

# THE PHOTOGRAM

Newsletter of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society

Vol. 1, No. 2

N. R. Skipper, Jr., Editor

September 1972

## President's Column:

Let me extend a personal welcome to you, as an avid fellow collector, photo historian, image lover, or ?; and certainly also, if your interest is mainly in the many fascinating tales of our antecedents--their accomplishments and disappointments while "making time stand still."

Their efforts allow us today to hold these fragile moments of beauty, pain and pleasure fondly; to preserve and pass on to future generations.

Many excursions into the exciting past are in the offing, from communicating with knowledgeable fellow members at regular meetings, attending demonstrations of almost forgotten techniques, displays of early equipment and lectures, to "do it yourself" field trips and social gatherings and Society sponsored tours to famous and little known museums, antique photo trade fairs, and historic or scenic points of interest.

Regular Society trade fairs, and "want ads" in our newsletter, will provide an opportunity to locate that vital "missing link" for your personal collection.

Our Society's affiliation with the National Photographic Historical Society now being organized, and other U.S. and international societies, assure our regular knowledge of their gatherings, publications, reprints and important discoveries.

Our September meeting is designed specifically to introduce new collectors to the principal subject matter of photographic collections--equipment, images and literature--and to suggest ideas and methods of adding to one's knowledge and collection. Please feel free to bring interested friends. See you all there!

*Cover design and headlines by  
John Naslanic*

## ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING : OFFICERS ELECTED

*by Barbara Skipper, Secretary*

On Saturday, June 24, 1972, the formal organizational meeting of the Society was held at the home of Nate and Barbara Skipper. Although the business meeting was between a cocktail party and a buffet supper, much was accomplished. The name Michigan Photographic Historical Society was formally adopted. The following were elected: Dick Wolfe, President; Doug Elbinger, Vice President; Barbara Skipper, Secretary and Don Wallace, Treasurer. Nate Skipper was asked to continue as Delegate to the National Society.

The aims and goals of the Society were discussed, and some of the ideas mentioned were: including image collectors and literature collectors as well as equipment collectors in the Society; providing speakers on historical aspects of photography to colleges with photographic courses; and preserving and cataloguing Michigan's photographic heritage. Dues were assessed at \$5.00 a year for regular membership (individual or family, including the newsletter and one vote), and at \$3.00 a year for associate membership (newsletter but no voting privilege). The newsletter was discussed and Nate Skipper agreed to act as editor until the end of this calendar year.

Reminder: Please send your dues to the Treasurer, P.O. Box 191, Dearborn, MI 48121. We don't have money to waste sending out bills!

\*\*\* NEXT MEETING \*\*\*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1972, 7:00 P.M.  
Henry Ford Centennial Library, Michigan  
Avenue Dearborn (opposite Ford World  
Headquarters) Room 101.



## From the Editor's Desk:

As I see it, someday there will be a bimonthly or quarterly magazine of the National Photographic Historical Society, containing major contributions to our knowledge and understanding of photographic history and news of national interest. There still will be a place, as there is now, for the regular publications of regional and local collectors' clubs.

In my view, The Photogram (or whatever our newsletter may be named) should be used for three major functions: (i) to report the major events of the Society and matters affecting the Society and its members; (ii) to serve as a means of communication among the members of the Society for their mutual interest and benefit; and (iii) to provide to members of the Society a forum for the exposition of accumulated knowledge, the results of original research, and the conclusions of analytical thought, related to photographic history.

This issue of The Photogram contains, what I hope will be, interesting and useful examples of the first and second categories. The third category, by its nature, will appear less frequently; but all members who can make contributions to our knowledge and understanding of the historical aspects of photography are encouraged to submit articles for publication. N.R.S.

## Collectors' Calendar

FOURTH QUARTER 1972

October 6-8: Trade Fair and Workshop, Ohio  
Camera Collectors' Society, P.O. Box  
4614, Columbus, Ohio 43212.

October 21-23: Symposium on Photographic  
History and Collecting, The Photo-  
graphic Historical Society of New York,  
244 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001.

October 28-29: Annual Meeting of The Leica  
Historical Society of America, at Ohio  
State University, Dept. of Photography  
and Cinema, Hasket Hall, 156 W. 19th  
Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43210.

