

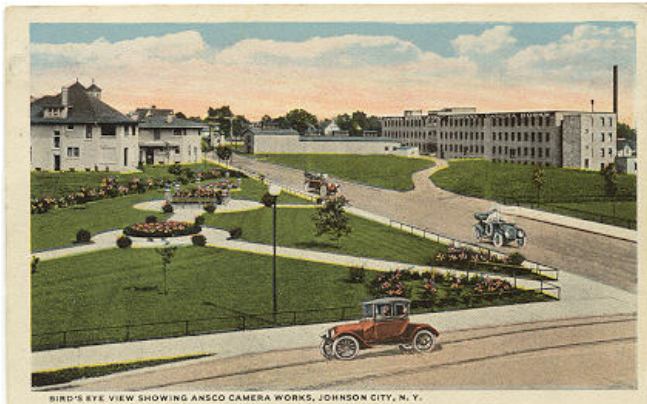


Historic Camera Newsletter

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ANSCO



The AnSCO Company has a dramatic history that dates back to Daguerre. It was America's first producer of daguerreotype plates and manufactured and marketed photographic equipment and hand cameras long before there was an Eastman Kodak. According to AnSCO executive A. C. Lamoutte, the company's origins began with Scovill Manufacturing Company. Originally a brass producer, the company expanded its operations to include manufacturing metal plates and supplies as the photographic market grew. To accommodate this ever-changing business, a separate entity, the Scovill-Adams Company, was established in 1889. During this period, the New York-based E. & H. T. Anthony Company was also selling photographic equipment while the newly-formed Eastman Kodak Company was serving as a distributor for Anthony plates. But the ambitious George Eastman was not content peddling another company's wares. He began producing his own cameras and opened a chain of stores exclusively featuring Eastman Kodak products. This created

intense market competition between Anthony and Eastman Kodak, with the wealthy Eastman getting the upper hand by buying out independent suppliers.

To stay competitive, Anthony purchased Goodwin Film & Camera Company in 1901. Episcopal priest Hannibal Goodwin invented a transparent film roll that served as an impressive substitute for glass plates. After several attempts, Reverend Goodwin was finally awarded a patent, and Anthony began successfully manufacturing Goodwin's film. Shortly thereafter, E. & H. T. Anthony merged with Scovill Manufacturing in an effort to combat Eastman Kodak's market monopoly. Their partnership resulted in a name change to AnSCO, and moved its base of operations to Binghamton, New York. In 1902, Goodwin sued Eastman Kodak for patent infringement, and though the case dragged on for more than a decade, Eastman Kodak was found guilty, and the \$5 million judgment awarded to AnSCO gave it the capital it needed to survive.



By January 1928, AnSCO merged with Germany's Agfa, which necessitated a name change to Agfa AnSCO. This merger strengthened the company in the lower-end

camera market, but Eastman Kodak still had the high-end camera market to itself. Nevertheless, Agfa Ansco did receive recognition by the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences, first in 1936 for its Agfa infrared film and two years' later for its pan motion picture film. Agfa Ansco became a subsidiary of the General Aniline & Film Company in 1939, and after the United States entered World War II, Agfa Ansco was seized because of its German corporate connection. Its camera production was replaced by wartime film and optical equipment, and was eventually overtaken by the U.S. Treasury and later transferred to the Office of Alien Property Custodian. By 1944, the name reverted back to simply Ansco for obvious reasons.



The postwar years sadly did nothing to alter Ansco's course. It continued to place second behind frontrunner Eastman Kodak, although it did distinguish itself in amateur camera production and developing high-speed reversible film for the space program. By 1967, its name changed again to General Aniline & Film (GAF). In 1978, the Ansco trademark was no more when it was sold to Hong Kong's Haking Enterprises, which later made cameras under its Ansco Photo-Optical Products Corporation division. legacy was later honored by Roberson Museum and Science Center in an exhibit entitled, "Ansco: Cameras, Community & Construction." In his

article, "A Brief History of Agfa, Ansco and GAF Cameras," James Ollinger laments, "Poor Ansco has arguably the most tortured history of any of the major marquee names." But while frequently relegated to second billing to Eastman Kodak, Ansco's industry star shined brightly for nearly a century and remains an impressive marquee name to photographic historians worldwide.

