

The Photogram

Newsletter of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society

Vol. 1, No. 3

N. R. Skipper, Jr., Editor

December 1972

TRADE FAIR HUGE SUCCESS !

President's Column:

Your Michigan Photographic Historical Society's first antique and classic photographica Trade Fair on December 2 was a great event and a fine start for many more meets of that kind. I sincerely regret that my business kept me away from home and prevented me from becoming acquainted with each and every one of you who attended the Trade Fair.

What's To Look Forward To:

A most welcomed and interesting invitation has been received from the Detroit Historical Society, to attend a preopening preview, for members and friends of MPHS, of a new photo exhibit called "The Face of Detroit." The documentary photographs are the work of students of the Society of Arts & Crafts School in Detroit. The preview will be held on February 15, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Special Exhibits Room of Urban History Hall of the Detroit Historical Museum (use Kirby Street entrance). Refreshments will be served. Please call the Detroit Historical Society at 831-0168 between 8:00 and 4:30 any business day to make your reservation. This is a signal recognition of our Society, and I urge as many of you as can possibly do so to attend.

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*Cover design and headlines by
John Naslanic*

First MPHS Trade Fair -Dec.2nd

See story and pictures on pages 4 and 5.

News of the Society

The second quarterly meeting of MHPS was held on September 9, 1972 at the Henry Ford Centennial Library in Dearborn. The subject for the session was "What to Collect." Barbara Skipper handled the introductory survey and mentioned collectors' clubs, activities and publications. Dick Wolfe covered equipment from the earliest period to about 1920 and Martin Alger took over to bring the hardware survey down to date. Collecting images, with an emphasis on the "historical prints" of famous early photographers such as Hill and Jackson and more modern artists such as Strand and Weston, was the topic covered by Tom Halsted of the 831 Gallery. Photographic literature, both "collectible" and "useful to the collector" was Nate Skipper's topic. All the speakers illustrated their presentations with photographs or the actual materials being discussed. At the conclusion, there was a little time for getting acquainted--and a few items of photographica went home in new hands.

*** NEXT MEETING ***

SATURDAY, MARCH 24 1973, 7:00 P.M.
Dearborn Youth Center, Michigan Ave.
and Greenfield, Dearborn. Rooms L
and M. Plenty of free parking.
Topic. History of Stereography.

From the Editor's Desk:

MPHS has enjoyed a phenomenally successful beginning: from a tiny group last Spring to about seventy members now, most in the Michigan, Western Ohio, and Southern Ontario areas, but a few as far away as New York and California; from no activities to public recognition, quarterly meetings, a newsletter and an incredible trade fair. But where do we go from here? Oh yes, there are many ideas and even plans, but what we need most are workers! We need volunteers for programs of substance at meetings, people to plan and carry out the annual meeting and photographic outing in June, people to organize the planned trade fair during the Summer, as well as the longer-range projects that Dick Wolfe mentions in the President's Column. Closer at hand, *The Photogram* needs writers, typists, layout artists, photographers, book reviewers and advertizing and circulation managers. If you can help out, please volunteer. I believe the survival of MPHS depends on enlarging the group of people directly contributing to the support of the Society's activities.

Collectors' Calendar

FIRST HALF 1973

February 15: MPHS Special Event--see President's Column.

March 24: Quarterly Meeting, MPHS.

April 14-15: Spring Show and Trade Fair, Midwest Photographic Historical Society, P.O. Box 882, Columbia, MO 65201.

April: (date to be announced) "Mini" Trade Fair, Chicago Photographic Collectors Society, 275 Laurel Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035.

May 26, 27 & 28: Trade Fair & Seminar, Ohio Camera Collectors Society, P.O. Box 4614, Columbus, OH 43212. During this event, there will be a meeting of the delegates to the Photographic Historical Society of America.

June: (date to be announced) Annual Meeting and Photographic Outing, MPHS.

Experience is so valuable because it is so costly--and painful--to acquire. N.R.

