



Historic Camera Club Newsletter

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Jas H. Smith Company

James H. Smith business operations dates back to approximately 1867 when he is listed working in the firm of Smith & Jennison, for the business of Commission, flour & Feed. It is also recorded that J. M. Smith of J. M. Smith & Co. was also operating at the same premises at 182 Washington St. Chicago in the business of commission, implying a connection between the two Smiths.

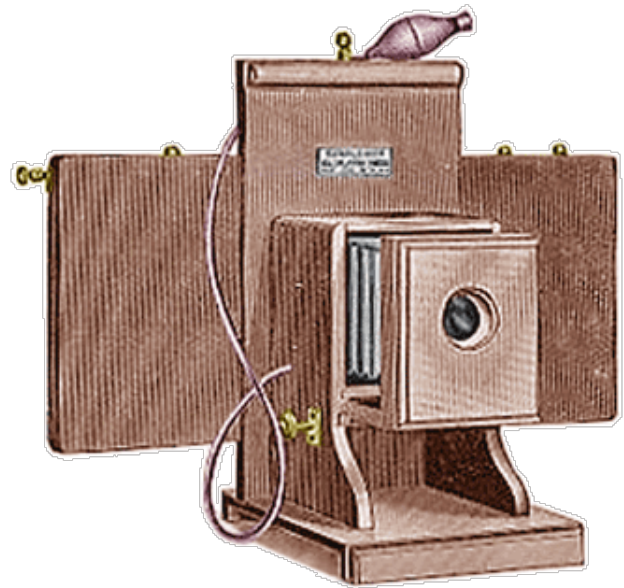


In the 1872 Jas. H. Smith established himself as a photographic firm, inventing, designing, patenting and manufacturing "tools of the trade" such as camera stands, posing stools, picture frames, burnishers, and darkroom equipment.

In 1884, Mr. Smith sold his picture frame and photo supply establishment at Quincy Illinois, where he was a respected photo stock dealer for twelve years, to Mr Robert Dempster. Mr. Smith moved to Chicago. In Chicago he partnered with Mr. Thomas W. Pattison who for fifteen years was with leading photo supply houses in Chicago. The two leased

the lofts at 88 and 85 Wabash Ave and established a large and complete stock of photographic materials and accessories.

In 1890 the firm of Smith & Pattison sold the all the stock and good-will of the business to the firm of Sweet, Wallach & Co. Mr. T. W. Pattison stayed with the business and began employment with Sweet & Wallach. Mr. Jas. H. Smith being the inventive genius of the firm, continued on his own in the business of Burnishers, Paper-cutters, Posers, Camera Stands, and other articles useful to the photographer, as the James H. Smith & Co.. His new firm was located at Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.



In 1901, two successive fires wiped out Smith's business and almost bankrupted him. Smith at the age of 64, rebuilt the company by inventing a more powerful form of flash-powder and introducing the Sunflower Multiplying Camera designed by Jacob F.

Standiford of Fort Scott, Kansas (US Patent No. 668,888, February 26, 1901). The flash powder was 24 times brighter than the leading flash powder of the day and became a financial success. Smith named the flash powder "Victor".

In 1905 Mr. F. Dundas Todd of the famous Burke and James Company, Chicago, Illinois purchased the entire estate of James H. Smith & Co., including the good will, patents, trade marks, machinery and tools and continued selling and manufacturing Jas. Smith companies products for a short time. Mr. Smith retained rights to his Victor Flash powder.

On June 21, 1908 T.H. Pattison died of a heart failure at the age of fifty-four.

In 1909 with the popularity of the flash powder, The revitalized company was incorporated as James H. Smith & Sons Corp. remaining in Chicago. They built a plant to manufacture the flash powder in the nearby town of Griffith, Indiana. In February of 1909 the company had a serious accident that resulted in a fatality of a young woman. The cause of the ignition was derived from a statement by the young women who before her death, reported the last thing she remembered was that she was putting "coal in the stove".

1912 the James H. Smith & Sons Company, Chicago reported sales of Victor powder was still increasing with the most gratifying persistence.

In 1918, James H. Smith died at the age of 81. hi son Herbert M. Smith succeeded him.

