The Photogram

Newsletter of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society

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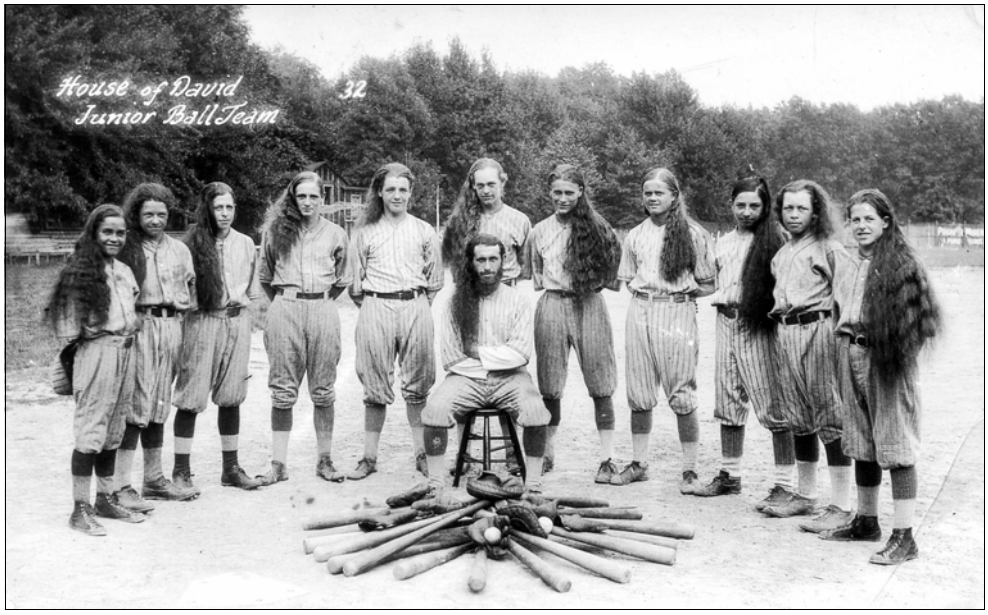

TOP: House of David, Benton Harbor, MI, Junior Ball Team.
BOTTOM: House of David Park, Benton Harbor, MI, Midget Autos.

THE PHOTOGRAM is the official bulletin of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society (MiPHS). It is published five times a year. The contents are copyrighted the year of publication.

THE PHOTOGRAM welcomes contributions to its pages from both MiPHS members and non-members. To submit an article, review, occasional photo ad (MiPHS members only) or informational item for publication, write to:

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Please include your e-mail address with all correspondence. Authors and advertisers are responsible for the accuracy of their contributions to *The Photogram*. The views of the authors do not necessarily reflect those of the Society.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:
June 1 (July-Summer issue)
August 1 (September-October issue)
October 1 (November-December issue)
January 1 (February-March issue)
March 1 (April-May issue)

The MICHIGAN PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY is an organization dedicated to advancing an understanding and appreciation of the history of photography through membership meetings, special events and publications, and through shared endeavors with other organizations and the general public. The MiPHS is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation chartered by the State of Michigan.

The MiPHS welcomes new members. Dues are $25 per year (January 1- December 31), $30 outside the USA, $15 for students with valid ID. For information and application forms, call 248.549.6026, visit us online at *www.miphs.org* or write to:

MiPHS
P.O. Box 2278
Birmingham, MI 48012-2278

THE BUSINESS SIDE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

MATTHEW ISENBURG, president of the Daguerreian Society and internationally recognized collector of daguerreotypes, photographic equipment and ephemera, will be our speaker at the Annual MiPHS Dinner and Lecture on Saturday, **APRIL 5.** His topic is "The Business Side of Photography," a glimpse into the lives and work of early photographers and their suppliers, as told through the photographs, equipment and ephemera of the era. The event will be held at the Birmingham Athletic Club, 4023 West Maple Road (just east of Telegraph Road and adjacent to the west side of Oakland Hills Country Club), Bloomfield Hills, MI. Reception with cash bar 6:00PM. Dinner 7:00PM. Presentation after the dinner. Dinner is $35 per person, and must be paid in advance by March 29. Seating is limited. Reservations are required. A reservation form is included in this issue of *The Photogram*, or visit our website at www.miphs.org. There will also be a SILENT AUCTION to benefit MiPHS, so please donate a photo item and bid generously.

DOUBLE PRESENTATION ON 35MM CAMERAS

On Saturday, **JUNE 7**, MiPHS members Dietmar Haenchen and Mark O'Brien will make presentations on 35mm cameras, milestones in their development and use. Dietmar will speak on, "Significant Development in 35mm Still Cameras," and Mark will encourage us to, "Get Your Film Camera Out of the Closet and Shoot Some Film: The Highs and Lows of 35mm." The double presentation will take place in room 375 (Lecture Hall III), in the Crane Liberal Arts and Science Building at Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Drive, Ann Arbor, MI, at 2:00PM. From US-23, go east on Washtenaw Avenue, turn left onto Hogback Road, at the next stop light turn onto Clark Road and drive east, turn left at the stop light into the entrance to WCC. The Liberal Arts building is on the south part of campus, easily accessible from parking lot A. For further directions to the college, go to www.wccnet.edu and click on Site Map (top of page).

ANNUAL MiPHS PHOTOGRAPHICA SHOW & SALE

Novi Community Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road (½ mile west of Novi Road), Novi, MI, Sunday, **OCTOBER 26**, 10:00AM-4:00PM. MiPHS members who have their proposals accepted for educational image, camera or photo ephemera displays will receive two complimentary tickets to the annual dinner and lecture in 2009. For information about submitting a proposal, call Cindy Motzenbecker at 248.549.6026.

