



The Photogram

Michigan Photographic Historical Society

Fall 2024

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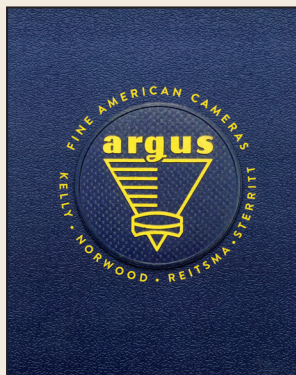
Reflections on the Rolleiflex.



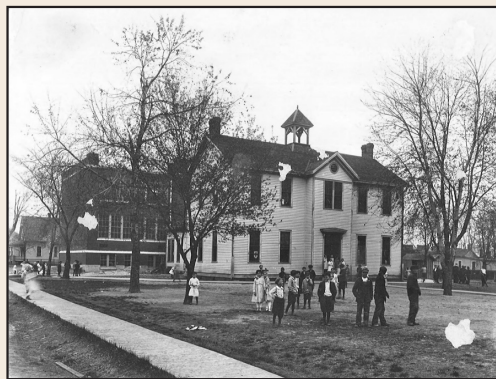
Photography Shoot at Eastern Market.



Howard Bond with his 11x14 Deardorff camera.



Bob Kelly and his Argus Journey.



Worden School in 1918.



Flat Folding Kodak.

MiPHS Annual Photographica Show & Sale
Sunday, October 6 from 10 am - 3 pm at the Elks Hall in Royal Oak Michigan

The Michigan Photographic Historical Society (MiPHS)



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News & Upcoming MiPHS Events

Election of Board Members and Welcome to New Board Members Jeff Rowe and Clint Hryhorijiw
By the suggestion of Nick Valenti, VP of Communications—and unanimous approval by the Board—all MiPHS members were requested to accept all board members and positions nominated for their respective terms. Since there were no objections to our Board of Director's slate, all nominations and officer positions were automatically confirmed. At our June 20th Board meeting, Chuck Fehl was nominated and elected unanimously to replace retiring Doug Aikenhead as President. New members: Jeff Rowe has been a MiPHS member since 2021 and has a lifelong interest in photographic techniques, genres, history and camera equipment. Clint Hryhorijiw has had a deep interest in the pursuit of the history of photography of the world since college, and has continued this interest through association and membership in various societies and historical groups throughout North America, Europe and Africa, often holding executive or director positions.

2024 MiPHS Photographica Show & Sale Sunday, October 6 10 am–3 pm Elks Hall, Royal Oak, MI
Donations of items for our sale need to be reviewed prior to acceptance to the show. The Board has experience with assisting with photographic items from estates. Contact the Board at michiganphotohistory@gmail.com.

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 \$40 or \$50 per year (January 1 to December 31) depending on whether you receive a digital or printed, mailed copy of *The Photogram* and \$20 for students with a valid ID. The **MiPHS** has a PayPal link for paying dues at our website "MiPHS.org." The **MiPHS** is on Facebook at "MiPHS Public Group." **MiPHS** mailing address: 19 Chestnut Dr., Chelsea MI 48118-9416.

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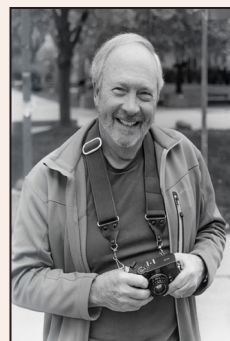
Contributions from **MiPHS** members and non-members are welcomed. To submit an article, review, occasional photo ad (free to **MiPHS** members annually), an informational item for publication, or questions about submissions formats, contact **Karen Fehl**, Editor, at: michiganphotohistory@gmail.com. **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 (New) President

Dear MiPHS Members,

As your new president and ongoing treasurer, I'd like to thank you for your continued support of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society. For those who don't know me, I've been a MiPHS member since 2009, board member since 2019 and was elected treasurer in 2021. I am a retired banker, having worked as a commercial lender in Cleveland and Detroit. I met my wife Karen (your *Photogram* editor and webmaster) in the late 1970s in Cleveland where we both grew up.



It was in that environment and time-frame where I became interested in camera collecting and photography—while there was a camera store on every downtown street corner. I would buy old cameras traded in for the “new” Canon AE-1, Nikon FM and the like, when Leicas, Rolleiflexes and Zeiss Ikon were considered obsolete. There was a magazine called *Shutterbug Ads* which listed thousands of classified ads for buying and selling classic equipment. Demand was greatly enhanced by Japanese and European investors benefiting from their strong currencies. This mail orientated camera business of mine lasted through the mid-1980s. Now it's just for fun.

What really got me energized about the collecting hobby though, were the large national camera shows that were promoted by Detroit Sam Vinegar's Photorama group. Many will remember the 600+ vendor, three-day events held at the Southfield Civic Center twice a year and other venues including Cleveland. Dealers from all over the country would show up at these where you could find almost anything.

Those huge Photorama days are gone, but the image and camera collecting hobby is anything but dead. Our annual Photographica show held in October has always been well attended and profitable.

Our sister society in Boston—Photographic Historical Society of New England (“PHSNE”), now shares its beautiful website (phsne.org) and monthly newsletter “*snap shots*” with us via email—and we do the same for them. This Fall we will join PHSNE's monthly Zoom presentations—which are outstanding if you haven't seen one. PHSNE's extensive Zoom presentation library is available on YouTube.

Also of interest to our members are local photo shoots organized by the Ann Arbor Camera Club and MiPHS member Dietmar Haenchen. So far, we have covered Eastern Market (twice), U of M's main campus, Dequindre Cut Park and the WSU campus. We try to encourage the use of vintage film cameras or the use of vintage glass on modern digital cams. All are welcome—just give us your name and email and we'll include you on the invite list. Check your emails and our website's Coming Events posts for these announcements. Please see Dietmar's article on pages 11-13 about our June adventure.

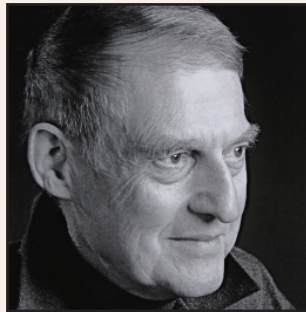
Also, this last year we have upgraded our website to be more up-to-date and user friendly. Soon we will have almost 70 issues of our past *Photogram* library available in the Member Login section. If you haven't taken the time to explore both these websites, you have hours of enlightenment ahead.

Chuck Fehl

Annual Photographica Show & Sale on October 6

Please mark your calendars to attend this year's Camera and Photo show we call Photographica. It is held in the Elks Hall of Royal Oak, MI located at 2401 E. Fourth Street. Royal Oak, MI. This gathering is one of the annual highlights of our society. The Sunday show runs from 10 am to 3 pm with the auction starting about 2 pm. Contact any board member with auction items you would like to donate, or if you would like to reserve a table.

Howard Bond: Photographer, Engineer and Musician Farewell to a Longtime MiPHS Member



Howard Bond, a longtime MiPHS member, was born in 1931. He passed away on July 13, 2024. Howard lived in Ann Arbor since 1962.

Howard was a musician and photographer. Following four delightful years in music classes at Bowling Green State University with his future wife—Margaret Wepler Bond—he was a high school band director in Blissfield, Michigan for five years. During this time, he obtained an M.A. in Music Ed from the University of Michigan. A piece of band music he composed was published. After three years at Michigan where he obtained an M.S. degree in mathematics, he worked as a computer programmer while establishing his photography career.