President's Column:

Discussions are underway for a possible joint meeting with the Photographic Historical Society of Rochester, New York, the first collectors' group formed, with many knowledgeable members and Kodak associates and employees.

A recent letter from Nick Graver, their program chairman, indicates another major symposium may be in the works for 1973; and THAT would be our target date - of course! If there is sufficient interest, a "group" trip could be arranged; by air, car caravan or bus. Let us know your preference.

A step closer to a nationwide photographic society was taken at the meeting of delegates during the Missouri Photographic Historical Society Trade Fair at Columbia on November 11.

The name "Photographic Historical Society of America," was selected; and specific "aims and goals" agreed upon.

In addition, procedures were set-up to have a selection of proposed drafts for a constitution and by-laws, based on these specific objectives submitted to chairman pro-tem, Don Blake, by February 28, 1973. After distribution to representatives of all known societies, hammering out a final set of documents is scheduled to take place at the Ohio Camera Collectors Society Trade Fair on Memorial Day weekend, May 26, 27, 28, 1973. We look forward to co-operating with this organization when it is established.

Membership of your Society has passed the 50 mark, and we are asking for volunteers to start action toward one of the Society's most important stated objectives--research into Michigan's photographic history, history-making photographers, and photographic activities and events. Please let me know personally of your own interests, so that we may form active groups to pursue this and other worthwhile objectives.

Dick Wolf

Pentax Gallery - TOKYO

by Nate Skirper

During my recent business trip to Japan, I had the chance to spend an afternoon at the Pentax Gallery in Tokyo, about a half hour's ride from the Ginza area.

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TRADE FAIR HUGE SUCCESS !



Doug Campbell "tell it like it is" to a likely prospect.

First MPHS Trade Fair -Dec.2nd

When the doors opened at 1:30 on December 2, 1972 for the first Trade Fair of MPHS, more than 50 people were lined up to pay the admission fee and get a chance to see or obtain the many hundreds of items of photographica on display or for sale. Fifteen tables were filled; several exhibitors had to share tables for no more were available. The activity for the first hour or two was frantic, as intense as the New York trade fair of June 1971, and far more so than any comparable time period at Columbia, Columbus, Cleveland or Chicago last season. When the crowd thinned a bit, we had a chance to make some pictures.



Doug Elbiner, who makes his own tintypes, had many nice old tintypes and other images for sale or trade.



Rick Skipper is showing his collection of photographic novelties to Mrs. Wallace, while serious haggling goes on in the background.



Langdon Mayhew of Fenton, Mich., searches for some undiscovered treasure, while an earnest group of image collectors converse by Willard Thompson's table of Daguerreotypes.

photos by Nate Skipper

First MPHS Trade Fair -Dec.2nd



Two collectors look for "real bargains" on the Society's tables. In the background, Treasurer Don Wallace and another collector are getting acquainted.

The Society's two tables held nearly two hundred cameras, lenses, shutters, books, movie cameras and who remembers what else; all proceeds went into the MPHS treasury. Jim Magyar and Don Issacsen were the major contributors for this trade fair. MPHS thanks them and all the others who made donations.

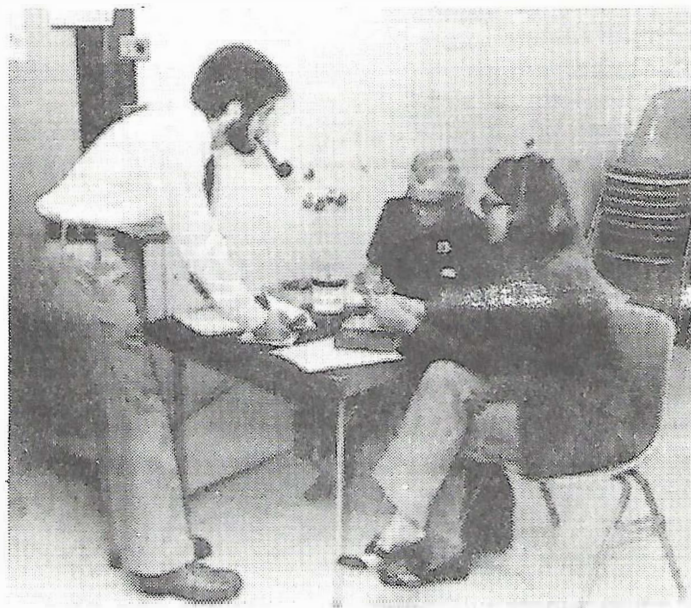
All members who have photographica they no longer want, or who want to benefit the Society, are urged to contribute to our next trade fair. Prices are set by a committee of MPHS officers and are calculated to move the items quickly--to the benefit of MPHS and the delight of the 'lucky hunter.