In the late 1920's flash bulbs began to eliminate flash powder and James H. Smith & Sons had lamps made exclusively for them by the Kentucky Lamp Company for a short time before larger company provided heavy competition. the company also ventured into

Flash synchronizers, Reflectors and Lighting accessories.

In the 1930's during the great depression, the company closed its offices in Chicago and reduced the work force at Lake & Colfax Sts. Griffith, Indiana.

In 1949 Herbert M. Smith died at the age of 64 and Jas. H SMiths daughter Marion took over as the third president.

In 1953, Ronald H. Smith became the company's 4th President. He changed the name from James H. Smith & Sons Corp. to "Smith-Victor" representing the family and the products.

In 1999 the Smith-Victor Corporation was sold to Promark International, Inc.. The company continues to this day manufacturing and marketing photographic lighting and accessories.

Actino Flash Cartridges
CONTAIN IN CONVENIENT FORM

Victor Flash Powder

SIX Actino No. 12
FLASH LIGHT CARTRIDGES

VICTOR FLASH POWDER is unequalled in actinic power and cleanliness. Always uniform in speed and actinic quality. Does not deteriorate.

Actino Flash Cartridges contain carefully-measured quantities of Victor Flash Powder. They are made in three sizes to thoroughly illuminate all objects at 12 feet, 18 feet, or 30 feet. The high speed and illumination stops any ordinary movement and insures sharp, fully-timed negatives. Your dealer has Actino Flash Cartridges and Victor Flash Powder, or can easily procure them from us. Write for our free instructive booklet on Flashlight Photography.

JAS. H. SMITH & SONS COMPANY, 3543 Cottage Grove Ave., Chicago, Ill.

1868 Trade and Commerce of Chicago, page 150.

1884 Philadelphia Photographer, p97-98.

1890 The Photographic Journal of America, Volume 27, page 735

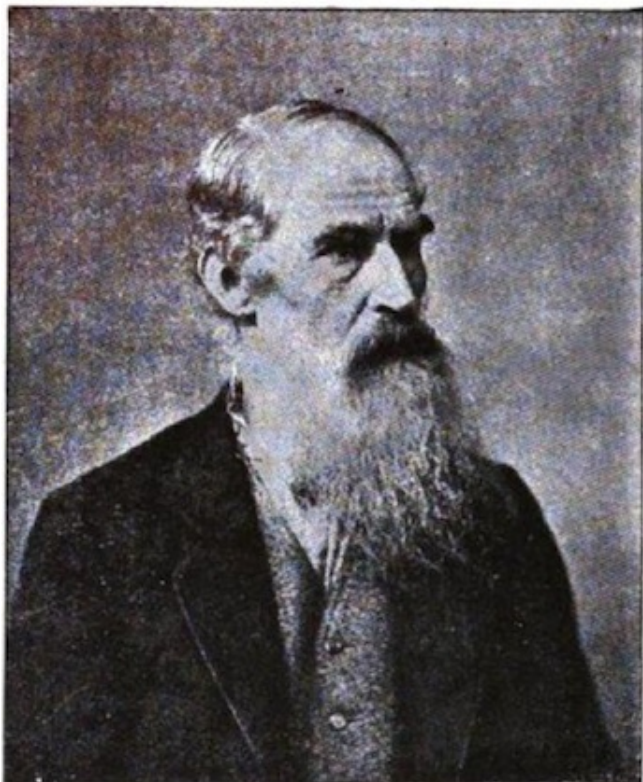
1909 snap shot magazine, page 58.

1909 Camera Craft, vol. 16, page 288

2014 Smith-Victor Company Website, history

(<http://www.smithvictor.com/company/index.asp>)

Major C. Russell



MAJOR C. RUSSELL.

