



Historic Camera Collector Club Newsletter

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Volume 10 No. 1, Jan 2012

Benjamin French & Co.

Benjamin French was born in Lebanon, New Hampshire in 1819. At the age of 21, he relocated to Boston where he would remain for the rest of his life. By the 1840s, Mr. French was transforming his interest of photography into a business that manufactured, imported, and sold a huge inventory of photographic materials that represented the latest innovations in cameras, lenses, lanterns, tripods, frames, chemicals prepared by German chemist Ferdinand Beyrich, albumen paper, and dry plates.

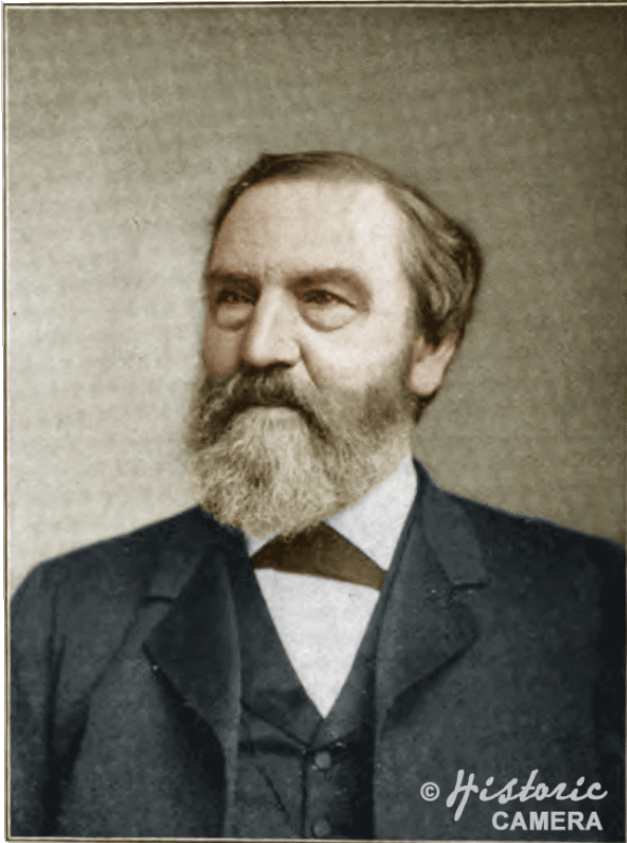
In 1844, Mr. French opened a daguerreotype studio, but the high prices of his photographs limited his profits. He, therefore, turned his attentions to supply and demand. That same year, he founded Benjamin French & Company in partnership with L. H. Hale. The original location was at 109 Washington Street, where it remained for 20 years before moving to 319 Washington Street. It quickly earned the reputation of being one of the preeminent suppliers of photographic materials in the United States. The business soon became an international agent of specialty lenses and magic lanterns from Canada, Mexico, South America, and Australia.



Benjamin French & Co.

Mr. French's company was well-stocked with quality merchandise at affordable prices and was the only distributor of Darlot and Voigtlander & Son products. In 1856, Benjamin French & Company first introduced Jamin and Darlot products to American consumers. Soon known simply as Darlot, these lenses which French & Company carried in three styles - were enduringly popular choices for hand-camera users because of their efficient and compact design, which earned them the affectionate moniker "little giants". Although several attempts were made by American retailers to sell facsimiles of the Darlot lenses to cash in on their huge demand, Mr. French's company remained their only authorized agent in the United States. One of his most famous Darlot customers was the Edward Anthony Company.

The Voigtlander line was introduced in 1859. Voigtlander cameras and portrait lenses, in particular, were highly sought because of their unparalleled perfection. They were constructed with the finest optical glass and subjected to a rigorous testing process. Voigtlander's Euryscope was one of the most impressive rapid wide-angle lenses ever produced.



By 1890, the aging and increasingly enfeebled Mr. French was turning over much of his corporate responsibilities to his son, Dr. Wilfred A. French, a photographer in his own right. After suffering from ill health for a decade, Benjamin French died in 1900.

Benjamin French & Company continued to flourish well into the twentieth century, merging with William H. Robey's Horgan & Robey firm to become the Robey-French Company in 1920. This company was owned and managed by the Eastman-Kodak conglomerate. Seven years' later, Robey-

French became exclusively known as an Eastman-Kodak subsidiary.

