



Historic Camera Club Newsletter

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May Ann Meade

- FIRST WOMAN PHOTOGRAPHER -



Born in London, England to Henry R. and Mary Meade in 1826, Mary Ann Meade arrived in the United States when she was 18. She joined her older brothers Henry and Charles in their fledgling daguerreotype business, which opened in Albany, New York in 1842. The ambitious brothers received technical instruction from Louis-Jacques

Mande Daguerre himself, which they shamelessly promoted in their business advertising. Miss Meade received her education into all of the daguerreotyping processes from her brothers, and is believed to be the world's first woman daguerreotypist. She proved to be a valuable assistant in marketing the new daguerreotype portraits, which were often referred to at the time as the "mirror with a memory." Her keen business acumen enabled the Meades to expand their enterprise to include studios in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood, Buffalo, and Sarasota Springs.

In 1850, the Meades realized their dream of opening a gallery in a prime downtown Manhattan location, 233 Broadway. Named American Daguerreotype Depot, its glamorous portrait sitting rooms received international attention. Henry and Charles Meade were always front and center, but it was their younger sister who was managing all aspects of the business from behind the scenes. When Charles became ill, Mary's role increased, and after his death in 1858, she became more involved in the gallery's daily operations. By 1862, she was officially named gallery director, and she became more visible to the public, greeting visitors who toured the facility and used her engaging personality to put portrait sitters at ease. They included such prominent individuals as author and critic Charles Dickens, actors Edwin Booth and Lester Wallack, and revered soldier and statesman Sam Houston. The studio - which continued to operate as the Meade Brothers "suffered a major loss with the death of Charles R. Meade, and were unable to

maintain pace with rapidly changing technology, which by the 1860s included albumen or paper prints. Beset by financial and marital problems, Henry W. M. Meade sank deeper in depression, leaving Mary Ann to run the business virtually by herself. When her brother committed suicide in 1865, Miss Meade was forced to sell the studio.

With time, the Meades once-revered photographic reputation faded. Miss Meade, who never married, lived out the remainder of her life in Brooklyn, New York. Mary Ann Meade died in virtual obscurity on January 17, 1903. A portrait of Miss Meade celebrating her contributions to the history of photography is currently being exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery.

Ref:

2013 The Brothers Meade & Their Daguerreotype Tokens (URL: <http://www.novanumismatics.com/industry/the-brothers-meade-their-daguerreotype-tokens>).

2013 How One New York City Studio and the Brothers Behind It Helped Popularize the Daguerreotype (URL: <http://www.airingnews.com/articles/190210/How-One-New-York-City-Studio-and-the-Brothers-Behind-It-Helped-Popularize-the-Daguerreotype>).

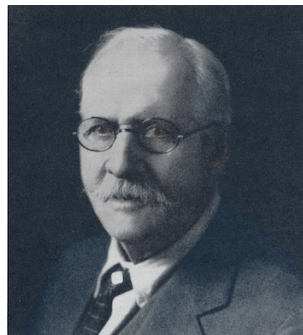
2012 Mary Ann Meade (URL: http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record_ID:npg_S_NPG.85.255).

1902 The New Photo-Miniature, Vol. IV (New York: Tennant and Ward), p. 555.

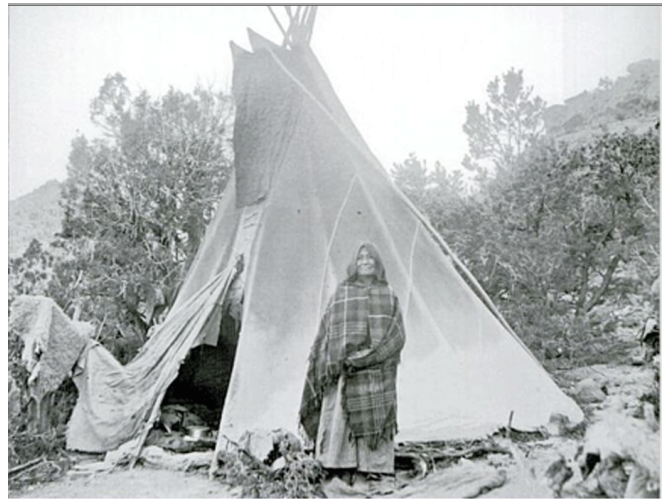
1903 The St. Louis and Canadian Photographer, Vol. XXVII (St. Louis, MO: Mrs. Fitzgibbon-Clark), p. 145.