Major C. Russell was born in Essex England in 1820. Scant details exist of his formal education or his family except that his surname of Bramfill was changed to satisfy the requirements of an inheritance on his mother's side. His interest in photography commenced in 1856, and four years later, his experimentation with tannin processes began. His photographic research included a collodion dry bath and using alkaline as a developer. His studies also revealed the limitations imposed on alkaline developers because of their bromides. To maximize sensitivity to light, exposures require wet plates. When treated with distilled water prior to exposure, Frederick Scott Archer discovered that sensitiveness was lessened considerably. If allowed to dry, sensitivity is also diminished. Dr. J. M. Taupenot's albumen method achieved decent results, but Major Russell believed they could be improved. He experimented with several chemicals to prohibit the plates from drying,

but with little initial success. On January 1, 1861, his preface to Hardwich's Photographic Chemistry described his improved dry collodion process, in which he initially coated the plate with gelatine (a step he later deemed unnecessary), then with bromide-iodized collodion. The plate was sensitized, washed, and treated with a solution of tannin and water. The solution was then drained and the plate was dried.

During the early 1860s, Major Russell is believed to be the first to work with alkaline development, but photographic industry professionals remained skeptical of its results. However, in a July 1864 article published in *The British Journal of Photography*, Major Russell provided a detailed account of his alkaline development experiments, attributing their successes to using bromide as a restrainer. However, there are others who argue that bromide only succeeded as a restrainer because it was added to the alkaline components. Major Russell maintained bromide could be added to the developer or used to treat the plate, along with ammonia or sodium thiosulfate serving as the alkali component. It is believed Major Russell ceased his experimentation after 1868 because his studies are no longer being chronicled in photographic publications. Having achieved the rank of Colonel late in life, C. Russell died on May 16, 1887. The man himself remains a mysterious figure in the history of photography, but his documented experiments made important contributions to its scientific development.

Ref:
2007 *The Focal Encyclopedia of Photography* (Burlington, MA: Focal Press/Elsevier), p. 40.

1888 *A History of Photography* (Bradford, UK: Percy Lund & Co., The Country Press), p. 51.

1894 *The Photographic Times*, Vol. XXIV (New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association), pp. 277-279.

Lyd Sawyer

Lyddell "Lyd" Sawyer was born in Newcastle-on-Tyne, England in 1856. He once remarked that he was born to be a photographer because his painter father had been one of its earliest practitioners. The young Sawyer received his professional education as an apprentice in his father's portrait studio. He also studied optics and chemistry, and passed the examination of the City of London Guild in 1885, the same year he left his father's studio. For a few years, he was an itinerant photographer, living and working in London and Paris. After receiving a medal at a Derby exhibition in 1887, he began building his own Singleton House studio in his hometown of Newcastle.



LYD. SAWYER.

Within a few years, Mr. Sawyer had established a reputation as one of the Victorian era's most gifted art photographers. His artistic inner circle included fellow photographers Henry Peach Robinson and Frank Meadow Sutcliffe. By 1893, Mr. Sawyer had opened a second studio in Sunderland,

and at this time enlisted the assistance of his two capable brothers Henri and Rubens Sawyer. With his brothers and the assistants he had trained personally, Mr. Sawyer's studios flourished. Using the pseudonym of 'Sheriff,' he joined the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring in November 1895. Despite his dedication to promoting photography as an art form, Mr. Sawyer steadfastly maintained he only regarded this as "means to an end," which was operating the most commercially and critically successful studio in London's art district.

Leaving the other studios under his brothers' leadership, he opened a gallery on Regent Street, which is where he developed the philosophy that photographers 'make' photographs, rather than merely take them. He maintained that the most powerful images must possess poetic narrative or lyrical characteristics because photography was both a visual and intellectual form of expression. He drew inspiration from his painter father and from the writings and photographs of his friend Henry Peach Robinson. His soft naturalistic portraits utilized gray tones that enhanced their earthiness. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Mr. Sawyer did not feel compelled to travel the world in search of photographic muses. He encouraged amateurs to master their surroundings and that they could literally find photographic inspiration in their own back yards. Perhaps appropriately, nearly all that is known about Lyddell Sawyer resides in his images, which were featured in several important publications of the period including *Sun Artists*, and the *Photographs of the Year* exhibit catalogue published by the The Photographic Society of London, and have since been reprinted in several Victorian photographic retrospectives. After winning more than 50 of the highest honors in the photographic industry, Lyddell Sawyer inexplicably severed his ties with the Linked Ring in 1901. There is no record of his life after he ceased his studio operations in 1908.



