



Historic Camera Club Newsletter

© HistoricCamera.com

Volume 11 No. 7

Herbert B. Crisler

Herbert B. "Cris" Crisler was born in Elbert County, Georgia on July 23, 1893. After his father deserted the family, the 16-year-old supported his impoverished family by running his family's photo business. While serving in the U.S. Army Signal Corps Spruce Production Division, Mr. Crisler became acquainted with the picturesque Pacific Northwest, and relocated in 1919 to Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Settling in Port Angeles and after a brief marriage that produced a son named Robert, he opened his own photography business. Shortly thereafter, he purchased a 100-lb. Pathe newsreel camera and began filming wildlife and the majestic Olympic Mountains. In the winter, he supplemented his income by working in construction. Because the format of a newsreel camera was compatible with motion picture projection, Mr. Crisler began shooting footage that was later released as his first documentary, *From the Mountains to the Sea* (1924).

After an unsuccessful commercial airplane venture in Seattle, Mr. Crisler embarked upon a highly-publicized trip throughout the wilderness that spanned the Olympic Peninsula. The trek began with a \$500 bet in which Mr. Crisler wagered *The Seattle Times* that he could complete the journey with only a pocketknife and some camera equipment. He promised he would return 30 days' later fit and heavier. The trek was completed successfully, but Mr. Crisler returned about 30

pounds lighter and with a newfound respect for wildlife. The award-winning sportsman would later say, "After that experience I put my guns away for good and turned to the camera."



In 1934, H. B. Crisler became a wildlife photographer, and was joined seven years' later by his new wife, University of Washington English professor and Seattle mountaineer Lois Brown, whom he married on December 7, 1941. Together, the Crislers began recording Olympic habitat and wildlife, producing several films and featuring them in cross-country lectures. After seeing their documentary *The Living Wilderness*, environmentalist Olaus J. Murie, one of the founders of The Wilderness Society, contacted Walt Disney about the film, calling it "the most beautiful picture on an outdoor subject he had ever seen. Mr. Murie went on say, "Here is a real life, real wilderness film, produced by a rare combination of wilderness understanding and imagination, that seemed to me to have many of the qualities of *Fantasia*."

Shortly thereafter, as contract wildlife photographers, Herb and Lois Crisler's television footage would be expanded and released as a 1952 Disney nature film entitled *The Olympic Elk*. Mr. Crisler's camera of choice was a Cine-Kodak Special II, which he used for subsequent Disney releases that include *The Vanishing Prairie* (1954) and *White Wilderness* (1958). The Crislers became actively involved in the migration of Arctic caribou and wolf pups, and Mr. Crisler's still photographs of Alaskan wildlife were featured in Lois Crisler's 1958 book, *Arctic Wild*, which later became another Disney documentary.

Settling in the Tarryall Mountains region of Colorado, the Crislers began raising five wolf pups they had rescued in the Arctic. The experiences were again documented by Lois Crisler in her memoir, *Captive Wild* (1968). The strain of protecting the wolves took a toll on their marriage, and the couple subsequently divorced. In 1973, 80-year-old Herb Crisler again made headlines when he retraced the trek across the Olympic Mountains he made four decades' earlier. He recreated his route so successfully he actually

found a food cache he had buried near Lake Beauty on his original journey. In later years, Mr. Crisler's faithful companion was Pacific Northwest historian and author Ruby El Hult. Living out his final days close to nature, Herbert B. Crisler died in Puyallup, Washington on December 15, 1985.

Ref:

2000 Arctic Bush Pilot: From Navy Combat to Flying Alaska's Northern Wilderness (Kenmore, WA: Epicenter Press, Inc.), pp. 16, 185, 189, 191, 196.

1974 National Geographic, Vol. CXLV (Washington, DC: National Geographic Association), p. 197.

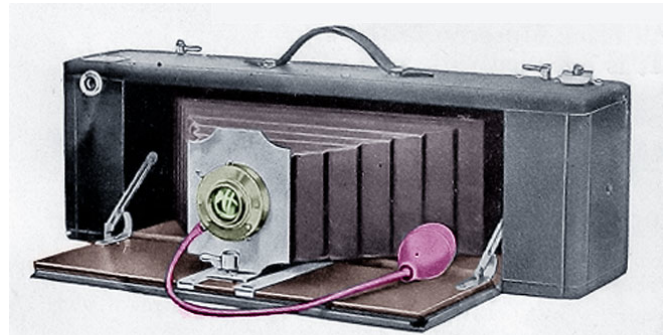
2008 Olympic Trail Talks (URL: <http://www.ifish.net/board/showthread.php?p=1963237>).

1955 The Reader's Digest, Vol. LXVI (New York: The Reader's Digest Association), p. 82.

2009 Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife on Film (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press), pp. 116-119.

