



# Historic Camera Club Newsletter

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## Underwood & Underwood.



ELMER UNDERWOOD



BERT UNDERWOOD

Photographic entrepreneurs Elmer and Bert Underwood, the sons of Reverend E. Underwood, were born respectively in 1859 and 1862. Living first in Illinois, the family later settled in Ottawa, Kansas, and the boys did what they could to ease their constant financial burdens. After attending college, Elmer went to work at a local printing office while Bert found work at a grocery store. In 1859, young Elmer Underwood established his own printing business, which quickly became successful. Meanwhile, Bert continued to struggle, and went to Kansas City, where he was hired by the White Sewing Machine Company. When this proved not to his liking, he returned to Ottawa, where he became a traveling salesman, selling medical books door to door. As a book agent, he became acquainted with several neighboring territories, and on one of his business travels, he met a smalltime peddler of stereoscopic views. Although considered outdated by this time, the younger

Underwood believed that there was a potentially lucrative market for stereoscopic views if the proper organization was in place. He then convinced his older brother to join this new venture, which began operating under the name Underwood & Underwood in 1881.

Shortly thereafter, the brothers had a team of agents representing their company in both Kansas and Missouri. Within a few years, the business had expanded further Midwest and into the West, with migration into the South, Rockies, Puget Sound completed by the spring of 1885. Although their main source of operations remained in Ottawa, the Underwoods opened a supply house in Baltimore that was subsequently moved to New York City. The domestic success led to further growth with houses opening in Ontario, Canada and Liverpool, England. By 1890, Underwood & Underwood was either shipping directly or through their agents to most of Europe, Scandinavia, Central America, Asia, and the south Pacific.

In 1896, Underwood & Underwood further expanded its profit margin by selling photographs to newspapers and magazines. Within five years, the company was producing an impressive 25,000 daily prints, selling more than 300,000 photographs annually. The Underwoods opened their own news photo agency in 1904, which enjoyed both power and prestige for the next three decades. They also added Underwood Travel System "stereoscopic tours" product packages that featured various events, cultures, and geographical marvels. These

boxed sets were unique in that the prints accompanied notes or booklets that painstakingly detailed exactly what the viewer was seeing, offering one of the first virtual travel experiences.



Underwood & Underwood remained a top producer in the stereographic field, competing successfully against large houses like E. & H. T. Anthony in the late-nineteenth century and Keystone View Company in the twentieth century. However, the advent of motion pictures significantly diminished the popular appeal of stereographic views, and the ever-astute brothers decided to sell out to Keystone in 1920. They retired five years later, and left the business in the capable hands of their brothers and grandsons. Elmer Underwood died in Tucson, Arizona in 1943, and Bert passed away in St. Petersburg, Florida in 1947. Although the Underwood & Underwood news agency found increasing competition with the industry powerhouses Associated Press and United Press International, it continued operations into the 1980s.

Ref:  
2000 Enterprising Images (Detroit: Wayne State University), p. 86.

1894 The Photographic Journal of America, Vol. XXXI (New York: Edward L. Wilson), pp. 66-69, 111.

2012 Underwood & Underwood (URL: <http://www.robinsonlibrary.com/technology/photography/biography/underwoods.htm>).

1983 Photographic Artists and Innovators, pub.

## Elias Goldensky

"Wizard of Photography" Elias Goldensky was born in the small Ukrainian village of Radomysl on September 9, 1867. His father Benjamin was an oculist, and opened a photography studio in the commercial district of Kremenchug in the 1870s. After the assassination of Emperor Alexander II in 1881, the subsequent anti-Semitic pogroms resulted in oppressive living conditions for Jewish families like the Goldenskys. Elias attempted to supplement the family income by becoming a member of a local acting troupe. At the age of 23, he, his father, grandmother, and two younger brothers, emigrated to the United States, and settled in Philadelphia, which at the time was America's second largest city. Philadelphia was the natural choice because of its large Ukrainian Jewish population.



ELIAS GOLDENSKY

Young Mr. Goldensky quickly joined William J. Kuebler Jr.'s portrait studio as a

retoucher. Less than a year later, he began working for Frederick Gutekunst, and spent the next four years as a retoucher and part-time printer. In 1895, Mr. Goldensky opened his own studio, which had stiff competition from the city's more than 130 portrait studios. Despite its ghetto location, Mr. Goldensky's studio quickly earned a reputation for producing elegant portraits that soon grabbed the attention of Philadelphia's most elite citizens.

