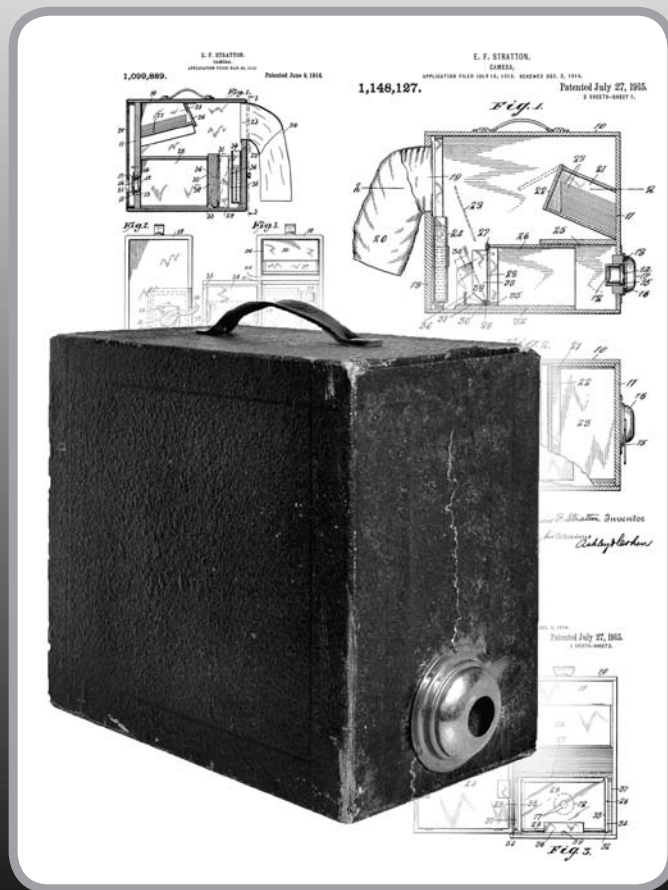


PHOTOGRAPHIC CANADIANA

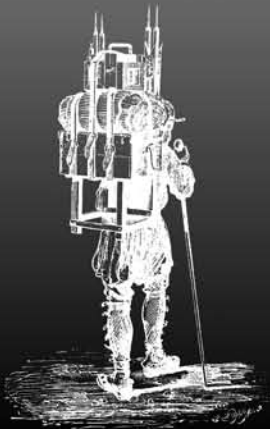
Volume 35 Number 2

Sept.– Oct.– Nov. 2009



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT LANSDALE

THE MYSTERY GORDON CAMERA – REVEALED



THE PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

PHOTOGRAPHIC CANADIANA

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35th
anniversary
1974 – 2009

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Views expressed in this publication solely reflect the opinions of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the PHSC.

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Writing for the PC Journal

To publicize events, notices, advertising, writing articles or if requesting information already published in *Photographic Canadiana*, please write directly to the Editor at 18 Ashfield Drive, Etobicoke, Ont., M9C 4T6 or e-mail: bob.lansdale@1staccess.ca

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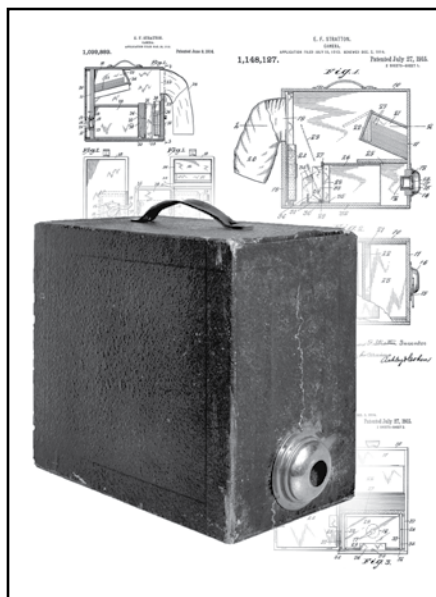
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OUR COVER

Starting on page 17 we unveil the story surrounding the search for the mystery GORDON camera. It has been quite a thrilling quest with a number of participants across the country adding their knowledge or digging into library and archive sources for pertinent data.

The initial big finds came to light right here in Toronto; then as we spread the word, more material, slumbering in its silence, has come to the fore.

Both camera and its inventor are worthy of taking their place in photographic history. We now have enough material left over to augment the story with Part Two in our December 2009 issue. 



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT LANSDALE



President's Message

Clint Hryhorijiw



PORTRAIT BY ROBERT LANSDALE

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The PHSC was founded in Toronto in 1974 for people interested in photographic history. It was incorporated as a non-profit organization in Canada four years later. All activities are undertaken by unpaid volunteers.

We help camera and image collectors and those interested in the diverse aspects of photographic history, sharing in their enthusiasm and knowledge.

We promote public interest in photographic history through talks, awards, publications, fairs and auctions.

The majority of our 260 members are camera or image collectors, photographic researchers & writers, and professional photographers in Canada. Included are many libraries, archives, museums and other photographic societies.

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M. Lindsay Lambert – Stan J. White
Robert Carter, Robert Gutteridge

PC Distribution *Robert G. Wilson*

The sleeping lion comes to life again!

At the PHSC, many of the executive have been busy with their tasks, as in this case the issue of *Photographic Canadiana* which has taken much time to prepare on desktop publishing and, of course, months of research by the authors of the articles.

On September 16th, we begin another series of educational programmes that will take us through to June 2010. How time flies!

We are fortunate to have new blood on the executive – John Kantymir and Doug Napier are recent additions as vice-presidents. Their untrammelled enthusiasm will bring new life to special projects and resurrected events. Stay tuned for special events that are being readied in the wings to supplement projects for this, the 35th anniversary of the PHSC.

We still need support assistance for two of our project managers. Bob Carter who has been servicing our all-important web site as Web Master AND, in addition, taking on the Treasurer's job, has relinquished that position to (new addition) Judy Rauliuk.

Our Web Master attends meetings to take notes and photograph, then prepare reports of the speaker presentations for the PC journal and for the web site. He has no back-up assistant which makes our internet communications to the world most vulnerable. We are not asking for someone to take over the project but to support Bob by possibly updating sections that are in the deep depths of the web pages. By osmosis, you are sure to learn much from Bob.

Our editor Bob Lansdale is also a solo artist who takes photographs of our meetings and events, researches, writes, prepares layouts via desktop publishing and carries the journal through its many steps to the printer. Luckily he has several "columnists" who submit prepared articles. Should (heaven forbid) Bob be incapacitated, we would be in dire straits to resurrect the many facets of publishing the journal and the E-mail newsletter. An assistant could lift away some small portion of the work and learn from Bob's experience.

Please step forward and help us help you – it's a chance to learn and grow.

A handwritten signature of Clint Hryhorijiw in black ink. The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name 'Clint' being more prominent.

CLINT HRYHORIJIW, PRESIDENT
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Toronto Notes

reported by Robert Carter

April speaker, Michael Torosian – a very accomplished Toronto photographer, added new perspective to the impact of digital technology on traditional processes. In the 1970s, recognizing the problems of getting his work published, Torosian took the opportunity of buying obsolete (and affordable) equipment to establish a new business as publisher producing hand-made limited-edition art books on photography.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT LANSDALE

MICHAEL TOROSIAN

His years of experience in the dark-room gave him sound basics for tone control and product uniformity that transferred to press work. For his first book, he decided to feature Edward Weston. It happened that Weston's youngest son, Cole had written an essay for the old *Camera 35* magazine and was delighted to give permission for it to be re-published.

Torosian purchased a circa 1950 Intertype C-3 machine (once the mainstay of newspapers and book publishers). This massive machine assembled lines of type – one character at a time, with brass matrices lined up in a composing stick. The composing stick moves to a mold where hot lead is poured into the matrices to produce a “slug” (a line

of type). The slugs are then assembled in line sequence to create a galley for the whole page.

Torosian's first few titles were printed on a hand-cranked press that eventually sent him to hospital with shoulder injuries. Through a cousin, he learned of two old Vandercook Universal 3 presses which were destined for the scrap yard. He took both of them and managed, from the best parts, to make one working press.

Like the printing, his early books were all hand stitched. He eventually found an old Brehmer Stitching machine, but had no idea how to operate it. He puzzled over this strange machine for over a year - even calling the factory in Germany, but the data had been lost in the war. Perseverance paid off and he now has the stitching machine working.

To say the least, each book is a labour of love with the topics chosen by Torosian. A book can take up to a full year to create. The print runs are short - a few hundred copies - and mostly pre-sold with remaining copies snapped up within weeks of publication. He uses only the very best materials, choosing the fonts, paper, ink, fabrics, and design to complement the content.

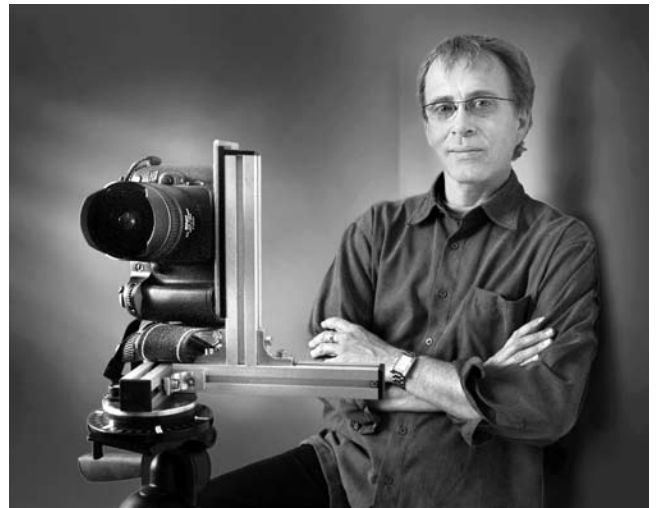
As a result of his devotion to perfection, his company, Lumière Press has won awards for the quality and design of its books. One title was short listed for the 2006 “Best Book Design” at Leipzig.

His talk was illustrated with slides of the steps (taken in 2003) to print “Korea,” a 50th anniversary celebration of Dave Heath's famous photographs of the Korean war in 1953 and 54. A small selection of the copies included a print from one of Heath's original negatives, printed by Torosian and signed by Heath.

MAY MEETING

May speaker, Tony Makepeace is a Toronto based photographer, writer, and teacher with numerous solo and group exhibitions. His work is displayed in a number of private and corporate collections. Tony has contributed portfolios and essays to magazines like *View Camera*, *PhotoLife*, *PhotoEd*, and *LensWork*. He holds a B.A.A. degree in Photographic Arts from Ryerson University and has recently completed a Master's degree in Education at Central Michigan University.

Tony saw promise in Quick Time Virtual Reality in the 1990s when it was a complex command line program



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT LANSDALE

TONY MAKEPEACE

offered by Apple. A friendlier version came out a few years later but Apple lost interest and when they moved to their modern OS X operating system in 2000, QTVR was left behind. The concept was then embraced by Ipix who developed proprietary software. At this stage, QTVR movie makers needed to license very expensive software and buy pricy special equipment. As a result, the product failed and QTVR would have disappeared into the history of novel technologies except for Helmut Deresh.