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## Meet Your Fellow Member



DICK WOLFE

by Andee Seeger

*Tintype by Dick Wolfe*

Tall, tousled, soft-spoken, easy-going, Richard I. Wolfe, finds his chief delight in any old photographic thing. Born Oct. 8, 1928 in Cheyenne, Wyoming, Dick graduated from Technical High School in Omaha, Nebraska and got in a year's engineering studies at the University of Omaha. When he was 19, an uncle gave him a plastic Baby Brownie. He promptly won a photographic contest with a 127 contact print of a florist's Christmas manger display, in which a light behind a plaster angel gave it an unplanned halo. The prize was \$25 and a bouquet of flowers.

Dick got into photo history via family tintypes: first he copied them, then decided to try to reproduce the authentic process. His first old camera was a 6-1/2 x 8-1/2" Empire State in such bad condition that when he literally tripped over it in a second-hand furniture store, he didn't know it was a camera. The original owner, then 82 years old, had used it to make plate negatives of Indians out West. The man had a basement full of the old plates, which his wife kept threatening to throw out; and Dick often wonders what happened to them. Another time, in Canada, Dick picked up the contents of an old photo studio run by a photographer also named Wolfe.

Dick says he makes his best finds in "small, out-of-the-way places." He specializes in wetplate and other early cameras and studio equipment, Daguerreotype cases and Century cameras and catalogues. Dick describes as his most interesting and personally rewarding experience,

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## Why I Collect . . .

*by Martin Alger*

Why do people collect things? Partly because they are packrat types, I think. I have long observed that the serious collector is often involved in several fields, the antique car buff also haunts the gun shows, the gun collector also collects uniforms or medals or is in stamps and coins. Long before my photographic interests turned to equipment collecting I had a moderate gun collection and a yard full of old Packard cars. And as a boy I hoarded all the old science fiction and fantasy magazines I could find.

In my case a sort of delayed wish fulfillment is involved, the boy who watched the banker or the doctor drive past in his Packard Twelve grew up wanting Packards. I grew up in Northern Michigan during the Great Depression. Cash was hard to get, I spent the summers printing the tourists' snapshots at a nickle a print and in a summer earned perhaps a third the price of a new Bolex or Contax. But I did buy the photomagazines and drooled over the ads. So now I work ten hours a day to pay for a whole cabinet full of Bolexes, Bell & Howells and Contaxes and seldom have time to use them.

Horse-trading and bargain hunting also add to the lure. In one of my fields of interest (top quality regular 8mm cameras) it is still possible to find items in near perfect condition at absurdly low prices, often ten or twenty cents per dollar of original price. This happy situation may not last much longer, now that collecting is growing and becoming organized. Some items are already increasing in price, so I have been spurred on by a feeling of "Grab it while it is still cheap and available."

This, plus an interest in the precision and mechanical details of fine cameras, may explain my interest.

## Collectors' Calendar

November 11-12: Trade Fair and semi-annual meeting, Midwest Photographic Historical Society, P.O. Box 882, Columbia, Mo 65201.

December (date to be announced): Trade Fair and quarterly meeting, Michigan Photographic Historical Society, P.O. Box 191, Dearborn, MI 48121.

## DAGUERRE COMMEMORATED

On August 19, 1839, the first public disclosure of the discoveries of Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre was made before the French National Academy of Arts and Sciences.

As we go to press, the Society plans to commemorate the 133rd anniversary of this announcement on Friday, August 18th, at the Mariner's Church in Detroit. It is anticipated that several members of the Society will appear in period costumes and, weather and the vagaries of chemistry willing, an actual Daguerreotype will be made. A full report of this event is expected to appear in our next issue.

For those who may want to learn more about the history and technique of the Daguerreotype, two publications are recommended.

The New Daguerreian Journal, published bi-monthly by The Daguerrean Society, Inc., Walter A. Johnson, Executive Editor, 1360 Haines Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43210. \$10.00 per year.

A facsimile reproduction of the French Daguerreotype Manual of 1839 is available from R. W. Lisle, 4235-C Falcon Courts North, McGuire AFB, New Jersey 08641, \$5.00 a copy. This booklet is in French, individually numbered, and contains drawings of the camera and other apparatus needed to make Daguerreotypes.