In this, he had help from three workshops and several private sessions with Ansel Adams, resulting in his concentration on photography as a fine art. His articles in *Photo Techniques* magazine led photographers from all over the world to attend his workshops. For many years he sang in the University of Michigan's Choral Union, which performed large choral works with leading American and European symphony orchestras.

His wife, Margaret Bond, preceded him in death on August 18, 2022. He is survived by two children, Susan Tobias and husband, Abdul of Columbia, MD, and Brian R. Bond and wife Lidia of Montrose, CO; and his grandchildren, Brian B. Bond and Brianna Bond, who live in Colorado.

A tribute will be held on October 19, 2024 at Genesis Social Hall, 2309 Packard St., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. Arrival time is at 4:00pm.

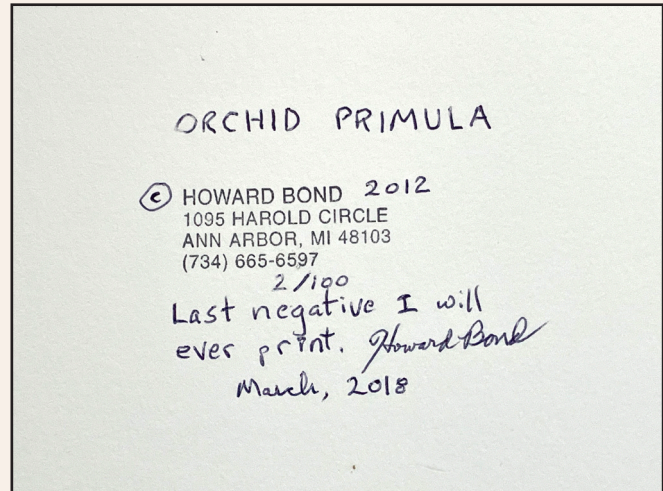
Obituary published on Legacy.com by Nie Family Funeral Home & Cremation Service - Carpenter Road Chapel on Jul. 20, 2024.



**“Long Canyon, Utah” by Howard Bond.
Print 1/100. From the collection of Yuki Kawai.**



**“Orchid Primula” by Howard Bond.
Print 2/100.
From the collection of Yuki Kawai.**



ORCHID PRIMULA
© HOWARD BOND 2012
1095 HAROLD CIRCLE
ANN ARBOR, MI 48103
(734) 665-6597
2/100
Last negative I will
ever print. *Howard Bond*
March, 2018

**Reverse of “Orchid Primula”.
From the collection of Yuki Kawai.**

Reflections on the Rolleiflex

By Chuck Fehl

One camera format that was hugely popular in the 1930s until the early 1960s, but is all but forgotten today, was the Twin Lens Reflex (“TLR”) camera. As the name implies, it has two (usually) similar lenses on top of each other—one used for viewing (composing and focusing) and the other hooked up to a shutter and other mechanisms to expose the film and make the picture. They operate in parallel—being mounted on the same adjustable lens board. When the top viewing lens brings the subject into focus in the mirrored reflex viewfinder, the bottom (taking) lens is automatically focused on the film in a separate compartment. An elegant arrangement!

The company that contributed most to the TLR design and early production was Franke & Heidecke DBP of Braunschweig, Germany (“F&H”). This company started out with its successful pack film Heidoscop (1921) and roll film Rolleidoscop (1926) that popularized high quality medium format stereo photography in the 1920s and beyond. The roll film version gave the company the nickname “Rollei” and it stuck. Those triple lens reflex* cameras were so advanced that they are still in use today by stereo hobbyists as they use (modern) 120 professional roll film.

What F&H noticed however, was that many photographers used these stereo cameras as makeshift TLRs by capping one stereo lens, taking a 2-D picture and then switching the lens cap to the other lens for their next 2-D shot before advancing the film or plate. Thus, the TLR was conceptualized, not by Franke & Heidecke, but by its customers’ practices. Ergo, if you can’t beat them, join them—and the TLR Rolleiflex was born to the public in 1929.



Rollei’s original product lines were stereo cameras, a Rolleidoscop in this case. This one used 120 roll film and has been worshiped by stereographers for close to 100 years. The side knob on the camera’s right focuses the lenses. The opposite one sets the shutter speeds. The remaining controls are logically placed on its top deck. The camera is made primarily from cast aluminum and is lighter than it looks.

Close-up of the Zeiss lenses in the Rolleidoscop. The center lens was used in conjunction with the reflex viewfinder (above it) to focus the two stereo lenses coupled to it. The 1 to 1/300th second shutter(s) was of a silent pneumatic type.

Although stereo camera production was continued by F&H until the start of World War II, by the mid-1930s they were the leading producer of quality TLR cameras in the world in both format sizes— (120 and 127) and had two quality levels: the Rolleiflex that had premium Carl Zeiss Jena “Tessar” lenses and state of the art Compur shutters, and the Rolleicord which was half the price of the Rolleiflex but had lesser quality Zeiss “Triotar” lenses and basic Compur shutters. The Rolleicord line was also missing some of the automatic features incorporated in the Rolleiflexes.

The prewar pinnacle in the Rolleiflex line was the 1937 Automat which pioneered the classic crank wind lever that wound the film with an automatic film stop and tensioned the shutter in one operation. It also had a handy window—showing shutter speed and aperture selected at a glance without taking your eye off the subject in the reflex viewfinder. F&H and corporate successors Rollei-Werke and Rollei Fototechnic, buttressed by over 50 international patents. It continued to make steady improvements in the Rolleiflex through the early 1990s with improved lenses, focusing screens, exposure meters and finally the super rare commemorative Rolleiflex models. The final US price on a Rolleiflex 2.8F was \$942 in 1978 (approximately \$4,400 in 2024 dollars).



A later version of the 1937 Rolleiflex Automat— which continued production until 1956 as it was so advanced. It was widely copied, but never beat. One of these in good working condition is an excellent way to enter into medium format photography.



The original and distinctive Art Deco Rolleicord of 1933 was a budget minded Rolleiflex. Using lenses of lesser specification was the main price differential. Superb quality was consistent throughout all Rollei products.

The prewar crown jewel in the Rolleicord line must be the original 1933-36 “Art Deco” model which had the distinctive deco case design in nickel and black paint. To keep the price down on the Rolleicords, F&H utilized knob film wind, red window film counter, manual shutter cocking, and lesser pedigreed Zeiss and Schneider lenses. The Rolleicord would be produced through its Model Vb Type 2 ending in 1974. It remained true to its origin as a simplified Rolleiflex, maintaining a significant price advantage to its big brother, but still producing excellent results. The final Rolleicord price was \$312 in 1975 (\$1,800 in today’s dollars).



Close-up of a later Rolleiflex 3.5F showing aperture and shutter speed controls (on either side of the lenses) and coupled match needle metering dial inside the focusing ring on the camera body’s side. The exposure system was easy to use and worked well.

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Rollei also produced some ingenious accessories for their camera lines including bayonet mount filters and lens hoods, Rolleinar close up lenses that compensated for parallax error, a Prism viewfinder attachment that aided the Rolleiflex's use in action and sports photography, as the standard waist level viewfinder's image was reversed left to right. After 1950, Rolleiflash devices became popular and were demanded by press and event photographers. A most unique device called a Rolleikin allowed the use of 35mm film cartridges of up to 36 exposures used primarily by wedding photographers. Many more devices were provided for specific or scientific applications.