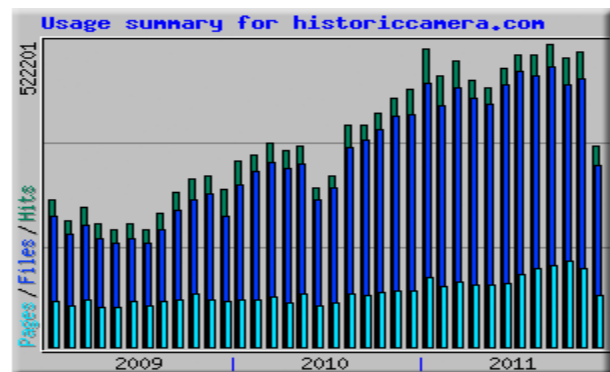
By Tracy Gegory

REF:

- 1882 Photographic Times and American Photographer, Vol. XII (New York: Scovill Manufacturing Company), p. xxvi.
- 1883 Commerce, Manufactures & Resources of Boston, Mass: A Historical Statistical & Descriptive Review (Boston: National Publishing Company), p. 132.
- 1889 Illustrated Boston, the Metropolis of New England, 2nd Ed. (New York: American Publishing and Engraving Co.), p. 136.
- 1890 The Photographic Journal of America, Vol. XXVII (New York: Edward L. Wilson), p. 512.
- 1891 Wilson's Photographic Magazine, Vol. XXVIII (New York: Edward L. Wilson), p. 59.
- 1900 The Photographic Times, Vol. XXXII (New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association), p. 92.
- 1920 Photo-Era: The American Journal of Photography, Vol. XLIV (Boston: Wilfred A. French), p. 321.

Year in Review

The State of the Site and Club is good. Significant progress has been made this past year with growing and sharing our Librarium of photographic information. In 2011, Historic Camera has provided over 330,000 visitors with information on cameras, photos and photographic history. This sets a new record with a 30% increase over last year. For those who visited the Historic Camera website, we served up over 1.4 million page views, which is more than a 40% increase from last year.



Our membership has stayed fairly consistent, with a current Home page registration at 304 members.

We have received two significant collections of photographs to care for this past year. One

collection is from semi-professional Romanian art photographer Peter Voinescu. At the age of 90, Peter has bestowed to HC his life's work. We also received a large collection of travel images from the Schoenfield estate. Mr. Schoenfield was an amateur photographer and a professor of international commerce, who extensively traveled the world capturing traditional vacation imagery from obscure travel destinations. We hope to process the majority of images and share a select group either on the HC site or in our Flickr Group in the coming year.

Special thanks are extended to our Staff member Tracy for her expertise in generating new and interesting biographies, like our feature article on Benjamin French. We also would like to thank Claire Engles graphic artist who has helped me in creating a pleasant viewing experience with our wonderful art illustrations.

Even though this year was very good, next year is expected to be better. Mainly because, it will be our **TEN YEAR** anniversary at the end of February and our gen 3 website will be established. Wow, time sure passes quickly when your having fun. Thank you for all you support.

Regards,
Tom Kowach

Roll out of our Third Generation (Gen 3)

Website Update

website is taking longer than planned. It seems that it is always more complex. Phase one was the updating to a MySQL database, which has been completed and is currently working on the site with all new Librarium information going into it. The old flat-file database is still operational; however it is not being updated and we have not yet updated it to relink all the old datasheets to the new

until the new site is fully working. The next phase is to integrate a new user interface, starting with our Librarium's data sheets. Our first focused efforts are to work on allowing our members to upload supporting information about specific cameras and then to be able to manage those items in their home page control panel. The new software comes with some of the old features and a few new features including a personal gallery and personal friend groups where you can email friends conveniently.

Msg Board Librarium Club Shop Links Gallery Flickr Members

Historic Camera

History Librarium

Librarium Home > catalogue > nglongfocus

HOME
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MSG BOARD
Info & ??

AdChoices

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40% Off Sitewide Sale & 1/6 Prom. Two Days Only. Shop Now!
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Newman & Guardia Long Focus Reflex Camera



The Newman & Guardia Long Focus Reflex Camera was manufactured from 1902. It is sometimes referred to as simply the Reflex or self focusing camera. The camera was built on the structure of the universal box cameras and specifically designed to meet the requirements of naturalists, artists and travelers. A hand or tripod camera that can accommodate plates, cut films or daylight film spoofs.

Although any lens could be used, this camera was fitted with Zeiss Double Protar Anastigmat with 2 foci. Normal focus is 6.5 inch at f6.3 and long focus is 11.5 inches at f12.5.

Features included a double extension front with focus to 1 foot, vertical and horizontal rising front, a detachable focal plane shutter with speed 1/10 - 1/800 seconds, central rack and pinion, two special T-levels, The changing box, and extra screen are enclosed and protected.

The Long Focus Reflex Camera was available in three sizes including a quarter-plate; a half plate and a 5 x 4 inch size.

- Historic Camera Collectible Rating

☆☆☆☆ average rating: 3.0 stars, from 2 votes.