Photo by Lrd. Sawyer.

JEALOUSY.

Gill Eng. Co.

Ref:

1962 Creative Photography: Aesthetic Trends, 1839-1960 (Toronto, Canada: General Publishing Company), p. 245.

2007 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), p. 1247.

1895 The Photogram, Vol. II (London: Dawbarn & Ward, Ltd.), p. 212.

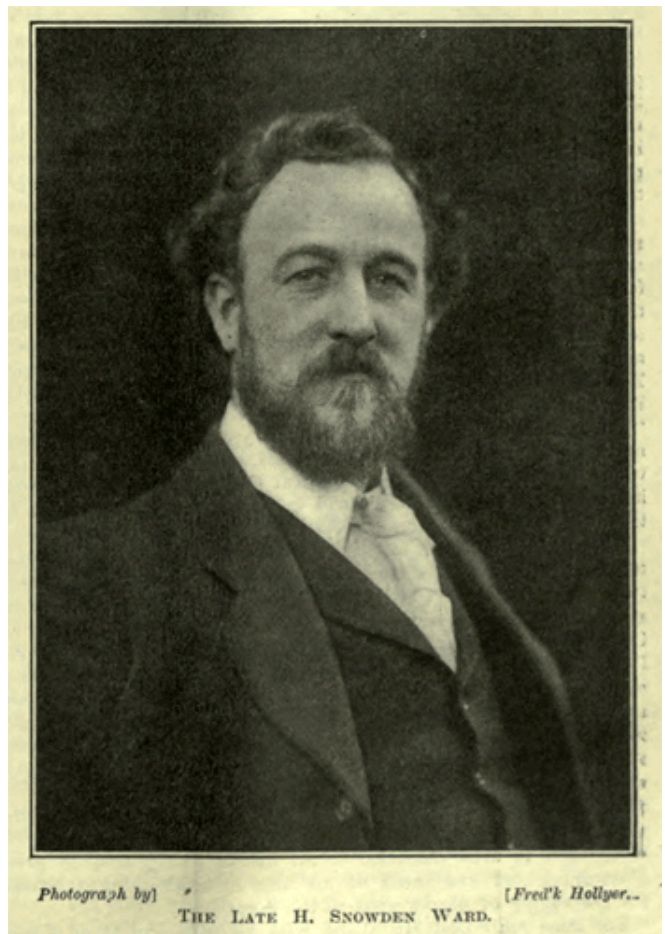
1894 The Photographic Times, Vol. XXIV (New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association), pp. 69-73.

Henry Snowden Ward

Born in 1865 at Great Horton, England, Henry Snowden Ward showed little interest in following the career path of his manufacturer father. Instead, he pursued his literary aspirations, and by age 18 was publishing and editing *The Practical Naturalist* magazine. By 1884, he was working for Percy Lund & Company (later known as Percy Lund, Humphries & Company) and editor of *The Practical Photographer*. His association with the publication ignited his passion for photography and allowed him to exchange ideas with amateurs and professionals. He married fledgling American photographer Catharine Weed Barnes in 1893, and together with his wife founded *The Photogram*, a monthly publication. This journal quickly established a reputation as a 'must read' within the photographic community, although its overall commercial sales were far less impressive.

Undaunted, the Wards expanded their publishing empire to include *The Process Photogram* (later known as *The Photo-Engraver's Monthly*) and the annual pictorial compilation, *Photograms of the Year*.

By now deeply immersed in the study of technical processes, Mr. Ward was anxious to share the latest improvements with his readers. He was an active member of the Royal Photographic Society, an active Council member and one-time President of The Photographic Convention, and served as a judge at many photographic society exhibitions. Mr. Ward became an enthusiastic student of X-ray photography and wrote what is believed to be its first handbook. He was also one of the founding members of the Roentgen Society, the premier radiological organization. Mr. Ward's lectures on the latest X-ray technologies were eagerly anticipated by photographers, nurses, and students.



Photograph by

THE LATE H. SNOWDEN WARD.

[Fred'k Hollyer..