A MIPHS MEMBERS' PORTFOLIO ISSUE 2008

With the success of *The Photogram*'s September-October 2007 issue where MiPHS members shared items from their collections, we have decided to create a second members' portfolio for this coming September-October 2008 issue. This can not be done without your assistance. So help make this a special issue by submitting a photograph and a short description (limit 100 words) of a favorite photographic item from your personal collection. Send a photograph or jpeg along with your description to the *Photogram* Editor, Jan Schimmelman. E-mail: schimmel@oakland.edu. Mailing address: The Department of Art and Art History, 307 Wilson Hall, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309-4401. Please let the Editor know a.s.a.p. if you plan to submit an item. **DEADLINE—JULY 15.**

J. THOS. RHAMSTINE
AND THE FIRST ELECTRIC EXPOSURE METER

By Richard W. Holzman © 2008

This is a story about a long forgotten Detroit businessman who manufactured radio components and automotive accessories before marketing the first electric photographic exposure meter in 1931.

John Thomas Rhamstine (JTR) was born March 24, 1892 in Chattanooga, Tennessee to John S. Rhamstine (1864-1910) and Ella Farquhar (1865-1919). His father was a railroad freight agent and the family seems to have frequently moved around the country. According to the 1900 U.S. Census, they lived in Washington, D.C., later moving to Louisville, Kentucky where JTR attended the Manual Training High School. He was the associate editor of the high school newspaper when an article with his byline appeared in the *Louisville Evening Post*, January 15, 1910 about the school curriculum with the somewhat long title, "Art of Creation and Buzz of Machinery Lend Interest to Course at Manual School. Studies of the Students Are Made Lighter by the Healthful Exercise and Recreation Afforded in the Various Mechanical Departments. Woodworking, Forging, Engine Building, Joinery and Other Sorts of Kindred Trades are Taught in the Course of Four Years." He began:

> The best education a young man can receive is that which will make him most keenly alive to his environment and all that is going on about him. It was not generally believed some years ago that the curriculum of association and analogy regarding practical machinery and the everyday trades could be introduced into the high schools, so that it would prove beneficial to the student. It was believed the inauguration of the technical arts would promote a tendency to disregard discipline and that the susceptibilities of the scholar for the academic courses would be overpowered and mechanics and literature would suffer. On the contrary, when the manual training course was finally established, after being brought in gradually, there was found a harmony through the schools such as had never existed before. The scholar became enthusiastic in his school duties; his problems in mathematics became footstones to his constructions in the shops, his mind, once dulled with the tedious academics, was animated with the varying manual courses, and his whole soul was stirred by more logical and simpler methods of teaching.

He then continued to describe the curriculum and the different courses that had definitely prepared him for the future.

His Draft Registration Card of June 1917 indicates that he was living in Chicago with his wife and aging mother. We next find him in Detroit about 1919 as the sales manager of the Monarch Governor Company with his brother Chester F. Rhamstine (1903-1983) as a repairman. He then established his own business on East Larned between St. Aubin and Chene, and is listed in the 1921-1922 *Detroit City Directory* as "elect supplies," in 1923-1924 as "radio mfrs," and in 1925-26 as "radio apparatus." His earliest advertisement located in a radio related periodical was for a radio rheostat in the July 1922 issue of *QST*, a monthly publication of the American Radio Relay League, which was directed to amateur radio operators or "hams," where "qst" means "calling all stations." A patent search found that the rheostat was covered by U.S. Patent #1,449,249, filed August 8, 1922 and granted March 20, 1923 to JTR. His other patents were #1,490,432 for an electrical switch used to time appliances like a toaster and #1,516,060 for a horn-shaped telephone amplifier. It is not known if these last two items were ever manufactured.


RHAMSTINE*
Rheostat
$1.75
Postage 6c.
The Rhamstine* Rheostat conveys instant and vivid conviction of value.
It is a new Rhamstine* Product and aside from its original design and attractive appearance, it possesses these valuable features:
1. Compactness — the element ring is only 1¼" in diameter.
2. One hole for mounting—the bearing for the shaft also holds the rheostat frame.
3. Brush Contact—two stationary brushes make contact with the resistance element.
4. Air cooled.
5. Noiseless.
It is exceptionally well made, dependable and durable and quite advanced in design.
Ask your dealer to show you how it works.
Circulars upon request.
Manufactured by
J. Thos. Rhamstine*
2152 E. Larned St. Detroit, Mich.
*Manufacturer of Radio Products

FIGURE 1. This is an early Rhamstine advertisement published in the July 1922 issue of *QST*. Note the asterisk following the Rhamstine name, which will be explained later.

Other advertisements were for a radio frequency transformer in 1923, the Victophone amplifier for phonograph or horn in 1923, a "B" type rectifier to eliminate a 22½ volt battery in 1925 and a tube booster to rejuvenate used radio tubes in 1925.

FIGURE 2. About 1924 JTR relocated to the corner of East Woodbridge and Beaubien which is today in the shadow of the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit. The building was demolished years ago. The signs read Auto Ignition Supply Co. (do not know if Rhamstine was involved) and J. Thos. Rhamstine, Manufacturer Electrical Apparatus.

FIGURE 3. This advertisement appeared in the October 1925 issue of *Radio Broadcast*. Note the star following Rhamstine's name.

The 1928-1929 *Detroit City Directory* listed JTR as "auto specialties," but the range of products has not been researched fully. He did claim to invent the push-pull cigarette lighter in 1925, but his most enduring items were air horns. His own was called the Rams-Horn for automotive use and he did manufacture the Strombos "most powerful of all signals" for yachts and possibly other uses under license from the American Strombos Company of Philadelphia (now Buell, see www.buellairhorns.com). Other products of unknown vintage were a cigar lighter that resembled a microphone and a needlephone loud speaker.

JTR seems to have been an amateur cinematographer, but as was common to all photographers exposure was a problem. In articles and ads, he would relate stories about wasting time squinting through a tube of an extinction meter or adjusting scales on a calculator and still not obtaining correct exposure. Research into applications of selenium photocells was very active in the1920s and JTR seems to have gotten involved in that as well. He sold the "Rhamstine Electronic Cell" and relays for the experimenter, and manufactured the "Electric Eye," which was a cell and relay unit. All you needed was a light beam so that when something would interrupt the beam, the relay would trip. These led him to design and market the Electrophot in October 1931 as the first commercial electric photographic exposure meter and to make other models through 1941, when raw materials became unavailable due to the war. A full treatment of the meters will come later in this article.