2010 Seabury Blair Jr.: ONP Needs to Honor Herb Crisler (URL: <http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/2010/mar/22/seabury-blair-jr-mr-outdoors-onp-needs-to-honor/?print=1>).

Bell Panorama Camera



Bell Panorama Camera

(Straight Working)

© Historic Camera

The Bell Panorama Camera (Straight Working) was manufactured by the American Northern Photo Supply Company in 1912. It was designed and patented by Isaac A. Bell of Crinnell, Iowa, in 1908 and 1911. This camera was the first to introduce a stationary wide angle panoramic camera. It eliminated the need for mechanical mechanisms that would rotate, spin or require a curved back. It

made a standard size panoramic picture 3 1/2 x 11 1/2 inch on standard 122 roll film. Later models included a knob to change the format size to create a picture of 3 1/2 x 5 1/2 inch in addition to the 3 1/2 x 11 1/2 inch size. The camera body was made of hardwood covered in seal grain leather. The lens was a special universal focus combination, made especially for this camera. The lens was fitted with a special Wollensak shutter working for time, bulb and instantaneous exposures. It was made with two tripod sockets for panoramic and panel work, two built-in brilliant finders. It was priced at \$35.00 in 1911.

William H. Rau



One of Philadelphia's most accomplished photographers, William H. Rau was born in

the "City of Brotherly Love" in 1855. His photographic career began early, as a 13-year-old apprentice at English photographer William Bell's studio. Six years' later and still a teenager, Mr. Rau became a photographer for the United States Transit of Venus Expedition. While sailing the globe on the old wartime vessel known as the Swatara, he performed intricate photographic tasks based upon astronomical planetary observations.



After returning to the United States, he joined the Government Survey of the Yellowstone and Rocky Mountains, and his photography is often credited with the expedition's success. In 1877, he married Louisa Bell, the daughter of his first employer and photographic mentor William Bell. The couple would later add two daughters to their family. In 1881, Mr. Rau joined his friend and colleague Edward L. Wilson, founder of the Photographic Journal of America, in an exhaustive journey through Arabia, Arabia Petra, Egypt, and the Palestine. He is acknowledged as the first photographer to capture images of

monuments and historical buildings from this region. His dry plates of Arabia Petra preserved what many believed were ancient ruins that had been forever lost. His plates of temples and tombs offered the West fascinating perspectives on African and Middle Eastern history and introduced them to their unique and quite different ways of life.

He later took an extensive tour to Mexico with writer John L. Stoddard and his regional photographs later became a sensation on the Philadelphia lecture circuit. Upon his return to the United States in 1882, Mr. Rau was named head of Edward L. Wilson's photographic department, and remained with the publisher until the business operations of The Philadelphia Photographer relocated to New York three years' later. At that point, he decided to open his own business and while acting as his own manager he steadily built what became one of the largest commercial photography studios in America. He also served as official photographer of the Pennsylvania Railroad for more than three decades. Mr. Rau also constructed custom cameras and processes for specific photographic purposes. For example, he was able to photograph the massive stone bridge over the Susquehanna River and Hell Gate Bridge at the water level by placing himself in a box and being hauled by a rope to his desired vantage point.

A longtime member and former President of The Photographic Society of Philadelphia, America's oldest photographic club, Mr. Rau was the most famous photographer in his hometown during his lifetime. After a brief illness, he died on November 19, 1920. Of his accomplishments, a story published in The Philadelphia Public Ledger noted, "Few men have crowded more adventure into a working lifetime than William H. Rau."

Ref:
1917 Bulletin of Photography, Vol. XXI (Philadelphia: Frank V. Chambers), pp. 213-215.

1921 The Camera, Vol. XXV (Philadelphia: The Camera Publishing Company), p. 48.

1918 Photographic Journal of America, Vol. LV (Philadelphia: Franklin Square), p. 392.

1921 Photographic Journal of America, Vol. LVIII (Philadelphia: Franklin Square), p. 16.

Zephyr Camera

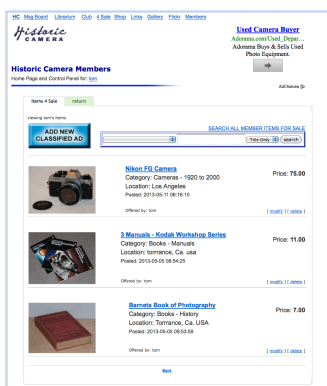
The Zephyr Candid Camera was manufactured in 1938 by the Photographic Industries of America, New York. It was the first American-made 35mm camera that incorporated a fast focal plane shutter. It was available in a 2 inch Wollensak Anastigmat with either a f3.5 or an f2.9 lens.



