the Contax. It was a folding camera with a fixed 5cm lens of varying formulas. The most popular lens was probably the 5cm f/3.5 Zeiss Tessar. The camera was similar in basic design to the Zeiss' popular Super Ikonta 120 roll film folding cameras, as it was black and nickel with black bellows and slightly art deco in styling. It had the Super Ikonta's reliable rotating prism rangefinder and a "Contax" focal plane shutter of 1/5 second to 1/1000th second speeds. Total production is estimated by collectors at 12,500 units.



View of Super Nettel and Nettax backs removed. Notice that except for finish, the camera bodies are identical from the back.

There was also a Super Nettel II produced in 1938 which had the same specs as the Super Nettel I except the body was finished in chrome (as opposed to black paint) and its lens was the premium f/2.8 Tessar. These are what high-end collectors are looking for, as only 2,000 were reportedly made. Either one is scarcer than a Contax I, so I am guessing that its original price advantage was not significant enough to steer many clients away from the Contax line.



Super Nettel showing fixed lens retracted. Nettax showing 5cm normal lens removed. Also available was a 10.5cm telephoto and an adapter to mount a Contax 2.8cm f/8 (uncoupled) wide angle lens.

The Nettax camera was another less expensive alternative to the Contax introduced in 1936. If you put the Nettax next to a Super Nettel, you will notice it is the same camera body except for the lens mount. On the Super Nettels, the fixed lens folds into the camera body, but on the Nettax the lens is interchangeable and bayonets onto the camera body. Lens choices were limited to 5cm f/2.8 or 3.5 Tessars, and a 10.5cm Sonnar f/4. There was also an adapter to use a Contax 2.8cm f/8 lens in scale focus mode with separate viewfinder. Again, these are even scarcer than the Super Nettels and were only produced for a couple of years before the war, with total production of 3,000 camera bodies.

Pre-war Tenax (mark) II (1938-40)

Another Contax family camera was a totally different animal than the above—the fast action Tenax II camera of 1938. It was unique in several ways. It had a large trigger lever on its front that wound the film and cocked the shutter in one short stroke. This made rapid sequence photography possible along with its smaller 24X24 format that allowed 50 photos per film roll.

Also, its shorter focal length lenses gave faster focusing with a short throw focusing lever and coupled rangefinder. This combination of features provided an almost perfect platform for sports and action photography. Essentially, it is a ROBOT II without the clockwork drive -- which I'm sure was its main competition.



Tenax II with 7.5cm telephoto (attached) with 4cm normal lens.

It deployed the same rotating prism rangefinder built into each lens as the Super Nettel and Nettax. Instead of a focal plane shutter however, it used a Compur Rapid 1 to 1/400th second leaf shutter with self-timer. It too had interchangeable lenses, although limited in scope due to typical vignetting with the behind-the-lens Compur shutters. Besides the 4cm f/2 normal lens, there was a 2.7cm wide angle and a 7.5cm telephoto lens available.



Tenax II with both lenses detached showing large lever that advanced the film and cocked the shutter to aid sequence photography. This camera operated on a Compur leaf shutter behind the lens (unlike the other Contax lines with focal plane shutters).

This camera name was brought back after the war as the "Tenax I" (curiously) which was a very much simplified and lesser camera than the Tenax II which it replaced. Because of its much lower price, the Tenax I sold well due to its simple but effective operation. Total production of the Tenax II is estimated at less than 7,000 units which include Xray and military cameras.

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Contax Original Prices and Current Values

Contax I is a unique and highly prized collectable camera today if working and in good cosmetic shape. These cameras sold new in the 1930s for \$260 to \$400—the equivalent of \$2,500 to \$4,200 in today's dollars. Recent Contax survivor values can range from \$400 to \$750 with a 5cm f/2 Sonnar—and add \$300 if with the rare 5cm f/1.5 lens. Leicas and Contaxes were prime war bounty brought back by GIs after WWII. Many wealthy German refugees smuggled them out, as the Reichsmark was worthless.

Contax II priced \$310 to \$450 in 1937 depending on lens choice. The metered Contax III was \$50 more. Although historically significant, current values of these gems are less than the Contax I, as more were produced and frankly, it competes with a Contax II copy—the Nikon S and S2 rangefinder cameras. Early Nikons are a better bet in reliability, and also take many of the excellent Contax lenses. You can find a decent Contax II or III for \$300 with a Tessar f/2.8 or Sonnar f/2 lens. Expect to put another \$150 into a CLA for any Zeiss Ikon roller blind shutter if you plan to use it, and don't expect the Contax III's meter to work or be repairable.

Super Nettel These originally cost \$100 less than a Contax, priced at between \$190 and \$225 in 1936. Current values are all over the board, ranging from \$200 to \$450 depending on condition and lens. I have seen clean Super Nellel II's go for triple or quadruple the price of the earlier black camera. I personally think the black cameras are more elegant than the rarer Supper Nettel II with its chrome finish.

Nettax These are rare as the war effort converted its line for German military production after only one year's production. They were listed in Zeiss catalogs in 1939, but never imported into the U.S. Most survivors are still in Europe, which I gather from eBay listings. You are probably looking at an international order of \$500 (or more) and auxiliary lenses (when seen) are at least twice that. These sold originally for \$300 when the Contax II was \$360. So, the differential was not significant. If you could afford a Nettax, you could afford a Contax.

Tenax II Original list price was \$208 in 1939 before another war-shortened production life. These are also exceedingly rare, especially in the U.S. Again, you are probably buying from Germany, Austria, Poland, etc. as not many of these were made or imported here. eBay lists camera bodies for \$300 to \$500 without lenses. The 4cm f/2 Sonnar normal lens can go for \$400 and the Tele 7.5cm f/4 lens for twice that. The 2.7cm f/4.5 wide angle lens is out of consideration at \$3,000. A post-war Tenax I sells for \$50 to \$75 and is an interesting collectable.