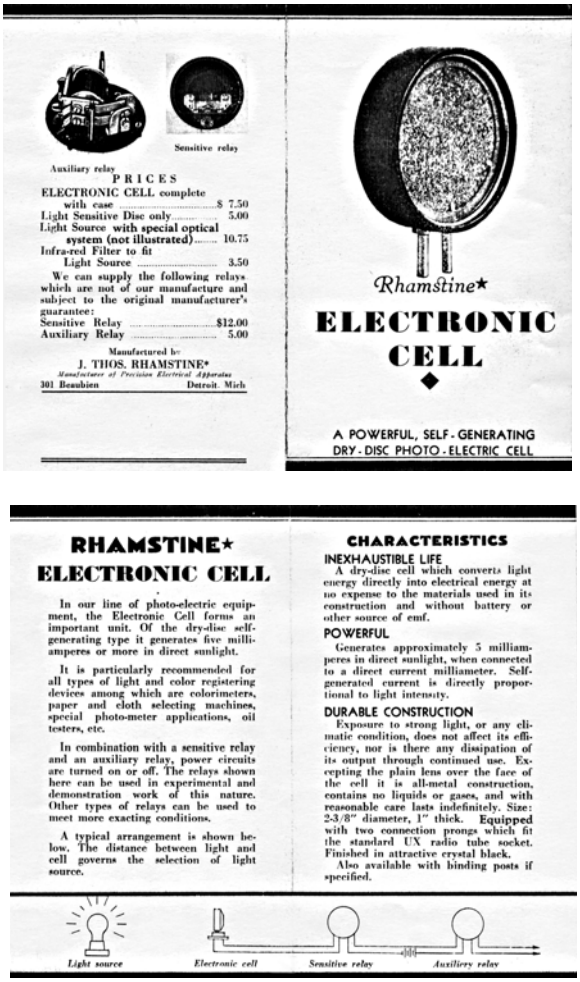


FIGURE 4. Four page brochure for the Rhamstine brand of selenium photocell.

A full-page article by Edward Beck in the *Detroit News*, July 30, 1933 titled "Rays from Sun Turned into Electricity—Old Sol Gets New Job, Detroit Expert Demonstrates How Light Can Generate Power, Makes Startling Predictions" shows

Rhamstine demonstrating how a selenium cell works. Beck states, "the chief use for day-disk generators is in photography. They enable the operator of a camera to gauge the exposure." Other industrial applications mentioned were in counting or sorting objects, photoelectric night-light and use as a door control. The main prediction was "that within a few years country homes and rural workshops will be lighted and powered by solar energy."

FIGURE 5. Rhamstine demonstrating how selenium cells could power a motor in 1935.

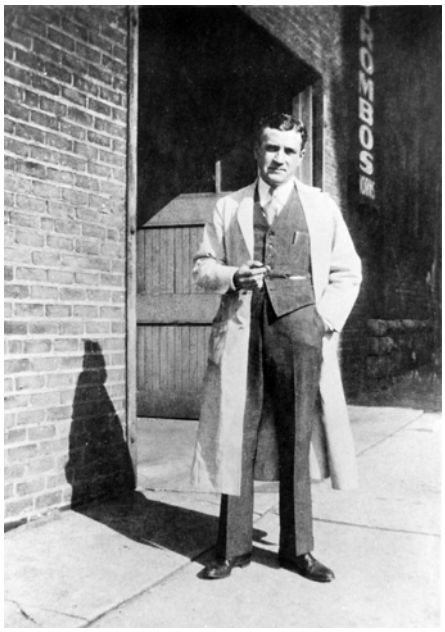
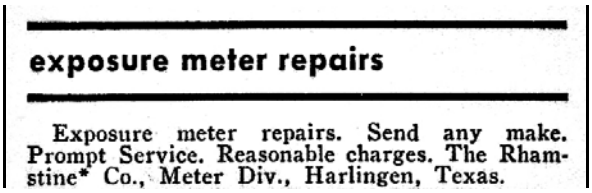


FIGURE 6. Rhamstine outside his shop in 1938. Note the Strombos Horns sign in the background.

JTR stated that "the Rhamstine plant manufactured electrical instruments for the Armed Services" from 1942 to 1945, as indicated in an unpublished chronology of his exposure meters. It is not known what was made, but the plant did repair exposure meters.

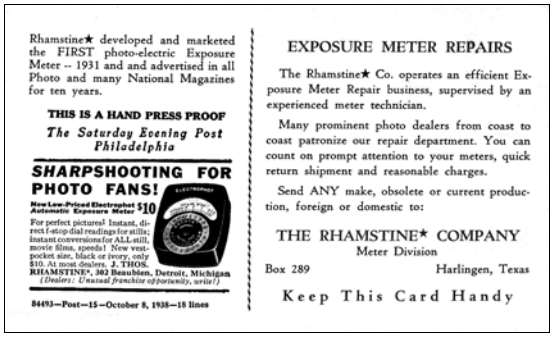
After the war, JTR sold the business to Adair (nothing is known about him as it is a common Detroit name) and his brother Chester Rhamstine, who seems to have always worked with him in Detroit. The Adair-Rhamstine Company made only the revised model 14A exposure meter from 1946 to about 1950-1951. JTR then moved to a citrus orchard in the Lower Rio Grande Valley near the city of Harlingen, Texas (the southern most point of Texas), but the venture was abandoned in 1949. An article in the *San Antonio Express Magazine*, March 3, 1949 described JTR demonstrating his solar motor in "Harness the Sun." In 1950 he married Josephine "Jo" Bedwell (March 27, 1911-September 1991) in nearby Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. She loaned me a scrapbook maintained by JTR, which is the source of Tom's photos and the newspaper clippings used here. From 1951 to 1973, JTR's new occupation was as an exposure meter repairman in a workshop attached to his Harlingen home.



exposure meter repairs

Exposure meter repairs. Send any make. Prompt Service. Reasonable charges. The Rhamstine* Co., Meter Div., Harlingen, Texas.

