



Historic Camera

Collector Club Newsletter

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This Month we feature quite a few biographies of important contributors to the advancement of Photography.

Sarony

One of America's most stylish photographers, Napoleon Sarony, was born in Quebec, Canada in 1821, the same year his namesake Napoleon I died in exile. He inherited his artistic talents from his French mother and his Austrian father. Young Sarony moved with his family to the United States when he was ten, and his father died shortly thereafter. In desperate need of a vocation to help support his family, he served an apprenticeship with a lithographer named Robinson for six years. Mr. Sarony moved to New York City in 1836, and joined with Currier as an illustrator, before Ives partnered with Currier. In 1843, he entered a partnership with James Major and established a lithographic company known as Sarony & Major. In 1853, the firm's name was changed to Sarony and Company, and then four years' later with the addition of another partner, was known as Sarony, Major & Knapp.

Mr. Sarony opened his own portrait photography studio at 37 Union Square in 1867, and quickly established himself as one of the most commercially prosperous photographers in America. His exotic studio decor represented the artist's extravagant

global tastes and featured a mummy at the entrance and walls adorned with Egyptian, Japanese, and Russian artifacts. With the daguerreotype process becoming outdated rapidly, Mr. Sarony focused his considerable talents on portraiture, and the techniques he developed have become a photographic standard. He transformed posing into an art form, noting that the most effective pose is not a pose but rather a natural position.



By 1876, Mr. Sarony was regarded as the western world's preeminent photographer,

and his celebrity portraits further cemented his professional reputation. Like other photographers of his day, he paid famous subjects to pose for him, secure the rights to the photographs, and then sell the images at a tidy profit. His collection of celebrity negatives amassed to more than 40,000. Mr. Sarony was rumored to have paid Sarah Bernhardt - the most acclaimed stage actress of her time -- \$1,500 to sit for him, a sum that is the equivalent of around \$20,000 today. His famous portrait of Oscar Wilde also set a legal precedent in the 1884 U.S. Supreme Court case of *Burrow-Giles Lithographic Co. v. Sarony* 111 U.S. 53. When the Burrow-Giles Lithographic Company used unauthorized images of Mr. Wilde in his advertising, Mr. Sarony filed a lawsuit and won a \$610 judgment. When the Supreme Court affirmed the decision, Mr. Sarony expressed his appreciation by photographing the justices to celebrate the 1890 centennial of the federal judiciary.

Mr. Sarony also became a successful photographic publisher with *Sarony's Living Pictures*, a publication in which models are posed to represent characters in famous artistic works. The title was later changed to *Sarony's Sketch-Book*. Married twice, Mr. Sarony's eccentricities increased as the years passed and won him as much notoriety as his photographs. Napoleon Sarony died at his home on November 8, 1896. His son Otto ran the Sarony studio -- which had moved from Union Square to Fifth Avenue in 1896 - until his own death in 1903.

Ref.:

- 1896 *The American Annual of Photography*, Vol. X (New York: Scovill & Adams Company), pp. 188-194.
- 2008 *American Cultural Rebels* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.), p. 28.
- 2012 *History of Art: History of Photography* (URL: http://www.all-art.org/20ct_photo/Sarony1.htm).
- 1895 *The Literary Digest*, Volume 10 (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company), p. 181.
- 1897 *Wilson's Photographic Magazine*, Vol. XXXIV (New York: Edward L. Wilson), pp. 65-75.

Emil Bush

Renowned photographic equipment merchant Emil Busch was born in Berlin, Germany on August 6, 1820. He was the grandson of Johann Heinrich August Duncker, a minister who founded Rathenow's esteemed *Optische Industrie Anstalt*, one of the first manufacturers of reading glasses. Mr. Duncker's son Edouard succeeded him, but since he had no sons of his own, Mr. Busch inherited the family business in 1845. Trained as a mechanic and a merchant, Mr. Busch quickly expanded the business to include the production of optical equipment for the military. With no direct competition in the area, his business flourished in its first few years.



However, around 1850, several competitors relocated to Rathenow, which prompted Mr. Busch to enlarge the factory and add a steam engine to increase mass production. The Busch-Rathenow Company, as it became known in 1852, began specializing

in photographic lenses and equipment. The company produced several types of Petzval lenses with wide aperture settings of six or seven inches.