Surrounded by tall buildings that made a skylight impossible, Mr. Goldensky's portrait sittings required a Percy King Light Controller. What some photographers would regard as an impediment he perceived as a huge creative advantage, stating, "I do not care if I only have an ordinary window, I can get whatever lighting or effect I wish with my light controller". Mr. Goldensky's approach to his subjects was equally unorthodox because he did nothing to dictate the expressions or poses of his sitters. He might suggest a particular chair or pose to his sitters, but firmly adhered to his professional mantra: "Let them be themselves." If he noticed a particular fatigue or sluggishness in a sitter on a particular day, the person would be posed and another attempt would be made at the next appointment. He defended his approach by explaining, "I want individuality... If I cannot put my whole soul into the picture that I am about to make, I will not spoil my reputation nor will I disappoint my sitter by giving him something that anybody can make. I must have results and only the best. I don't care if I do not make a penny out of the sitting". For Mr. Goldensky, the gum print was the perfect process for the wide variety of individual expressions the medium offered. Most of his sitters do not make direct eye contact with the photographer. Instead, they are looking off into the distance that added an aura of mystery to the portraits.

Mr. Goldensky's photography studio remained profitable until World War I, when

the business of portrait photography began a steady decline that bottomed out during the Great Depression. Nevertheless, he remained in demand as a photographic exhibitor, convention lecturer, and member of several photographic societies. Louis Walton Siple named Mr. Goldensky to serve on the first board of directors of Philadelphia's American Museum of Photography in 1940. The photographic maverick dubbed the "Wizard of Photography" died from an asthmatic attack on March 10, 1943, and his massive personal archives of 1,500 prints and more than 1,600 negatives and transparencies were donated to the museum. After founder Louis Walton Siple's death, his widow sold the museum's holdings to the 3M Company, which were donated to the George Eastman House in 1972.

Ref:

1907 Camera: A Practical Magazine for Photographers, Vol. XI (Philadelphia: Columbia Photographic Society), pp. 286-290.

1997 Pennsylvania History, Vol. LXIV (Camp Hill, PA: Plank's Suburban Press), pp. 206-272.

1978 The Valiant Knights of Daguerre: Selected Critical Essays on Photography and Profiles on Photographic Pioneers (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 215-220.

1912 Wilson's Photographic Magazine, Vol. XLIX (New York: Edward L. Wilson), pp. 265-267.

## Historic Collections

By Tom Kowach

With the recent sale of Michael Isenberg's awesome collection for a breath taking \$15 million, it makes one wonder about how many other museum quality collections are out there in private hands. Of course the first that comes to mind, in which most folks already know about, would be Rob Niederman. Rob has done a wonderful job of showcasing his rare collection on his open site [AntiqueWoodCameras.com](http://AntiqueWoodCameras.com). The site "American Field Cameras of the United States" is another well-documented

collection on the web and there are a few others that deserve a look.

However, I recently discovered another museum quality collection that, some of you may not know about. I learned about it through our Historic Camera group at Flickr, where I was offered use of some images of the rare boxed Aiken-Gleason cameras. The collector was Charlie Kamerman. In follow up communications, I was delighted to discover his extensive portfolio of Kodak items on Flickr. Learning more, I viewed his understated website [KodakCollector.com](http://KodakCollector.com), as it is a tip of an iceberg so to say. But most importantly, I discovered a collecting philosophy and discipline that has made Charlie's collection unique.

Charlie started out like most of us. He caught the bug in 1979 upon being influenced by a photographer friend, and upon receiving a gift from a college girlfriend's grandmother. Right upon the start he established a unique collecting philosophy and he was disciplined enough to follow it for the past thirty plus years. Many of us should be so wise. His philosophy was to - **only collect Kodak items that are found in an "original box"**. You might think this limiting, but for Charlie the Kodak collection grew leaps and bounds once his goal was established. Friends, pickers and dealers from all over the world helped find items too.