FIGURE 7. Classified ad that ran during a few 1954 issues of *Modern Photography*.



Rhamstine★ developed and marketed the FIRST photo-electric Exposure Meter -- 1931 and and advertised in all Photo and many National Magazines for ten years.

THIS IS A HAND PRESS PROOF

The Saturday Evening Post
Philadelphia

SHARPSHOOTING FOR PHOTO FANS!

New Low-Priced Electrophot Automatic Exposure Meter $10

For perfect pictures! Instant, direct f-stop dial readings for stills; instant conversions for ALL still, movie films, speeds! New vest-pocket size, black or ivory, only $10. At most dealers. J. THOS. RHAMSTINE*, 302 Beaubien, Detroit, Michigan
(Dealers: Unusual franchise opportunity, write!)

84493—Post—15—October 8, 1938—18 lines

EXPOSURE METER REPAIRS

The Rhamstine★ Co. operates an efficient Exposure Meter Repair business, supervised by an experienced meter technician.

Many prominent photo dealers from coast to coast patronize our repair department. You can count on prompt attention to your meters, quick return shipment and reasonable charges.

Send ANY make, obsolete or current production, foreign or domestic to:

THE RHAMSTINE★ COMPANY
Meter Division
Box 289 Harlingen, Texas

Keep This Card Handy

FIGURE 8. A note by "Jo" Rhamstine on the back of this card states, "This card & others were sent to customers while we had the service of repair to exposure meters in Harlingen about 51 to 73."

The *Valley Morning Star* of Harlingen published an article on May 1, 1961, "New Emergency Traffic Control System Invented by Harlingenite," which described Rhamstine's invention which would allow emergency vehicles to use a radio transmitter that would change all the traffic signals to red. Although he applied for a patent (no such patent has been located), he had no plans to manufacture or market the system.

Another article about his solar motor and his past inventions

was published in the *Houston Chronicle*, September 1967, in which his novelty item was marketed. "But no one appeared interested enough to develop Rhamstine's tiny machine and it never caught on except as an eye-catcher for merchandising displays in store windows. Its solar cells set the small motor whirring in jewelry store windows and drugstores over the country and Rhamstine found himself in the novelty business with a big demand for the 'sun machine.' "

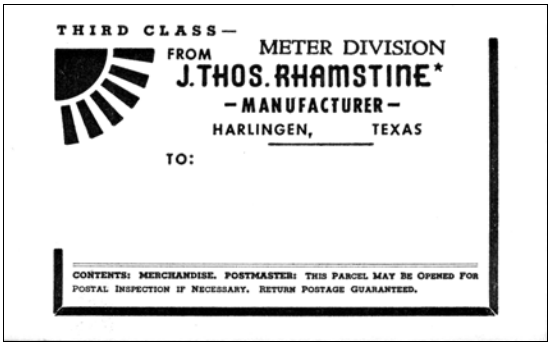


FIGURE 9. Note the sunbeams on this Rhamstine shipping label reflecting his interest in solar energy.

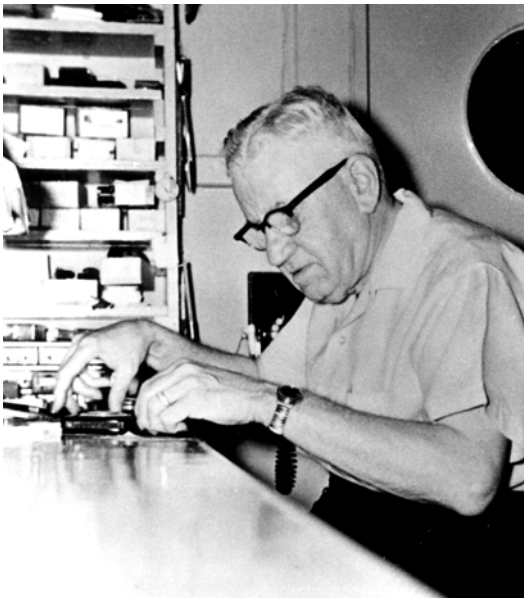


FIGURE 10. "Tom" repairing a meter in his workshop in 1968.

Around 1973, failing health caused JTR to stop all business activity. He died April 6, 1975. His obituary in the *Valley Morning Star*, April 7, 1975 began with the following:

> Lest some people think John Thomas Rhamstine, who died in Harlingen this week, was just an exposure meter repairman, we would like to set the record straight. Rhamstine invented the light exposure meter used in photography and other fields.
>
> After a career as investor and manufacturer, he did settle in the Valley and do meter repair work.
>
> We were told many years ago that before Harlingen people knew he did this kind of work that they would take their meters to a local photo dealer to be repaired. The dealer would bundle it up and send it to a firm in New York. The New York firm would bundle up the meter and send it to Rhamstine to be repaired. He would mail it back to the New York dealer who would again bundle it up and send it its Harlingen agent. And all the time, the man who wanted the repair done might have lived just across town from the man who did the work.

ABOUT THE RHAMSTINE ELECTROPHOT METERS

MODEL DH. This was first described in *Home Movies*, October 1931, pages 544 & 548, a monthly publication of the American Cinema League directed to amateur cinematographers: "A radically new type of exposure meter makes its appearance this month, operating on the light sensitive cell principle. The idea has been advanced theoretically many times and cine workers have been promised that this principle would some time be brought to their aid in solving the vexing problem of exposure but the firm of J. Thos. Rhamstine, 501 East Woodbridge Street, Detroit, Michigan, is to be the first to make this principle available to the amateur. The Rhamstine Electrophot is entirely automatic in its operation and requires no visible judgement whatever on the part of the user." The article continued with details about the meter and its use.