In 1865, Mr. Busch received a patent for the Pantoscope (known by the Germans as the Pantoskop), believed to be the world's first anastigmat lens. The wide-angle Pantoscope lens featured two deeply curved symmetrical combinations and an aperture setting of f/22 for sharp focus. The Pantoscope was a popular choice for landscape photographers for its effectiveness in capturing clear architectural subjects and panoramic views. It was also the lens of choice for photographers working within limited spaces. The Pantoscope was soon out-performing the famous Globe lenses produced by Harrison and Schnitzer, the Busch-Rathenow Company's main competitor.

Mr. Busch was constantly experimenting with progressive production methods, and his manufacturing operations were among the most modern in the world at that time. During the Prussian-Danish War, which lasted from 1864 until 1871, the Busch-Rathenow Company became the leading supplier of photographic equipment for the German military, which included lenses, field cameras, and telescopic glasses. The company successfully changed with the times, as did its name, which became the Rathenowner Optische Institute and then was later known as Emil Busch AG. Under Mr. Busch's capable management, the company became a publicly owned stock company, which provided many employee benefits. The Busch Company workers, who often worked out of their homes during the war years to supply the heavy military demand for photographic products, were generously rewarded for their efforts and enjoyed employment security that was rare within the fledgling photographic industry.

Emil Busch died in Rathenow on April 1,

1888, but his company remains very much alive and well. Up until World War I, it was Germany's leading manufacturer of optical supplies and mirrors, and today it continues to produce top quality ophthalmic machinery.

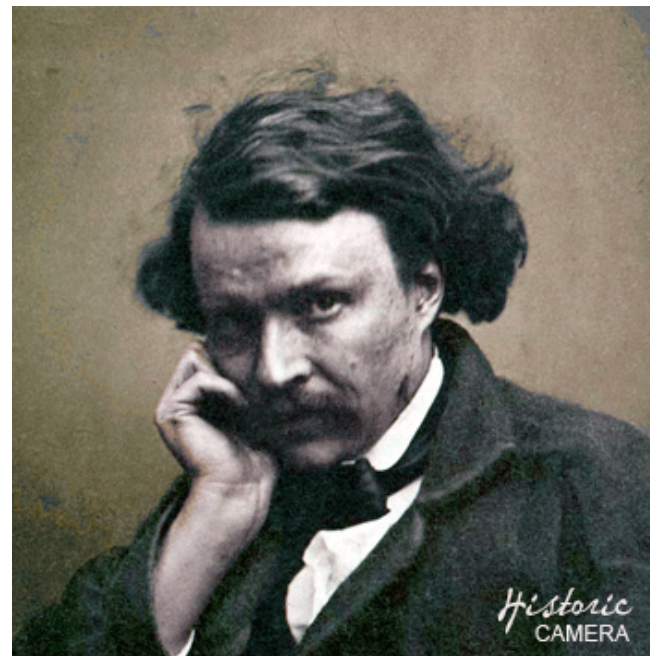
Ref.:

-1974 Cassell's Cyclopaedia of Photography (New York: Arno Press), pp. 390-391.

-2008 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), pp. 231-232.

-1989 A History of the Photographic Lens (San Diego: Academic Press), pp. 211-212.

Nadar



When asked the question, "Who is the world's greatest photographer?" French theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes (1915-1980) answered without hesitation, "Nadar." This is the pseudonym made famous by Gaspard-Felix Tournacho, who was born in Paris on April 6, 1820, the first child of printer Victor Tournachon and Therese Maillet. Educated in Paris, the family then moved to Lyon, where the young Tournachon briefly studied medicine. After returning to Paris in 1838, he adopted the name Nadar, and for the next several years associated with a Bohemian group of artists

and writers that included Charles Beaudelaire.

He gradually turned his attentions from writing to drawing, and in 1854, his collection of caricatures of famous Parisians received considerable notoriety. This was also the year Nadar married Ernestine-Constance Lefevre and helped his brother Adrien finance his photographic instruction with master photographer Gustave Le Gray and to establish his photographic studio. He soon opened his own studio, and by the late 1850s had become one of the most successful portrait photographers in Paris. He became a member of the Societe Francaise de Photographie in 1856, and his photographs were featured in its Salon exhibit three years' later. By this time, Nadar developed what became his trademark style of simplistic backgrounds, and a patented process of faded print edges. He wanted the portrait to be free of visual distractions, which is why he would insist his subjects wear dark clothing and often hide their hands or conceal them inside their clothing.