○ 1 Common ○ 2 Unusual ○ 3 Uncommon ○ 4 Scarce ○ 5 Rare

[Rate This Camera](#)

[CLICK HERE](#) for a list of Newman & Guardia Cameras.

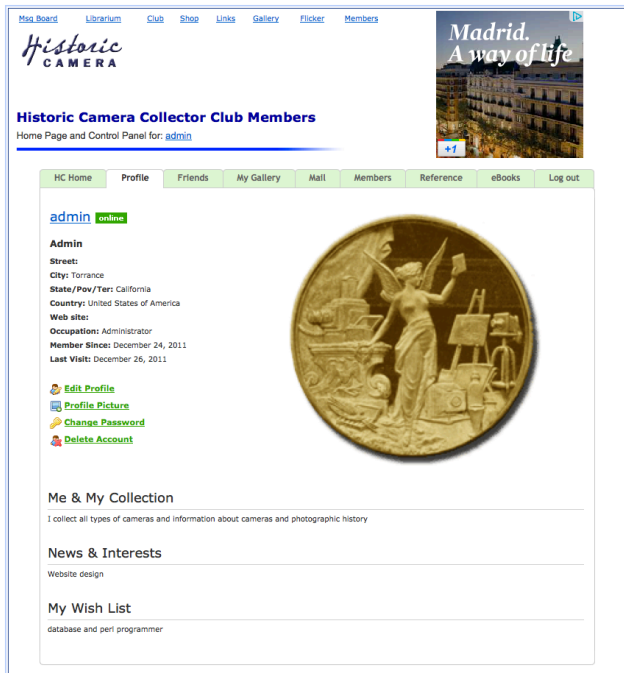
REFERENCE INFO

[Add Pic or PDF](#)

1903
The Newman & Guardia Long Focus Reflex Camera
The "N. & G." Reflex
For Sale
Newman & Guardia, Ltd.
1903 advertisement
Upd by admin

An important feature will be the ability to add your photos, trade catalogue pages, complete books, instruction and operator manuals and electronic clippings, like Advertisements relating to our datasheets. Our example above shows a clipping from a 1903 news advertisement. The new user member control panel shown below will allow our members to manage their inputs. The control panel is for messages and items that members input. It also features a personal gallery to upload your photos. The inputs of the member control panel profile page provides a picture and short bio of your self including areas to

describe your self, your collection and your wish list.



Historic Camera Collector Club Members

Home Page and Control Panel for: [admin](#)

HC Home Profile Friends My Gallery Mail Members Reference eBooks Log out

[admin](#) online

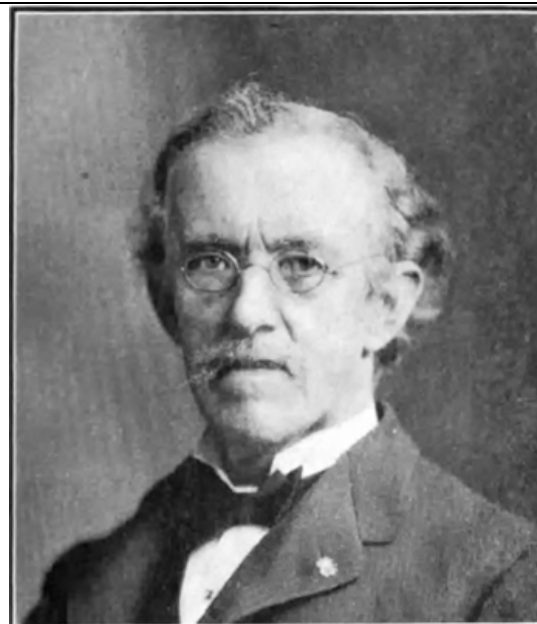
Admin
Street:
City: Torrance
State/Prov./Fees: California
Country: United States of America
Web site:
Occupation: Administrator
Member Since: December 24, 2011
Last Visit: December 26, 2011

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Me & My Collection
I collect all types of cameras and information about cameras and photographic history

News & Interests
Website design

My Wish List
database and perl programmer



MR. G. CRAMER

This past month we had several updates to our history librarium. We now have new camera reference datasheets for the [Kozy Camera Co.](#), the [Magic Introduction Co.](#), [Chr. Bruns](#), the [Boston Camera Co.](#), the [American Camera Co.](#) of London, and the [Birmingham Photo Co.](#). Also we have new entries for photographer [Henry Peach Robinson](#) and dry plate magnate [Gustav Cramer](#). Remember that located on [Photographic History librarium home page](#) there is a browse button to view the most recent entries.



KOZY CAMERA CO.,
44 Bedford St., Boston, Mass., U.S.A.



Happy
New Year

2012

From

Historic
CAMERA