Deresh developed the algorithms for stitching images in 360 degrees horizontally and vertically to make huge panoramas and used these algorithms to make his very popular Pano Tools program. He generously made the code open source which led to others creating inexpensive programs for Windows and the Mac. These programs created QTVR

movies which were viewed using the readily available Quicktime, Java, and Flash browser plugins. Today, QTVR has a much larger following in Europe than America. Tony teaches QTVR technique and makes QTVR movies as a hobby.

After a look at the new "Content-Aware Scale" tool in Photoshop CS4, Tony took us through the brief history of QTVR, the basics of the technology, the hardware and software tools, and then a live demonstration of how to make a QTVR movie.

Tony placed his tripod, with a Nikon DSLR and wide angle lens mounted on a special bracket and rotating head, in the centre of the audience. He checked that the head was level, then took a series of images in sequence around a full 360 degrees of the room. The seven shots he took had a generous overlap of about 25% to aid in stitching. He then took a single shot straight up, skipping the optional straight down shot. An image editor can "fill in the hole" with a blank circle or a special effect like a mirror ball.

The images in raw format were imported into Adobe Bridge for colour balance and exposure adjustment. If necessary, the images can be sent to Photoshop for further correction. The adjusted images were saved out of Bridge in jpeg format to be imported into the stitching program. Tony used PTGui to accurately stitch the images together. This program and PTMac allow both automatic and manual placement of stitching points to correct for lens distortion.

After the images were stitched into a linear panorama, Tony imported the file into another program called CubicConverter. This program or Pano2VR "wraps" the linear panorama around a cube and adds top and bottom images.

We are all familiar with the "linear" panorama image, now picture that panorama made to record 360 degrees and wrapped around a cube with the image facing to the inside of the cube. Add a top and bottom image and a way to view the result - that's Quicktime Virtual Reality. You can move any direction including zooming in and out.

We will provide further information on our web site. Meantime visit Tony's site (www.tonymakepeace.net) to see examples of the astounding capabilities of QTVR movies.

JUNE MEETING

Our June speaker Reg Holloway whose varied career began as a reporter/photographer in Britain, described how photography and the press have mutually benefitted over the years. He noted that in spite of our current interest in the "race into or perhaps through digital," we must remember photography is still relatively new - its roots go back only four or five generations (for example my grandparents were born in the 1870s and their parents in the 1840s).



REG HOLLOWAY

Once the photographic print had been achieved it was inevitable that a way would be found to make that image more widely available. Only a limited number of people could be reached by a single image even in an album or an exhibition. Reg emphasized that the medium for wide distribution was the press.

Artists provided the illustrations and impressions in the mass media of the day in spite of the technical limitations. Reg gave an example of the great fire of 1842 in Hamburg, Germany. The news took 10 days to arrive in London. An artist borrowed a painting of the city to guide his illustration. He added fire, smoke and

by-standers to his interpretation of the painting and two weeks after the fire a detailed report appeared in the London news complete with a line drawing depicting the famous city in flames.

Up to the end of the 1860s, pictures in the press were line drawing illustrations printed with wood cuts engraved from the work of a traditional artist or photographer. In 1869 Montrealer William Leggo succeeded in applying Fox Talbot's idea of using a fine screen to convert the continuous tones of a photograph such that they could be recreated with the simple black ink/white paper of the press. His "granulated photograph" process was used to publish a Notman portrait of Queen Victoria's son, Prince Arthur in the weekly *Canadian Illustrated News*. The world's first publication of a halftone image.

Leggo and his publisher, Desbarats, took the process to New York City where they improved it and in 1873 founded the *New York Daily Graphic*. "In 1880 the *Graphic* became the first daily paper to use the halftone process to reproduce a photograph on the same page as text." Later in the same decade the combination of halftone technology and the speed of the new dry plate photography marked the start of press photography.

The rest of Reg's talk addressed a number of milestone press cameras and their features as the preferred models moved from glass plates to cut film to film packs and finally roll film in ever shrinking negative sizes. He brought with him a selection of these epic cameras from his collection. I was attracted most to the *small technically precise c1930s Plaubel Makina* which spanned nearly a half century of press use beginning just before the great war.

To learn more about press photography pick up a copy of Reg Holloway's book *The Evolution and Demise of the Larger Format Press Camera* published in 2008 by Epic Press of Belleville, Ontario. / R.C.

As Reported by George Dunbar....

Browsing through our Exchanges

- publications from photographic societies are received and reviewed for your interest. To borrow single items or collections, contact Librarian Gerry Loban - phone (905) 477-3382.

Back Focus (Journal of the Australian Photographic Collectors Society) - March-June, 2009. Lyle Curr writes lovingly of his Kodak Brownie *Starflash* collection. He claims six distinctive models, including a "Coca-Cola" version and a unique Australian product. His knowledge of the product line is fascinating and will certainly interest all who have memories of this popular 127 film camera.

The history of a one-of-a-kind, rocket borne, panorama camera will please military historians. This article with photos of the prototype describes the camera assembly that was designed to be carried by rockets during tests in the 1970s at the Woomera, SA testing range. Surprisingly, the camera contained only a single-shot mechanism.

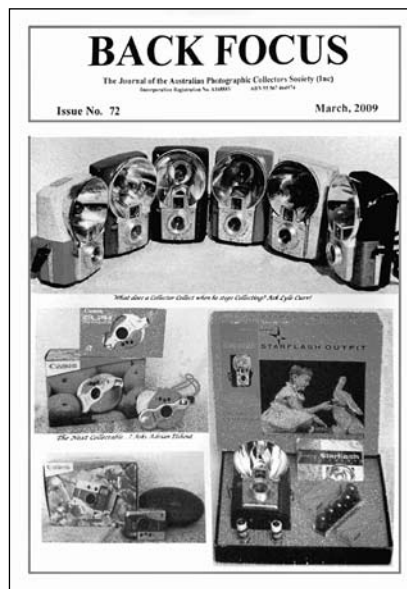
The circular *Photake* camera of 1896 (made by the Chicago Camera Co.) was designed to hold five 2-inch square dry plates. The description and photos indicate a neat little camera. Also featured in the March issue of *Back Focus*, the *Beaulieu 4008 ZM II*; *Noris* cameras and projectors; the *Almaz* reflex 35 mm.

The June *Back Focus* issue describes "a rare Australian made camera," the *Dalka Candid Model A-20*. Although the camera indicates "120 or 620 film" there's obviously a flaw in such an instruction. Certainly a fine, plastic collectable!

A major article by Stefan Sztromajer presents descriptions and images of many different models of the *Zorki* cameras that were first manufactured as Leica look-alikes in 1948.

The Bulletin (Chicago Photographic Collectors Society) -March, April, 2009, includes some interesting notes about the *Kodak No. 3A* folder from its introduction in 1903 to the demise in 1943. The 122 size film was sold continuously for 68 years (until 1971)!

Western Canada Photographic Historical Association Newsletter - April-June-July, 2009, News about the purchase of a *Univex AF-2* (1936) for \$5.00 and the sale of a Super Kodak 620 at \$1184.00. Also a report on "disappearing photographic retailers" during the continuing digital revolution.



The Photogram (Newsletter of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society) - April-May, July, 2009. The colourful and spectacularly designed *Beau Brownie* cameras are pictured in this article by Ralph London. Kodak sold these cameras only between 1930 and 1933. They were available in two sizes, each in five colours. The unique front-plate graphic for the camera and packaging was created by industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague.

In the article, *Making Daguerreotypes*, Gregory Popovitch tells of his introduction to the earliest photographic process and his decision to learn the technique for himself. This article and the fine

reproductions of Popovitch's images have also been published in the current issue of *The Daguerreian Society Newsletter* (April-June, 2009) although the images are exclusively in colour in this *Photogram*.

President of MIPHS, Cindy Motzenbecker, writes of her "Grand Adventure" at "the Mecca of flea markets" in Brimfield, Ma. Along with friends and a visitor from Canada (Bob Lansdale) she describes the treasures to be found and liberated.

Stereo World (National Stereoscopic Association) - March/April, 2009. An auction in the English countryside revealed the stereo views by Robert William Coperman (c.1861-1928) and prompted research into his life and times by Ray Norman (with contributions by Paula Fleming). This article, as well as displaying the exceptional quality of Coperman's images, explains that he was an auctioneer's clerk, Master of a Workhouse and one-time President of the (British) Stereoscopic Society. The biography along with evidence of his hobby makes for an interesting history.

A commemorative article by Mary Ann Sell reminds us of the 70th anniversary of *Sawyer's View-Master* reels. However the story is bittersweet since *Fisher-Price* (the current owner) recently ceased production of "scenic and custom reels." The View-Master was introduced at the 1939 New York World's fair.

This appears to be "a landmark year" for 3-D feature films. Described in this issue are: *Coraline*, *My Blood Valentine 3-D*, *The Dark Country*, *Grand Canyon Adventure*, *Monsters vs. Aliens* and *Battle for Terra*. The Grand Canyon film, shot in Imax 3-D, has integrated some historic stereo-card images for a timely comparison.

Photographica World (Journal of the Photographic Collectors Club of Great Britain) - No. 128, 2009/2. This beautifully produced, glossy journal delivers some fine articles, the first of which is an eleven-page review of the post war German products manufactured under the name *Iloca*. Author Ian Baxter tells how political decisions allowed for a camera industry to flourish and how competition, design and manufacturing expertise led to many different models including some stereo versions.

The fourth and final part of *The Tesina Story* covers accessories such as: finders, exposure meters, filters, cases, films and slide mounts. The four installments have given us a comprehensive overview of

this exceptional 35 mm Swiss camera.

Three diverse articles look at underwater cameras, underground photography during the 19th century and the *Zeiss Biogon* 21 mm f/4.5 lens.

Martin Magid surprises readers with a story of his conversion of a somewhat-deteriorated *Kodak No. 1 Panorama* f/13 swing-lens camera to an excellent pin-hole camera (f/270) - resulting photos included.

Tailboard (Newsletter of the Photographic Collectors Club of Great Britain) - April, May, 2009. 'Around the Regions' columns are always a great way to learn of members acquisitions and activities. Particularly notable are a guest speaker's anecdotes on *The Art of the Seaside Smudger* - apparently a nickname for the street photographers who once worked piers, promenades, beaches and swimming pools with their "instant" cameras. Unfortunately, most of those Smudgers are now replaced by camera-phones!

Some members like to "try out" their cameras and show the resulting images - often amusing and/or amazing. Would the "Shoot & Show" idea be a useful project for our own society?

It's reported that the historic archive of Kodak Ltd. (established in Britain in 1885) will be donated to the British Library and De Montfort University. The bulk of the archive appears to consist of business documentation.

Objektiv (Danish Photo Historical Society) - Nos. 123, 124, April, 2009. Although the Danish language is incomprehensible to this reader, the images in these magazines are a delight to behold. We have historic scenes and photographs of rare and unique cameras that are worth perusing. Some photographs depict early camera manufacturing facilities and darkrooms. There's a beautiful article on postage stamps displaying photo equipment and the article about the *Minox* camera is illustrated with some of the patent drawings. I thoroughly enjoy looking at the visuals in this magazine since most are informative and many, amusing.