Andee Seeger and John Naslanic shared a table of all sorts of photographic goodies. Is that dish pan to wash prints in. Andee?



The coffee table (manned by Rick Skipper) was able to just about break even, thanks to contributions from our patrons, like Bob Arach.



Mrs. Wallace (wife of our Treasurer, Don Wallace) and Barbara Skipper (Secretary), reporting to Vice-President Doug Elbinger, that we had 74 paid admissions. Certainly a gratifying turnout for our first show.

Why I Collect...

by John Naslanic

Until I was asked why I collect, I didn't think of myself as a collector. Of course, I have had pack-rat tendencies of long standing in accumulating odds and ends of information, and indulging in experimentation with photographic processes that combine an interest in photography with a background in science. While studying chemistry at Cass Tech High School, I experimented with such things as the Tripac/Chromatone process, and made my own blue-print paper and flashlight powders, and this experimentation has simply continued through the years.

A few years ago, I decided to look into the collodion process, having read in a book dated about 1908 that "...the process is now largely obsolete and used only where work of the very highest quality is required." In researching this lost art, I found that books such as *The Silver Sunbeam* printed in 1864, often contain a profusion of unworkable formulae. Other old books simply advised the photographer to "buy a bottle of iodized collodion." And although Mallinckrodt Chemical Works listed iodized collodion in their catalog as late as 1958, their sales department never heard of it. The best leads came from such sources as *Anthony's Bulletins* of the 1890's, which mentioned other literature available at the time, such as *The Ferrotypes and How To Make It*, and a definitive summary of the state of the art of the wet plate process in the 1896 *British Journal Almanac*. The library of the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House was able to furnish copies of these materials for a nominal fee.

While learning about and trying various photographic processes, both old and new, over a period of more than 30 years, I have accumulated several hundred books on photography, along with some of the associated apparatus and images -- so maybe I am a collector, after all!

Collector's Bookshelf

by Nate Skipper

Collecting Vintage Cameras, Volume 1, The American 35 mm, by K. C. Lahue and J. A. Bailey, Amphoto, New York, 1972, 159 pp., illus., \$5.95.

A second book in quick succession by the same authors on the same subject naturally invites comparisons and speculation

as to why. Compared to *Glass, Brass and Chrome*, the earlier volume reviewed in September, *Collecting* is simpler, less thought-provoking and undoubtedly written for the less experienced (or less dedicated) reader. *Collecting* is more concerned with the "what" and "how" of collecting the wide variety of American-made 35's, while *Glass, Brass and Chrome* gives little attention to the "how" but considers "why" the American-made 35 arose and died.

Collecting is aimed at the beginner (or even dealer) who wants to quickly obtain specific details about a group of cameras, including pricing information. Some reviewers have criticised the authors' comments on prices, but Messrs. Lahue and Bailey were brave enough to make some judgments, while most other writers on photographica have given only vague price ranges or none at all.

Collecting is not as valuable to the advanced collector or historian as *Glass, Brass and Chrome*, but does have an arrangement permitting information to be found quickly, and it costs somewhat less.

Available from your favorite bookseller or from the Editor.

More Photographic Advertising From A-to-Z, by George Gilbert, Yesterday's Cameras, Riverdale, N.Y., 185 pp., illus., \$6.95.

This book is a second, and equally interesting and informative, collection of reprinted advertisements for a wide variety of cameras and other photographic items.

