

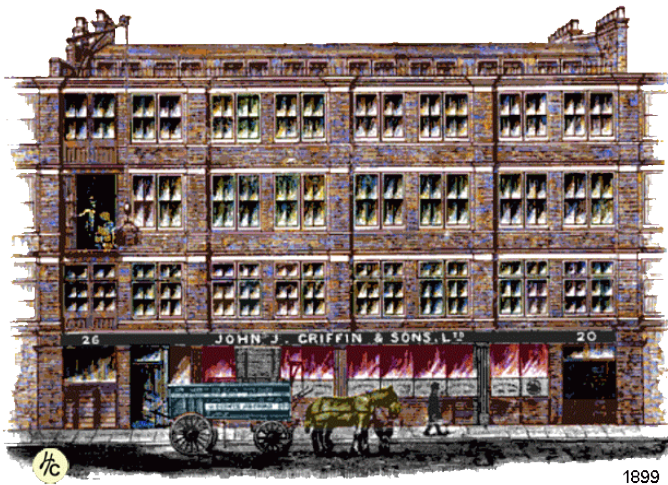


Historic Camera Club Newsletter

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John J. Griffin & Sons



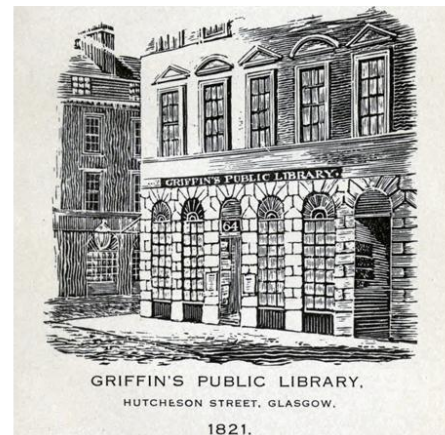
The beginnings of the "House of Griffin" can be traced back to as early as 1795, where Joseph Griffin was a successful merchant of Glasgow on Nile street, combining the selling of books and appliances of natural philosophy and chemistry.

In about 1805, Joseph Griffin's son Richard Thomas entered the business. It was a custom in Glasgow, that at age 15, the sons would enter the business if they were to embark on a business career. In 1817 another son John Joseph, born in 1802, also joined the firm. Richard T. had a natural attraction to the book selling side of the business. John J., studied in Paris and Heidelberg with chemistry being his favorite subject, and although he was trained as a bookseller with Tegg & Co. of London to help further the books selling business of his

father, John J. ended up naturally attracted to the philosophical and chemical part. These two brothers would eventually advance the business in two directions.

By 1820 the senior Joseph Griffin most likely died and the firm's name was changed to Richard Griffin and Co. With Richard at the helm. The business advanced on book selling and 1820 marks the beginning of the firm not as just a successful bookseller, but also a publisher, located at 75 Hutcheson Street.

Around 1821, a new concept of a subscription to the Griffin's the Public Library was opened. The library housed all of the books published by Griffin and subscribers could come to relax and read the latest books.



In 1828 the firm was located at 64 Hutcheson and listed as Griffin, Richard & Co., Booksellers and Publishers, Public Library and Newsroom.

In 1832 Richard Griffin died and John Joseph took over running the business. Richard's son Charles at the age of twelve began to assist John Griffin. In the same year John married Mary Ann Holder, by whom he had twelve children.

In 1834 John Joseph with his natural attraction to chemistry devoted great efforts to popularizing the study of chemistry. He wrote then published his own book, *Chemical Recreations: a popular manual of experimental chemistry*.

Shortly after the announcement by Daguerre in 1839, the House of Griffin began servicing the needs of Daguerreotypist with chemicals, apparatus and supplies. The book publishing arm allowed Griffin to include his photographic catalogues as an appendix to his published books. A [John J. Griffin trade catalog](#) was included in the firm's famous *Encyclopedia Metropolitana* as part of Robert Hunt's early *Manual of photography*.

In 1841 John J. founded the "Chemical Society" with headquarters in London. The Society was incorporated by Royal charter in the year 1848.



TRADE MARK.

In 1842, with Charles having grown up and capable of running the publishing business, John and Charles divided the partnership. John established the scientific instrument

and the chemical business as a separate institution and moved it to London, settling down at 53 Baker Street, Postman Square and appropriately naming the new firm John J. Griffin & Co., the publishing branch remaining in Glasgow continued as Richard Griffin & Co.

In 1848, the two firms resolved to transfer its center to London, but the association with the City of Glasgow and university remained strong.

In 1852, John Joseph and his nephew Charles dissolved their partnership with the uncle retaining the London based scientific instrument-making and chemical part of the firm. Charles Griffin became sole director of one of the most successful and influential publishing houses of the era. From this time the firm carried the name of Charles Griffin & Co..

