



Historic Camera Club Newsletter

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Louis-Alphonse Poitevin



Louis-Alphonse Poitevin was born in 1819 in Conflans (Sarthe), France. He received his undergraduate education in St. Calais, and in 1839 he became a student at Ecole Centrale des Arts and Metiers. As a student, he became extremely interested in the new daguerreotype process. After receiving a degree in civil engineering, he became a chemist at the Eastern Salt Works factory, where he developed several progressive manufacturing systems. In his spare time, Mr. Poitevin experimented with various daguerreotype methods. He discovered a

successful photo engraving technique, for which he was awarded a silver medal from the Societe d'Encouragement des Arts. In 1847, he researched the photographic potential of galvanography, the production of copper engravings by using electricity instead of chemicals.

In 1850, Mr. Poitevin was one of the first scientists to recognize the potential of gelatine. Three years' alter, William Henry Fox Talbot learned that exposing dichromized gelatine to light would allow ink to stick to it, but not water. Mr. Poitevin used these findings as the basis for his carbon and collotype printing techniques. Carbon prints became highly valued for their lush, glossy dark hues. By 1855, he was ready to work on his printing techniques full time, and resigned his position at Eastern Salt Works. He opened a printing company in Paris, but his first photo-lithographic effort, was commercially unsuccessful. He was eventually forced to sell his patent rights to acclaimed French lithographer Alfred-Leon Lemercier. He returned to manufacturing, managing Pereire's Chemical Factory in Lyon, and from there worked at glassworks factories in Ahun and Folembray. He also went to Africa to study mining processes. In 1862, he published his pigmented gelatine printing method, and also published his experiments with light interaction with iron salts. From these findings, he developed what became known as the "dusting on process."□

Mr. Poitevin began experimenting with heliochromy in 1865, and attempted to add colors to silver chloride-coated paper

reminiscent of the earlier attempts made by A. E. Becquerel and Sir John Herschel. He developed a fixing solution of water and sulfuric acid, after which the images were treated with albumen. This innovative process was featured at a Paris exhibition in 1867, but unfortunately permanent images could not be preserved with this method. By 1869, Mr. Poitevin again was forced to return to industrial employment, and began working at a Saint-Germain-Lembron aluminum factory. For his photographic technical innovations, he received many awards and cash prizes. He also received the prestigious order of Chevalier of the Legion of Honneur. His last text, on his iron printing experiments, was published in 1879. Louis-Aphonse Poitevin died in Conflans, France on March 4, 1882. Three years later, a bust of the French photographic pioneer was erected in St. Calais.

Ref:
2007 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), p. 1140.

2007 The Focal Encyclopedia of Photography (Burlington, MA: Focal Press/Elsevier), p. 132.

1894 The Photographic Times, Vol. XXIV (New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association), p. 405.

John Traill Taylor

John Traill Taylor is believed to have been born in 1827, although he once admitted, "The fact is, I cannot tell to a year or two the exact date of my birth." What is known is that he was born in the Orkney Islands of Scotland to a watchmaker and his wife, and attended Kirkwall Grammar School. He went to Edinburgh in 1845 to continue his studies in optics and chemistry, and apprenticed as an optician, jeweler, and watchmaker. He also became acquainted with the relatively new daguerreotype process. He later recalled, "At this time my eyes rested upon the first daguerreotype portrait that exerted so great an influence upon my career... I was not

satisfied until I had thoroughly mastered the mystery." In his workroom, friends would gather to talk about the latest photographic advances. These informal meetings would later become the Edinburgh Photographic Society. By 1860, Mr. Taylor was lecturing on photographic uses of optical lanterns, and these lectures included the first-ever slide presentation. Three years' later, he introduced a lens he constructed fitted with an adjustable focus to the Photographic Society of Scotland.