Nadar was not content with portrait photography, and soon expanded his artistic repertoire to include equestrian and aerial photography. In 1858, his first foray into aerial photography was accomplished from a balloon that was tied near the Arc de Triomphe. Sadly, these photographs seem to have disappeared over time. However, his initial success led to more risky expeditions as Nadar became an enthusiastic aeronaut, and purchased an enormous hot-air balloon known as le Geant (Giant). It was filled with 200,000 cubic feet of gas and provided all of the necessities for a weeklong journey. However, these dangerous trips often resulted in serious mishaps and injuries, which finally convinced Nadar he should keep his feet on the ground. This did not mean the ambitious photographer could use his camera to explore underground. During the 1860s, Nadar secured the rights to

photograph the sewers and catacombs of Paris that Victor Hugo had immortalized in Les Miserables.

Nadar decided to retire to write his memoirs in 1873, and turned the operations of his studio over to his son Paul (1856-1939). However, he returned briefly as a photographer in Marseilles in the late 1890s, but sold that portrait studio in 1899. The next year, Nadar's photography was celebrated at the Exposition Universelle. Age finally caught up with Nadar, who spent his last years staying close to home and caring for his beloved Ernestine. Fourteen months after the death of his wife, Nadar died one month shy of his ninetieth birthday on March 20, 1910. His famous studio closed after Paul Nadar's death in 1939.

Ref.:

-1875 The Aerial World (New York: D. Appleton and Co.), pp. 510-512.

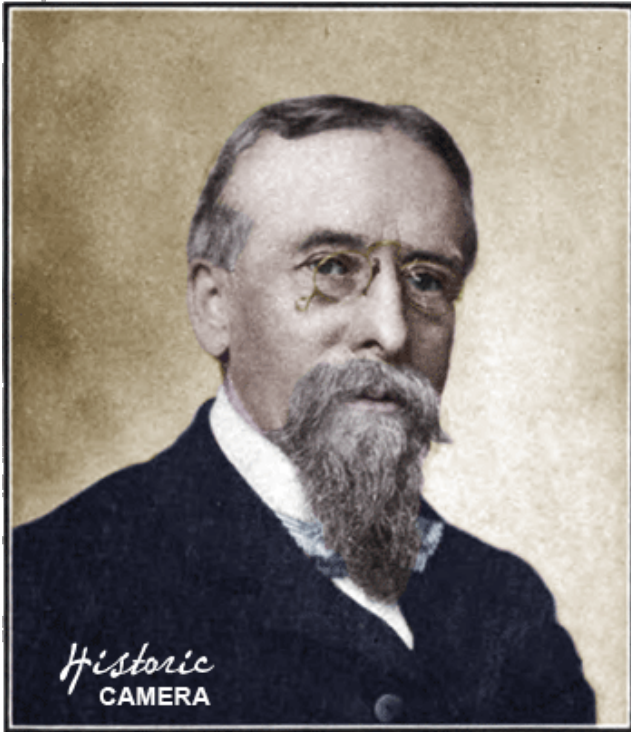
-2008 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), pp. 971-974.

-2011 Introduction to Remote Sensing, 5th Ed. (New York: The Guilford Press), p. 7.

M. A. Sead

Successful dry plate creator and manufacturer Miles Ainscoe Seed was born in Lancashire to Richard and Anne Elinor Ainscoe Seed in Lancashire, England on February 24, 1843. After moving to the United States in 1867, Mr. Seed settled in St. Louis, Missouri, and became an employee at John A. Scholten's photographic studio. During his spare time, Mr. Seed conducted home experiments on the simplification of photographic negatives. After several years, he developed a more practical photographic dry plate that was quickly dubbed the "Seed Dry Plate" upon its release in 1879. Soon, photographers worldwide were using Mr. Seed's invention. The appeal of Mr. Seed's dry plates rested in their ease of transport. Photographers could now travel with these prepared dry

plates and develop their photographs at their convenience.