It featured a scientifically balanced focal plane shutter providing speeds from 1/25 to 1/500th of a second, with bulb. Diaphragm stops included 3.5 (or 2.9), 4.5, 5.6, 8, 11, and 16. It accepted interchangeable lenses in a helical mount. Other features included an automatic film counter, built-in rangefinder attachment, an adaptable flash synchronization and a Wollensak telescopic view finder. The camera was made of a hard aluminum alloy body covered in leather and the exposed metal parts were brushed aluminum finish. The camera was capable of capturing 36 exposures on Kodachrome or Dufaycolor 35mm film. The camera was priced at \$22.50 for the f3.5 lens and \$29.50 for the f2.9 lens. A leather carrying case was extra for \$4.95.

Website Update

The development of a community "4 Sale" area continues in beta testing and can be seen and used on our site. This past month I has been upgraded with a direct paypal button. The public listing can be accessed through a link on the top of our website pages, located with our other menu items. The access from your member home page directs you to your personal item postings. A big blue button entitled "add new classified



ad" items will allow you to submit items for sale. The list containing your items will have text buttons only visible to you, allowing you to modify or delete your entries. Once posted buyers are encouraged to contact you in order to strike a deal and agree on shipping methods and cost. Once members have sold their item, then it is the member's responsibility to delete the posting. Listings are free and currently can be left indefinitely.

Isabella Bird Bishop

Isabella Lucy Bird was born to Reverend Edward and Dorothy Lawson Bird on October 15, 1832 in Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire, England. Her father was a prominent Church of England official, and Miss Bird's childhood was one of prestige and upper middle-class privilege. Homeschooled by her mother who nurtured her intellectual curiosity, the frail young girl refused to allow poor health to become an insurmountable obstacle. By her early twenties, Miss Bird was regularly traveling from Great Britain to North America.

Her first book, *The Englishwoman in America* (1856) was based on the letters she sent to her family describing her travels.



After the deaths of her parents, Miss Bird had the financial means to pursue her love of travel, which included extended sojourns in Australia, New Zealand, and the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). She accompanied acting British consul William Green on a treacherous mule ride to the top of the Mauna Loa volcano. From there, she sailed to California and the Rocky Mountains, which she explored on horseback. In 1878, she became engaged to her sister Henrietta's physician, Dr. John Bishop, but impending nuptials did not deter her travel itinerary, which included journeys to Malaya and Japan, featured in her 1880 book, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*.

Devastated over the death of her sister "Hennie", Miss Bird finally married Dr. Bishop in 1881. The doctor admitted, "I have only

one formidable rival in Isabella's affections and that is the high tableland of Central Asia." She would make several subsequent trips to Asia, which were chronicled in *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither* (1883). After her husband's untimely death from anemia in 1886, Mrs. Bishop once again channeled her grief in travel, again to Asia and the Middle East, and then took a solo trip through Kurdistan to the Black Sea. During her tour of Kurdistan, she earnestly studied a gifted military photographer and applied his techniques to her own amateur photographs. Always keenly interested in photography as a means of telling her travel stories, Mrs. Bishop began immersing herself in learning various technical processes.

Mrs. Bishop had the distinction of being the first woman to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, but her proposed membership the following year was met with considerable male resistance. After her text *Journeys into Persia and Kurdistan* was published, she continued her photography instruction by taking lessons from Howard Farmer at London's Regent Street Polytechnic. By January 1894, Mrs. Bishop was off again, this time with two cameras and a tripod in addition to her luggage. She embarked upon a three-year journey through Southeast Asia, which included a sailing trip up the Yangtze River and several visits to her beloved Japan. During this period, she produced hundreds of negatives, which would be featured in her texts *Views in the Far East* (1897), *Korea and Her Neighbours* (1898), and *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* (1899).

By now, Mrs. Bishop was developing her own plates and toning her prints whenever she found time, usually late at night. She remarked with noticeable pride, "Photographing has been an intense pleasure. I began too late ever to be a photographer, and have too little time to learn the technicalities of the art; but I am able to produce negatives which are faithful, though

not artistic, records of what I see." A more than 500-mile trek through Morocco and the Atlas Mountains in 1900 proved to be her final travel adventure as age and illness took their toll. Her life's journey complete, Isabella Bird Bishop died on October 7, 1904, eight days before her 72nd birthday.

Ref:
2005 *Explorers and Exploration* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation), p. 91.

2013 Fact Sheet - Biography of Isabella Bird Bishop (URL: <http://www.rgs.org/NR/rdonlyres/1E293436-3F54-460B-9020-C92F04DB48D1/0/F3FactsheetBiographyofIsabellaBirdBishop.pdf>).

1977 *Northlight*, No. 7 (Phoenix, AZ: Arizona State University), pp. 1-9.

2011 *PhotoResearcher*, No. 15 (Krems, Austria: European Society for the History of Photography), pp. 13-26.

New Camera Listings:

**ZENITH
CAMERA
CORP.**

**Zenith Camera
Corporation**

New Biographies



Frederick I. Monsen



E. J. Decker
Cleveland, Ohio

Send Comments & Suggestions to
admin@historiccamera.com.

© 2013 Historic Camera