



# Historic Camera Newsletter

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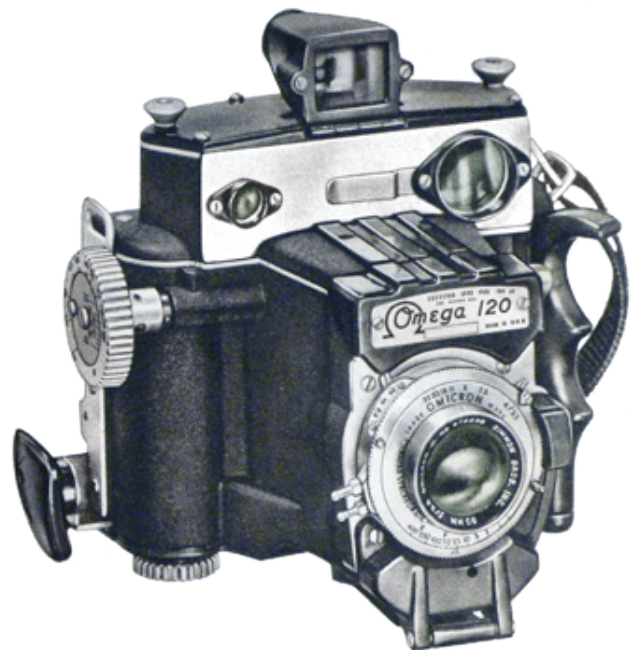
Volume 13 No. 09

## Simmon Brothers



In 1936 the three Simmon Brothers, Alfred, Rudolph and Frederick established their business in Long Island City, New York for the purpose of manufacturing photographic enlargers. Their first product was the Omega Model A Enlarger. The original Simmon Omega 120 camera design was made by

Alfred Simmon and introduced in March 1954. It later became the Koni-Omega made by Konica. In the 1960's they were the largest manufacturer of photographic enlargers in the world. In 1961 the brothers sold their company to Kong Photo. In the 1970s Kong Photo became Berkey Marketing company located in Woodside, New York and the cameras were manufactured by Konica in Japan. During the 70's the company also changed ownership to Mamiya. In 1995 the company purchased the assets of Satter, Inc. of Denver, Colorado a distributor and marketer of major photographic lines. In 2001 the company changed their name to OmegaSatter and are in business today providing customers with photographic and darkroom equipment, supplies and accessories.



## Snowflake Bentley



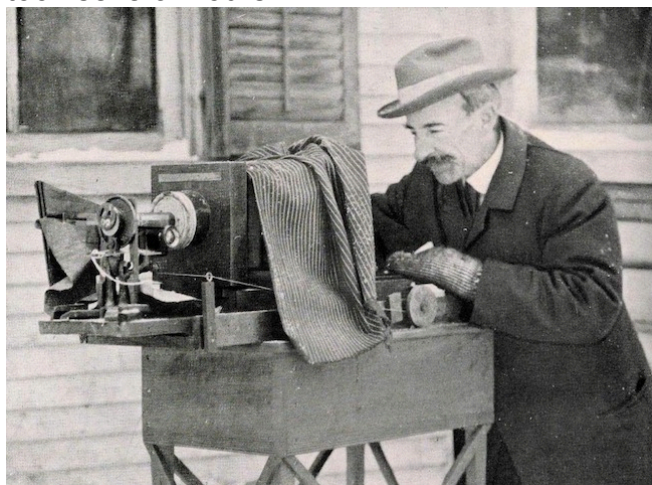
**Wilson A. Bentley**

Wilson Alwyn Bentley was born to Thomas and Fanny Colton Bentley in Jericho, Vermont on February 9, 1865. He would seldom venture far from the rustic seclusion of his family's Jericho

farmstead, situated on the eastern edge of Bolton Mountain. Because of the farm's remote location and brutal winters, regular attendance in the town's one-room schoolhouse was nearly impossible. Mr. Bentley later recounted that he never attended public school until age 14, but had nevertheless received an impressive education from his mother, a former schoolteacher with a vast collection of books and a set of encyclopedias. When he received the gift of a microscope, he began taking a closer look at the world around him. In 1925, he recalled, "Under the microscope, I found that snowflakes were miracles of beauty; and it seemed a shame that this beauty should not be seen and appreciated by others. Every crystal was a masterpiece of design and no one design was ever repeated. When a snowflake melted, that design was forever lost. Just that much beauty was gone, without leaving any record behind."