Camera on Left: Rolleiflex T (for Tessar) ca. 1961 with EV shutter and uncoupled meter. **Camera on Right:** Rolleiflex 3.5F ca. 1968 with Prism finder attachment and close-up lenses.

In addition to the standard Rollei TLR lines using 120 or later 220 films, there was a smaller version known as the Baby or Sport Rolleiflexes using 127 film. These were marketed as travel cameras, or ladies cameras, as they would better fit in a suitcase or handbag. The 127 film size gave twelve square 4x4cm exposures, as opposed to the standard size camera yielding 12 (or 24) square 6x6cm negatives. The 4x4 format also could be used to produce "Super Slides" which could be mounted in 35mm slide mounts giving a 33% larger (square) picture than a 35mm (rectangular) camera slide when projected.

The Baby Rolleis were produced in various models from 1931 to 1968. The final Baby Rollei price was \$175 in 1968 (\$1,533 in today's dollars). Note: The Baby's 127 (aka "Vest Pocket") film size was discontinued in the USA by Kodak in 1995. Supplies were quickly depleted. It can still be purchased fresh dated from foreign suppliers at a premium price (\$25+ per roll) or homemade by cutting down 120 film and re-spooling it using recycled 127 paper backing and spools. You could also take a chance on buying B&W Kodak NOS expired film, but I would stay away from anything older than a 1990 expiration date and have some assurance it was properly stored. The baby Rolleis are now mainly collector items.



Two examples of "Baby" Rolleiflexes taking 127 film. Camera on Left: the 1938 "Sport" had an f/2.8 Zeiss taking lens and film advance crank. **Camera on Right:** the 1965 Grey Baby with f/3.5 Schneider lenses was marketed to ladies, travelers and "super slide" shooters.

It could be said that the Rolleiflex ended the reign of the Speed Graphic in press and event photography around 1950 by allowing multiple shots to be taken sequentially. With the Speed Graphic you likely have one chance to get an action shot. The Nikon F ended the Rolleiflex press era around 1970 with its vast array of lenses and accessories, giving the user many more chances and options for photo coverage. F&H Rollei tried heroically to offset this challenge by offering Tele Rollei and Wide Angle Rollei cameras or heavy and expensive accessory lenses called Mutars. These items were produced in small numbers in the 1960s and early 1970s. By that point, the press business was lost to the Asian producers, as sending any camera down a German assembly line was cost prohibitive.



Note the size difference between the Grey Baby (left) and the full sized Rolleis on the right.

Today there is a resurgence in Rolleiflex interest as the later “T” and 3.5 and 2.8Fs command premium prices if in good condition and functionality. In several ways they are superior to the venerable Hasselblad, having the same normal lens (f/2.8 Zeiss Planar) and (Synchro-Compur) shutter. It is less complex in many respects and servicing is easier and less frequent. They are the ideal street photography camera as their waist level viewfinder and quiet shutter is less conspicuous to the subject for better candid shots. Every Rollei product was made of the finest materials available, and are excellent value propositions in the long run. All Rollei TLRs were made in Germany.

I have shot many rolls of 120 black and white and color slides with my (1968) Rollei 3.5F and the results are outstanding. The Carl Zeiss lenses are second to none, the film loading is foolproof, the viewfinder is bright, and the exposure meter is coupled to the shutter speed and or aperture and reasonably accurate for its type. Rolleiflex serial numbers are unreliable, but it has been estimated by *McKeown's* that over two million TLRs and seven million cameras overall have been made by F&H Rollei and subsequent concerns

Values today vary by location, but a Rolleiflex F is valued at \$750 to \$3,000 (more recent retro-collectible models valued at \$2,000 to \$5,000). Others are valued as follows: Rolleiflex T—\$500 to \$800, Rolleicords—\$200 to \$500, and Baby Rolleiflexes—\$250 to \$600. The rare Tele and super rare Wide Angle Rolleis go for \$800 to \$4,500 depending on model and condition. Prices are 20% higher in Europe as much of the high-end Rollei output was exported. There were a few later Rolleiflexes produced or modified to accept 220 films providing 24 exposures, which were discontinued about 2010. The \$200 to \$400 premium once paid for this 220 feature has largely vanished. The real crime was the disappearance of 127 film which made the Baby Flexes so popular as a miniature medium format camera.

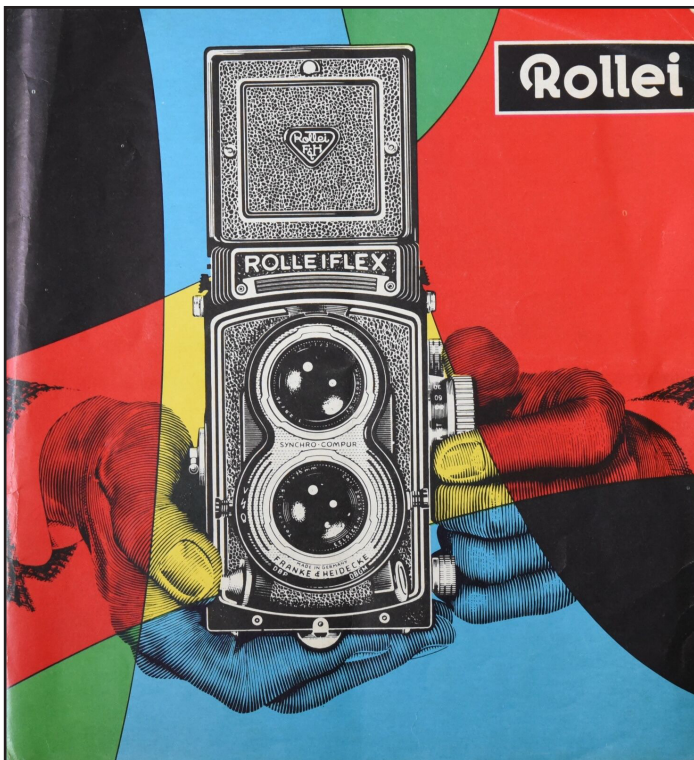


The Rolleiflex 3.5F (and 2.8F) were made between 1959 and 1978 and a few by special order into the mid 1980s. All had Gossen coupled meters, Synchro-Compur shutters and either Zeiss or Schneider professional quality lenses.

Endnotes

¹ Triple lens reflex refers to the early use of a center lens reflex viewer focusing two stereo taking lenses on either side. Later stereo cameras utilized a coupled rangefinder for focusing, or were simply scale focused..

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Rolleiflex T advertisement from a 1958 brochure.



Franke & Heidecke ad from 1950 showing a Rolleiflex Automat II and a Rolleicord II. By 1956 Rollei continued to dominate the professional scene with over one million TLRs produced.



The Rollei brand under Franke & Heidecke.

Photography Outing by Michigan Photographic Historical Society (MiPHS) and Ann Arbor Camera Club (AACC)

By Dietmar Haenchen

On May 25, 2024 a group of MiPHS and AACC members met at 8:00 am at the Eastern Market in Detroit to take photographs at the Market and the surrounding area. Our group totaled seven. Some of us used film cameras and/or manual focus lenses—to again use “something historic.”

The Eastern Market is a great historic district in Detroit and an excellent destination for photography. The Market is the largest historic public market in the U.S. and dates back to the 1840s. There are over 225 vendors in the market selling many items including local produce, meat, flowers, and local arts and crafts. It is open all year round. The area around Eastern Market, with over 150 murals, is great for photographers. The murals have a number of sponsors and are definitely a draw to the area. There are also cafes, art galleries, and artist studios in the area.