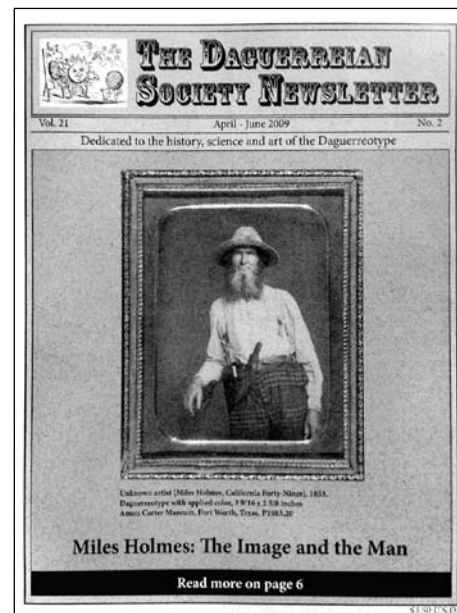
Nikon Journal (The Nikon Historical Society) - March, June, 2009. Two articles feature *The Nikon F at 50!* One displays many advertisements from the years 1959-2009 and another gives details of the 'F' system.

A few questions based on Peter Lownds's column, *Did You Know? Lore & Anecdotes About the F*: does 'F' stand for Masahiko Fuketa, the Nikon design-

er?; are there 967 parts in the F?; can you name any movies in which a *Nikon* appears or celebrities seen with a *Nikon* camera in any media?

Many know the story of photojournalist David Douglas Duncan's "discovery" of the *Nikon* in 1950 (which was subsequently used during the Korean War), but here is an addendum which reveals details of another journalist who accompanied Duncan on his original visit to the *Nikon* factory. John Rich acquired a camera from *Nikon* and used it to produce more than a thousand Kodachromes of Korea which have only recently been published. * see *The Smithsonian Magazine*, November, 2008 for more on this subject.

The June issue contains a study of *A Very Historical Pair of Nikon F Cameras* (body numbers 6400019 & 6400141) mentioning the fascinating similarities and differences. Also *Memories of Mr. Nikon*, by Peter Lownds will certainly be of value to those who study the *Nikon Company* history.



The Daguerreian Society Newsletter - April-June, 2009. A couple of interesting mysteries are explored in this issue. The first involves the 1853 Dag of Miles Holmes and the surprising discovery of an almost identical image in a Texas museum with the title, *California Forty-Niner*. Laddy Kite's exploration into the background of these images is fascinating.

The second mystery has been investigated by Bob Lansdale in his article, *The Queen's Plate of 1861*. A Dag image depicting the winning horse (*Wild Irishman*) of the 1861 race prompted Lansdale to research the history of this

annual Canadian horse race and attempt to connect the photograph to the event. Certainly a fine example of the perseverance required by photographic historians.

In celebration of the 170th anniversary of the Daguerreotype, an exhibition of 300 contemporary images by 50 Daguerreotypists will be held in Bry-sur-Marne, France from September 12 to October 18, 2009. Also, for your calendars, please note the time and place of the next *Daguerreian Society Symposium*: Nov. 12-15, 2009, Philadelphia, PA.

PhotoResearcher (European Society for the History of Photography) - No 12/2009. Many contributors provide analyses of the photographic arts with dissertations on pictorialism, cubism, scientific and historic archives and photography magazines.

Of particular interest to Canadians will be Suzanne Paquet's article, *Transcontinental Lines: Migrating Images and the Production of Space*. She has studied the involvement and contributions of the Montreal studio of *William Notman & Sons* that accompanied railroad expansions across the country. An agreement between Notman and William Van Horne, director of the *Canadian Pacific Railway*, gave the studio free transportation in exchange for photographs. Starting in 1887 Notman's son had his own private railcar. The author traces CPR's profitable association with Notman and reflects on the historic value of this amazing project which documented an expanding frontier.

snap shots (Photographic Historical Society of New England Inc.) - May, June, 2009. Lew Regelman shows his Kodak "dime bank" for children that was issued c.1916-19 when the dimes could be exchanged for the *No 2 Brownie* (\$2), *No 2A Brownie* (\$3), *No 3 Premo Jr* or *No 3 Brownie* (\$4), *No 2 Folding Cartridge Premo* (\$5) or finally the *Vest Pocket Kodak No 2 Folding Brownie* (\$6).

Apropos the announced death of *Kodachrome*, we have a brief biography of the two musicians who invented the process for Kodak. Leopold Godowsky II and Leopold Mannes were both from exceptionally brilliant musical families.

The PHSNE has published a *Membership Directory 2009* which will certainly be useful for those who wish to make contacts. The PHSNE's web page is: www.phsne.org.

The Melodrama Continues as the Vitascope Travels to Toronto and Halifax (Part Four)

by Robert Gutteridge

Mr. Gutteridge provides further details on the introduction of cinematography to Canada. This fourth serial installment is from his unpublished book. It continues from the previous Part Three in Photographic Canadiana Vol 34-3, Dec. 2008/Jan. 2009. Our thanks to Mr. Gutteridge for this exclusive privilege.

TORONTO—Robinson's Musee Theatre

As this chapter focuses on the Holland Brothers, space is not allotted to a detailed account of the engagement at Robinson's Musee Theatre, 91-93 Yonge St., Toronto. For such an account, the reader is directed to Chapter 3 in my book *Magic Moments: First 20 Years of Moving Pictures in Toronto (1894-1914)*. As cited earlier in Andrew's letter of August 24, 1896 Toronto's Vitascope debut begins on Monday, August 31, 1896.

On September 3, Andrew writes to Raff: "I have just returned from Toronto having successfully installed the Vitascope in the Musee theatre, leaving Willie [his nephew] to run it, with an assistant."⁷ In *Magic Moments*, I discuss an entertainer, Edward Houghton, the "assistant," to whom Andrew may be referring. Yet, in an interview printed in the *Toronto Mail and Empire*, July 22, 1933 (pp 1 and 4), Houghton claims a more substantial role: "...but M. S. Robinson of Buffalo, took it [the Vitascope] over and sent me over to put in [the] kinetoscope [sic-Vitascope]..."⁸ Being in show business, and accustomed to exaggeration, within these few words,

he makes several errors: 1) he does not even recall the machine's correct identity; 2) he claims that Robinson "took it over" to Toronto—not physically, of course, for it is contracted through the Holland Bros., from Buffalo; 3) he asserts that he installed—"to put it in"—but, as quoted above, according to Andrew, who is present during the installation, William John Holland, "Willie," is in charge. Houghton, who may well have been working at one of Robinson's Buffalo houses, could easily be "sent over" to assist the installation. Despite this, he is more accurate when telling the Toronto reporter that: "You paid a dime to get into the musee...then you paid another dime to go downstairs and see the pictures."⁹ But *The Evening News* reports differently in that having entered the place of amusement on the ground floor, paid the admission fee, the patron immediately ascends a set of stairs to the second floor from where he or she can descend a special staircase to the little theatre on the ground floor, whose balcony seats are free and lower seats reserved for ten and fifteen cents; also that, in August 1895, the then manager, S. S. Young, a Canadian, has a special staircase constructed leading from the ladies' observatory parlour on the third floor down to the theatre on the ground floor.⁴ This musee consists, as with most amusement places of its type, of various 'departments,' one being an auditorium in which vaudeville is offered, usually

arranged through a circuit, such as B. F. Keith Amusement Enterprises. The Vitascope, the star attraction, is to close the program on a high note.

ROBINSON'S MUSEE THEATRE

Grand reopening Monday afternoon, Aug. 31st. New management. new ideas, nothing cheap except prices. First time in Toronto—

EDISON'S WONDERFUL VITASCOPE.

First Time in Toronto—

PROF. ROENTGEN'S GREAT X RAYS.

First time in Toronto—The Hearon's Lady Orchestra. Grand combination features—Theatre, Eden Musee, Art Gallery, Music Hall, Roof Garden, Promenade Concert and Managerie, Mr. and Mrs. Houghton, Mr. Allen May, Mamie Bland, Eleanor Garvini, Loring and Leslie, and a host of bright people. Performances every afternoon and evening—Come at any time and stay as long as you please—General Admission 10 cents; theatre balcony free; reserved seats, first floor, 10 and 15 cents. During Fair week special performances of the Vitascope forenoons 10 to 12 a.m.

Just a word about the item billed with the Vitascope in the above newspaper ad, and to which Andrew refers in his letter of August 18 — *Prof. Roentgen's X-rays*. This invention is not part of the theatre program, as has been suggested by some authors, but rather gives demonstrations in the Musee Hall, or old Lecture Room, on the third floor, as evidenced by the following:

"In the Music Hall, the Hearon Ladies' Orchestra play in excellent style selections of popular music and Prof. O'Reilly gives an illustrated exhibition of the Rontgen [sic] ray phenomena."⁵

The *Mail and Empire* reports: "Upstairs is the X-rays apparatus,"⁶ meaning, of course, up in the Music Hall on the third floor.

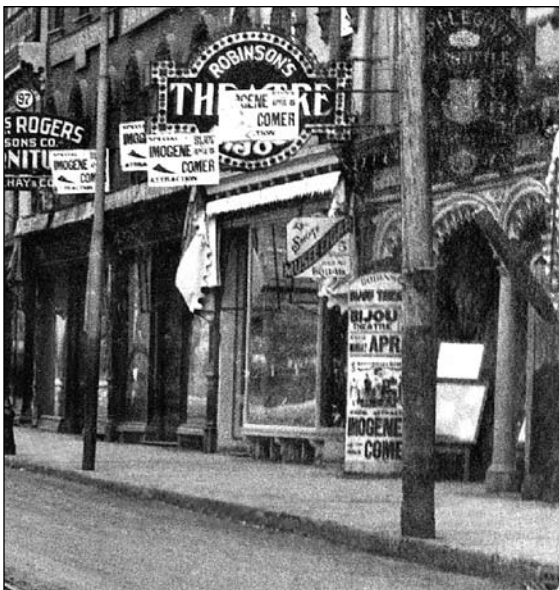
According to Andrew: "We exhibited four times a day, six films each time."⁷ This is achievable because neither the weather nor time of day being concerns. Although he establishes the number of films given per show, film titles are another matter. If Houghton is to be believed, THE KISS WITH MAY IRWIN AND JOHN RICE, is among the six exhibited during the opening week. Houghton informs his interviewer that "... the first film we [sic (?)] screened was the 'Kissing Scene,' with Mae [sic] Irwin and John Cohn [sic, Rice]. Yes, sir, that was the first picture, the very first motion

most realistic scenes...is a reproduction of the serpentine dance, 'La Loie Fuller' [sic, Annabelle]. The representation of the dance seems as perfect as if the dance were actually before the audience. The changing lights [meaning a change in colour tint] in the draperies [of her costume] are reproduced in all their vividness and variety."⁹

It is during this week, that Andrew notes his nephew's request from Toronto: "Willie telegraphs that a complete change of films is needed immediately. I am sending the stock I took to Halifax (*to be discussed next*) and will get what he has in return. Several of them are absolutely worn out and worthless."¹⁰

During the fourth week, September 21 to 26, inclusive, evidence of the first Canadian scenes is revealed—CATARACTS OF NIAGARA FALLS and WHIRLPOOL RAPIDS,¹¹ the latter being the only one retained for the following week's set of pictures.¹²

empty store.... We opened the same day and I think we beat him by a few minutes with our first pictures."¹³ Good drama, yes, but not accurate, since he confuses two events—the Cinématographe's opening at the Fair with that at 96 Yonge Street, nearly opposite Robinson's, on September 23, the same day Andrew informs Raff of Robinson's worry over the second Cinématographe opening: "I am this morning in receipt of a letter from Robinson ...asking upon what terms I will continue the exhibition there indefinitely, the contract terminable on a week's notice from either party. He explains that the Cinematograph is being installed in Eaton's big Dry Goods House on the same street [*Wrong, in a vacant store at 96 Yonge—this Eaton's store is several doors north of #96, on southwest corner of Yonge and Temperance streets and destroyed by fire on May 20, 1897*] as the Musee, where free exhibitions of the machine are to be given to every purchaser at the store."¹⁴ Again he is



Robinson's Musee Theatre, April 4, 1897. Entrance at extreme right (behind pole) through the arches.
— City Engineers Coll'n, City of Toronto Archives (RG 8-14-1-93A)



East side of Yonge Street looking north of King Street, c.1894. Arrow indicates 91 Yonge, entrance to Moore's Musee (Robinson's Musee in 1896).