After making more than 300 snowflake sketches, he learned he could actually capture their images by using a bellows camera attached to a microscope, which he received for his 17th birthday. He devoted himself to creating his own unique system of photographing snow crystals, and on January 15, 1885, Wilson Bentley successfully took the first known snowflake photomicrographs, which he described as "the greatest moment of my life." But less than satisfied with his

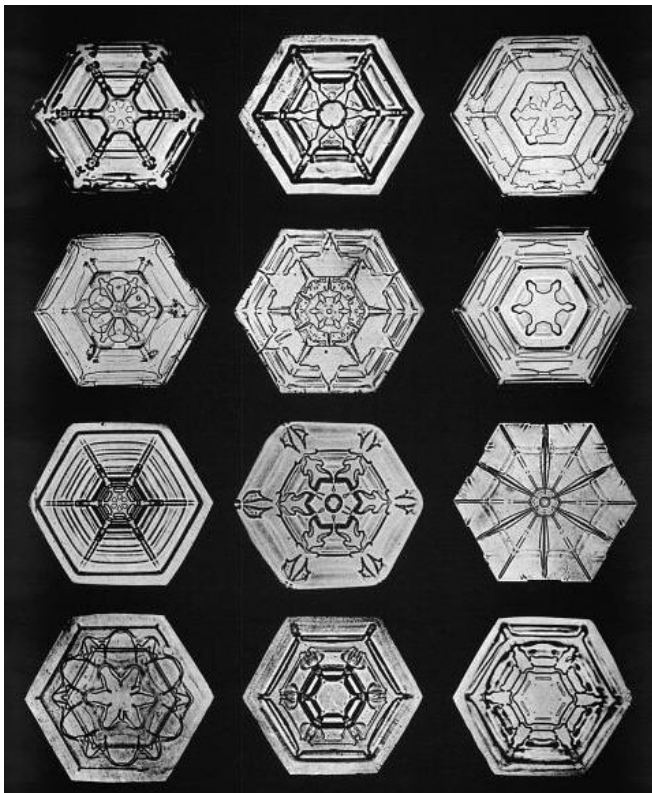
initial results, he strove to improve his technical precision. Working in nearly subzero temperatures, he had to develop a speedy process by which the crystals would retain their shape. He manipulated natural sky light and employed a large f-stop to capture sharp details of individual crystals. He draped a cool tray in velvet where he carefully placed the crystals, which were then transferred by a broom splint onto a pre-treated cool slide and then placed under his microscope. With a specially constructed pulley system, Mr. Bentley adjusted his back lighting before exposing his sensitized plate. He developed his own negatives and enhanced the detail of the snowflake crystals through a dark emulsion background, a tedious process that took several hours.



Despite his interests in photography, geology, and meteorology (he also spent several years studying and recording the sizes of raindrops), Mr. Bentley was a farmer by trade in the tradition of his ancestors. After compiling more than 400 photomicrographs, he showed them to University of Vermont Professor George Perkins in 1898, and his first article was published in Appleton's Popular Scientific Monthly shortly thereafter. Subsequent articles were featured in the U.S. Weather Service's Monthly Weather Review, and his photographs were used in articles on snowflakes presented in the Encyclopedia Britannica and Webster's Dictionary. In 1903, Mr. Bentley donated 500 snowflake



photographs to the Smithsonian Institution to ensure their preservation. By 1920, he was universally known as "The Snowflake Man," and his work was being featured in engravings, jewelry, and textiles. Four years' later, he received the American Meteorological Society's first research grant, and later worked with U.S. Weather Bureau chief physicist Dr. William J. Humphreys to organize his voluminous collection of photomicrographs, which now exceeded 4,000.



Mr. Bentley, who never married, never profited from his photographs or his important scientific contributions, acknowledged, "From a practical standpoint I suppose I would be considered a failure." Wilson A. Bentley died of pneumonia on December 23, 1931 at the age of 66. His hometown proudly exhibits many of his 5,381 snowflake views at the Jericho Historical Society.