MR. M. A. SEED

Mr. Seed's indomitable spirit carried him through considerable adversity. It took several attempts to produce the necessary dry plate treatment components, but he persevered. He admitted that his concern was not for the problem itself, but on how to troubleshoot the problem successfully. His resolve would again be tested when the M. A. Seed Dry Plate Company was completely destroyed by fire in 1882. Mr. Seed rebuilt the factory and within four months, M. A. Seed dry plates were once again rolling off the assembly line.

By the twentieth century, Mr. Seed's dry plates were universally regarded as the finest in the world. Although he was a prosperous businessman, Mr. Seed's interest in dry plates went far beyond commercial sales. He wanted to offer his expertise to assist photographers on how to get the greatest use of his plates. He became his company's official and

extremely effective spokesman who was frequently asked to deliver speeches on the art of photography at national conventions. His company published *The Art of Negative Making*, which became known in industry circles as the photographic 'bible.'

Mr. Seed's company was incorporated in July 1883, and the Eastman Kodak conglomerate of Rochester, New York purchased the thriving business in 1902, retaining him as a consultant. However, Mr. Seed announced his retirement shortly thereafter, and devoted his last years to religious study and contemplation. His philanthropy was well known to the people of St. Louis, with military causes and the YMCA the appreciative recipients of his charitable efforts. Mr. M. A. Seed died in his beloved St. Louis on December 4, 1913 at the age of 70. He left behind his wife Lydia, seven children, and what were arguably the finest dry plates ever produced.

Ref.:

-1918 *The Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Vol. VIII (New York: The Press Association Compilers, Inc.), p. 88.
-1903 *The Photo-Miniature*, Vol. IV (New York: Tennant and Ward), p. 394.
-1913 *Snap Shots*, Vols. XXIV-XXV (New York: Snap-Shots Publishing Co.), p. 237).

Ludwig F Hammer & Hammer Dry Plate Co.

St. Louis, Missouri was once known as the center of America's dry plate industry. Some attributed this phenomenon to the muddy water of the Mississippi River while others suggested St. Louis' climate was responsible. Whatever the reason, Mr. Ludwig F. Hammer and his St. Louis-based competitors provided nineteenth-century America with the highest quality dry plates.

Born in Wurttemberg, Germany in 1834, Mr. Hammer completed his formal education in Germany before immigrating to the United

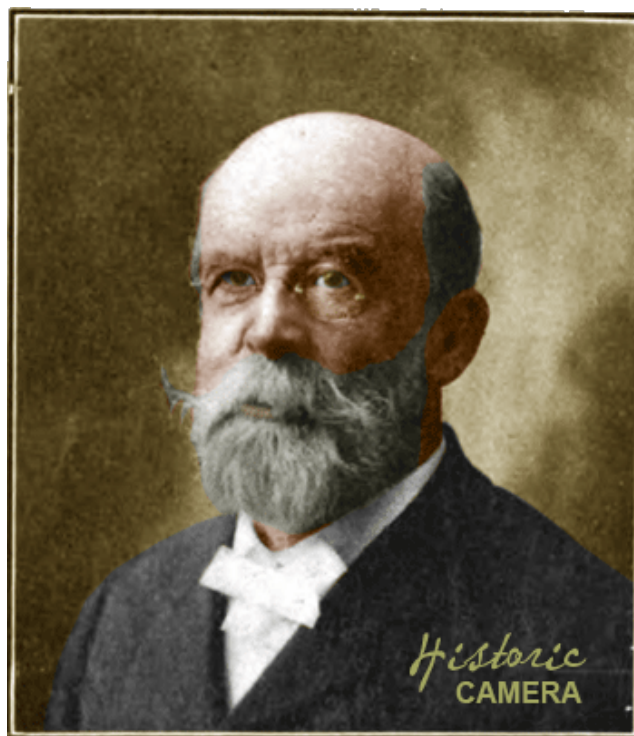
States in 1854 in hopes of opening his own photography studio, which achieved modest success that allowed him to provide for his growing family. The man who became known by the affectionate moniker "Papa Hammer" sold his photography studio to his son Ludwig Jr. in 1890. His attentions turned to dry plates, which culminated in the establishment of the Hammer Dry Plate Company, of which Mr. Hammer served as president and manager. It became so successful that the illustrious Scovill & Adams manufacturing company became the firm's Eastern agents.