## Meet Your Fellow Member

the opportunity to assist the Edison Institute to reopen the tintype studio in Greenfield Village, after its having been out of operation for several years. He also would like to open a mobile studio of his own to create tintypes and ambrotypes.

Dick has worked for Greyhound for 25 years, and is presently district sales supervisor for Greyhound Lines--East. He list his other hobbies as "family-tree research, travel, good food and friendly people."

"Collecting is, to me, an investment," he says, pointing out the growing interest in the field; "but mainly," he adds, "it's a lot of fun."



## TRADERS' COLUMN

WANTED Contax lenses longer than 135mm, Contax gadgets. Bell & Howell 8mm Sportster and Companion cameras, "C" mount to Sportster lens adapters. 8mm Camex camera. Exotic lenses, faster than f/1.0 and huge aerial lenses. Unusual filters and lens attachments. Martin Alger, Box 97, Royal Oak, Mich. 48068.

WANTED New or used members for the Michigan Photographic Historical Society. Dues \$5 a year regular membership for individuals or families (newsletter and one vote) and \$3 a year for associate members (newsletter but no vote). All members welcomed at all Society meetings and events. Write to P.O.Box 191, Dearborn, MI 48010.

WANTED Ideas for a logo to be used on Society stationery, posters, membership cards, etc. Logo should include the name of the Society or initials MPHS. The member submitting the design selected will receive a suitable prize. Write to the President, care of the Society.

WANTED Detrola 400 (35mm); Leica cameras and accessories in black finish; Leica magazines, books, catalogs, sales literature; The Camera, American Photography, American Annual of Photography and British Journal Photographic Almanac, all 1925-1930. Stereo photographs of Zeppelins, airships, balloons, and early aeroplanes. Many antique cameras, catalogs and stereo photographs to trade or sell. Nate Skipper, (313) 851-3394.

WANTED Your want, sell or trade ads for this column. Open to members only, rates are 75¢ for first 20 words, and 3¢ for each additional word. Telephone number will count as three words. Send your ad and payment to P.O.Box 191, Dearborn MI 48121.

WANTED Suggestions for a permanent name for this newsletter, if you prefer something other than The Photogram. If another name is adopted, the member suggesting it will receive a suitable prize. Write to the Editor, care of the Society.

WANTED Camera Obscura, Camera Lucida, Zoetrope, 5x8 Stereo, 3A Graflex, Kombi, Contax I, Ermanox, St. Louis Practical Photographer 1878--1879. Don Isaacsen, KE3-1089.

## Did You Know ...?

That film transport in the No. 1 Panoram Kodak is smoother and less subject to tearing, if size 620 film is used (rather than 120) with a plastic (Agfa or Ansco) 120-size take-up spool. N.R.S.

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That early 4x5 plate and cut film cameras may be used to make "pictures-in-a-minute" without any conversion. For example, the Polaroid 4x5 Land Film Holder #545 fits the 1908 Sears, Roebuck & Co. Conley Long Focus, hand and stand camera. The Conley Rapid Orthographic f/8 lens gives surprisingly sharp results on Polaroid Type 52 film packets (ASA 400). N.R.S.

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That The Photogram needs your contributions for this column.

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PHOTOGRAM--"By some people considered the correct name for a photographic picture of any kind. They contend that 'graph' is a termination indicating the active verb, whereas 'gram' indicates the noun. For example, 'telegraph'--to write at a distance; 'telegram'--the writing." --Cassell's Cyclopedia of Photography. J.N.

## Collector's Bookshelf

*by Nate Skipper*

Glass, Brass & Chrome, The American 35mm Miniature Camera, by K.C. Lahue and J.A. Bailey, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1972; 347 pp., illus., \$7.95.

The story of the introduction and rise to great popularity of the 35 mm camera in the U.S. Includes the detailed story of the Argus (manufactured in Ann Arbor), Universal, the various Kodak 35's, and shorter histories of others, such as Perfex, Bolsey, Kardon, Foton and some less well known brands. Also has chapters on stereo and the recent instamatics. Despite a few errors that may be noticed by the experts, and some controversial opinions, the book is an interesting history and a useful guide to collecting the equipment covered. Order from Classic Photographic Apparatus, P.O. Box 161, Simsbury, Conn. 06070 or Graphic Antiquarian Bookstore, P.O. Box 3471, Wilmington, N.C. 28401.