When we started taking photos it was cloudy, which worked out well for some of the photos under the roofed areas—except that this sometimes led to slow shutter speeds. We also went to the Gratiot Central Meat Market. At the time we arrived the area was very busy. There were some good photo opportunities there, but the light level was relatively low, and we also needed to be more careful when photographing people.

We found some more good photo ops outside around the markets and in some of the shops. Seeing the variety of the photographs I received from the participants I am again impressed with the different styles we have. Even though we are at the same locations, so many of us have different styles. Anyway, it was fun to do this and I learned quite a bit. We look forward to more photographic trips like this with a mix of cameras, a mix of photographers, and great surroundings. So, see you all soon.

Following are some photographs from our participants for your enjoyment.



Title Shot by Kristen Haenchen.

continued next page

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Dietmar Haenchen and Andy Rothman.
Photo by Jeff Rowe.



On the bridge over Fisher Freeway.
Photo by Tim Kellman.



The Group: Kristen Haenchen, Dietmar Haenchen, Chuck FehI, Jeff Rowe, Tim Kellman and David Kellman.
Andy Rothman is missing. Photo by Unknown Bystander.



Photo by Chuck FehI.



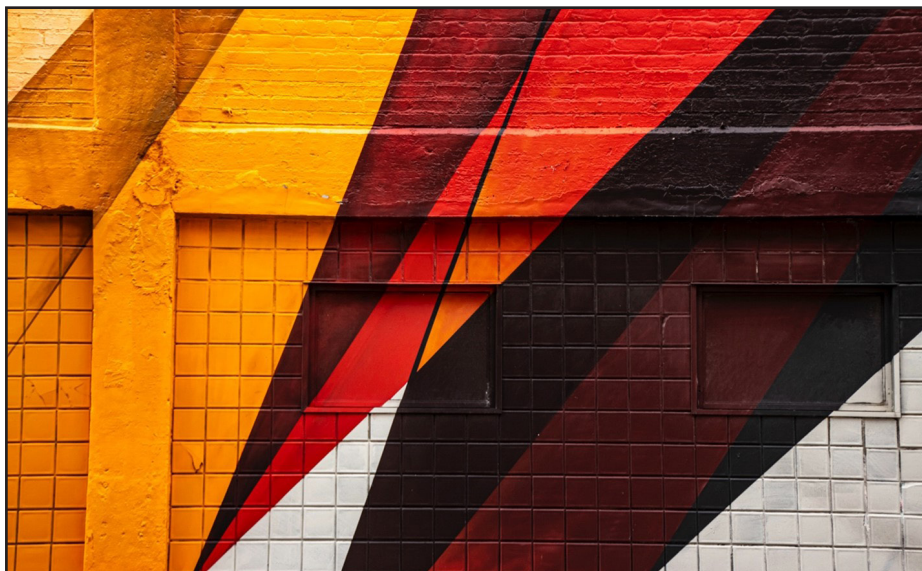
Photo by Chuck Fehl.



Chuck Fehl and Jeff Rowe.
Photo by Dietmar Haenchen.



Photo by
David Kellman.



Graphic wall
art by Kristen
Haenchen.

My Journey with MiPHS and Argus *Fine American Cameras*

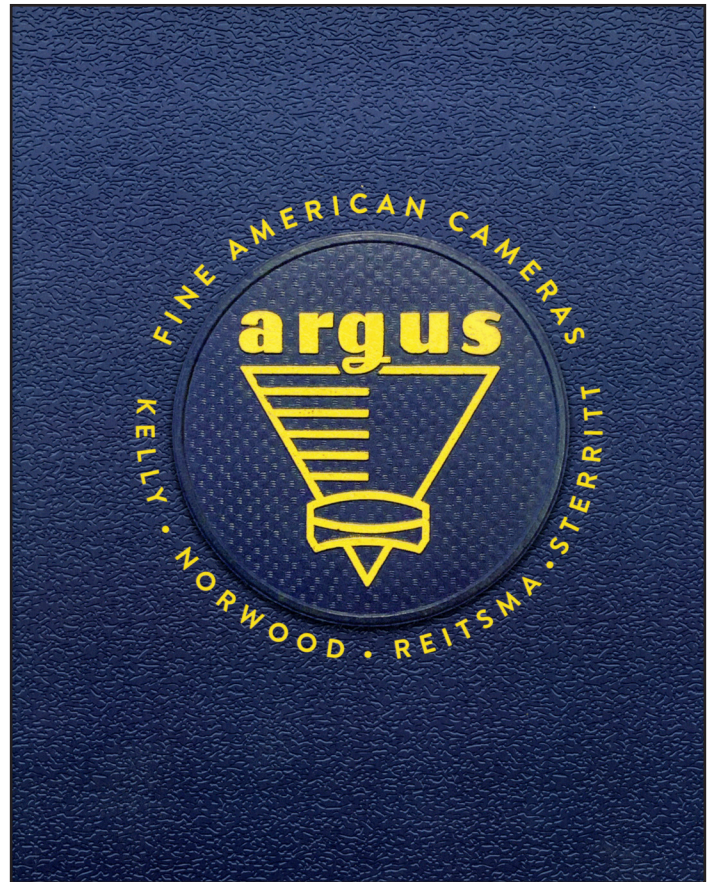
By Bob Kelly

I must have started sending Argus articles to *The Photogram* in 2005. Remembering back, the first article was about the Ann Arbor produced movie cameras. Our editor, Jan Schimmelman, encouraged me to submit the article after I mentioned it to Cindy Motzenbecker and Mark O'Brien. So I drafted a four-page article but was discouraged at how bad I thought it was and gave up. Then Ralph London said, "Send me a copy, I will give you some ideas for the article." Ralph had so many ideas for improvement that when I incorporated all of them and added a few photos, I thought "I can do this."

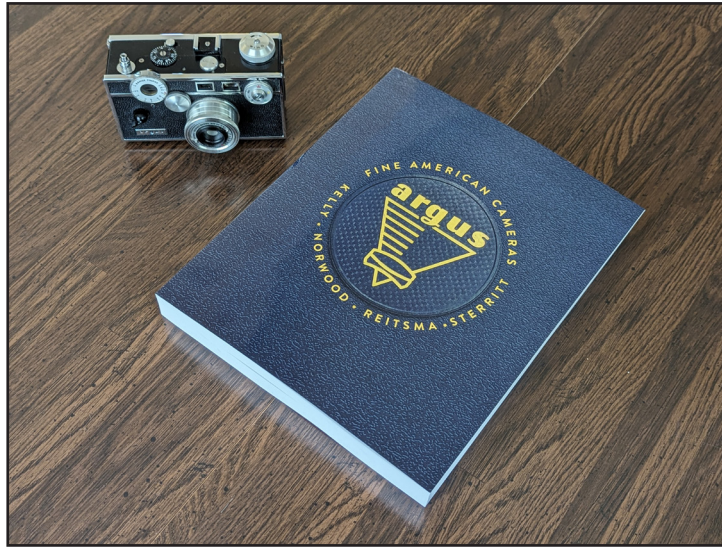
Over the next 12 years I submitted additional articles, with the help of Mary Desjarlais and Cindy. Then I realized the articles could become chapters of a book. I recruited Ron Norwood, Mike Reitsma and Phil Sterritt—who all had done some Argus writings and presentations for the Argus Collectors Group—for assistance in writing the book. The book is titled *Argus Fine American Cameras* by four authors.

