



# Historic Camera Collector Club Newsletter

[HistoricCamera.com](http://HistoricCamera.com)

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## Western Camera Mfg.

In February 1897 The [Western Camera Manufacturing Company](#) was established at 84 Adams street, Chicago, Illinois. A wood working shop was located at 215 Clinton St. The new business was the consolidation of two other firms which manufactured the Zar Camera and the Cyko cameras. The company started out making a simple line of glass plate box cameras called Cyclone focused on the young beginner.

The Western Camera Mfg. Co. was a major investor of the Zar Camera Company located at 12 Quincy Street Chicago, who manufactured by the Zar camera as early as 1895. The Zar camera was also sold through the Chicago Photo Stock Co. located at 38 E. Randolph street. In 1897 Western Mfg. Camera Co. took control of the Zar Camera Company to simplify the chain of command. The new company continued to manufacture the Pocket Zar camera with the Western Camera Mfg. Co. label. The Zar camera was an inexpensive box camera which used a special 2 x 2 inch glass plates. The camera was constructed of cardboard which made the materials cost low and provided the market one of the first, very competitively priced, beginner cameras.

In 1898 the company expanded and improved their [line of cameras](#) to include a full line of box cameras, folding Bicycle and hand cameras, a long focus camera and a view camera. The most popular proved to be the magazine cyclone. The firm advertised as being located at 131 Wabash Ave, Chicago, Ill.

In 1899, competition grew from the distribution of photographic paper that was manufactured by the Rives & Steinbach company. Five companies led by Eastman set out to control the sale of the German photographic paper in the American market. The firms included the Eastman, Aristo, Photo stock,

Aristo and Brown & Palmer. Western Camera set to compete against this front by securing a paper from the Holyoke Paper company who developed a new method of manufacturing raw photographic paper. The Nepera chemical company joined Western.



In 1899, Due to competition from Eastman, the Western Camera Mfg. Co. joined the consolidation of the 5 major Eastman competitors including the Rochester Optical Company, the Rochester Camera and Supply Company, the Ray Camera Company, and the Monroe Camera Company. The new combined companies office occupied the R.O.C. building at 45 South Street, Rochester NY, and was headed by W.F. Carlton. They continued all of the old product lines including, the Poco, Premo, Ray, and Cyclone box cameras. The Zar camera production was not continued.

Ref:

1897, Photo Beacon, Vol. 9, p 96

1899, The Bookseller, newsdealer and stationer, Volume 9, p 610.

1900, The Photogram: Volume 7 - Page 64

## The NEW HC Msg Board

We are glad to announce the opening of our [new Historic Camera Message Board](#). What makes it new are the new forums that we have added in addition to our web hosting service upgrading our board to a new

database server, allowing for blazing fast speeds between page loads. It was well over due. The new forums include Camera Photos, New Purchases, Camera values, photographs, for sale and trade and a ad and trade catalogue section to share reference data. WE have kicked off the last forum to include a rare PDF copy of an 1888 kodak catalogue distributed by the Scoville & Adams co.

We have also initiated new spam filters to keep the discussion on topic. One protection is for a new member who signs up will need to answer an easy question, spam bots can not do this. Remember first time user messages will be screened for approval before they go live.

## Web Site Update

Gen 3 website upgrade has made good progress this last month. The Librarium data is now available from the History Librarium's launch page. Both databases are currently running so users can select and obtain information for either. More to come.

## Librarium Help

We have hired help for our Librarium development. We have a digital artist now helping with image colorization and a History researcher for biographies.

We recently made a special offer to the photographic community for help in populating our History Librarium database with historical information on people, companies and special topics. Several articles have been received. We are paying \$10 per article accepted. Submissions can be made through September 2011 to the Admin and payment to the author is via paypal.

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## Featured Biography Richard Beard



Richard Beard was born in 1801 at East Stonehouse, Devon. He originally worked in the family grocery business adding to its success with his business skills. In the 1830s he moved to London and became a successful coal merchant applying his managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

In 1839 upon the announcement of the Daguerreotype he visited Daguerre and purchased a yearly patent license for £150 a year.

In 1840 Beard was approached by American William S. Johnson who was marketing a photographic camera on behalf of his son, John Johnson, and Alexander Wolcott, an instrument maker. The Wolcott patent camera enabled the successful taking of life portraiture by reducing the subjects sitting time from 30 minutes to only 5 minutes. The significant reduction in processing time was achieved through the use of a concave reflector in the camera, while still using Daguerre's chemical formula. Beard jointly secured the patent for Britain with Mr. Wolcott. Beard then commissioned chemist John Frederick Goddard

to improve quality and reliability of the chemical process, and to act as Beard's expert photographer.

On March 23, 1841 Beard opened the first portrait studio in England, located on the roof of the Polytechnic Institution on Regent Street, London. The studio was built with blue glass to allow ample light. The subject would sit in an elevated seat with head reclining backwards so that it could rest on a fixture without movement for the exposure duration. The camera with a miniature metallic plate (1 1/2" x 2") was mounted about five feet from the sitter high on a shelf.

On March 10, 1842 Beard patented a method coloring Daguerreotype pictures whereby likenesses and representations of nature and other objects, will be obtained in a more finished condition than can be effected by the simple process of Daguerre. The technique consisted of the deposition of various colors in the state of impalpable powders on different parts of the picture in succession, the outline and extent of each color being regulated by a pattern or screen somewhat resembling a stencil-plate.

In approximately 1843 Beard discarded the Wolcott camera and replaced it with a fast Petzval lens.

In 1850 the use of the daguerreotype process by others without a legal patent was wide spread. Beard pursued these with lawsuits, however the length and cost doomed the business and Beard became bankrupt.

In 1854, due to financial problems and the decline of the daguerreotype process caused by the introduction of the Collotype process, the Richard Beard studio closed. However he continued to sell pictures.

In 1857 Beard retired from selling photographs and he passed the business on to his son, located at 85 King William Street City.

In 1885 Richard Beard died.

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Submit your suggestions, event info, and comments to [admin@historiccamera.com](mailto:admin@historiccamera.com)

## Featured Camera

### Ottewill Folding Wet Plate Camera



The Ottewill Wet Plate Camera was manufactured by Thomas Ottewill in London England in circa 1853. The Ottewill sliding box camera had a unique collapsible design enabled by hinges, which allowed for the front and back panels to be removed, and placed on the baseboard. Thus allowing the camera to be folded into a flat package for carrying. This is considered one of the first compact cameras made.

★★★★★ average rating: 5 stars

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