— Micklethwaite photograph courtesy of Mike Filey

picture ever presented in Toronto. It was a 120-footer [sic, 50ft]...."⁸ This is quite plausible, since Andrew on September 3 writes that this film "has been running ever since we started [meaning for seven weeks]." Another film may be SHOOTING THE CHUTES AT CONEY ISLAND (taken before June 22, 1896, 43ft). Projected during the third week (September 14 to 19) BUTTERFLY DANCE, is not the one as reported to have been taken of La Loie Fuller, but rather that of ANNABELLE, the hand-tinted version: "One of the prettiest and

As the Lumière Cinématographe begins exhibiting at the 1896 Toronto Industrial Fair on Tuesday, September 1, the Vitascope wins the honour as the first machine to present *projected* moving pictures in Toronto; remember that the citizens of Ontario's capital, as in the case of those in the Dominion, have experienced them by means of Edison's peepshow Kinetoscope, only four years earlier. Here again Houghton errors in his 1933 interview, by saying that "...it was a race from the first, because a Frenchman, I think, Loumiere [sic], was opening the cinematograph across the street in an

wrong, as the price of admission for an adult is 25 cents; however, such an arrangement does happen, but not until January 1900 offered by Eaton's rival, the Robert Simpson Company, and not using the Cinématographe.¹⁵ "Of course, this is a knock-down blow to Robinson's exhibition," Andrew argues, "and I have lowered the price for him to \$200 per week on an extension of contract. [*Is Robinson using the event and his error about it in order to strike a better deal with Holland? If so, it seems to be working.*] I have concluded it is wise to

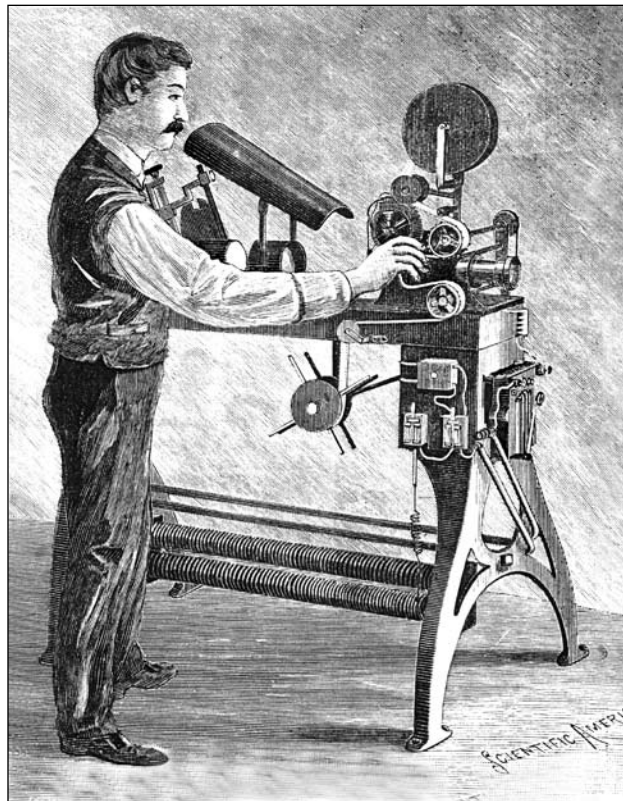
do so, more particularly when we are face to face with the fact that we cannot get a week's engagement in any other town where we can get direct current without heavy expense to electricians for reducing the 500 volt current." This presents Andrew with a challenge: "To enable us to make money we have to so remodel the machine that it can be worked with hand power [*meaning, hand cranked, as in the case of the Cinématographe*] when we cannot get electricity, and construct new travelling cases so that the breakable parts can be safely and rapidly packed for shipment." Despite this, he still exudes hope: "I believe there is plenty of business to be obtained in the country once we are prepared to work it, but it is worse than folly undertaking it in our small towns until we are ready to meet a three night's business and then pack up and get out to the next place." He relates anxiety over films: "It is only by the superior character of our pictures that we can hope to compete with ...the Cinematograph in Toronto."

Andrew had expressed his displeasure over films in an earlier letter, September 3, to Raff: "I am completely disheartened about the Vitascope business in consequence of the wretched films we have been receiving of late. If there is no improvement, it is simply out of the question altogether doing business under present conditions, and I do not wonder at the statements I hear from exhibitors in the United States, that they are not making money to warrant paying large bonuses for territory."¹⁶

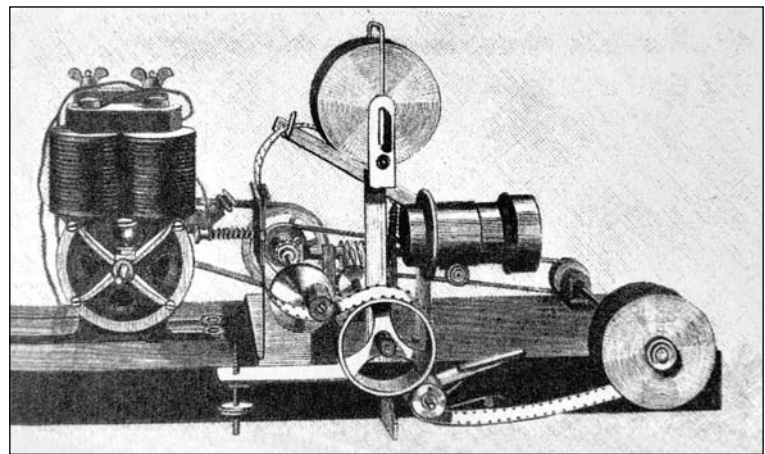
Raff and Gammon are well aware of this concern being expressed by Andrew, as there are extant many letters to them in the Baker Library Collection asserting exhibitor frustration. A fine example is written on September 26, by G. C. Rasch of San Francisco, expostulating: "We also beg to say that we have one or two films in the first lot that are so very light and thin that they will not stand enough tension to steady them while in operation, and it is almost impossible to use them with any success whatever."¹⁷

The questionable quality of the newer lot of films being released by the Edison Laboratory is supported by Andrew: "I enclose you a sample of film 'Herald Square,' that has been run through just seven times. We have at least six films (amongst them 'Annabelle') in as bad a condition. It simply means that we are working for the Laboratory—paying our own expenses and doing the chores for nothing. For my part, I would rather pitch the business to the dogs than continue it under such circumstances.... I need not

THE VITASCOPE AND ITS COMPETITOR



VITASCOPE (inventor, Thomas Armat) • for projection only • large, heavy and cumbersome • uses a Colt arc lamp • must be run by both Direct (DC) and Alternating (AC) electrical currents • resistance coil to modify current, at base of stand • can not be hand cranked • no shutter • intermittent by "beater movement"; in 1897, Armat changes to "star wheel" ("Geneva Cross") movement • film take-up system • Edison standard gauge 35mm film • accommodates a spool bank attachment for repetition of one Edison 50-ft film loop – SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, OCTOBER 31, 1896



PHANTASCOPE (inventors, C. Francis Jenkins & Thomas Armat, U.S.A.) • "beater movement" version used in October 1895; later modified by Armat to become the Vitascope • for projection only • operation totally dependent upon electric current • carbon-arc lamp • used into the fall of 1896, independent of Armat • has take-up system • uses Edison standard gauge 35mm film • shutter located behind lens

– SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, OCTOBER 31, 1896

Cinematography was in its infancy and entrepreneurs vying to capture the market. Audiences were already flocking to lantern shows by travelling lecturers. Adding motion made images more compelling. Installations often combined the magic lantern to provide introductions as well as to entertain the audience. The magician was frantically changing

As noted in the accompanying text, projectionists had to contend with the power, still relatively new in its infancy. Gasoline and coal gas were the dominant fuels in buildings and homes, particularly in city suburbs.

A new installation necessitated a box that shrouded the projector machine. Indeed it was also to protect snooping inventors who hoped to steal secrets. Henry J. Hill of the CNE, turned away by extracting an additional 10¢, wished to view the modern world.

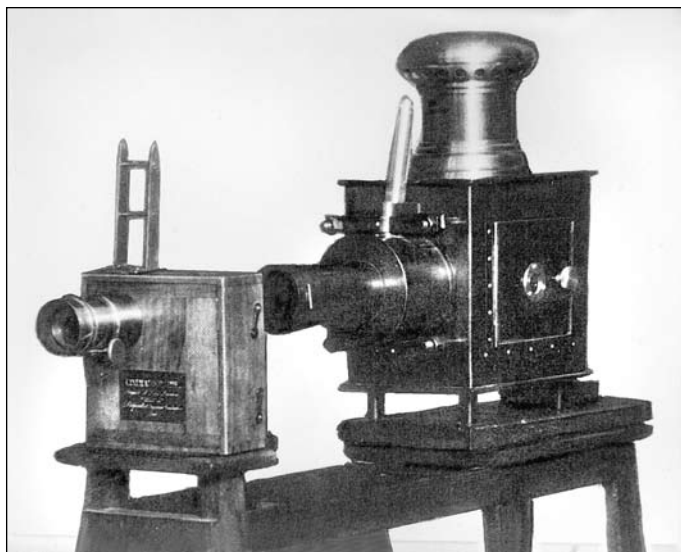
Making movies was a whole new world. Producers learned quickly to provide variety in short thrilling "topical" or "photo plays."