In 1860, John Joseph Griffin publishes his own book, *Chemical Reactions: A Popular Manual of Experimental Chemistry*. In approximately 1861 John Griffin partnered with Bohn and formed Griffin, Bohn & Co., Stationers' Hall Court.

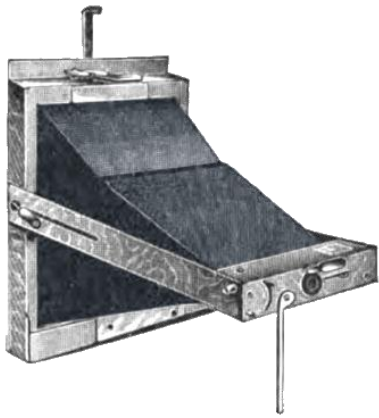
In 1862 Charles Griffin died and the publishing business left in trust was taken over by his wife Elizabeth Eves Griffin, who developed a remarkable ability to manage the publishing business, assisted by her brothers.

In 1877 on June 9th, John Joseph Griffin died. His operations at 22 Garrick Street, Covent Garden W.C. continued.

In 1898 the firm introduced to the European market a novel developing paper called Velox. Velox paper, was invented by Leo Baekeland, a Belgian-born American chemist in 1893 who sold it through his Nepera Chemical Company in Yonkers, New York. However by 1898-99 the rights were sold to George Eastman who is

presumed to have made a deal with Griffins. Velox was the first photographic paper that could be printed in artificial light or as Eastman coined it the "first of the true gaslight papers" ideally suited for amateurs. Four types were made, including "carbon Velox" for matt finish surface, Glossy Velox" for an enameled surface, Special Glossy for soft effects, and Rough Velox for naturalistic effects. The process involved very slow developing of silver chloride contact print paper, much slower than Bromide, and therefore did not require a dark room or colored glass. Also in the same year the firm opened a new factory on Sardina Street, just off of Lincoln's Inn Fields.

At the turn of the century, the firm advertised a unique new [camera line called the Pocket Cyko](#), meant to mean easy. The two models produced are believed to be of Griffin design that featured a unique construction entirely made of aluminum, which the folded into a flat box for portability.



In 1921, John Ross Griffin who was the grandson of John Joseph died. He was connected with the company until his death.

The "House of Griffin" was pioneer photographic supply house, in addition to a significant book publisher.

1903 Dictionary of National Biography p.227
1920 Griffins Centenary Volume of Charles Griffin & Co.

Gustav Le Gray



Jean Baptiste Gustave Le Gray was born in Villiers-le-Bel, Val-d'Oise on August 30, 1820. He received his formal artistic training in painter Paul Delaroche's studio, and opened his own Parisian portrait studio in the late 1840s. He received his first critical recognition for his landscape images of Fontainebleau in 1849. In the meantime, he became a student of photographic chemistry, for which he became as passionate as he was about photography.

He began publishing texts on his inventions in 1850, with A Practical Treatise on Photography, in which he described what allegedly was the first wet collodion process of producing a negative on a glass plate. However, his process description was vague at best, in contrast to Frederick Scott Archer's detailed findings published the following year, which earned him the

distinction of being known as the 'father of the wet collodion process'. However, Mr. Le Gray is credited with significantly improving the quality of paper negatives with his waxed paper process, in which a two-tiered process of treating paper with wax to produce a negative prior to exposure improved the paper's transparency. This resulted in greater definition and therefore produced a much more intricately detailed image than did the original calotype technique. Although admittedly slower than the calotype process, the waxed paper method could be mixed within two weeks of its use, whereas the calotype only lasted for a single day.

Mr. Le Gray's love of landscape and seascape photography led to another important innovation. Creating seascapes was a very cumbersome process because it required a negative for the sky and another negative for the water because of the range of light required for each. There was also the risk of overexposure because photographic materials of the time were supersensitive to blue, which often made the sky of a seascape appear to be white. However, Mr. Le Gray's picture *Brig upon the Water* created a major sensation when featured in the Photographic Society of London's 1856 exhibition because it combined both the sky and the water with the proper exposures onto a single print. Some critics have argued this feat could be achieved with a single negative because of luminosity similarities between the sky and foreground. However, the consensus is that two negatives were used in what is believed to be the first example of combination printing. This amazing print remains on display at the Royal Photographic Society.

The popularity of carte-de-visite photography was likely responsible for Mr. Le Gray's retirement from photography in 1861. He moved to Egypt, where he became a professor of drawing in Cairo while operating a photography studio on the side.