The Hammer Dry Plate Company soon distinguished itself for its durable and affordable dry plates, and became the a leading producer in both St. Louis and elsewhere. As its clever advertising reminded old and potential customers, if a holder was loaded and twelve of Hammer's dry plates were exposed and a photographer did nothing more with the camera for an entire year and this operation was repeated, the dry plate quality would be identical to those that were exposed the previous year.

It was Mr. Hammer's commitment to quality and customer service that was the driving force behind his company's success. His company provided satisfied customers with fog-free negatives and plates that were both fast and extremely adaptable. The company was also famous for its extremely informative short text entitled "A Short Story on Negative Company," which it shipped free to all inquiring customers. Mr. Hammer's pleasant and amicable disposition won him several friends within the St. Louis community, and he encouraged his family to be active participants in both business and civic affairs.

The loss of his beloved wife in 1907, though devastating, did not slow Mr. Hammer down. He continued to to make improvements to

his dry plates and always seemed to remain a step ahead of his competition. By the 1920s, the four leading dry plate manufacturers throughout the United States were Eastman Kodak Company, and the 'big three' St. Louis-based Central Dry Plate Company, Cramer Dry Plate Company, and of course the Hammer Dry Plate Company. The business continued flourishing after Mr. Hammer's death on May 8, 1921 at the age of 87. Hammer dry plates are highly prized by photographic historians and collectors.



Ref.:

- 1913 The Camera, Vol. XVII (Philadelphia: The Camera Publishing Company), p. 301.
- 1922 Hearings Before the Committee on Finance, United States Senate on the Proposed Tariff Act of 1921 (Washington: Government Printing Office), p. 1590.
- 1921 The Photographic Journal of America, Vol. LVIII (Boston: American Photographic Publishing Company), p. 233.
- 1913 The Photographic Times, Vol. XLV (New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association), p. viii.
- 1902 The Photographic Times-Bulletin, Vol. XXXIV (New York: The Photographic Times-Bulletin Publishing Association), p. 42.

Website Update

July we recorded a record number of new biographies and several camera company product lines were cataloged. Links to all new content can be accessed directly from our Librarium's photo history page. (http://www.historiccamera.com/photo_history.html)

Special thanks for significant contributions this month goes out **Tracy** for all the biographies, to **Jamie** from Flickr for her images on the Metropolitan camera co. amongst others, **John Kratz** for his many image contributions and **Rob Niederman** for sharing his unique and rare camera images off his site to enhance our many collectors experience. If you would like to see all of our contributor images then go to the search bar and enter the persons name and select a search in "All Fields".

Here is a listing of the content excluding the ones published in this newsletter:

New Camera Listings:



[Whitehouse Products](#)



[Monarch Manufacturing Co.](#)



[Metropolitan Industries](#)



[Utility Manufacturing Co.](#)



[JEM Camera Co. \(J.E. Mergott\)](#)



[Compco Camera Listing](#)



[Ottewill's Improved Kinnear](#)

New Biographies:



Robert Boyle



Charles "C. C." Harrison



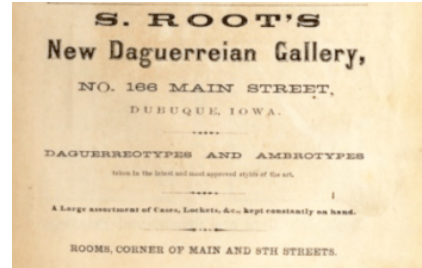
Hamilton Lanphere Smith



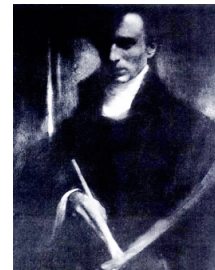
Adolphe-Alexandre Martin



H.A. Hyatt



Marcus and Samuel Root



Edward Steichen



Carl August von Steinheil



Augustus Washington



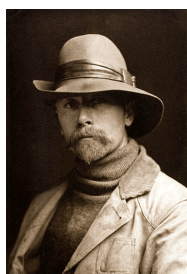
Walker Evans



Berenice Abbott



Imogen Cunningham



Edward S. Curtis



Baron Jean Baptiste-Louis Gros (1858)

Baron Jean Baptiste-Louis Gros

Send Comments & Questions to
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