



Historic Camera Club Newsletter

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Plaubel & Co.

In 1902 Plaubel & Company was founded in Frankfurt, Germany by Hugo Schrader, as a lens manufacturer and distributor. Hugo Schrader was a son-in-law of the famous Dr. Kruegener and worked in Kruegener's lens factory in Frankfurt-Bockenheim. He also received training at the famous Voigtlander factory in Braunschweig.

In 1910 Plaubel & Co began manufacturing and distributing cameras. Their first entry was with the "Prazisions-Peco", a 9x12cm/10x15cm folding bed field camera.

In 1912 the firm began manufacturing the popular Makina camera. A high-quality press-type camera with leaf shutter, interchangeable lens, and coupled-rangefinder for mainly 6x9cm format.. Production lasted up to approximately 1960, which saw the product line evolve for makina models 1, 2, 2s, 3, and 3R.

Around 1940 Hugo Schrader died and his son Goetz Schrader took over the management of the company.

In 1945 after the War the Plaubel company specialized in monorail view cameras.

In 1950 Plaubel introduced the Makiflex to compete with the Hasselblad camera. The introduction was met with limited success.

In 1952 the company introduced the Peco monorail camera for professionals and semi-

professionals. "The name Peco is believed to stand for Plaubel Equipment Company. The camera proved to be a success and this line of cameras for many years to follow.



In 1961 Plaubel collaborated with Brooks of New York, and introduced the Veriwide 100 camera. It featured a fixed Schneider-Kreuznachultra wide angle lens and a 6x10cm view finder.

In 1975 the Plaubel company was purchased by Mr. Kimio Doi or the the Japanese company the Doi Group,

in 1979 the company introduced the Plaubel Makina 67 camera. The unique high quality camera body was designed by Konishiroku, now called Konica, and the 80mm F2.8 lens was by Nikon. in 1981 the manufacturer was changed to Mamiya due to a relationship Mr.

Kimio had with the company.

In 1986 Plauble Makina 67 Production ceased in 1986 due to Mamiya's bankruptcy in 1984 and continued financial problems.

The company continued to manufacture the Peco and Profia large format monorail cameras.

Reference:

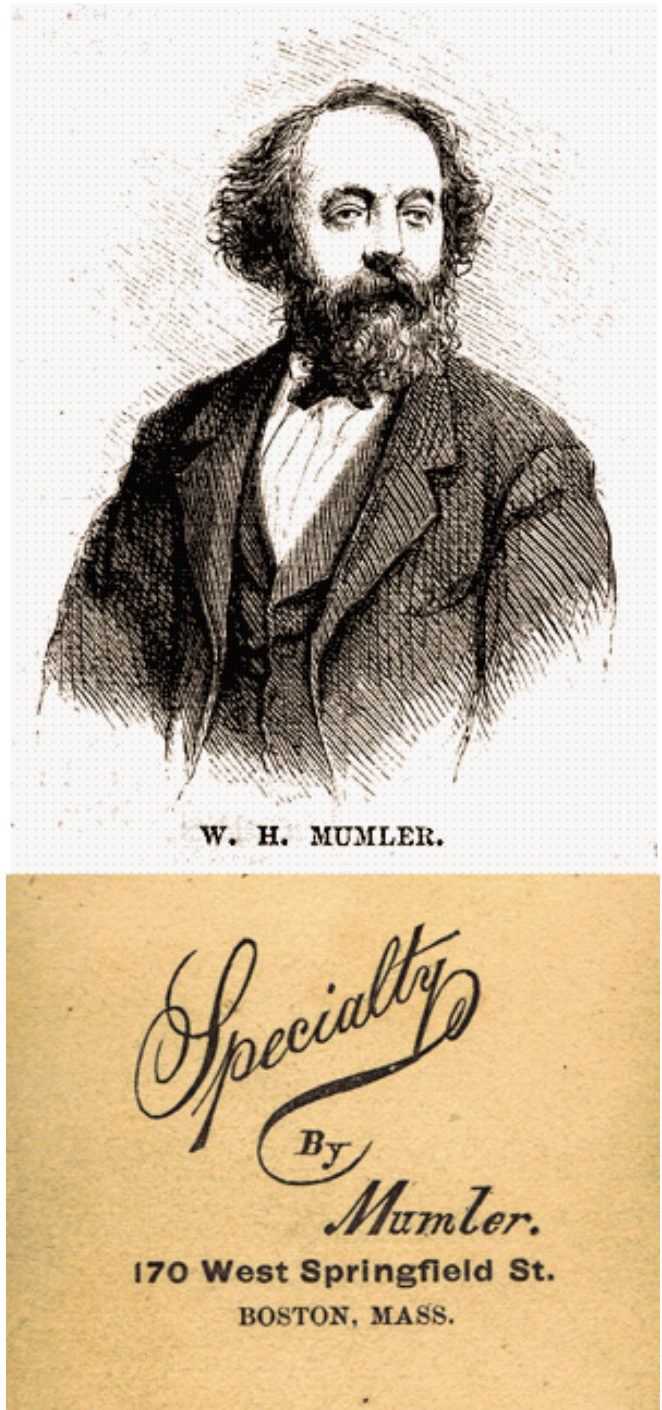
2006-2013 Plauble by J. Noir (<http://www.jnoir.eu/en/cameras/plauble/>)

William H. Mumler

Controversial photographer William H. Mumler was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1832 to John G. J. and Susan Blowers Mumler. Little is known about his childhood or education, and it appears his professional career began as an engraver with a Boston-based jewelry company, where he spent the next two decades. Despite his success as an engraver, Mr. Mumler's interest in photography inspired him to leave his lucrative position and become a photographic publisher. Mr. Mumler combined his passion for photography with his fascination for spiritualism, with the assistance of his clairvoyant wife Hannah.

In 1861, Mr. Mumler boldly proclaimed he had not only captured a spirit in a photograph, but had succeeded in duplicating the process several times. With Civil War casualties mounting, grieving families flocked to Mr. Mumler's studio in hopes of capturing spirit images of their departed loved ones. Mr. Mumler eventually relocated to New York, and opened a highly profitable Broadway portrait gallery. The spirit photography technique he developed varied little from a conventional portrait sitting. A portrait was made, and then the spirit 'extra' would appear in the negative and print. Mr. Mumler charged \$10 for a spirit photograph, which was five times the standard portrait price at the time. It

is believed Mr. Mumler created spirit photographs through the manipulation of double exposures with the use of a slow lens, a practice that met with considerable disdain by photographic professionals who dismissed his work as amateurish at best.



Mr. Mumler was charged with two felonies

and a misdemeanor in 1869 - defrauding the public, larceny, and taking money under false pretenses. The trial was a media sensation as experts on both sides argued whether or not his spirit photographs were legitimate or a hoax designed to exploit the grief of his unsuspecting patrons. Mr. Mumler was acquitted and continued making spirit photographs, but his professional reputation had been seriously damaged. This did not deter former First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln from paying a visit to the Mumlers. In 1872, the year after her son Tad, a desolate Mrs. Lincoln sought solace in spiritualism. According to Mr. Mumler, his wife communicated with the spirits of Abraham and Tad Lincoln while Mrs. Lincoln posed while adorned in her 'widow's weeds.' Mr. Mumler later recalled that after his wife ended her spiritual connection, "She found Mrs. L. weeping tears of joy that she has again found her loved ones."

Despite his famous portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln, Mr. Mumler's once thriving business began to decline after the trial and the waning interest in spirit photography after the Civil War. He focused his later years on the invention and production of photo-electrotype plates, and was experimenting with the use of dry plates to create instantaneous photographs. William H. Mumler succumbed after a brief illness in 1884, and left behind a professional legacy that is still being debated by photographic historians and legal scholars.

Ref:
2008 American History, Vol. XLIII (Leesburg, VA: Weider History Group), pp. 42-49.

2012 The Elements of Photography: Understanding and Creating Sophisticated Images (Waltham, MA: Focal Press), p. 239.

2008 Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 110.

1869 The Illustrated Photographer: Scientific and Art Journal, Vol. II (London: Edmund Dring), pp. 254-255.

1884 The Photographic Times, Vol. XIV (New York: Scovill Manufacturing Company), pp. 304, 347-348.

2010 Time and Photography (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press), p. 39.

Who invented the Plastic Lens ?

In our May 2012 Newsletter we discovered who invented the iris diaphragm. It was John Henry Brown, who just gave it away and was forgotten until we reiterated his contribution. Now we ask if anyone knows who invented the plastic lens. Give up. Well it is believed to have been Arthur Kingston. Here is a biography of Kingston and about his discovery.

On March 20th, 1934 Arthur William Kingston formed a partnership called the KGK Syndicate in London with Peter Maurice Kock.

In September 1934 Arthur Kingston is credited with inventing and patenting the first plastic lens, employing an injection molded polymathy methacrylate type (Perspex).

In 1936 the Rohm and Haas Company introduced the commercial availability of Polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA), or more commonly known as acrylic or plexiglas. Additionally, in the same year, the Dupont Company introduced a similar product called Lucite. The Imperial Chemical industries PLC and the Dow Chemical Company soon followed with their own products.

in 1936 Arthur Kingston founded the optical firm called Combined Optical Industries Limited (COIL). The company pioneered techniques in the precision molding of plastic optics using injection and compression molding. As more and more low-vision products were introduced, the brand name "COIL" became a recognized leader in optical products made with plastic throughout the world.

In 1937, Kock was credited for a lens made by combining sheets of Plexiglas resin that

were compressed in heated iron molds. There was a law suit between the two partners over who actually invented the first plastic optical lens during their partnership. Kingston is mostly credited with the invention.

In 1937 the Purma Special camera was introduced as the first mass-produced camera to use an integrated plastic lens view finder.



The partnership between Kock and Kingston lasted only a few years and was dissolved in 1938.

In 1959 the Kodak Brownie 44A was the first camera to use a plastic lens.



Currently, the [COIL company](#) is still a strong leader for Low Vision sales globally and is owned by the Carclo Technical Plastics company.

Ref:

2002, Applied Photographic Optics: Lenses and Optical Systems by Sidney R. Ray, p. 104
2009, European Plastics News, Plastic Ophthalmic Lenses (1936)
1994 (est.) The Stories Behind the Development of Plastic Lenses by PPG Ind.

George Croughton



George Hanmer Croughton was born to Thomas Hanmer and Ann Swinyard Croughton in Lowestoft, England on April 14, 1843. His drawing skills were displayed at a young age and earned him admission to the prestigious

National School of Art as a teenager. He later studied at the Royal Academy under the instruction of famed landscape painter Thomas Sidney Cooper. After completing his training, he became an itinerant painter and sketch artist, touring throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland. In September 1865, he married Charlotte Morgan at Bath, and together the couple raised a large family consisting of five daughters and one son. Mr. Croughton quickly became an outspoken advocate of utilizing photography as a legitimate and powerful art form, and published several articles on the subject in *the British Journal of Photography* and the *Photographic News*. He also delivered several important lectures on the art of photography at several photographic societies in Great Britain and abroad.

After settling in London, Mr. Croughton became employed by the Southwell Brothers, whose speciality was royal portrait photography. Shortly thereafter, he was commissioned to paint portraits of Queen Victoria, and later King Edward VII. He also painted the final portrait of Napoleon III before the exiled French President's death in January 1873. For his ivory miniatures, he was awarded a first-class medal

by the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society, and achieved increasing prominence for his crayon sketches and dramatic use of color. Mr. Croughton opened a successful studio and his exhibits received top prizes at the South Kensington International Exhibition.

In 1876, Mr. Croughton traveled to America to receive awards at Philadelphia's high-profile Centennial Exhibition. This would be a life-changing journey as he established important



professional contacts with world-class photographers. Seven years' later, his family make America their permanent home, living and working at various times in Philadelphia, Richmond, and New Orleans before settling in Rochester, New

York. Mr. Croughton remained devoted to promoting the artistic value of photography internationally, and for his efforts was rewarded a lifetime membership into the Photographers' Association of America. He served as one of its convention judges for several years and was also deeply involved in local artistic societies, serving as treasurer of the Rochester Art Club and president of the Rochester Art League. In later years, he became a successful manufacturer of mail-order gaslight developing and gelatine matt (also known as gelatin matte) paper.