The meter sold for $35 or about $475 in 2007 dollars based on a CPI (Consumer Price Index) calculation. Since this was during the depths of the Great Depression, it would seem that few amateurs could afford such an instrument. Additionally, it was only sold for about five months so few were actually made causing this to be a rare product.

FIGURE 11. The Model DH is real hefty for an exposure meter weighing in at one pound, 3½ ounces without its two AA batteries and is 3½ inches in diameter and 2½ inches thick. The snout serves to keep stray light off the cell in order to cover the same area as a normal lens.

FIGURE 12. Instructions are on the backside of the Model DH meter along with a table for different frames/second camera speeds and filters. The cautionary points are just like those for cadmium sulfide cells introduced in 1960.

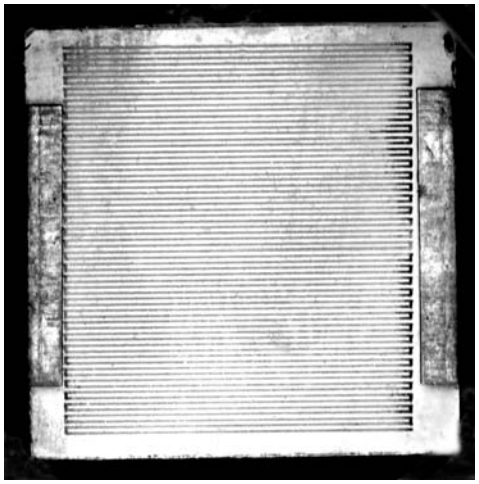


FIGURE 13. This is the photocell from a Model DH where a selenium line weaves back and forth to total about 42 inches. When light strikes the selenium, the resistance drops so that more current from the batteries flows to the microammeter that causes the needle to swing to the correct lens aperture.

MODEL DHA. The design has changed to a four-inch square meter that is 1⅜ inches thick weighing about a pound with the extra feature of having a viewfinder.

MODEL MS. This model is identical to the DHA except that it used the "Rhamstine Electronic Cell," which required no batteries. Electrical current generated by the selenium cell drives a milliammeter, which read directly in f stops for regular film. Even though the battery compartment remains there was no electrical connection. Although first noted in *American Photography*, December 1932, page 736 and adv. 25, all the photos of the meter were of the DHA. The correct photo did not appear until the April 1933 issue of *American Photography*.

FIGURE 14. Model DHA ad from May 1932, adv. 25 in *American Photography*.

FIGURE 15. At the lower right of the Model MS is the cover to the battery compartment but batteries were not longer required.

FIGURE 16. The "Rhamstine Electronic Cell" in the Model MS has the shiny appearance of galvanized zinc. To the right is the viewfinder.

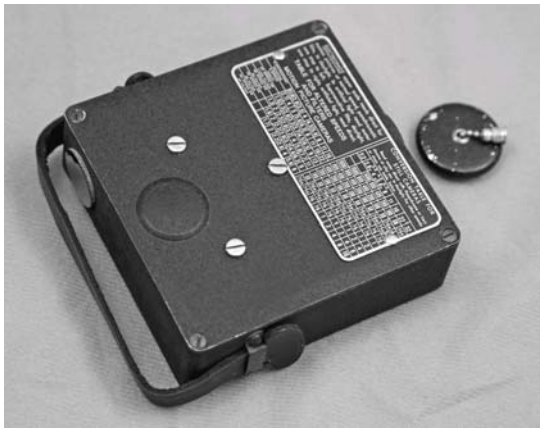


FIGURE 17. The underside of the Model MS has tables for different camera speeds and a table for still camera use. The plug is to protect the cell when the meter was not in use.

MODELS MSA & MSB. The meter is now smaller measuring 2¼ wide × 3⅜ high × 1¼ inches thick. Model MSA has a black dial face and the MSB has a white dial face; there is MSB version with an additional scale for Kodachrome film. A viewfinder is still present. No ads have been located for these two models but a July 1934 mailing of a MSA brochure provides a time frame.

FIGURE 18. A complete example of the Model MSA with box, meter, neck strap, carrying case and instructions.

MODELS 10, 12, 14, 14A. Ads for these models appeared from 1938 to 1941. The case measures 2 × 2¼ × ⅞ inches thick and has the Electrophot name above the dial window. The models differ only in the film speeds used; Model 10 has American Scheiner film speeds of 14-29; Model 12 has speeds of 14-35; Model 14 has speeds of 14-35 plus Weston speeds 3-400; Model 14A is just Weston speeds. These and the later models used the more conventional selenium cell, which is a dull gray. There may be some confusion with this model identification key because old components were used on the newer models; i.e. the dial face may say Model 12 yet the calculator dial is for the Model 14.

FIGURE 19. Model 14.

SUPER ELECTROPHOT. This was introduced in1940 with a larger and easier to hold design plus an improved calculator dial.

FIGURE 20. Super Electrophot.

REVISED MODEL 14A. Adair & Rhamstine made this model when meter production resumed after the war. Only a few ads have been located for 1946, but they were still being sold in 1950 and maybe 1951. Improvements include a better meter magnet and sapphire jeweled bearings.

By now you must have noticed the asterisk or star after Rhamstine's name in the various ads, documents and products. The asterisk in Figure 1 is like a footnote, which in this case calls attention to him as a "Maker of Radio Products." Other ads use "Manufacturer of Radio Products." Rhamstine's ads in *Radio Broadcast* in 1925 also have a star after his name, which referred to the product having been "Tested and approved by Radio Broadcast." The use of a star after his name continued throughout his life.

FIGURE 21. The revised Model 14A can be distinguished from the prewar Model 14A by the Electrophot name being on the dial scale and the plastic multilens cover over the cell.

THE ISRAELITE HOUSE OF DAVID:

A REAL PHOTO POSTCARD DIARY, 1904-1950

FIGURE 1. Mary Stollard Purnell.