Ref:  
2008 Cosmic Imagery: Key Images in the History of Science by John D. Barrow (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.), p. 200.

2001 Exploring the World of Chemistry: From Ancient Metals to High-Speed

Computers by John Hudson Tiner (Green Forest, AR: Master Books), pp. 80-82.

1962 Snow Crystals by W. A. Bentley and W. J. Humphreys (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc.), p. 44.

2011 The Snowflake Man of Vermont (URL: <http://publicdomainreview.org/2011/02/14/the-snowflake-man-of-vermont>).

1970 Weatherwise, Vol. XXIII (Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC), pp. 260-269.

2015 Wilson A. Bentley: The Snowflake Man (URL: <http://snowflakebentley.com/bio.htm#t>).

## W. I. Chadwick

SOLE PROPRIETOR AND MANUFACTURER—  
**W. I. CHADWICK,**  
AUTHOR OF  
"The Magic Lantern Manual," "The Stereoscopic Manual," &c.  
2 ST. MARY'S ST., MANCHESTER.

William Isaac Chadwick was a teacher, lecturer, dealer and camera designer in the 1880 and 1890s. He was active in Manchester England. W. I. Chadwick is credited with rekindling the public's interest in stereo photography and in 1887 he started earliest Stereographic group in the world called The Stereoscopic club of Manchester. It lasted to 1905. In 1895 Chadwick sent a stereoscope to Her majesty the Queen and the Queen was so taken that she had a set of views specially prepared for use in her apparatus and Chadwick earned public favor upon this royal expression of approval.

In the 1890s W. I. Chadwick designed several cameras believed to be built by Billcliff. He did little advertising as his opinion was that it cut into profit, but when he did he used innovative approaches causing one author to describe him as the Arch-Joker and remarking "Who, now, will maintain that advertisements must be dull and dry reading". For examples Chadwick had an ad that said "We have a lot of the old pattern in stock that we shall be glad to sell at any price" and another that

read "If the reader wants such things as 'the bridge is broken and I've come to mend it' or 'A night's adventure with a flee' our catalogue will be of no use." See our website [HistoricCamera.com](http://HistoricCamera.com) for more W.I. Chadwick camera information.



## John Reid Jr., Photographer



John Reid Jr. was born to John Sr. and Ann Allan Reid in Dundee, Scotland on December 19, 1835. His family moved to the United States six years later and after settling in Paterson, NJ, Mr. Reid apprenticed at Rogers Locomotive Works, one of several railway operations in the region. He became interested in the daguerreotype process as a teenager, and by the 1850s was producing wet collodion ambrotypes. Mr. Reid shared an

office with his brother Alexander, a dentist, at 83 Main Street, and the siblings advertised as "[Reid & Brother] Dentist & Daguerreotypes" until Dr. Reid's death in 1862. As his business grew, so did his family. He married Frances Mosson and together they had daughters Fannie, Caroline, and Bertha, and son John.



After serving in the Civil War, Mr. Reid returned to Paterson and his photographic enterprise, specializing in large format outdoor photography. He produced more than 200 landscape stereographs, which included some breathtaking views of Paterson's Passaic Falls and surrounding areas. Mr. Reid wisely elected to focus on subjects with which he was well familiar. He found inspiration in his hometown's many railroads. He was commissioned by Rogers, Cooke &



Co., and Danforth to produce photographs of their trains for promotional purposes. Mr. Reid's instruments of choice were Scovill's view boxes manufactured by the American Optical Company and favored Scovill's 'pearl' paper for his prints. He preferred the wide aperture Morrison lenses to produce his sharp and clean landscape images. The Morrison rectilinear variety was also practical because it was an excellent copying lens. His photograph of 1st Lt. James T. Gibson of the 33rd New Jersey Volunteers, which won an award at Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition in 1876, reveals Mr. Reid to be equally accomplished in portraiture. His works also received medals at the Paris Exposition (1878) and Chicago's Columbian Exhibition (1893). Mr. Reid prided himself on printing his own rag paper pictures and on using his own superior emulsion, which resisted the rapid deterioration that often plagued the prints of his contemporaries.



John Reid, Jr. remained a champion of wet plate photography until his death on April 7, 1911 at the age of 75. Mr. Reid's locomotive images were fondly remembered in a March 1937 article in *Railroad Stories* entitled, "A Famous Photographer of Iron Horses."