Thomas McKee

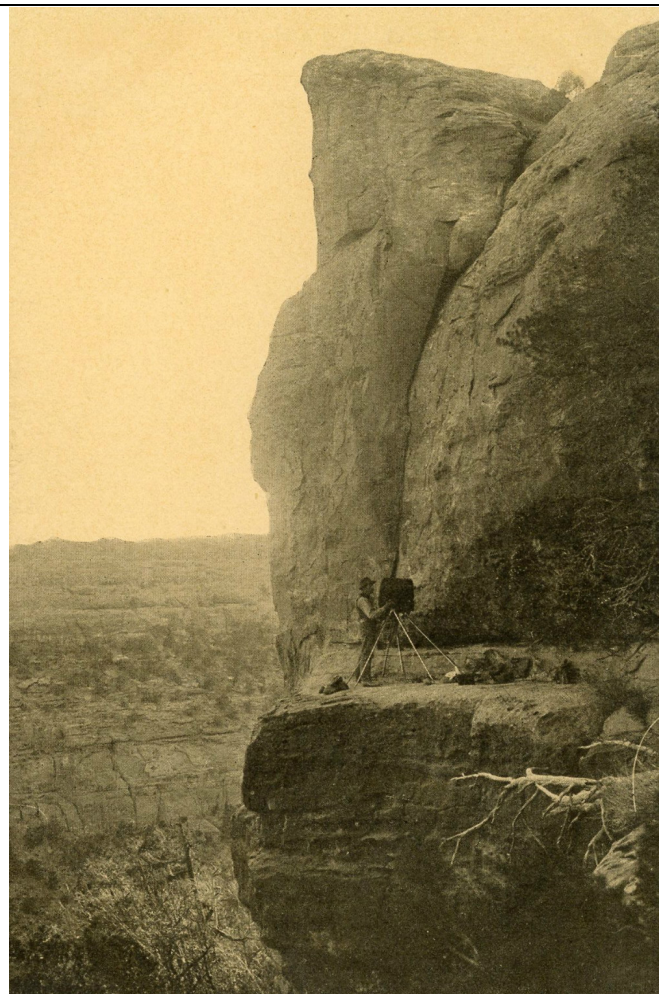
Thomas Michael McKee was born in Scary Creek, West Virginia on March 17, 1854. When he was a baby, his parents traveled to Louisville, Kentucky by steamboat and from there took a stagecoach to Nashville, Tennessee, where the family remained for several years. During his boyhood, his leisure time was spent traveling throughout the South



and painting landscapes along the way. He went to St. Louis to become a photographer's apprentice and later traveled to Texas to work as a railroad express messenger.



After a jaunt to Sitka, Alaska in 1887, Mr. McKee received a letter from family friend A. E. Buddecke, who owned an opera house in Montrose, Colorado. When learning the town had no photographic studios, he and his family moved again and settled in the small southwestern town. There, Mr. McKee had no shortage of subjects to photograph - the scenic valleys, the ranchers, the miners, and the Native Americans. Long fascinated with science, he experimented for oil shale and discovered their commercial potential. He also was one of the first scientists to employ uranium nitrates instead of gold and to use carnotite, a radioactive ore, as a source of light. Mr. McKee is also believed to be one of the first photographers to take X-ray pictures. In 1892, when the Rio Grande Southern Railroad began laying tracks in the Lost Canyon region between Dolores and Mancos, Mr. McKee resumed his earlier job as express messenger. This provided the amateur paleontologist with an opportunity to collect fossils well as to capture images with the wet-plate camera that was always by his side. Always the innovator, he also introduced the region to motion picture equipment, taking the first moving pictures of Western Colorado in 1895.



As the twentieth century dawned, Mr. McKee began concentrating on what had become his favorite photographic subjects - the Ute Indians. He befriended them, gained their trust, and then painstakingly documented their everyday lives. Mr. McKee became an authority on Ute culture and customs, and in an interview with a local newspaper, he admitted, "Probably I have a greater knowledge of the Ute Indians than any other man living and my experience comes from personal contact." After his wife Amanda died in 1919, Mr. McKee sought solace in his adopted Ute family, and became a close confidant to Chief Ouray and his wife Chipeta. He photographed Chipeta standing in front of her Utah teepee in 1924, one year before her death. Thomas McKee died in 1939, and was buried next to his wife in his beloved Montrose. Many of his photographs and artifacts were donated to the state of

Colorado and are now on display in Montrose's Ute Indian Museum.

Ref:

1991 Ancient American Indians: Their Origins, Civilizations & Old World Connections (Bountiful, UT: Horizon Publishers and Distributors, Inc.), p. 124.

2013 Denver Public Library Digital Collections(URL: <http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/search/searchterm/McKee,%20Thomas%20Michael,%201854-1939./mode/exact>).

2003 Off the Beaten Path (Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.), p. 51.

2010 Ouray (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing), p. 23.

1965 Photographers of the Frontier West: Their Lives and Works, 1875 to 1915 (Seattle, WA: Superior Publishing Company), pp. 11-13, 16.

Soho Ltd., Soho Square, London

The Soho Ltd. company was established in July 1929 from the reforming of the Amalgamated Photographic Manufacturers (AMP) Ltd.. Soho Ltd. was located at 3 Soho Square in London and continued to carry the quality cameras of the AMP brand like the Reflexes and the studio and field camera. Camera design and production was mainly accomplished by the Kershaw Mfg. Company.