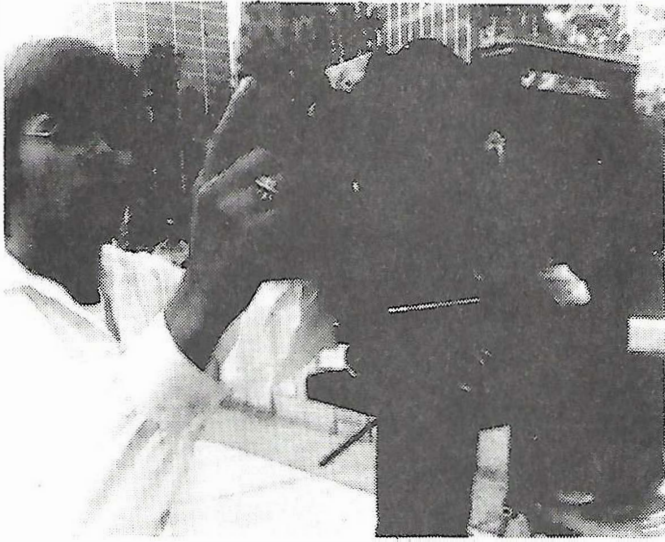
Volume Two is page numbered consecutively with Volume One, and a cumulative index is provided. Reading the old advertisements often helps to date a model by finding exactly the one in question, or a similar model that was offered at a certain date. Moreover, I enjoy seeing the different advertising appeals to sell different cameras, or the same camera at different periods. George chose some advertisements from my collection for Volume Two; many other collectors contributed as well.

Volume One of *A-to-Z* has become a "standard reference work" for collectors and dealers of photographica. Many people are now referring to an item they are offering as described or illustrated on page so and so of *A-to-Z*.

I would recommend this book, and the earlier one too, to every collector whatever his special interest.

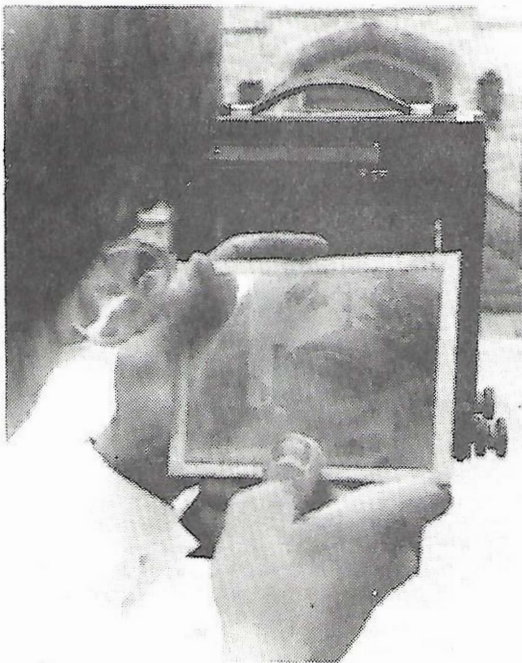
Order Volume Two at the discount price of \$6.00 from MPHS and you save a little and your Society makes a little.