Historic Camera now has a near complete informational listing of Ansco cameras, with one hundred and eleven (111) camera models. Visit our website to view the reference and camera value information.

Ref:

2015 Bird's Eye View Showing ANSCO Camera Works, Johnson City, New York, PU-1916 (URL: <http://www.delcampe.net/page/item/id,61925906,var,Birds-Eye-View-showing-ANSCO-Camera-works-Johnson-City-New-York-PU-1916,language,E.html>).

2015 A Brief History of Agfa, Ansco and GAF Cameras by James Ollinger (URL: <http://www.jollinger.com/photo/cam-coll/histories/history-ansco.html>).

2011 Ansco Chronology (From a Binghamton, N. Y. Point of View) by William L. Camp (URL: <http://billsphotohistory.com/3.html>).

2007 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), p. 50.

1919 The Poster, Vol. X (Chicago, IL: Poster Advertising Association), pp. 25, 47, 49, 51).

1915 Printers' Ink, Vol. XCII (New York : Printers' Ink Publishing Company), pp. 41-50.

1903 Western Camera Notes: A Monthly Magazine of Pictorial Photography, Vol. VI (Minneapolis, MN: Western Camera Publishing Co.), p. 187.

Frances B. Johnson

Frances Benjamin Johnston was born to Anderson and Frances Antoinette Johnston in Grafton, West Virginia on January 15, 1864. Her father served as head bookkeeper for the Treasury Department and her mother worked for the Baltimore Sun as a Washington political correspondent. From 1883-1885, she studied art at Paris's Academie Julian. Afterward, she entered the Art Students League in Washington, DC, which is where her interest in photography began. At age 21,

Ms. Johnston became employed as a magazine illustrator while studying photography with Thomas William Smillie, who was director of the photography division of the Smithsonian Institution. Freelance photographic assignments followed, and included documenting the grueling work of coal miners and chronicling the educational programs of former slaves at Virginia's Hampton Institute and Alabama's Tuskegee Institute.



Ms. Johnston opened her own gallery in 1890, and her parents' political connections provided her with unprecedented access to Washington, DC's power elite. Her career accorded her a financial independence that was rare for women of the Victorian Age. Her 1896 Self-Portrait (As a "New Woman") led to increasing feminist activism, which included lobbying for the right to vote and gender equality. Obviously inheriting her mother's talents for journalism, Ms. Johnston wrote several essays on female photographers for Ladies Home Journal. In her article, "What a Woman Can Do with a Camera", which was also published in Ladies Home Journal (1897),

she observed, "The woman who makes photography profitable must have, as to personal qualities, good common sense, unlimited patience to carry her through endless failures, equally unlimited tact, good taste, a quick eye, a talent for detail, and a genius for hard work. In addition, she needs training, experience, some capital, and a field to exploit." She also made the artistic distinction between a photograph and a picture, stating that it is "a true appreciation of the beautiful" that elevates the captured image. Ms. Johnston's camera of choice was a compact, lightweight 6-1/2-by-8-1/2" camera with two rapid, symmetrical lenses for indoor and outdoor photography that featured combination time and instantaneous shutters. She also recommended having more than one lighting source, and warned against the tendency to over-retouch portrait negatives.



As a member of George Grantham Bain's News Service, Ms. Johnston photographed the crew mess hall of the USS Olympia in 1899, a considerable feat for a female photographer. That same year, she covered Oval Office's War Room activities during the Spanish-American War. She also supported fledgling American female photographers and was responsible for their work being exhibited at the Paris Exposition (1900). Through her parents and her friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt, Ms. Johnston became an unofficial White House photographer during five administrations. Using a box camera she received from George Eastman, she took several pictures of President William

McKinley the night before his assassination in 1901. Three years later, Ms. Johnston became a member of the Photo-Secession. She was involved in several photographic and nonprofit organizations, and served as a juror for the second Philadelphia Salon of Photography. Ms. Johnston received four grants from the Carnegie Foundation to photograph the gardens and antebellum architecture of the American South. For her efforts, the American Institute of Architects made her an honorary member in 1945. Most of her 20,000 prints and negatives were donated to the Library of Congress in 1948.

Eighty-eight year-old Frances Benjamin Johnston died in 1952. Of the woman often referred to as America's first female photojournalist, Smithsonian Magazine contributor Victoria Olsen wrote, "[Frances Benjamin] Johnston's bohemian artist still urges women forward at the same time her proper Victorian lady reminds us all to look back at what we have achieved."