The company slowed down during the beginning of World War II in 1942 and was

operating from Colham Mill Road, West Drayton, Middlesex and then in 1943 from Germain Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. The company reemerged after the war in 1946 as the Kershaw-Soho Ltd. The new firm was essentially the sales division of the Kershaw Company. We have completed a fairly complete camera listing of Soho cameras with trade catalogue information.

John. W. C. Floyd



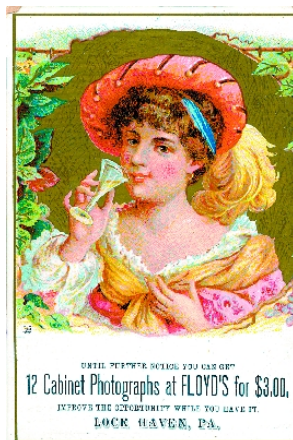
The photographer, John Wilbur Clarence Floyd, who lovingly captured Lock Haven, Pennsylvania in his discerning lens was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1853. He moved to Lock Haven at the age of 28, taking over the ownership of a photographic company from proprietor F. W. Wood. Within a short time, Mr. Floyd became the most prominent and prolific photographer in the area, as the regional photographs taken between 1881 and 1906 certainly attest. Mr. Floyd's love of the landscape and Victorian-era architecture and fashion are evident in his images. Now financially secure, Mr. Floyd could marry his longtime girlfriend Erma L. Gast in 1883, but within a few years he experienced several

professional and personal setbacks. In 1887, fire caused considerable damage to his photographic studio, and shortly after the catastrophic flood of 1889, Erma Gast Floyd succumbed to typhoid fever.



LOG RAFTS IN THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER AT LOCK HAVEN, PA.

Unwavering in his determination to succeed despite many obstacles, Mr. Floyd became a tireless business promoter, advertising heavily, and making several local appearances that would generate newspaper coverage for his studio. For example, in 1890, he announced he would release a 16-foot-long balloon over Lock Haven, and the person who successfully retrieved the balloon would receive as prizes photographs totaling \$5 and a cash prize of \$2.50. Unfortunately, the balloon caught fire during its ascent, but Mr. Floyd nevertheless rewarded the \$2.50 to a man who found the balloon's hoop. Sadly, Mr. Floyd's marital misfortunes continued when his second wife Jessie died in March 1896, less than four years after their marriage. However, his photography business flourished as he experimented with the latest technological innovations. He was among the first photographers to capture nighttime outdoor images with the aid of a camera light. He also received a patent for the photographic-print washer he invented complete with a rocking tray complete with a print chamber that could discharge water from receptacles at each end.



In 1906, Mr. Floyd married his retoucher, Blanche Bickford, to whom he remained happily married for more than 20 years. The couple decided to relocate to Pueblo, Colorado, and Mr. Floyd entrusted his beloved studio to his assistant, Henry Swope. Mr. Swope continued to operate the studio until it was permanently destroyed in a 1925 fire. Mr. Floyd opened a photographic

studio in Pueblo, and after 1915 began a new career as a silent film cinematographer. In the early days of motion pictures, operating a camera required great precision and dexterity. Mr. Floyd once explained to a local newspaper reporter, "In order to take a motion picture and get it correctly on the film, one must be able to make the mind and hands perform two things at the same time. One hand must wind the film and the other adjust the machine and both hands must work constantly at their separate task... I have had my machine for long enough now to manage it, but at first it seemed to me the work was about the most difficult I have ever taken."

Still photographer, businessman, inventor, and silent film pioneer John W. C. Floyd died in 1930 at the age of 77. Many of his more than 100,000 photographs are currently archived at Lock Haven's Annie Halenbake Ross Library.

Ref:
1887 Anthony's Photographic Bulletin, Vol. XVIII (New York: E & H.T. Anthony & Co.), p. 64.

2007 Clinton County (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing), pp. 92-93.

2008 The Express (URL:
<http://www.lockhaven.com/page/content.detail/id/501947/A-Peek-at-the-Past.html>).

1895 Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office, Vol. LXX (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), p. 404.

Face Book Page

Visit our new face book page to share and discuss everything related to cameras and photography. It is now convenient to keep up to date with all our friends' activities.



<https://facebook.com/historic.camera>

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

New Camera Listings:

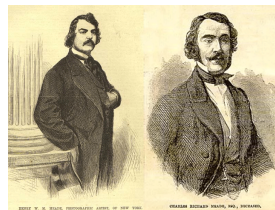


[W. A. C. Smith, Camera Listing](#)



[Soho Ltd. Camera Listing](#)

More New Biographies



[Meade Brothers Photographic Gallery](#)



[Charles H. Williamson](#)



[Prescott Adamson](#)

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