FIGURE 2: Benjamin Purnell.

By Wally Jung

The history of the Christian cult *The Israelite House of David* in Benton Harbor Michigan is one that spans more than a hundred years and continues to this day. It also spans the entire period of the real photo picture postcard in America. Its founder and leader Benjamin Purnell (FIG. 2) recognized the power of the postcard, and used it extensively as a tool to document and promote his version of Christianity. In the process he brought thousands of members and millions of visitors to the colony from its early years through the 1970s.

Born in Kentucky in 1861, Benjamin Purnell had no formal education, but learned to read by studying the Bible. From his youth, Benjamin was influenced by the various millennialist religious revivals that swept across rural America. In particular, he became associated with the Wroeites, an English sect that believed seven messengers would be sent by God to gather all believers together to wait for the second coming of Jesus. They all believed that five had already come, but several men around the world claimed to be the Sixth Messenger.

In 1880 Benjamin met and married Mary Stollard (FIG. 1), a young woman who had similar beliefs. They soon had a son Coy, and later a daughter Hattie. They began their careers as itinerant preachers, and were drawn to Detroit and a preacher named Michael Mills, who claimed to be the Sixth Messenger. In 1895 Benjamin had a vision that he was the Seventh Messenger, a claim that Mills and his followers rejected. Benjamin left with his family for another group in Fostoria, Ohio. That group accepted him as the Seventh and final messenger, but tragedy soon struck. His young daughter Hattie died in an ex-

plosion while working in a fireworks factory. Benjamin and Mary refused to claim the body, following Jesus' words, "Let the dead bury their dead." Local residents became so enraged over this perceived lack of sorrow and mourning, that they ran the Purnells out of town. A few of the faithful families followed the Purnells.

Benjamin had been corresponding with another group of believers in Benton Harbor, Michigan. In 1903 Benjamin had another vision in which God told him that Benton Harbor would be the location of the Ingathering of the faithful, and upon arrival, the group proclaimed that Benjamin was indeed the Seventh Messenger. Among their number was the Bauschke family, a wealthy family that were carriage makers by trade. They and others bankrolled Benjamin and purchased the first piece of land for the colony. There they built their first building, called The Ark.

Word went out to other Wroeite colonies in England, Australia, and California that the Seventh Messenger had arrived, and that a communal heaven on Earth awaited them in Benton Harbor. The group soon outgrew their original location, and land was purchased on the north side of Britain Avenue, east of the original location (FIG. 3). Soon, dozens of families began to arrive. They gave all their possessions to the colony and pledged their loyalty to Benjamin. Among them were talented carpenters, machinists, architects, stone masons, farmers, and a photographer named Henry Kirkham.

FIGURE 3. House of David, Administration Building. Benjamin Purnell stands in front on the left. A girls' band plays at center.

In 1907 the colony had grown to 385 members, and realizing it needed more land, purchased an additional 30 acres on the south side of Britain Avenue from the Eastman Springs Resort Company. This was ideal, as cottages from the resort already existed, and the area was filled with the natural beauty of ravines and several flowing springs. The colony soon began to work turning the ravine area into a park.

The local population took note of this unusual group of people and came out to see them. They were curious about these "Israelites," a strange looking, strange sounding, fast growing group, whose leader had long, flaming red hair. The other men didn't shave or cut their hair either, because they said Jesus didn't. The group was vegetarian, didn't drink, and it was rumored, didn't procreate upon joining the colony. Rather than discourage the locals, Benjamin altered his plans to expand the park area into a tourist site (FIGS. 4-5).

FIGURE 4. House of David, Outdoor Photo Studio. Henry Kirkham, photographer.

FIGURE 5. House of David, Outdoor Photo Studio.

The colony built bridges, gazebos, terraced gardens, log cabins, a small zoo, arcades, and an outdoor photo studio. Henry Kirkham became very active in the early years of the colony photographing leaders Benjamin and Mary, the remarkable colony buildings, the beautiful grounds, and the members themselves. Thousands of real photo postcards of the colony were sent around the world, back home to the families of members who had joined. Soon tourists were asking to be photographed in the park, and Benjamin, always the entrepreneur, obliged (FIGS. 6-7). Elaborate props were built, which encouraged multiple portraits of the tourists in different settings. Postcards of the buildings and grounds were printed for tourists to buy. Henry used darkroom magic to produce and sell more cards.

The Israelites were excited about this Ingathering and proud of the colony they had built, and their postcards reflected this.

The cards always showed well posed groups of colonists interacting with the buildings and grounds. Emphasis was on the large number of people there posed in front of the many newly constructed buildings (FIGS. 8-9). Mr. Kirkham also documented the day-to-day life of the colony. The colony had its own farms to grow food, and had a lumbering operation on High Island in Lake Michigan. It had its own print shop to produce literature about its beliefs, its own electrical system, and extensive food processing operation (FIGS. 10-12).

FIGURE 6. Author's mother, Annabelle (bottom center) in a House of David studio prop boat.

FIGURE 7. Israelite member, House of David.

Around 1910 the colony began to build a miniature railroad to carry the tourists from the parking area on Britain Avenue back to the ravine area. Talented machinists built the locomotives, cars and switches, while others laid down track, built depots, bridges and trestles. Young men served as engineers, and each developed their own distinctive style of train whistles (FIGS. 13-15).

FIGURE 8. House of David, Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

FIGURE 9. House of David, Diamond House, residence of Benjamin and Mary Purnell.

FIGURE 10. House of David, Lumber Yard.

So many people were joining the colony that transporting them became an issue. Benjamin solved this by volunteering willing men to serve as conductors without pay on the Twin City streetcar line in exchange for free passage for colony members. The excess labor pool also allowed the colony to expand its business operations in the area. It acquired numerous farms throughout Berrien County, including orchards, berry farms and a sorghum operation.