In 1864, Mr. Taylor turned his attentions to journalism, and became the editor of The British Journal of Photography (BJP), a position he retained until 1880 when he relocated to New York to become editor of The Photographic Times. Under Mr. Taylor's

astute leadership, The Photographic Times was transformed from a monthly journal into a daily publication. It became the 'go-to' text for amateurs and professionals alike on the latest international photography news. By the mid-1880s, he reassumed editorship of the BJP, and in 1886 became one of the founding members of the Photographic Convention of Great Britain, serving as its president for three years. Mr. Taylor was also a frequent contributor to The Scientific American, The Popular Science Review, and The Journal of the Society of Arts. He also rewrote and edited the ninth addition of Hardwich's Photographic Chemistry, and penned several important photographic texts including "Amateur Photographer" and "The Optics of Photography."

By the late 1880s, Mr. Taylor was contemplating retirement. He purchased an orange grove in Florida where he planned to live out his remaining years. He died there suddenly in November 1895, and in one photographic journal obituary, it was written that J. Traill Taylor's name "will live as long as photography is practiced." His friends established the J. Traill Taylor Memorial Fund for the purpose of financing educational lectures on photography.

Ref:
1896 The American Amateur Photographer, Vol. VIII (New York: The Outing Company, Limited), p. 75.

1895 Anthony's Photographic Bulletin, Vol. XXVI (New York: E & H. T. Anthony & Co.), p. 412.

2007 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), p. 1382.

1895 The Photogram, Vol. II (London: Dawbarn & Ward, Ltd.), pp. 57-58.

John & Frank Moffat

John Moffat was born on August 26, 1819 in Aberdeen, Scotland. His father, a prosperous bookbinder, moved his young family to Edinburgh eight years later, which is where John received his artistic education. In the 1840s, he opened his own artist and engraving shop and married Ellen Notman in 1847. The couple had a daughter two years'

later, but apparently were divorced by 1851. That year, Mr. Moffat married Sophia Maria Knott, whose brother was local successful photographer James Brown Knott. At this time, he began exhibiting his own amateur photographs and opened a portrait studio in 1853, likely in partnership with his brother-in-law. In 1854, the Moffats would have the first of seven children, Frank Pelham Moffat.



John Moffat

Mr. Moffat's photography business grew steadily so that by 1857, he opened what would be the first of five studios on Edinburgh's busy Princes Street. The senior Moffat also began selling oil and watercolor portraits. The senior Moffat made a rare portrait of photographic pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot. He was an active member of the Photographic Society of Scotland and later the Edinburgh Photographic Society, of which he served as President for several years. After studying photography in France and learning business practices after working for a merchant, the junior Moffat was ready to join the family business in 1875. Like his father, he was an accomplished painter and used to add charcoal and oils to his portraits. Frank P.

Moffat married Katherine Rhind on June 19, 1884, but sadly, Katherine Moffat died shortly after giving birth to James Francis Moffat less than two years' later.



Frank Moffat

John Moffat retired from the studio in 1884, but did not relinquish full control of the business until his death on March 5, 1894. After marrying Mary Irvine Swinton Watt in 1894, with whom he would have two sons and a daughter, Frank Moffat focused his attentions on mastering all aspects of photography. In 1895, He won first prize in the 'Cadett' International Prize Competition for his portrait of his former father-in-law John Rhind entitled, "The Master Hand." Like his father, Mr. Moffat was both artist and innovator. He subscribed to the philosophy, "If you want a thing done well, attend to it yourself." He is believed to be the first practitioner of wet plate photographic processing in Scotland, an early user of electric lamps, and later developed a three-color carbon technique, which he

discontinued because of its lack of commercial success. A popular speaker in the international lecture circuit, he enlightened audiences on such topics as gelatine plates, gelatino-chloride printing papers, home portraiture, and color photography. In 1811, he was named President of the Professional Photographers' Association. Frank Pelham Moffat died in Edinburgh following a brief illness in 1914. The Moffat family studio at 125-126 Princes Street remained in business until closing its doors for the last time in 1962.

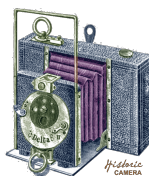
Happy New Year

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

New Camera Listings:



[Penny King Featherweight Camera](#)



Rolff & Hackenberg



[John Piggott & Co.](#)

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