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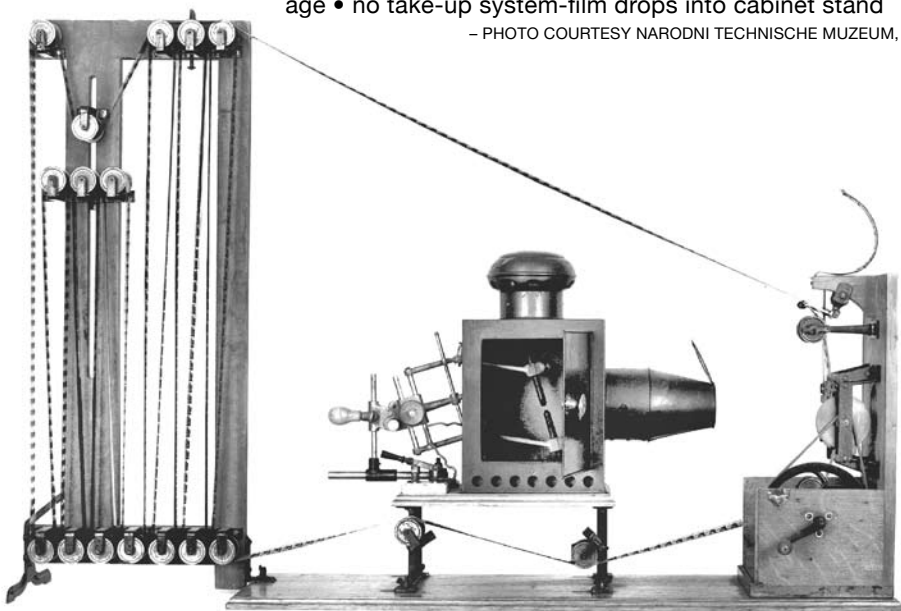
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LUMIERE-CINEMATOGAPHE (inventors, Lumiere Bro's, France)

- combination camera/projector/printer • hand cranked
- very light in weight; very compact • carbon-arc lamp or limelight system; can be made to operate free of electricity
- adheres close to Edison film gauge but stronger due to each frame having one pair of round sprocket holes instead of four rectangular pairs per Edison frame • greater rest period for film, producing brighter screen image • intermittent cam and claw movement • takes max. 50-foot roll
- half circle shutter behind lens produces a flickery screen image • no take-up system—film drops into cabinet stand

— PHOTO COURTESY NARODNI TECHNISCHE MUZEUM, PRAGUE



EDISON PROJECTING KINETOSCOPE (owned by Vernon Flaherty, Beaverton, Ont.)

- for projection only • only projector to be sold outright in America • handcranked
- can operate entirely free of electric current with a limelight system
- intermittent by a star ('Geneva') and two-pin cam movement • has take-up system
- has spoolbank attachment allowing repetitions of one 50-ft Edison gauge film loop
- with a special 'reel' can take up to six 50-foot joined Edison standard gauge 35mm films • shutter behind lens

— PHOTO COURTESY OF VERNON FLAHERTY, BEAVERTON, ONT.

assure you that such a condition does not arise from want of care on our part. 'The Widow's Kiss,' which is a thin stock as the enclosed sample, has been running ever since we started and is today in as good a condition almost, as when we got it from New York. 'The Cake Walk' is also perfect. 'The Swimming Match' that you ran for three weeks shows more signs of wear than our 'Cake Walk.' 'White Wings' which you sold me at \$30, as a second hand film, will probably last another week."¹⁸

In a letter dated October 1 to The Vitascope Company, 43 West 28th, N.Y.—offices of Raff and Gammon—it appears that Andrew extends his arrangement with Robinson, who also has film concerns: "Robinson writes me complaining of the films in Toronto. He says that unless he gets better films and better subjects there is no use in trying to compete with the Cinematograph [still exhibiting at 96 Yonge Street]."¹⁹ Furthermore, a new competitor arrives on the Toronto scene: "Another European machine has come into the field, and is to be exhibited in Toronto this week by the Trans-Oceanic Coy [Company] in a theatre." A full account of this engagement is in Chapter 6 of *Magic Moments*, in which I argue that this machine, advertised as the Kinematographe, appearing at the Toronto Opera, 25 Adelaide Street West, on October 5, 6, 8 and 10, respectively, is *not*, as others suggest, John Henry Rigg's Kinematograph, but is none other than Edison's truly *first* 'screen machine,' the Edison Projecting Kinetoscope, announced under another name. If I am correct, this means that Edison's people are working in secret while under contract with Raff and Gammon, breaching their agreement. A hint that Edison may be undertaking such a covert action is given in a September 9, 1896, article in the *Halifax Herald*, which reads, in part, as follows:

"...The great inventor does not regard the vitascope in its present form as being the end he aims at. He has now turned his attention to perfecting its details; and marvellous as the vitascope is now, reproducing life and motion in every detail, it is only an indication of what is to come. Mr. Edison has announced that it is only a matter of a few months until he [my *Italics*] or some other inventor [Is this added as a cover to his own work?] achieves greater success."²⁰

Film historian Terry Ramsaye writes that "in November of '96 [just two months after the above *Halifax Herald* article] the break between Edison and

Raff & Gammon occurred. Eighty Armat Vitascope had been made [by Edison] and delivered. *The Edison Projecting Kinetoscope was announced [my Italics].*²¹ However, an announcement does not confirm that an Edison machine is ready for market. For certain, Edison's 'Improved' '97 Model Projecting Kinetoscope is ready for sale on the open market (a suggestion expressed by Andrew earlier regarding the future of the Vitascope in Europe). John Barnes documents in *The Rise of the Cinema in Great Britain* that the first Edison model appears on the English market in late 1896.²² Therefore, Edison's first model, indeed, could be ready sooner in North America, possibly even by early October, to be 'tested' under a pseudonym, in order to deflect any lawsuit from Raff and Gammon. The Vitascope closes October 10th at Robinson's, never to return to Toronto. "By the end of 1896, the Vitascope enterprise was no more."²³ Edison is practically free²⁴ to release his 'Improved' Model in early 1897. It is all too clear that this matter, as well as troubles with the Armat machine, is a death blow to any future exploitation of the Vitascope. Of the latter, Andrew becomes only too painfully aware of during his attempt to exhibit the Vitascope in the Maritime Provinces.

HALIFAX—Academy of Music

On May 18, 1896, a letter addressed to I. S. McConnell Esq., Agent Edison Vitascope, c/o New York Dramatic Mirror, from Frank S. Cunningham, P.O. Box 310, Halifax, Nova Scotia, reaches Raff and Gammon, and reads:

"As I am unable to locate you, I am forced to address you as above, which I trust will reach you. Have you the rights of the Edison Vitascope, for Canada—and if you have would you kindly communicate your terms for the use of the Vitascope, throughout Canada. If you have not the Canadian rights, would you kindly give me the address of the party who has so that I may put myself in communication with him."²⁵

Raff and Gammon must direct Mr. Cunningham to Holland Bros. for, some months later, in his letter dated August 18, 1896, Andrew informs Gammon that "I have almost closed a deal with the Maritime Provinces. I expect to conclude it this week, and on proportionately higher terms than \$5,000 for the Dominion."²⁶ However, he does not identify the client. He may not at this point in time become involved with Cunningham for in his correspondence to Gammon of August 24 appears a name: "I

want you to post by the outgoing mail a catalogue and a price list of films in stock to John M. Lindsay, Windsor, N[ova] S[cotia]. I think it is altogether likely we shall close a deal with him for the Maritime Provinces..."²⁷ This deal does not come to fruition as George C. Holland telegraphs his brother in New York three days later during a visit to Raff and Gammon: "Cunningham accepts your terms two weeks engagement beginning Sept. 7th, rent to be allowed on price territory if he buys."²⁸ As the letter and telegram are sent on such close dates, the Hollands are probably negotiating with several persons, hoping to secure at least one contract.

Andrew sets out for Halifax immediately after returning from the installation of the Ottawa Vitascope in Robinson's Musee, Toronto. Either Gammon ships a second machine to Ottawa for Andrew to use in Halifax or expresses it directly from New York to Halifax. I suspect the latter because of the brief time period involved, for Raff receives a hand written letter, on Halifax Hotel stationery, dated Sunday, September 6th, from Andrew, ending with his characteristic signature—attachment of his initial 'A' to the 'H' of his surname. Already frustration appears: "Here I am, and I penn that I am in a box. It has cost me \$69 for railway fares (return ticket and sleeping car and back) to get here and find what I felt in my bones before I came, that Cunningham is a pass affair. He has nothing ready."²⁹ Yet, he begs Raff to provide him with an excuse to stay: "We can only get a 104 volt alternating current and a 500 volt direct current to work from. I am therefore telegraphing you for the alternating motor. For God's sake express it at once and don't keep me here under expenses doing nothing." His return railway ticket may govern his time: "I would be fit for a lunatic asylum here in a week if I had nothing to do. I doubt if it is safe to do anything with Cunningham. He has yet to make arrangements for a hall, and if he sells tickets and gets the cash, I have no guarantee that any of it will come to me. I can see that he is no business man." He relates a sound observation: "There is no money in a Vitascope in the Maritime Provinces. The towns are too small and too far apart. No man in his senses will pay a bonus for territory." He comments on a letter from his brother, who seems

puzzled: "George writes me that someone is advertising a Vitascope for the fair at London, Ont[ario]. If that is the case it must be a phantascope. Rockwell is advertising them all over the country at \$375. His last circular, before I went to New York last [end of August], quoted them at \$500." Because of competition,

DON'T FAIL TO SEE THE PHANTOSCOPE—The marvel of the age; the triumph of inventive skill; ahead of all; second to none. The Phantascope reproduces pictures far more realistic than can be imagined; life-sized and in motion. Think of it. Watch for date and place of exhibition. I21

Advance ad announcing the coming of the Phantascope (Jenkins' Phantascope) to London, Ontario, 1896.

—London Free Press, September 3, 1896

this machine is being offered at a reduction. In a letter just two days hence (Sept. 8), George provides some clarification: "I wrote you yesterday, on receipt of information from Mr. Carling of London, asking you to notify A. E. Roote, of London, Ont[ario], that he could only exhibit the vitascope under arrangement with us. Afterwards, I looked up a file of a London newspaper, and I find that the machine is not the Vitascope, but the Phantascope. Whether it is an exhibition of the Vitascope under another name or not, I cannot say. I think my brother told me something of the Phantascope, that it is a very inferior machine."³⁰

In his letter of September 6, Andrew presents another disappointment: "I wired a man named Andrews in Montreal, who wanted that territory, that I would meet him at St. Lawrence Hall on my way to Halifax. I met him. Up to that day he was not for Vitascope. One of Rockwell's (or Rockwood, I forgot the exact name, but he is a Columbia Phonograph man) circulars [about the *Phantascope*] had been given to him, and although I offered Andrews the exclusive right to Montreal and a year's lease of a machine with 12 films, set up and only to exhibit, for \$1100 cash, he would not bite. Write to me here by return mail and let me know what your best offer to Holland Bros. is. If it is reasonable, I would prefer to chance it ourselves and sublet machines if possible for whatever we can get for them." This begs the question: Do the Hollands' initial terms of Vitascope rights include Montreal? Andrew's comments seem to suggest otherwise. Must he arrange a subfranchise? However, upon his return to Ottawa, he concludes that his Montreal idea is of little benefit to *Holland Bros.* In fact, Andrew sees a

better venture: "I see by Friday's Boston Herald... that Edison has completed his new phonograph and telephone.... If the phonograph is as described there's more good money in it than in the Vitascope—if it is run by spring motor instead of storage battery." However, he finishes on a sour note: "I am sorry that I came here. I have left good territory to work a very doubtful one, and may have to telegraph for money to take me home." Lack of money is to be the least of his worries in Halifax! He scribbles across the back of the letter: "Tomorrow [Mon., Sept. 7] will be Labour day [a Canadian holiday], and I can do nothing but make myself unhappy. A.H."