Ref:
2011 American Women Artists in Wartime, 1776-2010 by Paula E. Calvin and Deborah A. Deacon (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.), pp. 72-73.

2007 Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol. I (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group LLC), p. 778.

2009 Frances Benjamin Johnston (URL: http://www.moma.org/collection/artist.php?artist_id=7851).

2011 Frances Benjamin Johnston, Three-Quarter Length Portrait, Holding and Looking Down at Camera, Facing Slightly Left (URL: <http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3c20455>).

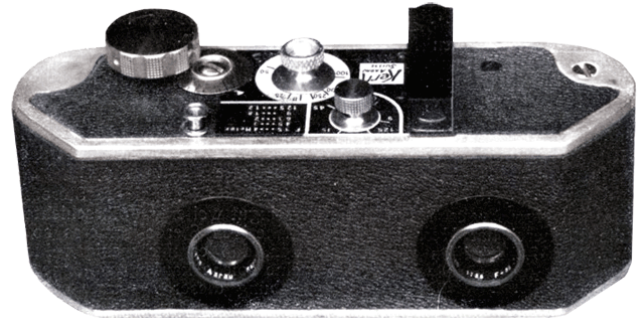
2010 Victorian Womanhood, in All Its Guises by Victoria Olsen (URL: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/victorian-womanhood-in-all-its-guises-14265506/?no-ist>).

2015 What a Woman Can Do with a Camera by Frances Benjamin Johnston (digital version of an article from Ladies Home Journal, 1897) (URL: <http://www.cliohistory.org/exhibits/johnston/whatawomancando>).

Kern Company

The Kern Company was founded in 1819 in the town of Aarau, Switzerland by Jakob Kern for the purpose of manufacturing and selling drawing instruments and later all types of

scientific equipment. In 1857, Jakob's two sons, Adolf and Emil joined the firm.



Kern Stereo Camera

By 1914 all three Kerns had retired and the business was renamed Kern & company AG. Heinrich Kern, son of Adolf was then managing the firm. In 1923 the company began to sell cameras with limited production. Due to high costs of production the business did not make cameras for a long period of time. In 1991 after several change of hands, the company ceased operations.



Bijou Camera photo Courtesy of Tomoyuki Takahashi



Eric G. Matson



Gastgifvar Eric Matson was born on June 16, 1888 in the Nas parish of Dalarna, Sweden. In 1896, the Matson family joined a group of their Nas countrymen who immigrated to Jerusalem. There, they joined American expatriates to form the American Colony, which provided aid and supplies to poverty-stricken Palestinians. To generate income, Colony residents peddled their hand-colored prints to predominantly American tourists. Two years later, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany visited the region, which was impressively photographed by members of the American Colony. The success of this endeavor led to the formation of a permanent photographic department, which satisfied the high tourist demand for regional pictures.

As a teenager, Mr. Matson worked in the photographic department along with Edith Yantiss, a teenage transplant from rural Kansas. Together, they mastered the delicate technical process of hand-tinting prints and lantern slides. Soon, their professional partnership

turned into a personal relationship, and the couple married in 1924. Mr. Matson further honed his skills as first assistant to department head Lewis Larsson. Although the community was disbanded in 1930, primarily because of expensive global travel, the Matsons stayed on, and when they left in 1934, they took with them the rich American Colony archive and some photographic equipment. Mr. Matson and his wife formed the Matson Photo Service, and over the next several years they captured thousands of images that depicted everyday life in the Middle East from their vocations to their style of dress to their religious rituals and cultural traditions.

By 1946, the Jewish-Arab conflict had intensified to a point that the Matson family (which now included three children) were forced to leave for their own safety. One of the last images Mr. Matson captured was the bombing of the King David Hotel by Zionist extremists. Traveling through the Holy Land for the final time, he lovingly photographed Qumran, Amman, and Jerash, which are now cities of Jordan and Israel respectively. Despite relocating to the United States, Mr. Matson maintained a staff of photographers in Jerusalem until the late 1950s. In 1966, Edith Yantiss Matson died, and later that same year her husband donated 20,000 of their negatives to the Library of Congress. G. Eric Matson continued working until his death in December 1977 at the age of 89.