Keeping the energy of the young people, especially the boys,

on a path in the right direction was an ongoing problem. Leaders and parents used sports and music to keep them occupied. The colony sponsored baseball teams for the boys, and later for girls (COVER PHOTO). The baseball team flourished, and it wasn't long before House of David teams were playing and winning against other local amateur and semi-pro teams. As their fame grew, so did the crowds. The colony built a baseball stadium adjacent to the park area. The fans loved coming to the park to watch the long-haired ball players, their pre-game pepper games, and to feast on a new creation called the ice cream cone, which the colony had invented and patented. Occasionally the colony would book an exhibition game with major league teams traveling between Chicago and Detroit.

FIGURE 11. House of David, Printing Office.

FIGURE 12. House of David, Electrical Works, dated August 1934.

The colony was also known for its outstanding musical groups. Choral groups and both women's and men's bands were formed and were prominently featured on postcards. Again the groups were beautifully posed in both indoor and outdoor venues. Quite often skits and morality plays were performed as well (FIGS. 16-18). The men's jazz band would start its performance with its back to the audience, long hair cascading down their backs, playing a mournful dirge. Then, just when the audience thought they had made a mistake by coming, they swung around and started into some toe-tapping Dixieland jazz, and the crowd would go wild (FIG. 19).

FIGURE 13. House of David, Miniature Railway.

FIGURE 14. House of David Park, Train Depot.

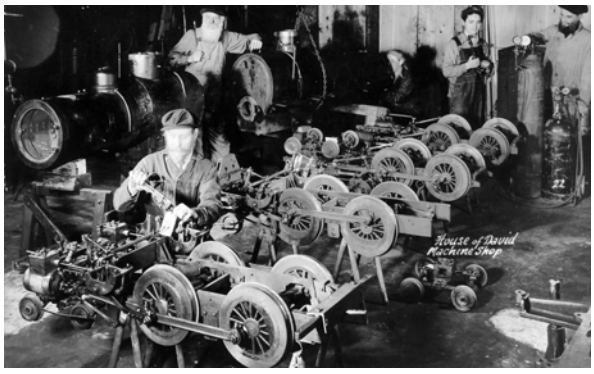


FIGURE 15. House of David, Machine Shop.

FIGURE 16. House of David, Men's Quartet. Left: "It's wrong to catch fish on Sunday." Right: " 'Zat so."

FIGURE 17. House of David, Ladies Orchestra.

FIGURE 18. House of David Band.

Unfortunately, the good times in the colony were short lived. Almost from the beginning some members had second thoughts about joining the colony. Having turned over all their earthly possessions to the colony, they wanted them back when they left. Of course, the colony refused, and lawsuits followed, often with accusations that Benjamin was a) a fake, impostor or the devil himself, or b) a womanizer, child molester or home breaker, or c) all the above. It came to a head in 1927 when the Michigan governor, attorney general and the State police all became involved in bringing Benjamin to justice. After months of being hunted, Benjamin was captured and put on trial. As the trial dragged on that summer, Benjamin's health began to deteriorate. In November 1927, after facing numerous counts of fraud, child molestation and malfeasance, Benjamin was convicted of nothing more than being a public nuisance. His sentence was that he and Mary separate themselves physically from the colony.

FIGURE 19: House of David Band, dated July 9, 1937.

The colony purchased land just east of the colony park area, and built a home for the couple, but before they could move Benjamin died on December 16. As the colony waited for three days, expecting Benjamin to arise from the dead, his body did not respond, and the coroner ordered him embalmed. Mary immediately proclaimed herself as Benjamin's successor. However, Judge H. T. Dewhirst, a member from nearly the beginning, a former California Circuit Court Judge, and the colony's long time business manager, claimed that while he was not a prophet, neither was Mary, and that he instead should become the colony's leader (FIG. 20).

FIGURE 20. Judge H. T. Dewhirst (left) at the Grande Vista Tourist Court, Stevensville, MI.

A division split the colony, with half siding with Mary and half with Dewhirst. Mary was locked out of the headquarters and prevented from speaking at gatherings. Lawsuits were filed, with the net result that the farms were divided, and Mary and

her followers left the colony and moved into the houses and land purchased for her and Benjamin. Dewhirst and his followers retained the original grounds and the park facilities. Dewhirst expanded the original House of David holdings, built a greenhouse in St. Joseph, a cold storage unit next to the farmers market in Benton Harbor, and one of the first motor courts in the country in Stevensville (FIGS. 21-22).

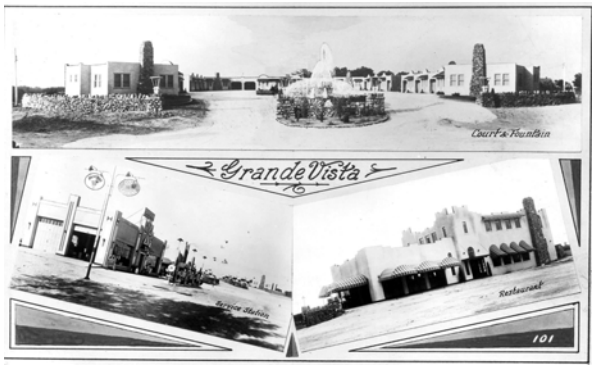


FIGURE 21. Grande Vista Tourist Court, Stevensville, MI. Court and Fountain (top), Service Station (left), Restaurant (right).

FIGURE 22. House of David, Greenhouses, St. Joseph, MI.

FIGURE 23. House of David Building, Chicago World's Fair, 1933.

FIGURE 24. House of David, Chicago World's Fair, 1933. Engraving Names on Souvenirs.

FIGURE 25. House of David, Chicago World's Fair, 1933. Art Studio.

The biggest post-Benjamin publicity was the result of the colony's souvenir booth at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. The booth served several purposes—it introduced the colony to fair visitors who did not know about them, allowed the colony to sell souvenirs and distribute literature it produced, and invited fair visitors to visit the colony when vacationing in Michigan (FIGS. 23-25).