There, he remained for the next two decades, and continued to exhibit his photographs, which remained largely unnoticed outside of Egypt. Sixty-three-year-old Gustave Le Gray died in virtual anonymity in Cairo on or around July 30, 1884.

Ref.:

-2012 Bibliotheque Nationale de France (URL: <http://expositions.bnf.fr/legray/grand/098.htm>).

- 1962 Creative Photography: Aesthetic Trends, 1839-1960 (Toronto: General Publishing Company, Ltd.), p. 52.

- 1995 A History of Photography from its Beginnings till the 1920s (URL: http://inx.phototeka.it/documenti/Cenni_storici_fotografia.pdf).

- 1856 Orr's Circle of the Sciences: Practical Chemistry (London: Houlston and Stoneman), pp. 149-150.

- 2004 Photographers of Genius at the Getty (Los Angeles: Getty Publications), pp. 32-35.

- 1856 Photographic Notes, Vol. I (London: Bland and Long), p. 46.

Victor Hasselblad



(Fritz) Victor Hasselblad was born in Goteborg (Gothenburg), Sweden on March 8, 1906. The son of prominent Swedish businessman Karl Erik Hasselblad, who

was also Counsel General for Rumania, young Victor grew up in an affluent household with a great appreciation for art and photography. He combined his fascination for birds with his interest in photography, and soon established himself as a successful bird and nature photographer. In 1934, he married Erna Nathhorst, and she became his professional partner as well. She assisted him with his camera research, and later became his most trusted business partner.

Settling in Goteborg with his young wife, Mr. Hasselblad focused on his photographic career, exhibiting his photographs and writing technical articles for trade publications. He published his first book *Flyttfagelstrak* (Migratory Bird Passages) in 1935. After serving apprenticeships at France's Kodak Pathe, Germany's Zeiss Ikon, and the U. S. Eastman Kodak Company, Mr. Hasselblad returned to Sweden, feeling sufficiently qualified to open his own camera and laboratory processing company, Victor Foto. In the spring of 1940, when the threat of another world war was growing by the day, the Swedish government asked Mr. Hasselblad to reproduce a camera exactly like the German spy camera it had recently recovered. He constructed a small camera workshop, within which he studied the German camera and designed his own interpretation, known as the HK 7. The HK 7 was a handheld camera measuring 7 x 9 cm, used 80 film and had two lenses that could be used interchangeably - a Zeiss Biotessar and either a Meyer Tele-Megor or Schneider Tele-Xenar.

Naturally, during the Second World War, most of Mr. Hasselblad's camera production was for military purposes, but the camera designer believed that military cameras would lead to the production of high quality portable cameras for consumer use. Various military prototypes - including

one specially designed for the Swedish Air Force - were used in the production of the first Hasselblad civilian camera, which was formally introduced on October 6, 1948. The Hasselblad 1600F represented a professional and personal triumph. This 6 x 6 single-lens, mirror-reflex camera has Kodak lenses, viewer finders, and magazines that were interchangeable. It was the supreme technological accomplishment for its time, but also easily damaged. The newer and improved Hasselblad 1000F included a six-lens series, and scored impressively in a Modern Photography field test. Other Hasselblad cameras included the Hasselblad SWA (1954), the wide-angle Hasselblad SWC (1957), the ambitious Hasselblad 500C (1957), and the motor-operated Hasselblad 500 EL (1965). Hasselblad also became the official NASA camera, and images of moonwalking Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin were captured with a Hasselblad 500EL/70.

Upon his retirement, Victor Hasselblad sold his Hasselblad Fotografiska AB to Kodak. In 1976, Safvean AB, a Swedish investment firm, purchased Victor Hasselblad AB. Two years later, Victor Hasselblad died in Goteborg on August 5, 1978 at the age of 72. The following year, the Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation was created to promote photographic research and education. Goteborg remains the headquarters of Hasselblad cameras, whose quality and excellence have not diminished with the passage of time.

Ref.:
2007 Focal Encyclopedia of Photography (Burlington, MA: Focal Press/Elsevier), pp. 307-308.

2012 Hasselblad Foundation (URL: <http://www.hasselbladfoundation.org>).

1981 Popular Photography, Vol. LXXXVIII (New York: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company), p. 12.

Ernest Brown



Photo Courtesy of [Brian Purcell](#) - © All Rights Reserved

Photographer Ernest Brown was born at Newcastle upon Tyne, England on September 8, 1877. Little is known about his childhood or education other than he had served a photographic apprenticeship in England and later had his own traveling studio, which was a novelty at the time. He was regarded as a passionate photographer, who strived for simplicity. For Mr. Brown, photography was a method of recording history as realistically as possible. Early in his career, he also devised a simplified negative duplication process by placing a light-sensitive dry plate onto the negative as if making a transparency. Then, after a brief exposure to subdued sunlight, the negative is taken to the darkroom where a reverse image is developed. The process is repeated to make a negative that duplicates the original.