The day after Labour Day, Andrew has a glimmer of hope: "I have struck a snag here, but will come out all right if you can send me White or Webster in reply to my telegram.... I must work this territory on short engagements. Consignments must have an expert to run the machine leaving me free to do advance agent's work and make engagements to keep the machine going."³¹ (James H. White and Charles H. Webster are the two men with whom Andrew became acquainted when establishing a Kinetoscope parlour on Tremont Street, Boston. They now assist Raff and Gammon.) However, the Cunningham affair rears its ugly head afresh: "Cunningham has turned out to be a first class stuper. He will give me no guarantee that he will pay me for two week's exhibition. He owns nothing, and refused to sign a contract by which I will collect the cash every evening—in fact, I am told that he makes a living by engaging companies whom he never pays in full, and running them in a hall the lease of which is in his wife's name."

Electrical matters add further stress: "Your telegram 'Give voltage and frequency of Currents' is a stumper. If I have to get a special motor for every town I go into I may as well drop this country altogether, except in towns large enough to support an electric railway system.... I do not know the frequency, but I thought you had overcome the difficulty of differences in frequency by the adoptions of cone pulleys [i.e. 'step pulleys']." He voices that he will ascertain how to obtain an alternating motor that will work on any alternating system.

Never one to concede failure, he declares: "I have today pitched Mr. Cunningham overboard, and have arranged with the Academy of Music [opening in 1877 on the east side of Pleasant Street (now Barrington Street) at

the foot of Spring Garden Road] here to give three evenings on a 8% (?) [number difficult to decipher] basis. There is no other attraction, and we must give sixteen films to make a programme [The newspaper ad also includes 'Machines leased, Territory sold!']."

Fully conscious of the risk taken earlier when using the Vitascope as the main attraction at West End Park upon the failure of the Japanese troupe's arrival, Andrew claims: "In order to fill in time, I must go on the stage myself and on some lecturing to help the orchestra to fill in the time between pictures." But hastily inserts: "I have telegraphed for another hundred dollars to enable me to meet any emergency. I have only \$25 in my pocket out of \$120 that I left home with, which will not be sufficient to meet the advertising and printing bill. I think, however, we can fill the Opera House [i.e. Academy of Music] at 10, 20 and 30 cents. If not, I am in the soup. If you have anything great and on the new stock, send two short films to Willie, care of Robinson's Musee Theatre, Toronto, in one box c.o.d. \$10.... If I was up home I'd make several good contracts for exhibition [Is this merely wishful thinking to raise his spirits?], but can't leave the helm here without danger of severe loss," and closing with an ominous P.S.: "Cunningham, who is a litigious Irish Catholic is threatening me with a suit for breach of contract."

His letter of September 9, indeed reveals a captain at the "helm" weathering a storm:

"The man who undertakes to run the vitascope in the Maritime Provinces has no picnic. If the small towns of the Continent are to be worked, a radical change will have to be made in the construction of the machine so that exhibitors can be utterly independent of electric power companies. In any town where there is a trolley line one can get current if he can provide resistance to cut down a 500 volt to a 110 volt power—that is if he can get the company to accommodate him. After all my advertising was done, dodgers [fliers] distributed, hangers posted and everything ready, had the Railway Company failed me I would be simply crowded out. The Academy of Music in which I am to exhibit tomorrow night is now occupied with the 'Trip to Chinatown' show. I have only tomorrow forenoon to build my cabinet [i.e. projection booth], wire the house and set up the machine. The expense for a three nights' show is simply appalling, and I can hardly anticipate getting back my

expenses. It is all very well to run the vitascope in big cities where it can be set up to stay for a month or two, but to go to all the expense of setting it up for a night or two, then pack up and off to a town where an entirely different set of

ACADEMY MUSIC

Thursday. Friday and Saturday
and Saturday Matinee,
Sept. 10, 11, 12
EDISON'S VITASCOPE !
First exhibition in the Mari-
time Provinces of Edison's
latest triumph.

PRICES—10, 20 30 cents. Matinee—
Children 10c. ; Adults 20 cents.
Machines leased, Territory sold.
HOLLAND BROS., Ottawa,
mh Sole Agents for Canada.

An advertisement announcing the engagement of the Vitascope at Halifax's Academy of Music in 1896.

— from the Halifax Herald, September, 1896

conditions require new appliances—well it is simply working for nothing. I had to wire home for more money for fear of being stranded. Fortunately, in Canada I can scarcely strike a town where I cannot find someone to identify me.

"George writes me that a man up in London, Ont[ario] has bought a phantascope and will exhibit it there as Edison's Vitascope. [This matter was presented above.] If it hadn't been for that infernal shyster Cunningham, I would have been there [instead of here] for the fall fair, and would have raked in some good money.... Fifty per cent of the gross receipts for the next three nights will go to the owner of the Academy. He supplies the carpenter work, the current and the assistance in the house, and collects the money. I pay for the wiring and half the salary of the orchestra, all the advertising, bill posting etc. and when I come to run through 16 or 18 films an evening in order to satisfy a 10 cts, 20 cts and 30 cts house, I doubt if the game is worth the candle.

"If Webster or White does not turn up to assist me tomorrow night, I shall have a heavenly time with only green hands [trainees] to assist me. My second son

[George Hibbard Holland, just turning 17] is with me, and had some training at West End Park, but to know the lightning change act [*meaning, speed of changing a film*] yours truly is doing his utmost to convince himself that he will come through the ordeal with satisfaction or the audience—where I have to put on my glasses every time to set [*up*] a picture. If I am successful tomorrow night, well only my sound temperate principles will prevent me from getting drunk. I fear that I shall swear—swear easily and heavily, but as long as it's deep and not loud enough for the audience to hear, I can stand it. Willie writes that the Toronto exhibit is doing well. He has a soft snap, compared with what I have to face here.

"In thy visions be all my tribulations be remembered."³²

As the pictures comprise the major part on the bill, no live acts appear as 'fill,' a fact that the *Halifax Herald*, on opening night, makes known: "...In connection with this exhibition it is explained that the change in pictures involves a delay of a couple of minutes..."³³

In his letter of September 11, the day after the first show, Andrew first brings up his efforts to work out a deal with Cunningham, possibly in order to provide Raff with a more satisfactory answer for his actions: "I wrote you that finding Cunningham to be utterly without money or credit, I declined to exhibit for him without a guarantee for payment. This he refused to give. I then offered to exhibit and take \$30 each night out of the receipts, leaving \$20 per night to be settled the end of the week. This he refused to do, and I simply declined to go on."³⁴

At this stage, hoping to recoup some of his losses, he devises the three-night run with the proprietor of the Academy of Music. How does opening night go? "We had to work on a 500 volt-motor circuit and an alternating 52 volt current for the lamp. The electricians could not control the current with the appliances that they had on hand and the exhibition was a complete failure. Half crazy with the defeat, I rushed down to the stage and made an apology to the audience and explained the reason of my failure. I told them that my principal regret was that they might get an unfavorable impression of the machine." The *Halifax Herald* verifies these actions,³⁵ and concludes that "there is a possibility that the vitascope will be shown free tonight. Manager

Clarke has offered to give the free use of the academy for this purpose, if it is decided upon, otherwise the show will be discontinued." Alas, with a tinge of bitterness, Andrew's letter reveals his decision:

"Hearing nothing from you about the motor, I decided to pack up and go home today, after sustaining a loss that will run over \$140 by the trip. The worst is coming: I was all ready to the noon train when I was arrested on a *capias* [*i.e. a writ commanding an officer to take a person specified into custody*] issued by [*You guessed it!*] Cunningham demanding \$200 damages. Fortunately I had friends here who went on my bond, and I am free



In 1877, The Academy of Music opened on the east side of Pleasant Street (now Barrington) at the foot of Spring Garden Road. In 1918 (seen here), it became the Majestic Theatre until demolished in 1929.

— from Recorded Memory of Theatre Life in Nova Scotia

again. I cannot express my humiliation and disgust in words at the circumstances attending this trip. I shall exhibit no more until I go home and get appliances that will run the machine satisfactorily." Once more, he reaffirms his conclusion that it is "useless trying to exhibit outside of three or four cities in Canada unless one has a plant [*i.e. moving-picture outfit*] that is totally independent of electric companies. The setting up of the machine, taking it down and repacking for safe transport involves too much labor and risk, and the express charges and other expenses are simply out of all proportion to the earning power of the machine outside of a big city on a ten cents basis; more than that one cannot get a store show and to join in a variety company [*i.e. a vaudeville circuit*] and charge around from town to town every two or three days is not to be thought of." Having received, as yet, no personal reply from either Norman Raff or

Frank Gammon, he closes in a somewhat expected frame of mind: "I hope you have sent neither White nor Webster. I do not want anyone at present: All I want to do is to get home and hide my humiliated head and prevent my grey hairs from falling out from too much thinking over this blasted Cunningham business.... Yours down in the mouth, A. Holland."

Even after arriving in Ottawa on Monday, September 14, still fostering anger, Andrew writes: "I have arrived home this morning at 1.40, tired out, and came down to the office early, to find a telegram from Murphy from Halifax to say that he arrived and was subject to my orders. I immediately telegraphed

[*responding, unlike Raff or Gammon*] him back, 'Arrived too late, go back to New York, written Raff.'³⁶

Now, he aims his displeasure at Raff: "When I telegraphed you to send me White or Webster, it was because the matter was urgent, and I asked you to answer. To this telegram I received no reply [*But adding a cushion*] and concluded you never got it; consequently, when neither White nor Webster turned up by Thursday, I felt there was no necessity in doing anything further than write to you when I knew the result of the first evening exhibition." He places the responsibility for failure squarely upon Raff: "Had you sent the alternating motor and an operator promptly [*my Italics*] in reply to my telegrams, the result of the Halifax exhibition would have been very much more satisfactory." He

deduces: "I do not propose now to leave Ottawa with a machine until I have secured a motor that will give satisfaction on an alternating current." His umbrage with Raff increases: "I saw an alternating motor with cone pulleys in your office that Mr. Gammon said was satisfactory, and it was for that one I telegraphed. It was two days after my telegram was sent that I received the reply asking for the voltage and frequency of the Halifax current. I cannot charge myself with any want of foresight or business promptitude in anything I did while there." And yet tactfully he leaves Raff an opening: "I have no doubt you can give satisfactory reasons why my telegrams were not promptly attended to."

Having discharged his feelings, Andrew moves forward by noting other concerns: "On my way home I stopped at Montreal and went down to Sohmer Park

to see if I could not make an arrangement to exhibit there.” He is thinking in terms of a possible outdoor setup reflecting the success of the Ottawa experience and avoiding another Halifax debacle, but soon realizes that it cannot occur: “The cinematograph had taken all the novelty [*a key factor for fulfilment*] out of the business so far as Sohmer Park Company are concerned.” Furthermore, he indicates a new problem, one troubling other exhibitors, namely, that when rights for exhibiting the Vitascope were contracted a monopoly to a purchased territory would be protected: “Martin of the Carleton Hotel [*Montreal*]...told me that he had just bought a phantoscope from Columbia Phonograph and twelve dozen films—which he named—the Columbia Phonograph Company having sent over to Orange [*home of the Edison Laboratory*] and ordered them for him.” In addition, he suggests that Edison is *not* restricting film sales to Vitascope exhibitors, offering evidence of this practice: “Enclosed you will find a circular issued by Maguire & Baucus which tells another story and shows how utterly absurd it is to ask any man to purchase territory which cannot possibly be protected.”