There were several group trips to visit the Argus Museum, Bentley Library, and the Ann Arbor District Library. During some of our visits we arranged meetings with past Argus Company employees who all had stories to tell. In Ann Arbor we met many "keepers of the story" and asked them to teach us about the people, the factory, the products, and the business. Along the way we discovered how significant Argus was during WWII and how they transferred innovations to new products.

The excellent collections in MiPHS member homes and the people we met made us realize that this is an Ann Arbor story that can be—and needs to be told.



Book Cover:
Fine American Cameras
by Bob Kelly, Ron Norwood, Mike Reitsma
and Phil Sterritt.



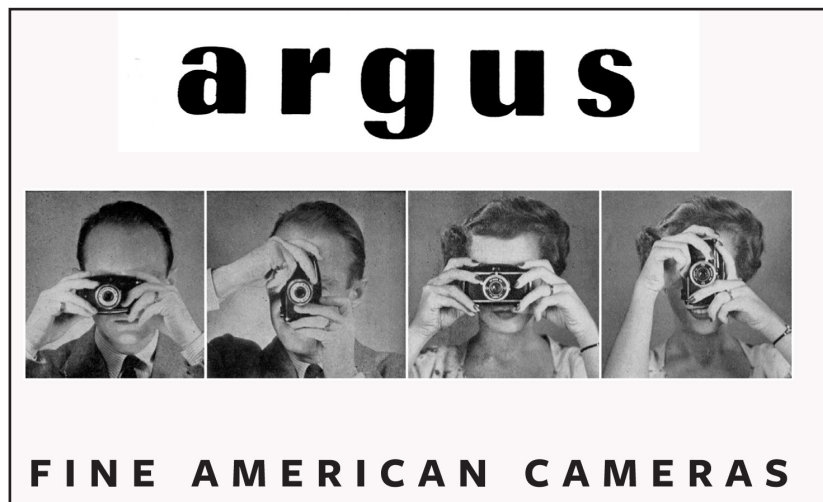
Book Promo Photograph.

As the authors teamed up to do the writing and take the photographs we never realized it would take 492 pages and over 500 color photos. In addition to the actual products, the people, places and stories became a major portion of the materials. Beyond Ann Arbor, in the 1970s–1990s, we discovered what seemed to be an “evergreen” trademark using the Argus name by large importers and even in the conversion to early digital photography. Once the research and writing were completed, we wandered our way through publishing and printing, producing just 250 copies.

The authors are in the process of placing copies for the public at the Ann Arbor District Library, the Bentley Library and the Argus Museum. The book will be available for purchase this fall during the annual conference at the Argus Museum on October 4 and 5. It will also be available for sale at the MiPHS Fall Photographica & Sale Show on October 6.

In many ways this Ann Arbor story has more to be told. We ask MiPHS members to consider sharing additional information they may have, so we can document the rest of the story. Thanks to all the MiPHS members who have assisted us. Please submit any information you wish to me at the email below.

The book has a website. Search: Argus Fine American Cameras. If any members want more information, or a copy of the book in advance of availability at the fall events in Ann Arbor, contact the author at mvmvm@comcast.net.



Frontispiece.

Room No. 5, Worden School, 1911-1912

By *Bill Christen*

I collect school group photographs from the 1860s to the 1930s. Here is a real photo postcard showing students from Room No. 5 of a school in Worden, Illinois.¹



Room No. 5, Worden School, 1911-1912.

The card is an AZO 2 divided back with squares in the corners of the stamp box.² Printed on the reverse is "GENUINE PHOTO BY C. U. WILLIAMS, BLOOMINGTON, ILL." Handwritten on the reverse: "Joe Reck," "Worden Ill," and "Box 41."



Reverse side of RPPC.



Detail of the sign held by the three girls in the front row.



Worden School in 1918.

Worden School was built around 1882. The frame building with a bell tower was used for grades 1–8 until 1918 when it was replaced by an adjacent new building (visible in the photograph). The older building was razed shortly after this photograph was taken. Several children are standing on the lawn in front of the school and in the doorway. Additional children are on the sidewalk at the far left of the photograph. A group of adults are seen in the distance at the far right of the photograph.³

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Joe Reck (Rek) was born on 2 October 1887. He was the son of Joseph Rek (1871–1950) and Josephine Klauber (1879–1958). His siblings were Mary Edith Rek Homer (1898–1936), Francis (Fanny) Rek Kroll (1900–1987), Christina Vera Rek Tennill (1901–1977), Frank Thomas Rex (1904–1994), and Josephine Rek Henke (1913–2000). The entire family except Josephine was born in Austria (later referred to as Czechoslovakia).⁴ She was born in Worden, Illinois where the family settled. They arrived in the United States in 1905.

There is a Michigan connection. Joseph married Emily J. Morgan (1902–1986) twice. The first time was in 1920 in Illinois and the second in 1945 after a divorce in 1943. The divorce and re-marriage both occurred in Michigan. In 1930 they were living in Lincoln Park and later moved to Muskegon County, Michigan. Joe died on 16 August 1964 in Dearborn, Michigan and was buried in Montague, Muskegon County, Michigan where his wife Emily is buried. Joe's sisters, Frances and Josephine, also moved to Montague.

In 1910 the family lived on Barenson Street, Omphgent Township, Worden. According to the United States Census Joseph Rek, age 39 worked in a coal mine and his wife, Josephine, took in laundry at home. When the school photograph was taken Joe was 14, Mary was 13, and Fanny was 12. It is possible that all three could be in the RPPC image.

While researching the Rek family on Ancestry I came across this image of the Rek family. Except for Mary there was no other identification. However, I believe Josephine is sitting between her parents (Joseph and Josephine) in the front row. Standing, from left to right, are Frank, Mary, Christina, Frances, and Joe.⁵



Rek Family between 1915 and 1920.



The coal mine where Joe Reck's father (also named Joseph) was employed.⁶

Endnotes

¹ Worden is a village in Madison County, Illinois. It is located in the southeast corner of Omphgent Township east of Alton, Illinois. It was originally named "New Hampton" when it was laid out in 1860. In 1870, when the Decatur and East St. Louis Railroad was built through the area, the station was named "Worden" after John C. Worden, an English immigrant, businessman, and railroad promoter.

² Eastman Kodak Company, August 1907 listed in Bogdan and Weseloh's *Real Photo Postcard Guide*.

³ Worden School (old), Madison County (Illinois) Historical Society, found at the Illinois Digital Archives, Illinois State Library, Illinois Secretary of State, Springfield, Illinois. <https://www.idaillinois.org/digital/collection/p16614coll13/id/52/rec/88>.

⁴ Also known as Bohemia.

⁵ Submitted to Ancestry by Theresa Jones on 7 June 2024.

⁶ <http://www.miningartifacts.org/Illinois-Mines.html>.

The Flat Folding Kodak: “The Cyclists and Tourist’s Comrade”

By Rob Niederman

In late 2023 I acquired a fine example of the elusive Flat Folding Kodak—a camera I had been chasing for over 20 years. When starting my usual research, I discovered a camera advertised as “The Cyclists and Tourist’s Comrade” (*Photographic News*, August 23, 1895) yet somewhat shrouded in mystery and often misunderstood. On the surface, it looks like an 1890s self-casing, roll film camera similar to the earlier Folding Kodets and later Cartridge Kodaks. Unlike those other series, which consist of many models with feature changes, there appears to be one version of 400 cameras produced by Frank Brownell’s Camera Manufacturing Company for Eastman Photographic Materials Co. Ltd., London.