Ref:  
2011 Civil War Cartes de Visite: 1st Lt. James T. Gibson (URL: <http://www.nj.gov/state/archives/images/sdea4010/SDEA4010-130.jpg>).

2015 Civil War Era CDV Image with Paterson, New Jersey Backmark (URL: <http://www.shilohrelics.com/images/store/CEE6D6C30E0A4308AB583EB A944DF30DDSC01989.jpg>).

2001 Clifton (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing), p. 20.

2004 Historic Passaic County: An Illustrated History by Edward A. Smyk (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network), p. 31.

2009 John Reid by Arthur H. Miller (URL: [http://www.lakeforest.edu/library/archives/railroad/John\\_Reid.php](http://www.lakeforest.edu/library/archives/railroad/John_Reid.php)).

2004 Nineteenth Century New Jersey Photographers by Gary D. Saretzky (URL: [http://gary.saretzky.com/photohistory/resources/photo\\_in\\_nj\\_July\\_2010.pdf](http://gary.saretzky.com/photohistory/resources/photo_in_nj_July_2010.pdf)).

1872 The Photographic Times, Vol. II (New York: Scovill Manufacturing Company), pp. 114-115.

1884 The Photographic Times, Vol. XIV (New York: Scovill Manufacturing Company), p. 564.

1887 The Photographic Times, Vol. XVII (New York: Scovill Manufacturing Company), p. 173.

1883 The Photographic Times and American Photographer, Vol. XIII (New York: Scovill Manufacturing Company), p. 68.

2015 Photographs from the Archive of Samuel Dunning, a Steam Locomotive Engineer (URL: <http://www.nestorsbridge.com/Dunning>).

2003 Railway Photography by Brian Solomon and John E. Gruber (Iola, WI: Krause Publications), pp. 17-18.

1910 Snap Shots (New York: Snap-Shots Publishing Co.), p. 419.

## Nova Camera



© Wish-4-Leica

The Nova camera was manufactured in circa 1938. The manufacturer is unknown but it is probably Erwin Adloff Apparatus of Berlin because the body of the Nova is the same as the Tex camera. The camera body was constructed of cast-metal with a double box telescoping lens. The camera was capable of accepting 35mm roll film in special cassettes. It was fitted with a Special Anstigmat f4.5 lens in a shutter providing 1/25, 1/50, 1/100, and bulb speeds.

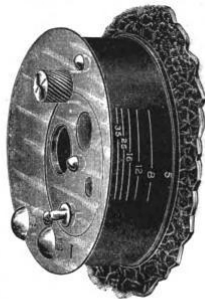
## Willsie Camera



The Willsie cameras were manufactured by the Willsie Camera Company of Chicago, Illinois and sold through the Rockford Silver Plate Company of 202 Wyman St., Rockford, Illinois from approximately 1897 to 1900. It was a line of leather covered box cameras with a unique telescoping lens and a solid metal double acting shutter. It had the capability of using mounted flat films (film packs). Their advertisements describe the camera as "The Cameras of the Future". In 1899 the camera was called the Triumph.

### A FOCUSING ATTACHMENT

is a part of each camera. All lenses require focusing. A "universal" focus lens cannot be ground. Lenses frequently are used at a fixed (or "universal") focus to avoid the expense of a focusing device in a camera. Our focusing attachment is accurately scaled, and, being made of metal, is not liable to the wear and injuries of leather bellows.



### THE SHUTTER

being fastened to the metal front disk cannot warp and can readily be removed for examination or exchange. It has a safety stop disk with three openings, and time and instantaneous buttons. The front is finely finished in nickel.

The Line included the Willsie Pocket Camera, the Willsie 3 1/2 Camera, the Willsie 3 1/4 Camera and the Willsie 4 x 5 Camera. See the HC site for more information.

## F.F.V



The Fovarosi Finommechanikai Vallalat or FFV - Metropolitan Works for Precision Mechanics was originally founded in 1914 and located in Budapest. Over the years it underwent several reorganizations. In the 1950s at the time the Utitars camera was made the companies name was Finommechanikai es Acelarugyar or FA and the camera bears the FA nomenclature. Later models and the Pajtas bear the FFV inscription.



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