He has recently completed what is believed to be a first in collecting history. It is a complete set of the first seven Kodak string set cameras in their original boxes (Original, No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 3 Jr., No. 4 and No. 4 Jr.). The seven boxes are marked with three different company names: The Eastman Dry Plate and Film Co. (1884-89), The Eastman Co. (1889-92) and Eastman Kodak Co. (1892 and later). However the Kamerman collection is not just cameras with boxes but includes the entire history of one company including catalogs, flyers,

signs, posters, window displays, boxes of film, photographs, darkroom supplies, advertisements, toys and point of sale life sized Kodak Girls. He has no list or inventory, just 1000's of things and then more! He has over 5000 pictures on Flickr and has not scratched the surface. The collection has evolved over the years to include collecting other companies' items in original boxes as it became increasingly difficult to find Kodak items he did not have.



Charlie's collection was showcased in several exhibits and museums. His first exhibit was in 1981 at a local Pasadena Camera Show. Having returned to the Pasadena show several times with an ever-increasing exhibit culminating in twelve tables, he hit the big time in 1985. A dream came true when the curator of the California Museum of Photography in Riverside

California agreed to exhibit the Kodak collection for a six-month duration. Due to its far-reaching breadth beyond just cameras, in 1986, the collection received a follow-on showing in the Loker Gallery at the Museum of Science and Industry in Los Angeles. In 1988, the Eastman House borrowed a large assortment of advertising to use in their Centennial display in Rochester. A few smaller museum exhibits followed over the last years.

In the early years of Charlie exhibiting, the collection was described by one of his colleagues Mike Kessler in 1982, as “an overwhelming sense of completeness. Dan Meinwald, a museum curator of the California Museum of Photography, called the collection “extraordinary”. Matthew Isenberg wrote in a letter to Charlie, “The more I look at them (photos of the collection), the more I realize how important your collection is. I know of no other photographic collection that encompasses the changing styles & tastes in so many different disciplines”. The collection has grown significantly since those early days. Since it has been some time since the public has viewed the collection, Charlie is interested in exhibiting his collection again, should a museum be willing to host it. Personally, I look forward to the day of seeing a grand museum exhibition of Charlie’s entire collection.



**CHARLIE KAMERMAN**

It is interesting to reflect on the paths that we take. By setting a goal and a collecting philosophy early in your collecting days, as Charlie did, it may prove to be the key to making the adventure more enjoyable and the end result a cherished prize as your collection grows.

Charlie can be contacted through his website [kodakcollector.com](http://kodakcollector.com) or at his Flickr account under [kodakcollector](#). If you know of other private collections that have a unique collecting story, I would love to hear about it.

## Escopette Camera



Photo Courtesy of [Jose Carlos Casimiro](#) - © All Rights Reserved

Here is a great photo of a Historic Camera named the Escopette. It was one of the first European cameras to use Kodak’s new flexible roll film. The Escopette was invented by Albert Darier of Geneva Switzerland and manufactured by E.V. Boissonas in circa 1888, the same time as the introduction of original Kodak camera. The camera was constructed of wood with a carved wooden handle giving it the shape of a pistol and accompanied by polished brass support legs to serve as a tripod with brass hardware to mechanize the film advancement. This camera was fitted with a unique brass Steinheil Periscopic f6 90mm lens and spherical shutter with trigger release. This very rare camera was capable of capturing 110 exposures, 68 x 72mm in size.

## William Latour

Born on October 4, 1845 in Eslingen, Germany, William Latour and his family immigrated to the United States six years' later, settling in St. Louis, Missouri. Reportedly, he began his daguerreian art education at the age of 11 under the tutelage of Augustus Plitt, one of the St. Louis' most respected artists. From his instructor, the young man also learned ambrotyping and the aesthetics of photography, and further honed his skills working for several local galleries over the next five years.



William Latour

The outbreak of the Civil War temporarily stalled Mr. Latour's burgeoning career, but he resumed the profession in his new home of Sedalia, Missouri in 1866. He quickly established a reputation for excellence throughout Sedalia and Joplin. During this period, Mr. Latour also pursued a theatrical career, first performing at the Leavenworth, Kansas Theatre leased by acclaimed thespian George D. Chaplin. He acted in several theatrical touring companies that included both Mr. Chaplin and renowned stage actor Edwin Booth.