Figure 1: Early build of the Flat Folding Kodak. Collection of the author.

To many collectors, the Flat Folding Kodak is an enigma: an insignificant blip in the grand oeuvre of early Kodak equipment. With only ten examples known worldwide, it has proven to be a difficult camera to study and accurately document. Most information known today, albeit limited, appears on page 89 of Brian Coe’s book *Kodak Cameras—The First Hundred Years*. At the time Coe wrote about the Flat Folding Kodak, he might have only seen one or two examples because there are no variations which are normally listed in his book.

As a collector and historian, I felt the Flat Folding Kodak's story needed more detail. Starting with contacting other owners to compare our examples and document variances, my investigation extended to museums and other institutions around the world. While new information has been added to the camera's narrative, there remain unanswered questions.

This article describes new information and open questions undergoing further study. For now, the reason why the camera was made, manufacturing dates, design changes, and production quantities are better understood. Advertising was found indicating the cameras' possible market introduction. Research also uncovered a puzzling question of why the camera continued to be promoted in Australia years after it was discontinued.

The Beginning In the 1890s, George Eastman was reshaping the photographic equipment landscape with innovative self-casing folding-bellows cameras—offering an alternative to more complicated, equivalent format field-view cameras. It started in 1890 with the innovative Folding Kodak series, which established a new body pattern influencing designs well into the 20th century. Eastman's quest to improve on the folding bellows design during the 1890s included the introduction of Folding Kodets (1894 to 1897) which briefly sold concurrently with Folding Kodaks (1890 to 1897).

Self-casing cameras changed when in 1893 Thomas Blair introduced a new, smaller roll film and plate camera called "The 400"¹—a portable folding bellows pattern for 4x5 inch pictures on roll film and plates. For some reason, maybe as a way to get around Eastman's control of roll films and patents, Blair chose to sell his new camera in the United Kingdom (U.K.) under the name of "Folding Kamaret." The key to Blair's camera was eliminating the need for a separate roll film carrier by incorporating the film spools into the camera body and positioning them on either side of the bellows.

The Folding Kamaret might have caught Eastman's attention for two reasons: back in 1891, Eastman commented that the company's long-term strategy was film² and at the time of Blair's 1893 introduction, Kodak did not have an equivalent side-spool body pattern.³ Given the success of the Folding Kodak cameras and a publicized commitment to film, it was inevitable that Eastman respond to Blair.

In 1895, Eastman entered the U.K. market with the Flat Folding Kodak which was made in Frank Brownell's U.S. factory. As of this research, there are no records explaining why Eastman chose to sell the camera in the U.K., but a plausible explanation might have been to counter Blair's design as well as open new market opportunities.



Figure 2: Rear view of camera showing how the integrated roll-film back fits into the body.

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Advertisements from 1895 imply that Eastman's new camera, without directly stating as such, was a simpler, less expensive alternative to the Blair 400: £7 vs. ~£12. Though somewhat similar in styling, the Flat Folding Kodak made up to 48 exposures on Eastman's Transparent Film while the Blair 400 made 50 on 4¼" film. In regards to size, the cameras are identical; both advertised as 6½" high x 8½" wide x 3½" deep, which is possibly another indicator that Eastman's camera was meant to compete with Blair's.

With the elimination of boxy roll film carriers (i.e. the Eastman Walker holder), roll film mechanics were placed onto the inner removable back creating a significantly thinner body, as shown in Figure 2. This might have inspired the name "Flat" Folding Kodak. The name could also have conveyed to customers a feeling of small size and portability.

A Collecting Misunderstanding At first glance, the Flat Folding Kodak looks like a mash-up of two Kodak portable bellows cameras; the earlier Folding Kodet series (1894 to 1897) and the later Cartridge Kodak cameras (1897 to 1907). It is the two-camera look that also makes a fascinating backstory that was shared with me by the camera's former owner.

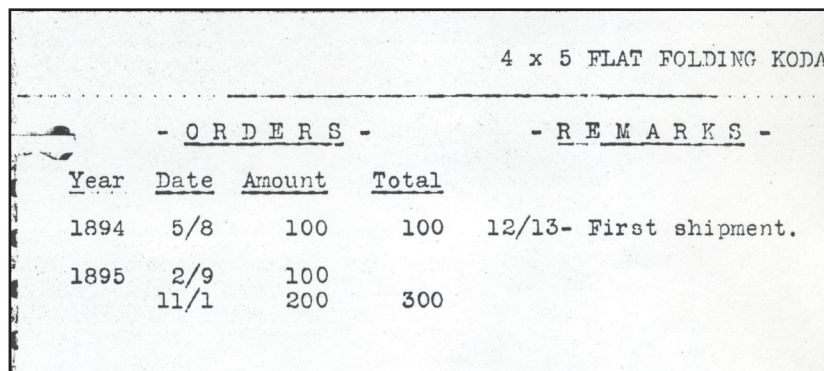
In the early 1970s, a U.S. dealer's son purchased the camera in England and brought it into the United States. It was sold to a prominent New York based dealer. The new owner felt it was probably a "fake" made of parts from a Cartridge Kodak and Folding Kodet. He returned it. The camera was then resold to another collector who found advertising proving the camera was real. The last owner acquired it in the late 1970s and kept it for over 40 years before selling it to me.

It is possible this particular camera is one of the first identified Flat Folding Kodaks. A couple cameras were probably in collections at the time as nothing more than unidentified apparatus. Without period ephemera, it isn't surprising that this camera was considered a fake because pre-Internet research was slow and difficult. And, it is understandable that a very experienced dealer had doubts. Nevertheless, it must have taken a lot of energy and work in the 1970s to find original advertising.

Dating the Flat Folding Kodak and Understanding its Production There is some confusion about the availability dates. What should be taken into account are the years the camera could actually be purchased and its catalogue listings and advertising. The Flat Folding Kodak appears in advertisements from March 1895 to Kodak's U.K. catalogue of June 1897.

Two non-factory April 1895 advertisements mention the camera as "new" or "introduced." Several online websites stating the camera's 1894 market presence is more than likely a misinterpretation of information from Kodak's *Camera Production Order Book*.

As background, Kodak maintained a series of three-ring binders that tracked equipment "orders." Even though the Flat Folding Kodak was advertised from 1895 to 1897, Kodak's *Camera Production Order Book* has a page listing entries totaling 400 "orders" for the years 1894 and 1895.⁴



4 x 5 FLAT FOLDING KODAK				
- ORDERS -				REMARKS
Year	Date	Amount	Total	
1894	5/8	100	100	12/13- First shipment.
1895	2/9	100		
	11/1	200	300	

Figure 3: Detail of the Flat Folding Kodak entry in Kodak's *Camera Production Order Book*.

It is important to consider that orders do not necessarily equal actual camera production; yet the 8 May 1894 order listing has a 13 December 1894 comment stating the initial order of 100 cameras as “First shipment.” This might imply all ordered cameras, or a portion of the order, were being scheduled or shipped to Eastman Photographic Materials Co. Ltd., London for the 1895 model year.

For 1895, there are two order entries for an additional 300 cameras. At this time, there is no documentation stating all or a portion of the 300 orders were manufactured. By Kodak standards, 100 cameras are a very small production number. Is it possible that the 1895 cameras were an improvement on the 1894 design? For example, one improvement is updating the bellows from square corners (1894) to chamfered corners (1895). As a note, Kodak had shifted most of its production to bellows with chamfered corners.

