



Historic Camera Club Newsletter

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Frank A. Brownell

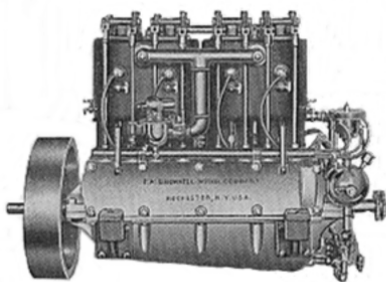


Frank Alexander Brownell was born in Vienna, Canada to Myron and Paulina Culver Brownell on February 4, 1859. When he was 17, his millwright father encouraged him to peddle his woodworking and mechanical assembly trades in Rochester, New York, known as the "Flour City" because it was at the time the largest producer of flour in the United States. He quickly landed an apprenticeship with Yawman & Erbe, and in his spare time he constructed a plate camera

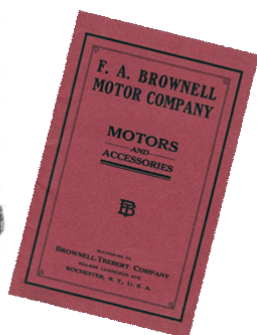
that was purchased by the Union View Camera Company. This provided him with the financial means to marry Rochester native Helen A. Peet, with whom he would have a son and a daughter, and with the self-confidence to open his own shop on 282 State Street. He made cabinets as well as cameras, but it was his camera-making expertise that caught the attention of George Eastman, founder of Eastman Dry Plate and Film Company. In 1885, Mr. Eastman asked Mr. Brownell to make a roll film holder comprised primarily of wood that could be fitted onto the back of a camera. This was the first of what would be a long and successful collaboration.

Within a decade, the Brownell Manufacturing Company had established itself as one of the largest international producers of professional and studio cameras. Five years' apart in age, Mr. Eastman and Mr. Brownell were forever experimenting with camera designs that would be both trend-setting and profitable. In October 1887, Mr. Eastman proposed a camera concept that would later become the Kodak when it was introduced a year later. Mr. Brownell manufactured its wooden parts, which were then assembled at Yawman & Erbe. In 1889, Mr. Brownell became the principal designer of the first Folding Kodak camera. Two years' later, he designed Eastman's daylight-loading camera, but in April of 1892, his factory was seriously damaged by fire. What could have been a catastrophic loss due to lack of insurance was resurrected in a new building Mr. Eastman constructed for his chief designer on 333 State Street. In return, Mr. Brownell signed an

exclusive contract with his benefactor. Within four years, the Camera Works factory was employing 700 people; by 1902, this figure had increased to more than 1,000 workers.



4 cylinder 30-34 HP Automobile Motor



Mr. Brownell was also a social visionary, winning the respect of his employees by providing them with monetary productivity incentives, on-site meals, a hospital, and a library. When Mr. Eastman wanted his designer to create an affordable and easy-to-use camera for the amateur, the famed 'Brownie' was born. In less than two decades, Mr. Brownell designed many of Eastman's signature cameras, including the Bullet, the Cartridge Kodak, Eureka, the Flexo, Panoram, and Pocket Kodak. When Mr. Eastman proposed to buy out his collaborator for \$130,090.64 while still retaining him as a design consultant for \$12,000 annually, Mr. Brownell accepted the generous offer. In later years, he pursued other business interests, opening the Brownell-Trebert Company in 1906, which produced motors for automobiles and ships, the F. A. Brownell Motor Company, which operated from 1908 to 1913, and the Rochester Motors Company from 1913 to 1919. He also constructed 15-160 HP engines and provided the U.S. Navy with its first motor yacht fueled by gasoline.

Mr. Brownell became increasingly enfeebled after the death of his wife in 1927 and George Eastman's suicide in 1932. Like many businessmen in the 1930s, he lost most of his savings. Once described by George Eastman as "the greatest camera designer the world has ever known," Frank A. Brownell died in Rochester on February 2, 1939, two

days before his 80th birthday.

Ref:
2013 The Families of Adam Keith (URL:
http://mykeithfamily.com/index_files/Page2880.htm).

2007 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), pp. 224-225.

2008 F. A. Brownell Motor Co. (URL:
<http://www.s363.com/FABrownell/index.html>).

2006 George Eastman: A Biography (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press), pp. 83-84.

E. Mazo

Elijah Mazo was an Optician, photographer and camera manufacturer operating in Paris beginning in approximately 1880. His firm of E. Mazo was located at 8, Boulevard Magnta, Paris, France. By 1896 the firm expanded to include the adjacent space now consisting of 8 & 10, Bouevard Magenta.



In approximately 1913 E. Mazo partnered with J.B.A. Tauleigne. The two partners improved upon Dr. Taube photographic mordant dye process which removed the silver-iodide and leaving a transparent dye image (US patent 1,059,917). It produced strongly colored photographs.

In 1921 Mazo and Tauleigne patented a projecting system consisting of a plano-convex parabolic condensing lens of short focus, with a plano-convex lens and a single achromatic lens.



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Alexander Gardner

Born in Paisley, Scotland to James and Jean Glenn Gardner on October 17, 1821, Alexander Gardner was the oldest of four children. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to Glasgow, where young Alexander studied astronomy, botany, and chemistry. At the age of 15, the teenager served as a silversmith apprentice for a local jeweler. By 1847, he was manager of the Clydesdale Discount and Loan Company and spent his spare time reading about utopian communities. Four years' later, Mr. Gardner purchased the Glasgow Sentinel and penned several editorials celebrating the working class. He became interested in photography in the early 1850s and began providing professional services in 1855. The following spring, Mr. Gardner, his wife, the former Margaret Sinclair, and their two children along with his mother and brother boarded a ship for the United States. They settled in New York, where Mr. Gardner quickly found work with fellow photographer Mathew Brady. Within a few years, he was managing Mr. Brady's Washington, DC gallery, where he applied both his creative and accounting abilities. He is credited with introducing the 2x4" carte de visite photograph, which quickly became one of the Brady gallery's best sellers.