A man of many interests, Mr. Ward and his wife began applying photography to literary landscapes. They collaborated on a text on William Shakespeare's home Stratford-on-Avon that featured Mrs. Ward's photographs. They also provided the photographic illustrations for R. D. Blackmore's classic romance, *Lorna Doone*. Next, the Wards embarked upon the gargantuan task of illustrating the life and works of Charles Dickens. *The Canterbury Pilgrimages* met with great critical and popular acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. By 1899, the couple was touring the United States with their lantern slideshow, "The Real Dickens-Land," which also featured original photographs of Mr. Dickens' Gads Hill home. Their second American tour, which also included a "Shakespeare at Home" series of slides, was a huge financial success, with audiences willing to pay top dollar for Mr. Ward's insightful commentary and humorous anecdotes. In 1911, while on a grueling lecture/slide tour to celebrate the upcoming centenary of Mr. Dickens' birth, Mr. Ward collapsed in New York and died shortly thereafter. The news of Henry Snowden Ward's sudden death at the age of 46 stunned and saddened his many friends, colleagues, and admirers. Mr. Ward's close friend George E. Brown summed up the collective sense of loss in this eloquent remembrance:

"His memory will long survive among those who knew him as a man of truly great qualities, without a shade of bitterness in his nature, and the firmest and most loyal of friends."

Ref:

1899 Anthony's Photographic Bulletin, Vol. XXX (New York: E. & H. T. Anthony & Co.), p. 97.

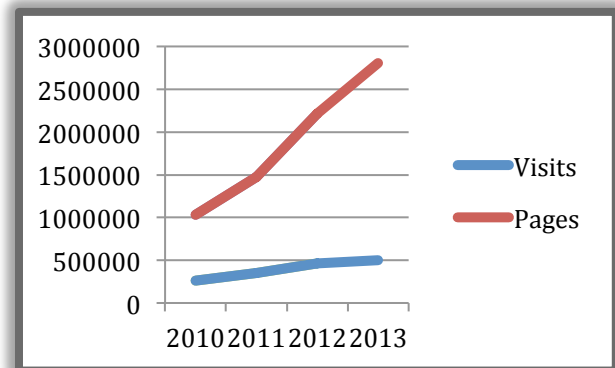
1993 A Century of X-Rays and Radioactivity in Medicine (London: Institute of Physics Publishing), p. 85.

1909 Wilson's Photographic Magazine, Vol. XLVI (New York: Edward L. Wilson), p. 416.

1912 Wilson's Photographic Magazine, Vol. XLIX (New York: Edward L. Wilson), pp. 42-44.

2013 in Review

As the Historic Camera web site enters into its twelfth year on the web we reflect on the impact that HC has made to our community. This year our website traffic was strong at the beginning of the year with consistent growth but in the second part of the year, the growth stalled. However for the entire year, we shared 2.8 million pages with over a half million visits.



Even though we face tough competition from the various Wiki's and Google rankings Historic Camera is proud to have had the opportunity to share photographic information and to help in connecting new friends.

Our two club extensions using Flickr and FaceBook groups have flourished. On Flickr we now have 194 contributors to our pool of over 4700 historic images and information. Our members continue to provide quality imagery that we can use and organize on the HC website to provide ideal reference information. In our HC Facebook group, this year being our first, we have quickly enrolled over 1300 members and have an active community discussion on many different topics.



As Historic Camera enters into its twelfth year on the web, I see a broadening of photographic interests beyond the original label of camera collecting. We are enjoying new frontiers of information and insight, for instance we have seen several craftsmen who make their own cameras and take photos with them. We see a new photographs using alternative photographic processes in the groups by their masters. Compelling Historic imagery from Dags, CDVs and early film are being shared. Modern Film photos taken today using historic or soon to be historic cameras are being enjoyed by many and shared in our groups. It has been an interesting and good year. Thank you for your support. - Tom

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

New Camera Listings:

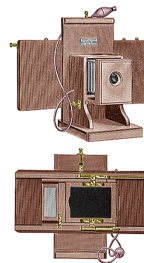
United
Optical
Instruments



[United Optical Instruments](#)



[Bear Photo Special](#)



[Sunflower Multiplying Camera](#)

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admin@historiccamera.com.

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