Summary of Production Changes Information provided by other collectors provides an opportunity to closely examine and compare cameras. A comparison of the ten cameras uncovers six feature and build changes. Of the updates / improvements, the most important might be the bellows modification from square to chamfered corners as noted previously. Chamfered bellows corners have better durability and wear than square corners.

In looking at six design characteristics, three camera styles emerge: Early, Transitional, and Improved. Unlike the Folding Kodak series which includes a name change adding the term “Improved,” Kodak did not update its Flat Folding Kodak listings to disclose improvements and design changes. For example, all advertising from 1895 to 1897 have illustrations of square cornered bellows even though five of the cameras have chamfered bellows.

The following chart groups cameras by key features and changes. At a glance, Flat Folding Kodak cameras with square bellows represent the primary feature defining an early build. Square bellows models also have the lowest body and lens serial numbers.

	Early	Transitional	Improved
Bellows corners	Square	Square	Chamfered
Shutter tension lever location	Center	Right	Both
Button for locking winding key	No	Yes	Yes
Front bed lock bracket	No	Yes	Yes
Underbody depression shapes	Rounded	?	Squared
Number of screws on top body	4	2	2
Number of cameras	3	1	6

Figure 4: Three styles (models) of Flat Folding Kodaks.

The transitional camera in Figure 4 belongs to the Bradford Museum in London. It is assessed from a picture appearing on page 89 in Brian Coe’s book *Kodak Cameras—The First Hundred Years*. Queries for additional detail were sent to the museum and replies have not yet been received. Otherwise, the Bradford camera has square cornered bellows (early) plus later features. This is somewhat uncommon for Kodak because the company often revised model names (i.e. Model A, Model B, etc.) when updating and adding features. And while improved cameras have shutter tensioning levers centered on the lens board or located to the right, there is no explanation why there are two positions.

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Figure 5 below compares the bottoms of early and late models. There are two depressions: the left is dedicated to a back locking lever and the right accommodates a winding key, film counter and locking lever. Updates include reshaping the body depressions and changing the film counter material from ivory to brass.



Figure 5: Body comparison of early and later cameras.

Later cameras also include a minor mechanical improvement that adds a button shown in Figure 6 below. Back removal is done in two steps. The first step is to remove the winding key by unscrewing it clockwise. On later cameras, the button must be pressed at the same time as unwinding the key. This stops the key from spinning freely. Next, both brass levers are turned toward each other so that they are parallel to the front. The back can now be removed.



Figure 6 shows the back of a later model camera in the collection of Jos Erdkamp. The design includes a button to lock the winding key from spinning. Early models do not have the button.

Fitting into Kodak's Timeline To better understand the camera's fit in Kodak's catalogue, it was placed into a timeline with other early Kodak folding bellows cameras as shown in Figure 7. The chart shows that the Flat Folding Kodak can be considered a pivotal design. It links the company's early portable bellows patterns to the future: more specifically, in the year 1897 it bridges a design gap between the Folding Kodaks and Folding Kodets to Cartridge Kodaks.

		1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	
Folding Kodak No.4	Roll film holder	[Yellow]																		
Folding Kodak No.5	Roll film holder	[Yellow]																		
Folding Kodak No.6	Roll film holder																			
No.3 Folding Kodet	Roll film holder																			
No.4 Folding Kodet	Roll film holder																			
No.4 Folding Kodet Jr.	Roll film holder																			
No.4 Folding Kodet Special	Roll film holder																			
No.5 Folding Kodet	Roll film holder																			
No.5 Folding Kodet Special	Roll film holder																			
Blair 400	Internal to body																			
Flat Folding Kodak	Internal carrier																			
Cartridge Kodak No.3	Daylight Cart.																			
Cartridge Kodak No.4	Daylight Cart.																			
Cartridge Kodak No.5	Daylight Cart.																			

Figure 7: Availability timeline for the Flat Folding Kodak, Blair 400, and other early folding Kodak cameras.

An interpretation is that the Flat Folding Kodak's side-spool design becomes a key feature of Kodak's major roll film patterns from 1897 on. Additionally, the side-spool body pattern appears to establish a new paradigm for nearly all of Kodak's future folding-bellows roll film cameras, which include horizontal and popular vertical body patterns.⁵

Bringing the Flat Folding Kodak to Market The time it took Eastman's teams to bring the Flat Folding Kodak to market as a potential response to Blair's 400 (Folding Kamaret) appears to be quick. Considering the time to create a new design, the Flat Folding Kodak could have been in development from mid-1893 to early-1894 based on a comment in Kodak's *Camera Production Order Book* that orders were shipped (or interpreted as scheduled to ship) at the end of 1894. The end result was an 1895 camera functionally similar, simpler, and less expensive than the Blair 400.

One method to reduce the time-to-market and manufacturing costs is to copy existing camera parts and design concepts as well as simplifying the design. Figure 8 illustrates how early Kodak folding bellows cameras share their pedigrees through similar components. The final body phase (Cartridge Kodak) is Kodak's first large-scale production side-spool design.

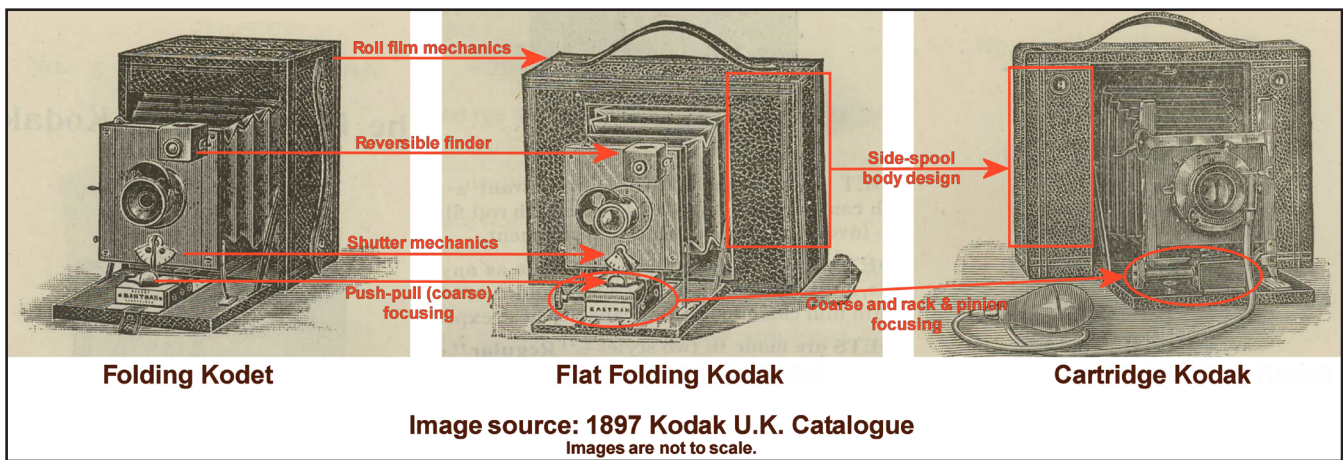


Figure 8: Comparison of Folding Kodet, Flat Folding Kodak, and Cartridge Kodak features.

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An important improvement was placing Eastman-Walker type mechanics onto the inner back. A winding key and film counter are positioned beneath the body; which is a forerunner to the Cartridge Kodak design. While the camera was advertised to make up to 48 exposures, the counter has hash-marks that go to 50. Was this a competitive feature to the Blair 400?