Ref:

2015 Egyptian Camel Transport Passing over Olivet, 1918: Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection (URL: <http://cdn.loc.gov/service/pnp/matpc/14700/14759r.jpg>).

2015 Egypt: Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection (URL: <http://rebloggy.com/post/egypt-g-eric-matson-edith-matson/44211803395>).

2009 Jerusalem's American Colony and Its Photographic Legacy by Tom Powers (URL: https://israelpalestineguide.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/jeruselems_american_colony-_its_photographic_legacy.pdf), pp. 28-29.

2015 Matson photographing in Petra, 1934 (URL: <http://cdn.loc.gov/service/pnp/matpc/21900/21956r.jpg>).

2003 Palestine and Egypt under the Ottomans by Hisham Khatib (New York: Tauris Parke), p. 247.

2002 Photography: An Illustrated History by Martin W. Sandler (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 51-52.

Roto Camera



The RO-TO or simply ROTO Company was founded by Giovanni Ropolo in the mid 1930s. It was located in Torino Italy. The name is believed to be derived from the first two letters of his last name RO combined with the city of Torino TO in which the company resided, thus representing Ropolo-Torino or RO-TO. The company marketed photographic goods and sold a variety of cameras that were made locally by small businesses for RO-TO, including the Alpha Photo of Piacenza.

Over the years the company sold a wide variety of cameras since they came from multiple manufacturers. Known models

include Ardita, Invicta, Juve, Nea Fotos, Riber Lys, Simbi A.C.2 and the Elvo.



Photo Courtesy of John-Henry Collinson

The Elvo was manufactured in the 1940s. Made of molded brown bakelite with the front lens extending out on struts once the viewfinder is positioned in an upright position. It was fitted with a fixed focus achromatic f11 lens and a simple instantaneous and bulb shutter. The camera was capable of capturing 4.5 x 6 cm exposures on standard no. 120 roll film.

In 1970 ROTO merged into the CIDAF (Italian Consortium Distributors News Photo-cine-radio) which was formed in Milan by a group of 16 distributors operating in various Italian regions including Bancolini of Bologna, Bigagli Florence, Genoa Crovetto, Pecchioli and Ropolo Turin and Palermo Randazzo.



Visit the Historic Camera site for more info on the other ROTO cameras

S. C. A. P. (France)

S.C.A.P or Société de Construction d'Appareils Photographiques was located in the city of Levallois, France and established in circa 1949. The firm was in business for only a short time. It produced two similar cameras. The Kovex and the Rollex.

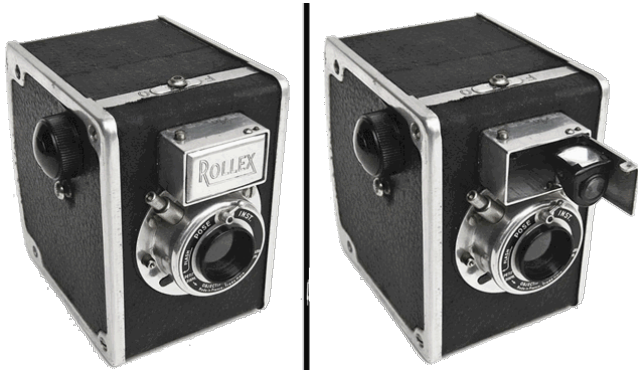


Photo Courtesy of Jamie

The cameras were box shaped and made with an aluminum body with covering on the sides. The Kovex had snakeskin covering and the Rollex plain black. The exposed edges were rounded and polished. The camera took 6 x 9 cm exposures on standard no. 620 roll film. It also had flash synchronization. It featured a unique finder that is stored away behind door and swings into place when opened. It was fitted with a fixed focus meniscus lens with two diaphragms "PETIT DIAPH" & "GRAND DIAPH" and a simple Instantaneous and Pose (bulb) shutter.



Photo Courtesy of Gilles Pérès y Saborit

Snappy Camera



The Snappy Candid Camera is marked in the molded body that it is made in England, however the name of the manufacturer is unknown. It is however identical to the Scenex camera that was identified to be manufactured by the Candid Camera Company of Dallas, Texas in circa 1951.

It was a small simple to operate snap shot camera. The camera was made of plastic backlite with a ground glass lens and instantaneous shutter. It captured 25x25mm exposures on No. 828 roll film.



Send Comments & Suggestions to admin@historiccamera.com.

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