Contax I and Contax II. Zeiss Ikon's first and best attempts to compete against the Leica's dominance in the miniature camera market. By 1961 Zeiss Ikon was on to other battles that would not end well either.

Additional Author Remarks

Although I own all of the above pre-war Contax cameras, I have never shot any with film. I plan to do that shortly as I am waiting on a couple of auxiliary lenses to be cleaned. I also have a late post-war (Stuttgart) Contax IIIa from 1960, with a full complement of lenses and accessories—which I used extensively in my darkroom days. Its 50mm f/1.5 Sonnar is the sharpest, most contrasty normal lens I ever used and makes prints and slides that just pop! Now this is a newer coated lens and the post-war cameras were much simplified (only 450 parts!) resulting in better reliability. My pictures made then with an early uncoated 13.5cm Sonnar lens were just as sharp, but slightly less contrasty. The last Contax was made in 1960 after the compelling advantages of the single lens reflex camera crowded out this venerable design.

The pre-war Contaxes were used by iconic photojournalists like Margaret Bourke-White, Robert Capa and others being partial to Carl Zeiss Jena optics. Speaking of which, values of original Contax lenses continue to climb as they can add a mellow vintage look to modern images when used with available adapters on full frame digital cameras. An example would be a (Contax mount) Carl Zeiss Jena pre-war nickel 3.5cm f/2.8 Biogon (mid-wide angle lens) in decent condition selling regularly at \$500-\$650 on eBay.

Remembering Robert Lansdale *continued from page 21*

Bob's life dates are March 10, 1931-July 13, 2021, which means 90 years of helping others with unending patience. He met his wife of 47 years, Margaret, working at the *Federal News* where he started working as a photographer in 1953. He was a night (!) person and she was a day person. Bob took the photos, processed them at night, then she handled the billing and such. They had two sons and five grandchildren spanning the U.S. and Canadian border. Margaret and Bob produced a "contemporary" book on the Canadian, British and Australian photographers that they knew of, published in 1997: "A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Darkroom. Photographers' True Stories and Anecdotes".

Bob honed his editing skills here as he wanted to prove to his parents that he and his wife could write a book. He edited over 100 Newsletters for the Photographic Historical Society of Canada. He also sent out an amalgamated newsletter from all the photographic historical society groups he was in touch with. His was the first Zoom funeral for me. At least I could "attend", as the Canadian/American border is closed to non-essential people. Bob could roll with "life is what's happening when you're making other plans". He stepped up to the plate to learn the new technology of the computer age and became a genius at it. His patience in explaining how it worked to anyone was a labor of love. His suggestions will resonate in anything that involves graphics. There are so many who will miss him immensely.

If you'd like to read more about Robert Lansdale, including some interesting stories, see below.

https://www.arbormemorial.ca/en/glendale/obituaries/robert-bob-lansdale/68872

https://canadianfilm.com/can_photogs/margaret_lansdale_bio.html

https://phsc.ca/camera/robert-lansdale-1931-2021/

https://phsc.ca/camera/

(https://utarms-online.library.utoronto.ca/islandora/object/utarmsCPC:LAN)

GREAT news photographer stories to be found here: https://www.canadianfilm.com/can_photogs/robert_ lansdale_bio.html

Photographic Collector Corner

Please check websites for updates due to the current pandemic.

Antiquarian Book and Paper Show www.curiousbooks.com/shows.html

Bievres Photo Fair (France) http://www.foirephoto-bievre.com/en/

Camera Connection Show

http://www.cameraconnectiononline.com/ Redford Jaycees, 15585 Beech Daily Rd. Redford, MI 48239, 10 am - 3 pm

Camerama Camera Show

https://ca.eventbu.com/toronto/cameramacamera-show/6143133 Edward Village Hotel, 185 Yorkland Boulevard, Toronto Ontario M2J 4R2, 9:30 am -2:30 pm Admission \$7.00

Chicago Camera Show www.photorama.com

Chicago Postcard and Paper Show www.courthousesquare.net

10:00 to 6:00 & 8:00 to 3:00 Admission \$5.00

Cleveland Camera Collectors Show

https://10times.com/cleveland-camera-show 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

The Daguerreian Society www.daguerreiansociety.org

DC Antique Photo and Postcard Show http://www.antiquephotoshow.com/

Detroit Stereographic Society http://detroit3d.org/

Grand Rapids Postcard & Paper Show

<u>www.postcardarcheology.com</u> 2327 Byron Center Ave SW, Wyoming, MI American Legion Hall 10-4

London (ON) Camera Show

https://londonvintagecamerashow.vpweb.ca/ Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre 656 Elizabeth, London, ON 10 am - 3 pm Michigan & Ohio Postcard & Paper Show www.postcardarcheology.com

MiPHS 2021 Photographica Show & Sale Sunday, October 17. 10am-3pm. Elk's Hall, Royal Oak MI www.MiPHS.org

National Stereoscopic Association 3D-Con www.3d-con.com & www.stereoworld.org

Ohio Camera Collectors www.cameratradeshow.com

Ohio Civil War Show

http://ohiocivilwarshow.com/ Richland County Fairgrounds 750 N. Home Rd, Mansfield OH 44906

Photographic Historical Society of Canada http://phsc.ca/ Trident Banquet Hall 145 Evans Ave. Toronto, ON 10 am- 3 pm

Photographic Historical Society of New England https://phsne.org/index

Rob Niederman's website for Camera Shows www.antiguewoodcameras.com/shows.html

York International Postcard Show

<u>https://www.marylmartin.com/</u> York Fairgrounds, 334 Carlisle Ave, York PA