Cartridge Kodak folding bellows cameras appeared in 1897 and overlapped the Flat Folding Kodak for one year. The two cameras are nearly identical in size, but what an amazing difference in terms of user experience. The Flat Folding Camera's main drawback was its continued use of Eastman's Transparent Film which required darkroom loading and unloading. Despite this one flaw (actually a huge flaw which needed to be fixed to attract amateurs and beginners), the overall body design for this limited production design foreshadows the incredibly popular Cartridge Kodak series (122,000 produced) and distances itself from the Folding Kodak (8500+ produced) and Folding Kodet (8,000+ produced) body styles.

Same as with later Folding Kodaks and Flat Folding Kodak, Cartridge Kodak cameras shared the coarse and fine-focusing mechanics. However, a significant improvement was adopting paper-backed "daylight" roll film cartridges. The mechanical film counter was also eliminated because daylight cartridge film had exposure numbers printed on the paper backing that could be seen through a small red window. This is another example of simplifying the camera by eliminating film counter mechanics.

A less expensive, easier to use camera might also entice more customers into Kodak's realm. In 1895, the Flat Folding Kodak was significantly less expensive at ~\$26 than the similarly designed Blair 400 (advertised in 1893 for \$60). However, during the one-year period in which the Flat Folding Kodak and No.4 Cartridge Kodak were both sold in the U.K., the Flat Folding Kodak's legacy features at £7 (with two 24-exposure film spools) were probably less appealing when compared to Kodak's newer, easier to use (unloaded) Cartridge Kodak for £5 5 0.⁶ Spooled film was relatively close in price; £0 6 6 for 24-exposure transparent film vs. £0 3 9 for 12-exposure daylight rolls. While the price per exposure was slightly higher for the No.4 Cartridge, the convenience of daylight loading probably more than compensated for the small price difference.

Dating through References and Advertisements
Factory and non-factory advertisements appear from March 1895 to June 1897. A selection of advertisements and references are shown below.

- 1895-04: Process *Photogram*. pg. 97-98. "New Flat-folding Kodak. March 14. Price £7 Eastman Photographic Materials Company, Limited."
- 1895-04-12: *The British Journal of Photography*. pg. 232-233. "The Eastman Company has lately introduced a "flat-folding Kodak."
- 1895-04: *The Practical Photographer*. pg. 154. "The camera is recommended for cyclists ..."
- 1895-05: *Optical Magic Lantern Journal* pg. 77-78. The Flat Folding Kodak is mentioned in an article entitled *Hand Cameras for Obtaining Slides for the Lantern*. The article includes a comment that the camera might be useful for making lantern slides.
- 1895-08: *The Photographic News*. pg. ii.
- 1895-09-6: *English Mechanic and World of Science*: No. 1583 pg. 59.
- 1895-12: *Photography Annual Compendium for 1895*. pg. 389.
- 1897-06: *Kodak U.K. Catalogue*. Pg. 23.

Post Production Availability in Australia Flat Folding Kodak advertisements in Australia appear in 1898 (*Sydney Evening News*) and 1899 (*The Mudgee Guardian*). Baker and Rouse, a company with deep ties to Kodak placed six advertisements from 1898 to February 1899.

The photographic side of Baker and Rouse (1887-1908) made their own photographic apparatus and imported equipment from other companies. Given their long history with Eastman, could they have been an outlet for unsold inventory? I contacted the Victoria Museums who have a lot of information about the Baker and Rouse to learn more.


YOU CANNOT ENJOY
YOUR XMAS HOLIDAYS
TO PERFECTION
WITHOUT A CAMERA.

The Pocket Kodak, £1 1s
The Flat Folding Kodak, £2 7s 6d
The Cyclists' Camera, £3 3s
The Premo Camera, from 25s.

AGENTS:

Baker and Rouse Proprietary,
Limited,
375 GEORGE-STREET,
Sydney.

Suitable Christmas Presents.



**AMATEUR
Photographic Outfits.**

Complete Outfits from 35s.
The Pocket Kodak £1 1s.
The Bulls Eye Kodak £1 17s 6d
The Flat Folding Kodaks
£2 7s 6d.

The Celebrated Premo Camera from 25s.

ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUES. INSTRUCTIONS FREE.

Baker and Rouse,
Proprietary, Ltd.
375 GEORGE-STREET, SYDNEY.

**Two Baker & Rouse Advertisements
1898 & 1899**

Figure 9: Baker & Rouse Advertisements.

In conclusion, rather than perceiving the Flat Folding Kodak as an obsolete design, I see the camera as a means that Kodak proved the practicality and simplicity of side-spool designs for its future.

Acknowledgements I want to thank collectors Jos Erdkamp, Ruud Hoff, Gerjo Quicken, David Purcell, John Clark, and Todd Gustavson (George Eastman Museum Technology Curator) for providing detailed information and pictures of their cameras.

Endnotes

¹ *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List of Photographic Apparatus and Supplies Manufactured and Sold by the Blair Camera Company.* The European Blair Camera Company, Ltd., London. 1893. p. 16.

² Eastman's long-term strategy is noted by Reese Jenkins in his book *Images and Enterprise* (1976. p. 98): "...perfection of a system of film photography that would supplant the use of glass dry plates." - Affidavit of George Eastman filed 23 May 1891, Eastman vs. Blair.

³ Author's comment: To distinguish between box camera roll film patterns and bellows cameras that accepted separate roll holders (i.e. the Eastman-Walker carrier), I refer to this new approach as a side-spool body design.

⁴ Detail is from the *Kodak Camera Production Order Book* (1885-1920) George Eastman Museum; Gift of Eastman Kodak Company Patent Museum: The order book is a series of three-ring binders donated to the museum from the Eastman Kodak Company Patent Museum; it was part of a file which the company donated to the museum in December 1989 (Information courtesy of Todd Gustavson, George Eastman Museum.)

⁵ Other side-spool designs influenced by the Flat Folding Kodak such as the smaller format 1897 Folding Pocket Kodak and 1899 No. 2 Folding Bulls-Eye cameras are not included in the chart to maintain viewing simplicity.

⁶ Kodak's 1897 U.K. catalogue lists prices in a pre-decimal format of pounds, shillings, and pence.

Photographic Collector Corner

Please check websites for updates. Listings on this page are FREE.

Antiquarian Book and Paper Show

www.curiousbooks.com/shows.html

Bièvres Photo Fair (France)

<http://www.foirephoto-bievre.com/en/>

Camerama Camera Show

www.cameramashow.com

Sunday, September 29, 2024

Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre

10 am-3 pm Admission \$9.00

Upcoming Dates: February 9, 2025;

June 8, 2025; September 28, 2025.

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 Camera Show

www.photorama.com

Detroit Stereographic Society

<http://detroit3d.org/>

Grand Rapids Postcard & Paper Show

www.postcardarcheology.com

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 2024 Photographica Show & Sale

Sunday, October 6, 2024 10am-3pm.

Elk's Hall, Royal Oak MI

www.MiPHS.org

National Stereoscopic Association

www.stereoworld.org

www.3d-con.com

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 Noon-4:30 pm

Fall Camera Fair: Sunday, October 20, 2024.

Photographic Historical Society of New England

<https://phsne.org/index>

Rob Niederman's website for Camera Shows

www.antiquewoodcameras.com/shows.html

York International Postcard Show

<https://www.marylmartin.com/>

York Fairgrounds, 334 Carlisle Ave, York PA