DAGUERRIAN OBSERVANCE August 19th

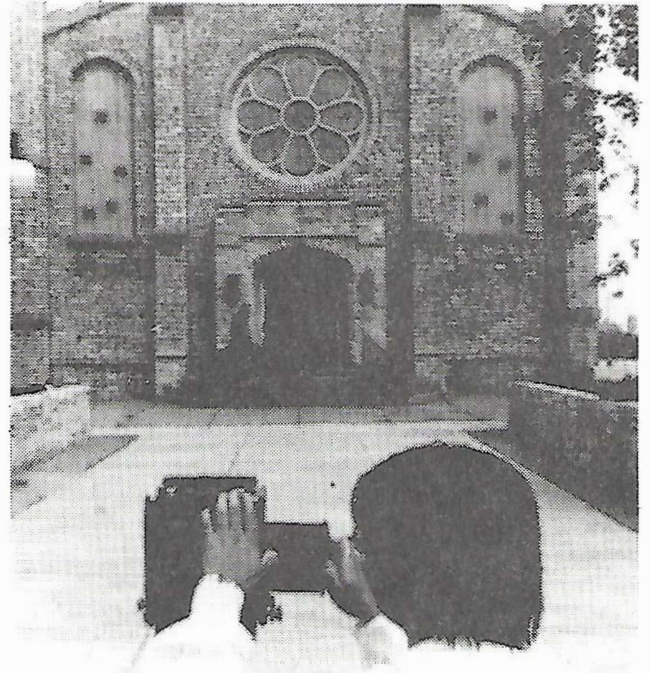


Our Daguerrian is Fred Birkhill who has been experimenting (with varying degrees of success) with the Daguerrian process for over a year. Since he has found that lengthy exposures are often necessary, he is now experimenting with "accelerators" in an effort to shorten the exposure time. Fred is a student at Eastern Michigan University.

Fred advises anyone who wants to experiment with the Daguerrian process to first provide his darkroom facilities with adequate ventilation. The vapours of bromine and chlorine, used for sensitizing the silver-plated copper plates, are caustic and mercury vapour, used for developing the latent image, is poisonous.



photos by Joe Lippincott



It was a sweltering hot day in Paris on August 19th, 1839, when Arago, an eminent French physicist and Member of the Chamber of Deputies, announced to the French National Academy and the world the fantastic discovery by Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre of the first practical method of photography.

In honor of Daguerre on the 133rd anniversary of Arago's announcement, the members of the MPHS commemorated that event by attempting the making of a Daguerreotype in front of the Mariner's Church, one of the oldest buildings in Detroit. The "Daguerrian artist" is Fred Birkhill who, like his predecessors, buffs and sensitizes his silver plates himself in preparation for a picture. One of the "townspeople" is Doug Elbinger, Vice President of MPHS who was instrumental in arranging press and TV coverage of the event. About this experience, Doug said, "One can hardly appreciate the unique qualities of the Daguerreotype until he stands, holding a pose, in ninety-degree August heat for five minutes to have his own Daguerreotype made. Such was my experience during the first official MPHS program."

The Back Page of the Saturday, August 19, 1972, *Detroit Free Press* featured a story on the MPHS commemoration, illustrated with photographs by Joe Lippincott, Free Press photographer, and member of MPHS.

Did You Know ...?

That on January 16, Doug Elbinger gave a lecture to the advanced photography class at Oakland Community College on the History of Photography.

That Peterson's PhotoGraphic magazine for February 1973 is a special issue on "nostalgia." There are articles on photographing a vanishing America, the "look" of the "thirties, how to produce a modern "tintype" (a black & white positive backed by tinfoil) and a story on Edward Weston. At newstands.

That Rick Skipper and his collection of Photographic Novelties are written up in the January 1973 issue of Photographica, the newsletter of the Photographic Historical Society of New York.

That C. C. Packard, Kalamazoo, MI, was issued U.S. patent No. 451,880 in May or June 1891 for a "photographic shutter." Vol. III, No. 7, July 1891 The American Amateur Photographer.

Pentax Gallery - TOKYO

The exhibition room was hung with the winning photographs in Asahi's annual contest for Pentax users. Good lighting and comfortable benches invited a leisurely inspection of the black and white and color prints. Captions were in Japanese, but arabic numbers were used for focal length, aperture and speed.

The other room held the Gallery's museum of photographica. Only about 400 cameras, accessories and images can be shown at once, and these are arranged in glass cabinets and display tables. The majority of the cameras shown were German, Japanese, Chinese and U.S. folding roll-film models, with enough rare and odd models to keep the advanced collector interested. A Homeos, some other stereo cameras, a Leica Model A, a single-exposure Leica and an Ur-Leica replica were on display. One corner was devoted to very early equipment including a Giroux Daguerreotype camera.

There were several displays of images, most from Germany and parts of Europe, illustrating the various processes and periods. I did not see any oriental Daguerreotypes, Daguerrian or stereoscopic equipment.