After the Boer War, Mr. Brown closed his Newcastle studio, and he and his wife relocated to Canada in 1903, settling first in Toronto. There, photographic dealers informed him that a photographer in the West named Charles Wesley Mathers needed a capable assistant to operate his studio while he toured the Arctic. For the

next year, Mr. Brown assumed a managerial role at Mathers' Art Gallery, which specialized in views of the Klondike, Eskimos, and the gold rush. When Mr. Mathers returned, he chose to open a souvenir shop featuring his new collection and sold his studio, its property, and his old negatives and photographic equipment to Mr. Brown. To expand his collection of regional negatives further, Mr. Brown purchased several negatives from other area photographers, which eventually totaled more than 50,000 on more than 6,000 Edmonton subjects dating back to 1867. At the time, it was believed to be the largest collection of photographic negatives west of Montreal.

Like many North American cities of the period, Edmonton grew significantly from 1904 to 1914, and Mr. Brown's lenses captured every stage of its development. Then, World War I altered economic growth substantially, with a decline in business during the war years and a devastating recession afterwards. Mr. Brown was unable to hold onto his studio or property, and was evicted in 1920. He still managed to retain his collection of negatives, but they provided no financial rewards at the time. He decided to enter politics and ran unsuccessfully as a Labor Independent in 1921, and briefly operated a newspaper, *The Glowworm*.

Returning to photography, Mr. Brown began collaborating with photographer Gladys Reeves, who had once worked as his assistant. After helping her open her own Art League Studio in Edmonton, Mr. Brown and Miss Reeves began producing an exhibiting a vast collection of historical photograph albums that featured a certain region or subject like the Hudson Bay Company. One of the most famous volumes was entitled "The Birth of the West." Mr. Brown became one of Canada's most successful historical documentary photographers, and his albums offered a compelling narrative of urban

growth and technological modernization.

In 1929, Mr. Brown began operating the Pioneer Days Museum, which allowed him to exhibit his impressive photographs and historical artifacts. The provincial government purchased both Mr. Brown's artifacts and his massive collection of negatives in 1947. They are now on display at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. The money he received from the purchase allowed Mr. Brown to live his final years comfortably. He died in Edmonton on January 3, 1951 at the age of 73.

- 1991 Art and Architecture in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), pp. 522, 665.
- 2008 Canada: An Illustrated History (Vancouver, B.C.: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd.), p. 171.
- 2005 Edmonton in Our Own Words (Edmonton, Alberta, CA: The University of Alberta Press), pp. 207, 234
- 2010 The West and Beyond: New Perspectives on an Imagined Region (Edmonton, Alberta, CA: Athabasca University Press), pp. 78-88.
- 1896 Wilson's Photographic Magazine, Vol. XXXIII (New York: Edward L. Wilson), p. 261.
- 1897 Wilson's Photographic Magazine, Vol. XXXIV (New York: Edward L. Wilson), pp. 213-216.

Website Update

We have keep the momentum up last month and continue to record new reference information at a good pace. We now have over 2200 information entries to share with our community. Links to all new content can accessed directly from our Librarian's stationary photo history page. (http://www.historiccamera.com/photo_history.html)

Special thanks goes out this month to Ake Borgstrom at Photographica.nu for sharing images of his rare and unusual collection. You can view the data sheets with Ake's photos by doing a search with all fields with the key word "Borgstrom".

Additional thanks also goes out to Mike Butkus and his willingness to allow Historic Camera to carry his archive of instruction

manuals, helping HC to provide a one stop reference database library, or what we discussed in a previous issue, a comprehensive encyclopaedia. Thanks also goes out to Tracy for our biographies and to our friends at Flickr for contributing camera images of their collection.

If you have images to share please contact admin@historiccamera.com

Here is a listing of the additional content generated this past month, excluding the ones published in this newsletter:

New Camera Listings:



**John J. Griffin & Sons Ltd.
Camera Listing**



**James A.
Sinclair & Co.
Ltd**

W. W. ROUCH & CO.,
Manufacturers of Photographic Materials,
180, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

W.W. Rouch & Co.



Bilora Camera Co.

New Company History



Certo Camera-Werk
Company History



Ruth Bernhard

New Biographies:



Hill & Adamson



Alice Boughton



Robert Capa



Townsend Duryea



E. J. Bellocq



Robert Demachy



Louis Fleckenstein



Victor Hasselblad



Oskar Barnack



Andre Kertesz



George Hurrell

Send Comments & Questions to
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