Retiring from the stage in April 1868, Mr. Latour again returned to Sedalia and photography. He worked for daguerreotypist and photographer J. C. Downing and later joined the business of Richard Penny, and bought him out in 1869. On October 25th of that year, he married Josephine Lyons. Together, they would have three children - daughter Blanche and sons Ira and Lionel. From 1875 until 1884, his flourishing business was known as Latour's Photographic Gallery and Studio of Painting.

On the corner of Ohio and Fourth Streets, he constructed "Latour's Block," and its upper rooms housed one of the most lavish and successful galleries in the Midwest. His cartes des visite were particularly popular. Quite simply, William Latour symbolized photography in Missouri, and served as president of the Photographers' Association of Missouri. His approach demonstrated how photographs can be both artistic as well as affordable.



After an amazing and highly profitable 50 years as a photographer and gallery owner, William Latour announced his retirement in August 1914 and sold his studio. He moved to Columbus, Ohio, which is where he died on October 22, 1914 at the age of 69. He was buried in his beloved adopted hometown of Sedalia, and his widow Josephine was buried next to him twelve years' later. Not surprisingly, Ira Hinsdale Latour Sr. and Lionel L. Latour also enjoyed successful photographic careers individually and as partners throughout Sedalia and Joplin. Ira Sr. was co-founder of the California Photographers' Association in 1903. Ira Latour Jr. continued the family's photographic legacy into a third generation with an acclaimed career spanning seven decades.

Ref:

1914 Bulletin of Photography, Vol. XV (Philadelphia: Frank V. Chambers), pp. 240, 599.

2012 Eight Original Carte de Visite by and of Daguerreotypist / Photographer William Latour (URL: <http://www.ebay.com/itm/8-CDVs-Daguerreotypist-William-Latour-Building-Studio-Interior-Family-/140896085703>).

2005 A Force in Contemporary Photography—Latour Reveals His Passion for Life in His Art (URL: [http://www.csuchico.edu/pub/cs/spring\\_09/feature\\_02.html](http://www.csuchico.edu/pub/cs/spring_09/feature_02.html)).

1882 The History of Pettis County, Missouri (San Antonio, TX: Pranava Books), p. 689.

2005 Pioneer Photographers From The Mississippi To The Continental Divide: A Biographical Dictionary, 1839-1865 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), p. 387.

## 2012 Website Stats

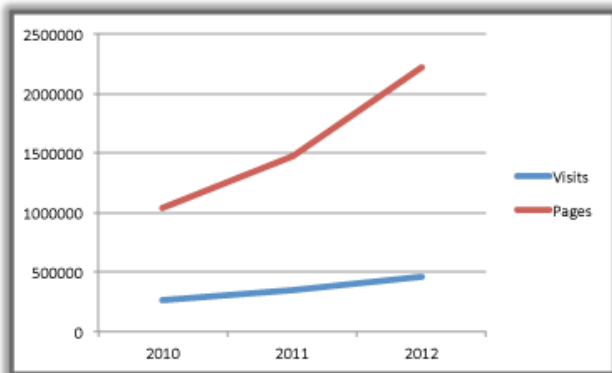
Historic  
CAMERA



Community & Resource for Cameras, Photographs and Photographer Biography

As the Historic Camera website sails past its ten year anniversary and moves into 2013, it is interesting to reflect on the past and all the hard work that has gotten us here. 2012 was a pivotal year for HC, with the momentum of our Flickr photo-sharing group reaching over 100 members and over 1500 photos. We added about six hundred and sixty eight new and unique datasheets of historical information about photographers, companies, photographs and cameras.

The rejuvenation of our free monthly newsletter was on time every month and helped to foster information sharing and proved to be a good vehicle for letting folks know about the latest reference information available. We are proud to say that we have helped almost a half million visitors this past year with photographic information, by serving up well over two million web pages. This is an average growth rate of a 47% for serving web pages for the last two years. Thanks for the support!



## Jozef Franaszek

By Krzysztof Slowinski

In the year 1873 Jozef Franaszek (1840 - 1916), a man coming from a noble family and an insurgent of so-called January Uprising (1863 - 1864, against Russian Empire Army occupation), bought from A. Vetter in Warsaw a factory producing various types and colors of paper - packing paper, tissue paper, wallpaper, blotting paper etc. The factory was founded in 1829 by the company Spörlin & Rehan and located in Warsaw at the corner of Marszalkowska and Zlota streets. It was in 1910 modernized by J. Franaszek and moved to a new building at ul. Wolska (Wolska St.) and renamed to Towarzystwo Akcyjne Fabryki Obic Papierowych i Papierow Kolorowych.