As proof that Andrew is not alone in this situation, the following quote from a letter to Raff and Gammon, dated September 11, 1896, is evidence:

“...You sent us a letter stated that you had new film, which you called The Garden Film [*THE GARDEN SCENE*] on receipt of your letter, I telegraphed you, so as to be the first one in St. Louis to have it, but I see Mr. Hopkins showed it before we did. Now if you continue to sell him films to be used on his Fantoscope [*sic. Phantoscope*] in this city, against one of your own machines, I hardly know what to think of the Edison Company. Mr. Hopkins is my brother-in-law, and therefore I know he gets films direct from your office. If this thing continues we will have to take steps to make some other arrangements....”³⁷

Another exhibitor writes: “...Further all of the manufacturers of other machines claim they can buy any or all of your films. If such is the case it certainly gives very little protection to the people who have paid your price for territory, and we also understand that there are lots of films now on the market made in Europe,... [*But are they in Edison format?*]”³⁸

Raff and Gammon are not in the dark about this matter, for in a letter from their legal advisor only three days after the Rasch letter just cited above, reveals that there are contract difficulties with the

inventor of the Vitascope (*Thomas Armat*, not Edison), who in fact is supposed to help Raff and Gammon maintain a steady supply of film product.

In October, a letter is received by Raff and Gammon from the General Western Agent for Edison Kinetoscope, G. W. Walters, another frustrated client:

“Gentlemen: I just received a circular from the W. S. Phonograph Co., offering for sale the Edison Vitascope. I have never known them to advertise anything for sale they could not furnish. If they can sell this machine, by what authority? *Are you able to control it?* [*my Italics*]”

“Please explain this matter at once. I want to know if our franchise is entirely worthless. It is bad enough to have other machines in competition, but to have *our own machine* [*my Italics*] sold outright, is an outrageous affair.”³⁹

I have a strong suspicion that the concerns being expressed in the above letters may well be linked to Edison who is directing his laboratory people to develop a truly Edison ‘screen machine,’ in secret, hinted at in that *Halifax Herald* article, alluded to earlier: “...The great inventor does not regard the vitascope in its present form as being the end he aims at... Mr. Edison has announced that it is only a matter of a few months until he or some other inventor achieves greater success.”⁴⁰ Robert C. Allen states that Edison “undercut Raff and Gammon by selling his films for the Projecting Kinetoscope at a lower price than Raff & Gammon were offering to Vitascope customers.”⁴¹ No wonder Raff and Gammon clients want to know who *is in control* and protecting their interests in the Vitascope!

In Andrew’s letter of September 14, after reaffirming his belief that the Vitascope cannot be exhibited in small towns without changes in the construction of the Vitascope, the sting of Halifax strikes back: “My Halifax trip has been a direct loss in cash of something over \$200—” Then he twists the knife in the wound: “...all which could have been avoided by expressing the alternating motor and sending me an operator promptly in reply to my telegrams.” And to add insult to injury: “The loss will not stop there if a court of law construes my letters to Cunningham as being a contract between us, and it is hard to say how much I may be stuck for damages. I feel mighty sore over the matter and discouraged this morning.” Lacking in his closing is a pretext for Raff’s failure to respond to his requests; despite his harsh words, he gives his usual complimentary

closing: “George joins in kind regards to yourself and Mr. Gammon.”

Andrew’s letter of Friday, September 18, to Frank Gammon (not Norman Raff) in response to a letter of explanation for the Company’s deficit in action, even though showing his reluctance to fully accept the reasons supplied by Gammon, while still feeling the hurt of the Halifax experience, Andrew remains ever the rational businessman: “The explanation of your *apparent* [*my Italics*] delay in sending the operator and motor clearly shows one of my telegrams to you and one of yours to me miscarried.”⁴² Some coincidence, indeed! However, Andrew fires back with details so that neither can escape lightly: “Immediately on receipt of your message asking voltage and frequency of current, I went to the electric Light people, found out what they had and wired it. I was astounded when, two days afterwards, I received another message from New York via Ottawa, asking the *same question* [*my Italics*]. To my telegram asking you to send White or Webster, I received no reply. As it demanded an answer, I *presumed* [*my Italics*] you telegraphed, and the telegram *also* [*my Italics*] went astray. I wrote Mr. Raff by Thursday night’s mail that I was to open in the Academy of Music on Thursday. I could not get possession of the building until Thursday morning. I could not delay exhibiting until the man and the motor arrived, for the town had been billed and the exhibition was advertised in all the papers. I could only get the place for three nights, for it was engaged for the following Monday by the Sawtelle Company. Murphy only arrived in Halifax Saturday night, so that we were out on all our calculations. I only write you these facts to explain why it is there will be no dividends for some time to come.” The last sentence is significant for Andrew is warning Raff and Gammon that the Vitascope experiment, in Canada, is doomed as a money-maker or at least, on shaky ground!

Not to terminate the letter on a acerbic note, he demonstrates his determination to salvage something from this shaky enterprise: “I have secured a vacant store here [*in Ottawa*] and have set up the machine to test the new motor *when it arrives from Halifax* [*my Italics*]. If it works satisfactorily, on a 52 volt current of 16,000 frequency, I will get a rheostat made to cut down to 104 or 110 alternating current to 52; also handy packing cases, and with them be ready for the road.”

To defend himself from a suggestion

from Gammon as to how he could have overcome the fact that no motor arrived, Andrew comments that “the power wheel that you describe as being used in New Hampshire is a scheme that occurred to me in Halifax, and had I supposed for a moment that the alternating motor *would not arrive on time [my Italics]*, I would have worked it in that way. It would require another assistant, who for that purpose, need not be an experienced one.” Nevertheless, Andrew closes in a conciliatory tone, after firming his point: “I accept your letter in the spirit in which it was written, and you will find that in my previous communication I suggested that there was an explanation of the delay, for I feel that you do what you can to put us ahead, not only because you are equally interested in our success with ourselves, but because I am satisfied we have the confidence and friendship of both Mr. Raff and yourself. Hoping to be able to send you a better report of affairs next week, I am etc.” Others, as we have seen, are not so generous. How long will Andrew continue such generosity?

As gleaned from his letter of September 23, to Raff, Andrew discusses the following: Toronto matters, such as the extension of Robinson’s exhibition and the Cinématographe opening on Yonge Street; his remodelling the Vitascope with a hand crank; and the importance of superior films to meet competition. Three days later, in a letter to Frank Gammon, who seems to be the technician in the partnership, Andrew is pleased to present his solution to free the Vitascope’s dependency upon electric currents: “I received your letter containing diagram of hand power for running the Vitascope. Prior to getting it, I struck a motive [*i.e. mechanical power*] myself that I think will be far ahead of the one the drawing of which you sent me. I broke my bicycle and when in the repair shop found it swung on a frame. I went fooling with the pedal crank, and it struck me at once that that was the power to run the Vitascope with. I am getting the gears fixed at a foundry and I think, when I have it completed I will have a perfect motive power as can be obtained apart from electricity. It will cost me about \$25. I telegraphed you this morning not to ship the alternating motor. If this proves to be the success I expect it will, I will experiment with calcium light [*i.e. the limelight system*], and I think I can make myself entirely independent of electric light and power, and consequently will be able to work the small towns through this country to advantage.”⁴³

His letter of October 1 reports

progress: “The motive power run by hand proves to be a complete success so far as speed is concerned, but it does not give the same even, steady power as an electric motor. I have more difficulty with the lamp of the new machine [*i.e. the one he used in Halifax*]. Do my best I cannot get a good clear light from it the same as we have with the first machine [*the one operating in Toronto*]. It may be the fault of the lens or the condenser. I have placed them in every imaginable position, but the results are not as good as we have been accustomed to.”⁴⁴ A few days later, having rejected a motor shipped from Boston because of its inability to start with a load, Andrew comments: “I decided to continue my experiment with the bicycle gear motor. I am happy to say that it has proved a complete success. We can now run the machine without an electric motor and have as good results as with one. I have overcome the difficulty about the lamp. I found that by cutting out more resistance in the rheostat, I had a more brilliant light, though it is hard on the carbons and the rheostat gets very hot.”⁴⁵ As he employs carbon rods, he still uses the arc lamp, requiring electricity, and seems to have abandon the limelight idea.

Where might the Hollands go next? What problems will they confront? The story will be continued.

Endnotes:

- 1 Raff & Gammon Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University (hereafter referred to as R-G) Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 3, 1896
- 2 *Toronto Mail and Empire*, July 22, 1933, p 1
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 *Toronto Evening News*, Sept. 5, 1896, p 8 and Aug. 30, 1895, p 4, respectively
- 5 *Toronto Globe*, Tues., Sept. 1, 1896, p 3
- 6 *Toronto Mail and Empire*, Sat., Sept. 5, 1896, p 8
- 7 R-G, Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 3, 1896
- 8 *Toronto Mail and Empire*, July 22, 1933, p 1
- 9 Ibid., Sat., Sept. 19, 1896
- 10 R-G, Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 14, 1896
- 11 *Toronto Evening Star*, Sat., Sept. 19, 1896, p 2
- 12 *Toronto Evening News*, Tues., Sept. 29, 1896, p 3
- 13 *Toronto Mail and Empire*, July 22, 1933, p 1
- 14 R-G, Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 23, 1896
- 15 See *Toronto World*, Jan. 27, 1900, p 3. See, also *Magic Moments: First 20 Years of Moving Pictures in Toronto (1894-1914)*, by Robert W. Gutteridge (2000), Chapter 15, #3.
- 16 R-G, Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 3, 1896
- 17 Ibid., Vol. 7, Folder 9, Letter to Raff & Gammon from G. C. Rasch, Pres. of Burlington Blanket Co., San Francisco, Sept. 26, 1896, p 1
- 18 Ibid., Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to Raff & Gammon from A. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 3, 1896
- 19 Ibid., Letter to The Vitascope Co. from A. Holland, Ottawa, Oct. 1, 1896
- 20 *Halifax Herald*, Wed., Sept. 9, 1896, p 8