Almost all items had a neat sign--in Japanese--but often the name of the camera, date and lens information were in roman letters. A novel touch was a tiny colored flag painted on each card to identify the country of origin.

TRADERS' COLUMN

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. Send your ad and payment to P.O. Box 191, Dearborn, MI, 48121.

WANTED: Camera Work or Camera Notes, any issue; Leica Photography, any prewar issue; Leica, Graflex and Rolleiflex catalogs, sales literature, magazines and books, including books by Paul Wolff, Fritz Henle, and others; various issues of The Photo-Miniature, The Camera and American Photography; also American Annual of Photography for 1887, 1889, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1902, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1917, 1919, 1922, 1925, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1931, 1935, 1951, and 1952. Will buy outright or I have various magazines, literature, and antique equipment to trade. N. R. Skipper, Jr., 4782 Crestview Ct., Birmingham, MI, 48010.

WANTED: More 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. We have received suggestions from only three persons so far; there must be more good ideas out there! Selection of logo is expected to take place at the annual meeting in June. The member submitting the design will receive a suitable prize. Write to the President, care of the Society.

SELL OR TRADE: Leica II(D) body \$125; 35mm Elmar f/3.5, \$60. Leitz Imaret \$45; Kodak 616 Monitor f/4.5 Special, \$40; No. 3-A Brownie "pencil box", \$30. Want pre-war Rolleis. Nate Skipper, 851-3394.

WANTED: Stereo views, lantern slides, & cabinet photos of any caves. Also Rocks at Mackinac, MI. Have many views available. James Quinlan, 1275-904 Elgin, Burlington, Ontario, Canada.

WANTED: Any wet-plate studio equipment, lens & images. D. Elbinger, 476-5943.

WANTED: Century cameras, catalogs, accessories & equipment. Also, wet plate cameras, equipment, posing chairs, head clamps, collodion silver bath. Early photo equipment catalogues, magazines, etc., posters, display items, toys, men's jewelry or rings, etc. Write for sale item list. R. Wolfe, Box 41, Taylor, MI, 48180.

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TRADERS' COLUMN

WANTED: CONTAX & 8mm equipment. Martin Alger, Box 97, Royal Oak, MI, 48068.

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

Interested in buying miniatures, early movie and reflex cameras. Bob Bolda, 11127 Erdman, Sterling Heights, MI, 48078.

WANTED by private collector, Daguerreotypes etc. Best prices paid. Please include description, price in first letter. Also interested in correspondence and possible trades with other collectors. Reply to: J. Feder, 1761 August Rd., No. Babylon, N.Y., 11703.

DAGUERREOTYPES MADE. Fred Birkhill, 31 Shady Hollow, Dearborn, MI, 48124.

The Detroit Stereographic Society meets the 2nd Wed. each month at the Ferndale Public Library, 222 E. Nine Mile Rd., about one block east of Woodward. Plenty of parking.

SELL: Folding Kodak, box cameras; Agfa boxes. Andee Seeger, Tu2-1113.

WANTED: Military daguerreotypes, ambrotypes. R. McDonald, 2240 Glencoe Hills Dr., Ann Arbor, MI, 48104.

ARTS & CRAFTS Workshop Slides, showing individual crafts. Available for schools, clubs. Represent 15 yrs of collection by art teacher. TO4-4496, Emily Scott.

TRADE: 4x5 Speed Graphic, accessories for Rollei 4x4. Marvin Hartwig, 673-5091.

TRADE OR PURCHASE: Daguerreotypes (especially colored) & cases; L. Walle, 455-5099.

WANTED: An outdoor setting, such as a farm or lake side, for the Annual Meeting of MPHS in June. An "old-time" photographic outing and picnic are planned. Here's a chance to try out that antique camera while pursuing your collecting interests with fellow members. Anyone who can suggest a place, please call any member of the Executive Committee, or write to the President, care of the Society.

WANTED: More 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.

MICHIGAN PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 191
DEARBORN, MICHIGAN, 48121

MICHIGAN PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY