



Historic Camera Club Newsletter

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J. W. Willard & Co.

The J. W. Willard Manufacturing company was founded in 1857 by John W. Willard in New York as a dealer in Daguerreian apparatus and photographic materials. It was a small company establishment located at 118 William Street. The opening of this establishment was during a period of fierce competition and only through Mr. Willard's conviction and virtues did the business eventually begin to succeed after two years of hard work. Mr. Willard was born in 1826, in Chester Connecticut and was reported to have started in the photographic business in 1856.

In 1860 Mr. Willard opened a new Warehouse at 522 Broadway in New York. He began to advertise and slowly grew the business by using his sound business practices. The new Stock house grew to sales of three hundred thousand dollars carrying on trade as large as any retail establishment in the country.

In 1864 the firm was located at 684 Broadway in New York City in one of the largest and most attractive warehouses in America. During this period the company was incorporated under the laws of the state of New York as simply the Willard Manufacturing Company. Willard Manufacturing was one of the largest manufacturers in America along side American Optical, E & HT Anthony and Holmes, Booth and Haydens.

In 1866 Willard Manufacturing acquired the entire business of Charles F. Usener, a

Lenses! Lenses! Lenses!

WILLARD MF'G CO.'S Standard American Cameras,

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PORTRAITS, VIEWS, COPYING, STEREOSCOPES, ETC.,

Made under the direction of the celebrated Optician

MR. CHARLES F. USENER.

First Premium awarded by the American Institute, New York.

Our Lenses possess a uniform and extraordinary Depth of Focus, Extent of Field, and Sharpness of Image, which gives them the preference over the best of every other make, either Foreign or Domestic.

We are also manufacturing and are prepared to furnish the

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celebrated optician. Usener continued to work at the Willard Manufacturing Company and his name was prominently announced in advertisements regarding the quality of lenses available. Mr. Charles F. Usener was born on the 2nd of July in 1823. He was a native of the German state of Wurttemberg. Mr. Usener immigrated to America in the 1850s, where he was listed in New York

directories as a Daguerreian and optics manufacturer. He became a naturalized US citizen on October 12th, 1860.

By 1870 the firms name was changed to J. W. Willard & Co. and located at 109 Bleecker Street New York.

In 1872 John W. Willard made a deal with N.C. Thayer, an inventor and manufacturer, of the firm N.C. Thayer & Co., a large photographic supply house based in Chicago. The N.C. Thayer & Co. advertised as the Willard Mfg. Co. successor. The new firm set up shop at 609 Broadway New York and J. W. Willard and A. H. Baldwin remained on staff at the firm. This arrangement lasted for only a short time, and J. W. Willard resumed control of the business with an association of the well-known firm of William B. Holmes & Co and A. H. Baldwin. He moved the business to 644 and 646 Broadway at the corner of Bleecker Street.

In 1882 with Mr. Willard being the largest owner, he advised his board to dissolve his company. Due to incidents of an unpleasant nature, he withdrew his interest his interest in the company. Mr. Willard joined the Scovill Manufacturing company and assumed charge of a department where many of his old customers would patronize him

In 1897 J.W. Willard left Scovill to become the editor of Snap Shots magazine and remained in that position until his death. John W. Willard died at his home in Chester, Connecticut on January 26 1901.

On march 31st, 1891 N.C. Thayer suffering from ill health and unable to run his large Chicago photo supply business sold it to Sweet, Wallach and Company.

In 1896 Mr. Willard organized a co-operative purchasing agency for photographers and photo-engravers at 25-27 Third avenue, New York City. The agency provided everything needed for photographic and process work on very favorable terms.

Mr. Charles F. Usener died on the 17th of April 1900 and is buried in Green wood cemetery Brooklyn New York.

Mr. John W. Willard died on January 26 1901 in his native home in Chester Connecticut.

Ref:

1867	Photographic	Mosaics	-	Page	151
1868	Manual of Photography,	m. carey	lea	,	p355
1872	The	Photographic	Times,		p23
1872	The	Photographic	Times,		p89
1896	new	photo	miniature,		p480
1896	Wilson's	photographic	magazine	Vol. 33,	p94
1901	The Photographic Times				

Oliver Wendell Holmes



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Oliver Wendell Holmes was born to Rev. Abiel and Sarah Wendell Holmes in Cambridge, Massachusetts on August 29, 1809. He came from an aristocratic and culturally influential line of New Englanders he dubbed the "Boston Brahmins." He graduated from Harvard University at the age of 20, at which time he began writing poetry. He switched his professional focus from law to medicine, and embarked upon a career as a professor and researcher at the medical

schools of Harvard and Dartmouth. In 1840, Dr. Holmes married Amelia Lee Jackson, a Massachusetts Supreme Court Justice. The couple would later have two sons and a daughter, with their eldest son, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. becoming an influential Associate Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Although Dr. Holmes would have a second successful career as an acclaimed poet and essayist, with the 1858 compilation of essays *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* becoming a bestseller, his experimentation with the art and science of photography arguably provided him with the greatest personal satisfaction. Dr. Holmes maintained that photography was a transformative instrument that combined past memory with an appearance of contemporary social reality. Intrigued by Professor Charles Wheatstone's invention of the stereoscope (also known as the English stereoscope), Dr. Holmes decided to construct his own variation in 1859. He discussed the trials and tribulations of developing the hand or American stereoscope in his 1859 essay, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph." Dr. Holmes explained that he sought to create a simple device that could produce complex results. The stereoscope needed two lenses and a supporting frame. He also inserted slots to hold the stereographs in place, and added a grooved, dovetailed stand. Despite Dr. Holmes' considerable enthusiasm for the device, he knew he faced serious obstacles due to the precision it demanded to produce two perfectly matched negatives. He believed that an affordable stereoscope that was marketed by emphasizing its ease of use would appeal to both professional and amateur photographers. Dr. Holmes' faith in the stereoscope was not misplaced, and by the dawn of the twentieth century, it was being used not only by photographers but also by educators, researchers, and medical professionals.

A frequent contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*,

Dr. Holmes' other photographic essays included "Sun-Painting and Sun-Sculpture" (1861) and "Doings of the Sunbeam" (1863). His passion for photography and his tireless promotion of his beloved American stereoscope never waned. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes died at his Boston home on October 7, 1894. The Miltonian prose that concludes "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph" serves as a fitting epitaph to one of American photography's greatest visionaries:

"We are looking into stereoscopes as pretty toys, and wondering over the photograph as a charming novelty; but before another generation has passed away, it will be recognized that a new epoch in the history of human progress dates from the time when He who 'never but in uncreated light Dwelt from eternity -' took a pencil of fire from the hand of the "angel standing in the sun," and placed it in the hands of a mortal."

Ref:
1859 *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. III (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company), pp. 738-748.

1878 *Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes and his Works* (London: Elliot Stock), pp. 11, 23-24.

2013 *Fifty Key Writers on Photography* (New York: Routledge), pp. 125-128.

1949 *Oliver Wendell Holmes' "His Pioneer Stereoscope and Later Industry"* (New York: The Newcomen Society in North America), pp. 10, 15.

1894 *The Photographic Journal of America*, Vol. XXXI (New York: Edward L. Wilson), pp. 100-103, 557.

Multiscope & Film Cameras

In our February 2012 newsletter we provided a history of the Multiscope & Film Company. This month we updated our Multiscope & Film Co cameras with trade catalogue descriptions and nice photos courtesy of Holabird-Kagin Americana Auctions. The catalogues were produced with a poor engraving and the images in the catalogues are not helpful in identifying the various models. The Multiscope Co. with the introduction of the Al-Vista cameras are historically important due to this camera being the first successful

commercially produced panoramic camera made in quantity for amateur and professional photographers.



AI-Vista model 3B

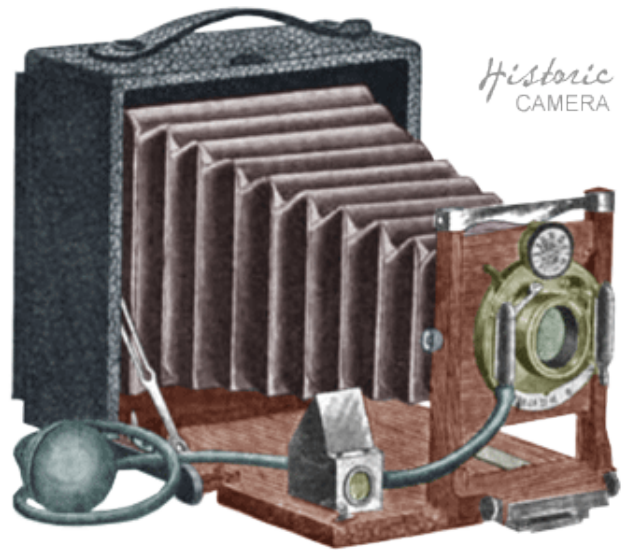
A novel improvement on the AI-Vista panoramic camera was a unique improvement to have an interchangeable front converting a panoramic camera into a standard single lens hand or stand camera, like the model 5F.



AI-Vista model 5F

The Multi-scope company also carried, just prior to the companies sale, a line of traditional cameras called the Badger Cameras. Not many of these camera were made. The most advertised camera of this line was the Badger Special which was

offered in two sizes, a 4 x 5 inch and a 5 x 7 inch.



Multi-scope Badger Special Camera

J. P. Ball

James Presley Ball was born in Franklin County, Virginia in 1825 (or 1826, according to some sources) to freeborn African Americans William and Susan Ball. Nothing appears to be known about his childhood or education except that he became a daguerreotype apprentice to another freeman of color, Boston photographer John B. Bailey. Mr. Ball opened his first photographic business in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1845. Within a year, the business failed, but the determined young entrepreneur returned to Virginia, where he enjoyed some success. He was encouraged enough to try again in Cincinnati, and in 1847 opened "Ball's Great Daguerrean Gallery of the West" on 28 West 4th Street. The four rooms consisted of two operating rooms, a workshop where plates were prepared and images were enhanced, and a massive gallery measuring 40' long and 20' wide. Mr. Ball assembled an impressive crew that included his brother Thomas as manager, Alexander Thomas, who would become his brother-in-law after his marriage to Elizabeth Ball, and finisher Robert S.

Duncanson, who would become an acclaimed landscape painter.



J. P. BALL'S
DAGUERREAN ROOMS,
No. 10, West Fifth Street.

Pictures taken at these
Rooms by NORTH & SKYLIGHT for
ONE DOLLAR
Equal to any in the city. FAMILY GROUPS
taken in a few seconds, and
Regardless of Weather.
Pictures set in
SOCKETS, RINGS,
BREAST PINS, &c.
In all cases
SATISFACTION WARRANTED.

J. P. Ball & Son, **Helena, Mont.**
ESTABLISHED 1860, CINCINNATI, O. OPP. POSTOFFICE

With his gallery success, Mr. Ball was able to get married (his wife Virginia gave birth to their first child James Presley Ball, Jr. in

1854) and to finance the cause dearest to his heart - abolitionism. He published a popular antislavery pamphlet in 1855, and emphasized the devastating consequences of slavery on a massive 2,400-square-yard panoramic canvas entitled, Mammoth Pictorial Tour of the United States Comprising Views of the African Slave Trade; of Northern and Southern Cities; of Cotton and Sugar Plantations; of the Mississippi, Ohio and Susquehanna Rivers, Niagara Falls & C. He received commissions to photograph such luminaries as fellow abolitionist Frederick Douglass, Ulysses S. Grant, operatic soprano Jenny Lind, author Charles Dickens, and Queen Victoria. Mr. Ball's flourishing business enabled him to open another Cincinnati studio, the Ball & Thomas Photographic Art Gallery.

Sadly, Mr. Ball's prosperity was halted by a tornado that destroyed his gallery in May 1860. Although the structure was rebuilt, and his association with Mr. Thomas continued into the 1870s, and later included James Jr. as a partner, the gallery never regained the success it had previously enjoyed. Mr. Ball's personal life also took a downturn when he was viciously attacked by his wife, who accused him of adultery. She was arrested and the couple divorced shortly thereafter. He married Fannie Cage in 1864. Mr. Ball and his son decided to join the growing trend by going West. They first moved their studio to Minneapolis, Minnesota in the 1870s, then to remote Helena, Montana in 1887, and finally in Seattle, WA, in 1900. Suffering from rheumatism, Mr. Ball and his family moved to the warmer climate of Honolulu, Hawaii in 1902. James Presley Ball Sr. died on May 4, 1904, leaving behind an inspiring legacy of African-American photographic art and social activism.

Ref:
2000 Artists in Ohio, 1787-1900: A Biographical Dictionary (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press), p. 41.

2007 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), p. 112.

1854 Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion, Vol. VI, No. XIII (Boston: F. Gleason), p. 208.

2011 The Grove Encyclopedia of American Art (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 194.

2006 History of the Negro Race in America from 1619-1880, Vol. II (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing LLC), pp. 141-143.

2008 J. P. Ball, African American Photographer (URL: <http://library.cincymuseum.org/ball/jpball-cincy.htm>).

1993 J. P. Ball: Daguerrean and Studio Photographer New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

F. A. Wenderoth



Frederick August Wenderoth was born in 1819 in Kassel, Germany. The son of painter Carl Wenderoth, he received an artistic education at an early age and became an accomplished sketch artist. He continued his formal instruction under the tutelage of Professor Frederick Mueller at Hesse Kassel's Academy of Fine Arts. By age 18, the young man was a popular art teacher of young maidens at the court of Hesse Kassel, where his mother had long served as a lady-in-waiting. In 1846, Mr. Wenderoth began studying in Paris with renowned portrait painter Leon Cogniet until the French Revolution intervened two years' later. He resumed an old Kassel Academy acquaintanceship with painter Charles Christian Nahl and his family. When the Nahls relocated from Paris to New York, Mr. Wenderoth accompanied them.

Settling in Brooklyn, Mr. Wenderoth exhibited paintings at the American Art Union, but in 1851, decided to travel to San Francisco for what turned out to be a futile search for gold. However, he became captivated by the miners, and sketched several drawings from which he made daguerreotypes. By year's end, he and Mr. Nahl went into business in Sacramento, where they specialized in portraits, wood engravings, and lithography. After sailing to Australia, Mr. Wenderoth officially became a member of the Nahl family by marrying his friend Charles's half sister Laura. In 1857, the couple settled permanently in Philadelphia, but their happiness was short-lived when Mrs. Wenderoth and her newborn baby died the following year. The grieving widower found solace in his work, finding lucrative and prestigious employment as a daguerreotypist and illustrator for Harper's Weekly. Many of his paintings, such as the "Battle of Gettysburg," became successful photographic reproductions.

Mr. Wenderoth's first love was painting, but he also immersed himself in exhaustive photographic experimentation. He developed the ivorytype portraiture and is credited with inventing the photozincographic process, in which after capturing an image in ink, it would be transferred to zinc, from which a plate would be made. He also invented the 'Argento-picture,' which was an interesting marriage of daguerreotype and paper photograph, in which a printed carbon print is subsequently mounted on a metal plate, producing visually attractive effects. The process could be completed within a half hour and readied for immediate delivery as opposed to the conventional daguerreotype process, which could take a week or more to complete. Another attractive feature was that it could generate an infinite number of productions.

Painter, daguerreotypist, and inventor F. A. Wenderoth died of tuberculosis in Philadelphia in 1884.

Ref :

- 1998 Art of the Gold Rush (Berkeley, CA: Regents of the University of California), p. 129.
- 1883 The British Journal of Photography, Vol. XXX (London: Henry Greenwood), p. 670.
- 2009 Turn of the Century, F. A. Wenderoth - Photographer's Still Life with Lens and Mixing Glassware (URL: <http://turnofthecentury.tumblr.com/post/1689921929/f-a-wenderoth-photographers-still-life-with>).
- 1873 Photographic Mosaics (Philadelphia: Benerman & Wilson), p. 15.
- 1872 Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated. A Repository of Science, Literature, and General Intelligence, Vol. V (New York: Samuel R. Wells), pp. 257-258.

The following new information can be seen on our Historic Camera Site.

New Camera Listings:

National
Instrument
Corporation

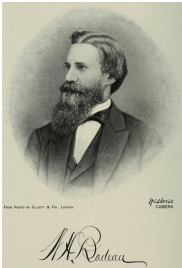
Houston, Texas

National
Instrument
Corporation

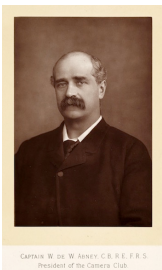


Multiscope &
Film Company

New Biographies



William H. Badeau



William de Wiveleslie Abney

Send Comments & Suggestions to
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