George Hanmer Croughton died after a long illness at his Rochester home on April 15, 1920, one day after his 77th birthday. One editorial described Mr. Croughton with a reverence befitting this early champion of photographic art: "He possessed the courage of his convictions, and had the will to conquer. In a

word, though genial, he was combative and when convinced of the right, immovable."

Ref:

- 1917 American Art Annual, Vol. XIII (London: M. Knoedler & Co.), p. 223.
- 1920 Bulletin of Photography, Vol. XXVI (Philadelphia: Frank V. Chambers), pp. 399-400.
- 1920 The Photographic Journal of America, Vol. XLVII (Philadelphia: Edward L. Wilson Company, Inc.), p. 231.
- 1883 The Photographic Times and American Photographer, Vol. XIII (New York: Scovill Manufacturing Company), p. 543.
- 1900 The St. Louis and Canadian Photographer, Vol. XXIV (St. Louis, MO: Mrs. Fitzgibbon-Clark), pp. 281, 685.

B. L. H. Dabbs

Benjamin Lomax Horsley Dabbs was born on November 30, 1839 in London, England. After moving his family to the United States, George Dabbs became one of America's most successful photographic supply merchants, first as an employee of New York's L. Chapman & Company and later in his own Philadelphia-based company. After receiving a public school education in New York, the young Dabbs began working in his father's store before moving to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in April of 1861, where he opened his own lucrative supply and ambrotype sales business. Later that year, he purchased property from a man named Rorah, which he transformed within the next three years into Pennsylvania's largest photographic gallery.

Now firmly established, the prosperous Mr. Dabbs asked Dr. John Dickson for his daughter Sadie's hand in marriage, and their January 21, 1868 wedding was the local social event of the season. The happy couple would later have nine children. Mr. Dabbs enjoyed so much success with his portraits, he sold his supply business in 1869 and focused solely upon photography, opening a lavish studio at 602 Liberty Street in 1876. Mr. Dabbs traveled extensively to Europe, and his international reputation grew as he photographed some of the world's most important government officials and

entrepreneurs. He had been a close personal friend of President Abraham Lincoln, and his portrait of Andrew Carnegie was widely regarded as the best photograph ever taken of the steel tycoon turned philanthropist.

While Mr. Dabbs was known for his natural-looking portraits, he made it clear that he approached photography from both artistic and business perspectives. In 1896, he explained that he did not believe in telling customers they would not be charged for re-sittings because he believed, "The public do not value what they can get for nothing." He further explained that since all specialists in their chosen professions such as doctors and lawyers charge for their time and services whether successful or not, photographers should be no different. When re-sittings were necessary or requested, Mr. Dabbs argued a photographer should be adequately compensated for his time, equipment, and professional service.

Sadly, Mr. Dabbs' lavish studio was destroyed on May 2, 1897 by the worst fire Pittsburgh had experienced in nearly half a century. Thankfully, Mr. Dabbs' printing and finishing departments were housed elsewhere, and because most of his negatives and card stock were also stored at another location, his inventory losses were minimal. Mr. Dabbs' later years were sadly marred by rheumatism and various other debilitating ailments, which brought his active lifestyle to a halt. Sixty-year-old B. L. H. Dabbs died on December 13, 1899, and his contributions to Pittsburgh's photographic history are remembered fondly in his adopted hometown. His celebrated portrait of Andrew Carnegie is proudly displayed at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Art.

Ref:
1892 All Sorts of Pittsburgers (Pittsburg, PA: The Leader All Sorts Co.), p. 233.

1868 The Medical and Surgical Reporter, Vol. XVIII

(Philadelphia: Alfred Martien, Printer), p. 112.

1896 Photographic Mosaics (New York: Edward L. Wilson), pp. 153-154.

1900 The St. Louis and Canadian Photographer, Vol. XXIV (St. Louis, MO: Mrs. Fitzgibbon-Clark), p. 44.

1897 Wilson's Photographic Magazine, Vol. XXXIV (New York: Edward L. Wilson), pp. 269, 288.

The Following information can be seen on our Historic Camera Site.

[New Camera Listings:](#)



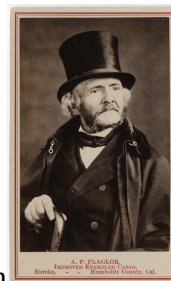
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[A. P. Flaglor](#)

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