After Jozef's death the factory was taken up and managed by his son Stanislaw Franaszek (1872 - 1933) who modernized and developed it so that the rate of employment reached the level of 290 workers.



His successors, brothers Jerzy (-1943) and Kazimierz Franaszek (1902 - 1944) decided to introduce new products based on their gained experience and current market analysis - photographic papers, plates and films. Preparations to realize the task were begun in 1936. It took about two years to complete the works. The efforts were crowned in 1938 with opening the biggest and most modern paper factory in Poland.

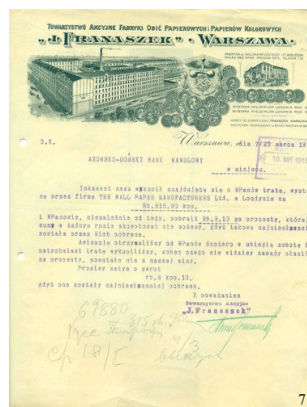
The production was started when all tests to reach the highest quality possible were performed and all planned products proved positive. Marketing of the new products preceded was with intensive advertising campaign in photographic journals, in press and in the company's brochures and leaflets, also in the air.



The campaign backed by the brand name's excellent reputation soon gained regular clientele in Poland and in Europe, and especially in Balcan peninsula countries and made possible to successfully compete on Polish and foreign markets with well-known and reputable companies.

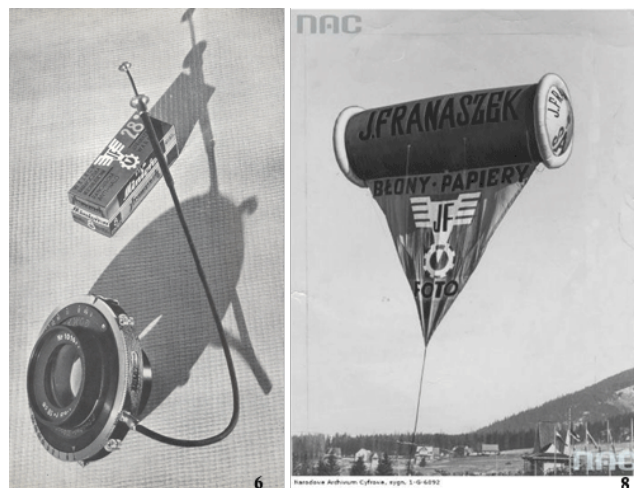
The factory continued activity even after the outbreak of war (WW II). It wasn't taken over by German Nazi administration like many other companies that were forced to support German war production, and worked still under its own management. Making good use of the factory's abilities Franaszeks

helped the anti-Nazi Resistance with providing special kinds of papers enabling fabrications of counterfeit identity cards and other documents. Franaszeks used to take care of the workers - they regularly paid wages, helped those who lost their relatives, and Kazimierz was active among the Warsaw community as one who used his connections to release the jailed and to help their families. In 1943 the brother Jerzy died and Kazimierz kept the business alone.



On the first of August 1944 an uprising against Nazi occupation was triggered off in Warsaw by the Resistance Home Army to liberate the town from Germans. As the approaching Soviet Red Army came to a halt at the

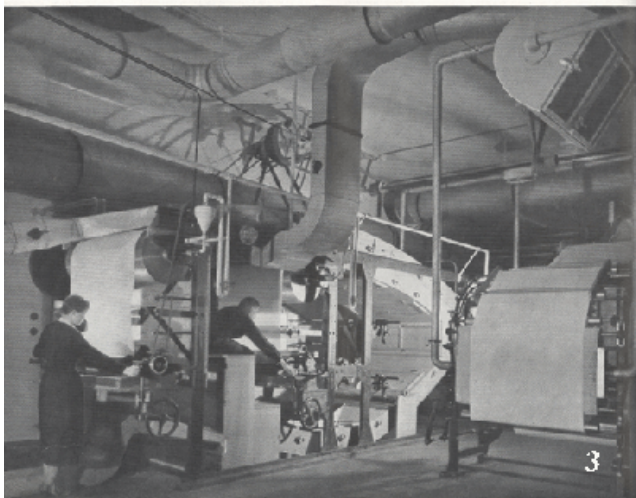
east bank of the Vistula river and stood there without advancing forward, the German Nazi army felt free to carry out Hitler's special order to bomb and to totally devastate Warsaw to raze it to the ground. The quarter Wola was the first to be destroyed. The destruction business was executed methodically - building after building, district after district, accompanied with the crime of genocide on civilians.