When the Civil War erupted, it was Mr. Gardner and his junior photographers that took to the battlefield, but it was their employer, Mathew Brady, who received the credit and considerable notoriety for their combat photographs. Mr. Gardner and his assistant, James Gibson, employed a wagon team to carry their glass plates and photographic equipment. Mr. Gardner was appointed staff photographer for Union General George B. McClellan, a position he held until President Lincoln removed McClellan as General-in-Chief in March 1862. Mr. Gardner continued to photograph the war, famously capturing the horrific aftermath of the Battle of Antietam, in which more than 22,000 casualties were incurred on September 17, 1862. His engraved plates were published the following month in

Harper's Weekly. During the Civil War years, Mr. Gardner demonstrated how a camera could be used for more than capturing images. It could convey emotions of fear, heartache, and despair. His photographs of the carnage at Gettysburg, particularly in Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter, depict the finality of death and an ugliness that belies patriotic rhetoric.



In 1863, Mr. Gardner left Mr. Brady's employ and opened his own gallery in Washington, DC. His portrait of Abraham Lincoln, taken just five days before his assassination, shows the ravages of war etched in the President's weary face. He also recorded for posterity the image of the presidential conspirators following their execution. Mr. Gardner released a two-volume compilation of more than 100 of his Civil War plates entitled Gardner's Sketchbook of the War in 1866. During the late 1860s, he chronicled the Kansas Pacific Railroad construction and served as official photographer for the Office of Indian Affairs. His later years were spent pursuing philanthropic interests as an active member of the Masonic Mutual Relief Organization and the Washington Beneficial Endowment Association. After a brief illness, 61-year-old Alexander Gardner died on December 10, 1882. Although the name of Mathew Brady has now become synonymous with Civil War photography, at the time of his death, Mr. Gardner's fame and reputation eclipsed that of his former employer.

Ref:
2001 The Civil War at Sea (Brookfield, CT: Twenty-First Century

Books/Millbrook Press), p. 13.

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2007 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), pp. 571-572.

2013 The Faces at Antietam (URL: <http://www.cob-net.org/antietam/faces.htm>).

1959 Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc.), Plate 41.

2002 Photography: A Cultural History (London: Lawrence King Publishing Ltd.), pp. 110-111.

2013 The Routledge Encyclopedia of Civil War Era Biographies (New York: Routledge), p. 210.

1999 Too Afraid to Cry: Maryland Civilians in the Antietam Campaign (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books), p. 1.

Holmes Bros.

C.H. and H. Holmes established the Holmes Brothers business in 1896 as wholesale manufacturers and Patentees of high-class photographic apparatus. Holmes brothers had it beginnings as the Leather, Sadler & Holmes Company starting in 1878 where they sold glass for wet plate photographers. In September 1896, the photographic News reported that J.J. Sadler retired from the business to settle down in Leeds and to pursue another business, which initiated the name change and start of the business operating as Holmes Brothers. The Holmes brothers firm was located at 24 Southall St. Manchester.

404 THE BRITISH JOURNAL ALMANAC ADVERTISEMENTS.

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The Holmes Brothers are most recognized for their manufacturing of the Sanderson camera. The Sanderson was one of the most popular British made cameras made beginning in 1895. F. Herbert Sanderson designed the camera. Sanderson was born in Cambridge in 1856, he worked as a cabinetmaker and wood and stone carver. Working as a photographer and finding difficulty in photographing architectural subjects, he designed a suitable camera for his purposes, the Universal Swing Front which is the basis of the Sanderson camera. He died in July 1929.

In March of 1904 several companies merged with Houghton's Limited. With a capital of 175,000 pounds in 10 pound shares. Houghtons acquired and amalgamated the business of (1) George Houghton and Son's limited, manufacturers of and dealers in photographic apparatus and appliances, (2) The business of Joseph Levi and Co. wholesale opticians and dealers in photographic apparatus and appliances, (3) the business of the Spratt brothers, manufacturers of photographic, scientific and other apparatus and appliances, the business of Holmes Brothers, manufacturers of photographic apparatus and appliances, and (5) the business of Alfred Charles Jackson, manufacturer and vendor of photographic apparatus and appliances.

Gem Dry Plate Co.



MR. T. E. H. BULLEN.

The Gem Dry Plate Company Ltd., was established in 1895 at Willesden Green, N. W. for the sole purpose of making dry plates. The company was managed by T.E.H. Bullen. Previous to this position, Mr. Bullen was a partner with Leon Warneke in 1881 and

the business manager of the Imperial Dry Plate Company, of Cricklewood.

In 1902 Photographic paper was added to the product line followed by the "Gem" Colour plate for three colour process works. Mr. T. Thorne Baker was the company chemist during this period.

In 1912 the Gem Dry Plate Company Ltd. was acquired by the Imperial Dry Plate company. It was approximately during this period that the company relocated to Cricklewood, London, N.W. 2.

In 1929 Ilford limited acquired several companies including, the Imperial Dry Plate Co. Ltd., This Illingworth & Co. Ltd., Wellinton & Ward Ltd., selo Ltd., and the Gem Dry Plate Co. Ltd..

The company ceased operations in approximately 1932.

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

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[J. C. Strauss](#)



[F. J. Mortimer](#)



[R. L. Maddox](#)

[New Camera Listings:](#)

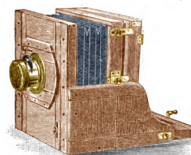


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