FIGURE 26. The Theodore Roosevelt and Buses Loading for House of David Park.

The strategy was extremely successful. The colony purchased fair buses after the fair closed, then met passenger ships coming in from Chicago and transported the passengers to the colony (FIG. 26). Once there, they could enjoy open air band concerts, a delicious vegetarian dinner in the restaurant and even a trip to the beer garden (while the members themselves could not drink, they were not prevented from making and serving alcohol—remembering that Jesus changed water into wine). They could also enjoy rides on the miniature train or the midget race cars, watch a baseball game or simply stroll the shaded park and view the lush gardens (FIGS. 27-29, COVER PHOTO).

FIGURE 27. House of David Park, Open Air Theatre.

FIGURE 28. House of David Park, Vegetarian Restaurant.

FIGURE 29. House of David Park, Beer Garden.

The colony continued to flourish through the 1940s and 50s, but as the members aged and the flow of new members grew to a trickle, the colony begin to atrophy. Soon more members were in nursing homes than not, the farms were sold, the maintenance and repair to facilities grew less and less. Finally in 1977, the colony closed the park. Buildings collapsed, brush took over the lawns and gardens. Today, the original colony lies deserted, except for a small trailer park.

Mary's City of David fared little better. After its separation, the colony struggled economically as it faced the daunting task of creating housing for 350 members just as the winter of 1928 began. They continued to field a baseball team, as well as bands, but they never had the advantage of being a tourist attraction. They did reach out to the Jewish visitors in the area by offering kosher vegetarian dinners, as well as operating a hospital for Jewish guests. Mary led the colony until her death in 1953.

The City of David property received a reprieve in the mid-1990s when a couple of young energetic men joined the colony and began a remarkable restoration of the building and grounds to its original condition, including a wonderful museum in the former auditorium. They now offer weekend tours in the summer, along with classic old time baseball games, and a vegetarian dinners in the restaurant.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: **RICHARD W. HOLZMAN** is a graduate of Cass Technical High School and Wayne State University. He first worked as a chemist, then was a freelance photographer and later an in-house photographer. Next came working with bank film surveillance systems, which involved the building and servicing of cameras plus all related photo processing. He has now retired. Since 1984 Richard has collected information on all manner of photographic exposure meters and exposure aids from 1839 to 1960. The work continues in discovering the lives of the meter inventors. He is the author of "Impact of Nature Photography," *Amphoto* (1979) and "Scenic Highlights at the Picture Rocks National Lakeshore," *Royal Gallery* (1990). Richard lives in Troy, MI. **WALLY JUNG** has been a postcard dealer and show promoter since 1991. He received a B.A. in American Studies from Michigan State University and an Associates Degree in Applied Photo-graphy from Lansing Community College. He is former owner of Great Lakes Photographic Service in Lansing, MI. He has visited the House of David on numerous occasions since his childhood days in Benton Harbor, and currently has over 350 House of David real photo postcards in his collection. Wally lives in Lansing, MI.

Doug Price at the Clements Library in Ann Arbor at his presentation, "The History of the Photographic Book," February 9, 2008.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello members! Have you had ENOUGH of this snowy winter? Not to worry, the signs of spring are creeping in, starting with the sap running in the trees and the Canada geese arriving to mess up your lawn. Soon those spring flea markets will be opening up and the hunt for that three dollar gold rush daguerreotype or undiscovered Leica can begin again!

Hopefully, you've received your membership renewal and the latest ballot. We hope to get the next project, a new directory, out soon. So double check your details and send the form back to the PO Box. Thanks! Also, you have one last chance to attend our next dinner meeting with the renowned Matthew Isenburg. We're over half full, so get your reservation in if you plan on going.

On a different subject: we all regret, to some extent, that the film era is passing. That means that the "found" photos will be less and less available in the flea markets and garage sales. Recently, I heard of a museum collecting cell phones so they can save the "ephemera" photos for posterity. In doing a computer search for the exact museum (still unknown), one of the sites that showed up was a MIT cell phone photo contest. (Doesn't that make the fine art photographers just cringe?) So don't let the technology bug walk away with your photos. If you want them "forever," print them out!

Hang up and drive and I'll see you in the flea markets. **CINDY MOTZENBECKER**

PHOTO-HISTORY CALENDAR

April 5: **MiPHS** – Annual Dinner & Presentation: Matthew Isenburg, "The Business Side of Photography," Birmingham Athletic Club, Bloomfield Hills, MI, 6:00PM cash bar, 7:00PM dinner. Reservation required.
April 6: Michigan Antiquarian Book & Paper Show, Lansing Center, Lansing, MI www.curiousbooks.com
April 6: Boston Antique Photo Show, Westford Regency Hotel, Westford, MA, www.stereoview.com
April 10-13: The Photography Show New York, Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD), Park Avenue Armory, New York, NY, www.aipad.com
May 3-4: Photographica Show, Photographic Historical Society of New England, Americal Center, Wakefield, MA, www.phsne.org
May 11: London Photographic Fair, Bonnington Hotel, London, www.photofair.co.uk
May 25: Spring Photographica Fair, Photographic Historical Society of Canada, Soccer Centre, 7601 Martin Grove Road, Woodbridge (Toronto), Ontario, Canada, www.phsc.ca
June 7: **MIPHS** – Dietmar Haechen & Mark O'Brien, "Double Presentation on 35mm Cameras," Crane Liberal Arts and Science Building (room 375), Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, MI, 2:00PM.
June 7-8: Bièvres Photo Fair, Bièvres, France, foirephoto-bievre.com
June 28: Metro Detroit Postcard & Paper Show, Clawson-Troy Elks Hall, Troy, MI postcardwally@comcast.net
July 9-14: National Stereoscopic Association Convention (Trade Fair – July 12-13), Grand Rapids, MI, www.stereoview.org
October 26: **MiPHS** – Annual Photographica Show & Sale, Novi Community Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road (½ mile west of Novi Road), Novi, MI, 10:00AM-4:00PM.