And there came the 5th day of August. Groups of people trying to take shelter from raging SS Nazi troops gathered in the Franaszek factory buildings. Among them were the factory workers and Kazimierz Franaszek himself with his little son Pawelek.



Fotonicznie robienie i graniczy mechanizmów i urządzeń.



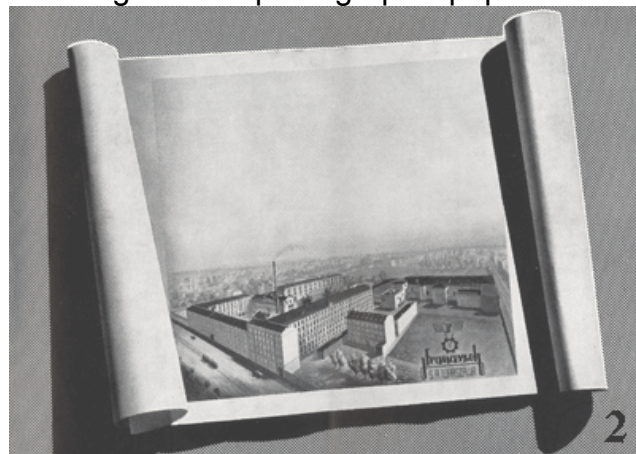
All of them were shot down to death and the building burnt out. The day was called The Wola Massacre as several tens of thousands people were then killed.

The factory's machinery and production facilities that survived, were later taken away and sent to Germany.

The Franaszek family gravestone bears the inscription engraved at the cornice: (...) The ashes of Kazimierz Franaszek and

his little son Pawelek. Murdered at Wola on the 5 of August 1944 by German barbarians.

The only building of the Franaszek factory (the FOTO department) that survived WWII was in 1949 rebuilt and included (with the former Lebedzinski factory) in the state enterprise Warszawskie Zakłady Fototechniczne FOTON. In 1988 a commemorative plaque of bronze honoring Piotr Lebedzinski, the Franaszek brothers as pioneers of Polish photochemical industry, and some others as continuators, was affixed on the building. FOTON manufactured various types of films and all grades of photographic papers.



After political system transformation in Poland, in 1990s, FOTON terminated its production. The buildings were taken over by other investor (FOTON Trading Sp. z o.o.) and now they serve for commercial activity.

**Sources:**

- "RZECZPOSPOLITA" (daily newspaper) of 31 August 2009, an article "W koncu zabraklo nabojoj" (Finally they've run out of ammo) by Agnieszka Rybak
- (website) NAC - Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (National Digital Archive), illustration no. 8
- (website) Fotopolska.eu, illustration no. 7 [original letter (bill) of 1915 on the factory's stationery] and photo no. 9 [The Franaszek building photographed soon after Warsaw liberation in 1945]
- (website) <http://mojecmentarze.blogspot.com/2012/06/jozef-franaszek.html>,
- (website) <http://independent.pl/n/11984> , illustration no. 13
- (website) [http://pl.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Plik:Fotopan\\_FF\\_120.JPG&filetimestamp=20110109165123](http://pl.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Plik:Fotopan_FF_120.JPG&filetimestamp=20110109165123) , illustrations nos. 12, 14
- "Spojrzenie w przeszlosc polskiej fotografii" ("A Look Back to the Past of Polish Photography") by Ignacy Plazewski, Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1982

## New Camera Listings:



**Herbert George  
/ Imperial  
Camera Co.**



**Gertrude Kasebier**

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 Shutter-Strap, \$3.00 Box, Prepared.

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Camera**



**Reinhold Thiele**

## New Biographies:



**Alfred Horsley Hinton**

No  
Picture  
Available

**William Runciles**



**Hermann Wilhelm Vogel**



**John G.  
Doughty**



**Hermann Carl Vogel**

Send Comments & Suggestions to  
[admin@historiccamera.com](mailto:admin@historiccamera.com).