- 21 Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights* (Simon & Schuster, Inc., NY, 1926, reprinted 1986) p 311
- 22 John Barnes, *The Rise of the Cinema in Great Britain* (Bishopsgate Press Ltd., London, 1983) p 152
- 23 Robert C. Allen’s essay “Vitascope/Cinématographe” in *Film Before Griffith*, ed. by John L. Fell (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983) p 152
- 24 I say “practically free” because a legal battle lasting some 20 years began.
- 25 R-G, Vol. 7, Folder 6, Letters May 1896
- 26 Ibid., Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to F. Gammon from A. Holland, Ottawa, Aug. 18, 1896
- 27 Ibid., Letter to F. Gammon from A. Holland, Ottawa, Aug. 24, 1896
- 28 Ibid., Telegram to A. Holland, c/o Raff & Gammon, New York, from G. Holland, Ottawa, Aug. 27, 1896
- 29 Ibid., Handwritten Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Halifax, Sept. 6, 1896
- 30 Ibid., Letter to N. Raff from G. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 8, 1896. Ramsaye discusses problems with the Phantoscope (or Phantascope) on pp 271-273. I found no further references in London newspapers to indicate that this machine ever exhibited in London, Ontario.
- 31 Ibid., Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Halifax, Sept. 7, 1896
- 32 Ibid., Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Halifax, Sept. 9, 1896
- 33 *Halifax Herald*, Thurs., Sept. 10, 1896, p 8
- 34 R-G, Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Halifax, Sept. 11, 1896
- 35 *Halifax Herald*, Fri., Sept. 11, 1896, p 8. Part of the article states: “The vitascope exhibition...was not a success. The audience was not satisfied, and the managers of the show were disappointed. This was not caused by anything wrong with Edison’s vitascope or with the management.... A little time in experimenting would have accomplished this, but the time available was not sufficient.... Mr. Holland, who is managing the vitascope, made an explanation to this effect last night....”
- 36 R-G, Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to N. Raff from A. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 14, 1896
- 37 Ibid., Vol. 7, Folder 11, Letter to Raff and Gammon from Jannopulo & Gumpertz, St. Louis, Sept. 13, 1896
- 38 Ibid., Vol. 7, Folder 10, Letter to Raff & Gammon from G. C. Rasch, Pres. of Burlington Blanket Co., San Francisco, Sept. 26, 1896
- 39 Ibid., Vol. 7, Folder 11, Letter to Raff & Gammon from G. W. Walters, dealer in Phonographs and Phonograph Supplies, General Western Agent for Edison Kinetoscope, Helena, Montana, Oct. 28, 1896
- 40 *Halifax Herald*, Wed., Sept. 9, 1896, p 8
- 41 Allen, in *Film Before Griffith*, p 152
- 42 R-G, Vol. 6, Folder 7, Letter to F. Gammon from A. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 18, 1896
- 43 Ibid., Letter to F. Gammon from A. Holland, Ottawa, Sept. 26, 1896
- 44 Ibid., Letter to The Vitascope Co. from A. Holland, Ottawa, Oct. 1, 1896.
- 45 Ibid., Letter to Messrs. Raff & Gammon from A. Holland, Ottawa, Oct. 3, 1896

Bob Gutteridge has extra copies of his book: *Magic Moments – First 20 Years of Moving Pictures in Toronto (1894-1914)* for \$2.00 plus shipping. Phone 905-430-2499.

Yes Virginia there is a GORDON CAMERA

by Robert Lansdale and Clint Hryhorijiw

Our quest, described in the June 2009 PHSC E-Mail Newsletter, to find a mysterious Gordon camera has produced positive results. Initially, all we had was a citation in a 1913 publication "Art and Photography" describing its availability for \$2.50. For Canadians, it would be shipped from the "factory" near Toronto. But that could have been a hoax. At our PHSC Spring Fair we found an envelope of sensitized positive cards for the Gordon Camera; it bore the address of the Gordon Camera Corporation, 98-100 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. With that validation the hunt was on!

McKeown's Cameras Price Guide offers nothing about the Gordon camera, so it looked like our search might run on forever. Googling on the internet for the Gordon Corporation and for Edmond F. Stratton, the inventor, produced scant information. Then at an executive meeting President Clint Hryhorijiw plunked down a big briefcase and said: "Take a look!"

Clint had alerted everyone so many gathered around with equal expectations. From the dark interior emerged a scruffy black box with an odd-looking appendage on the front. It had seen much wear having tattered corners and a long split up the front. It wasn't until Clint pointed to the leather handle that I read with a thrill the imprint *GORDON*. Wow! After all these years, could it really be the missing camera? For a box camera it was quite a chunky size: 5 1/2" x 9 1/4" x 10 1/4" Only upon examining the full camera could we realize how it placed in photographic history. I could hardly wait to hear the story from Clint as to how he acquired it.

CLINT: "For fresh air and relaxation I tour southern Ontario and visit a number of antique and flea markets. I have no set regimen, I just go where it takes me. I don't drive a van as I would end up filling it and would soon be bankrupt; I don't try to be first in the door for the bargains as I'm certain whatever is destined for me can surely wait.

"About five o'clock, close to closing time, I happened to bump into a PHSC member who had a table with a mix of photographic goods. For the present time we'll say his name is 'Jack.' I've bought stuff from him before, so during our socializing he was pointing out items that might prove interesting to me. He said: 'Take a look at that box camera at the end of the table.' Well I had seen a gazillion box cameras that day in all their shapes and blackness, so I didn't expect anything great this time.

"I had to lift away a Rollei 126 which was still in its display case. Underneath was this big box so it seemed it might be something different. It had only been two weeks since reading the story about the mystery GORDON camera in our E-Mail newsletter so when I spotted the name gleaming from the leather handle, I was frozen with AHA! – then NO WAY! It surely could not be the same Gordon as the one described in the newsletter. I asked how much? – he asked a fair price and the prize was mine. Jack recalled that he had picked it up at a yard sale recently in Toronto. Talk about serendipity!"



The envelope of sensitized cards (above) with Gordon Camera address, alerted Clint Hryhorijiw to the name and subsequently found this prize GORDON camera.



The GORDON name imprinted in the leather handle atop the camera.

THE GORDON CAMERA

Gordon Camera Corporation, New York, N.Y.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT LANSDALE



With the camera in hand we quickly determined its technical structure. The rear of the camera is where you find the details; the back is one large hinged door with a cloth-covered orifice. Here we realized the purpose of the camera's large size. This is what is termed a *street photographer's camera* with a self-contained developing tank within to instantly process the pictures. The large opening has a sleeve of light-proof cloth attached, through which the operator inserted his hand to load the camera with a sensitized card or Ferrotype plate, and then processed the image in the premixed chemistry.

On the inside base of the camera is a *bellows box* with a focussing screen of celluloid. The box can be moved forward and back to focus and to compose the scene. A small distance scale in *feet* and *focal points* is attached to the floor accompanied by a marker-arrow on the rear edge of the bellows. The focussing screen is in a hinged metal frame which pivots back to accept a 3" x 4 1/2" photo card, then closes to hold it firmly at the plane of focus.

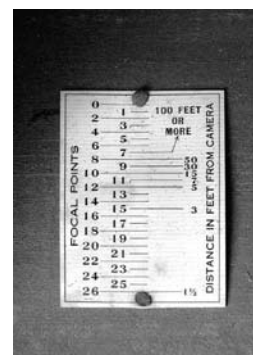
Another box and (presumed) a lid were loosely sitting atop the focussing box. The lid has a piece of black cloth along one edge that seemed to be used as a hinge. We were uncertain as to how these fitted within the camera but determined they formed a light-tight safety box for unexposed cards.

A nickel-plated lens mount on the front was easily removed to inspect and remove an old spider's nest. The housing reminds one of a converted door-bell cover; it has a block of wood jammed in from the rear with a hole bored through it into which the threaded lens-mount screws into the fiber of the wood. The shutter is a single flat blade that pivots away from

The GORDON camera with lens mounted on the front. Model H is a bulky 5 1/2" wide by 9 1/2" tall by 10" long.

At right is seen the camera back and interior which explains it as a "street camera" with instant processing. Black cloth sleeve affords access to interior for loading camera and processing of the image.

At far right is the distance scale marked in *focal points* and *feet*; it is attached to the inside base of the camera.



The shutter and its nickel plated cover removed from the camera front. Single flat blade of the shutter pivots (swings) to uncover the aperture. No springs or action.



The lens, approx. 6 inches in focal length is mounted in a threaded tube that screws into a block of wood.



Wooden focussing box slides on the camera floor. Metal braces on sides keep it in place. Metal frame has celluloid as ground glass. Card is clamped in place by frame.

the lens aperture and then is swung back – no timing, no springs, just finger control. The lens is approximately six inches in focal length.

A curious second wall across the interior of the front wall attracted our attention for some time. It was trimmed at the bottom with some dark material and we could not ascertain its purpose. Careful to avoid damage to the camera, force was exerted until it finally moved and came out revealing corduroy cloth extending across the whole back side. A tell-tale pattern on that wall revealed the gluing location for the end of this wooden slab (a light trap just above the bellows) and for the end of the safety box. The glue probably came undone pretty quickly during blind-hand operations.

The lid of the safety box bears a label indicating *Patents Pending* and *Manufactured by Gordon Camera Corporation, 98-100 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.* Located off-center it would seem the lid had to be cut smaller in size, late in production with the edges never being repainted.

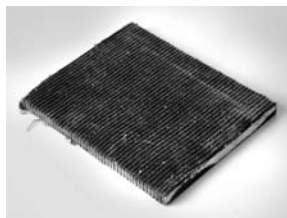
Nick Graver of Rochester, came to our aid introducing us to a number of experts. Karl Kabelac volunteered to chase down information for us. A retired

librarian in Rochester, he located a legal notice in the *New York Times* of April 3, 1913 indicating the Hoyt-Showers Manufacturing Corporation would apply to the New York State Supreme Court for a change of corporate name to Gordon Camera Corporation. Gordon E. Riggin is listed as Vice-President. (Hmm!) Riggin also shows up as General Manager of the Madden Music Publishing Co.

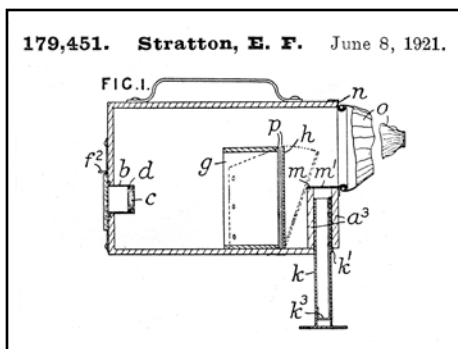
Via the internet and Toronto Reference Library, U.S. patent drawings were accessed for June 9, 1914 (1,099,899), July 27, 1915 (1,148,127) and September 18, 1923 (1,468,088). These were found by tracing inventor Edmond F. Stratton mentioned in the *Art & Photography* citation. Stratton is also credited with a shoe-polishing machine in 1909 (928,341) and a motorcycle patent in 1901.

The first patent describes a camera with fixed focus and an upright image. The safety storage box is affixed at the top of the camera interior. The door at the back is only half the height of the camera. The patent text describes it as “simple and inexpensive in construction.”

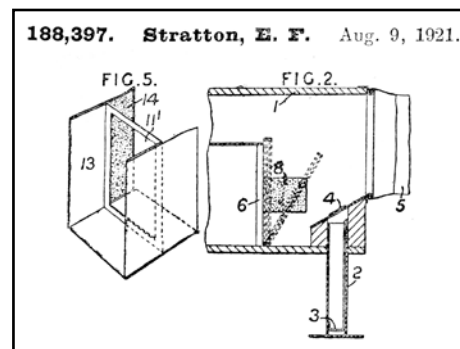
The second U.S. patent matches Clint’s camera found in Toronto. It is a focussing instrument with image in horizontal format; more space is allowed between the back of the bellows and the processing tank; it shows the safety box attached on the front wall just above the bellows; the lid is on the opposite end of the safety box to what we had imagined – its angled slant keeps the lid closed; the corduroy-covered wooden panel sits atop the bellows to form a light trap; the door is full height of the camera.



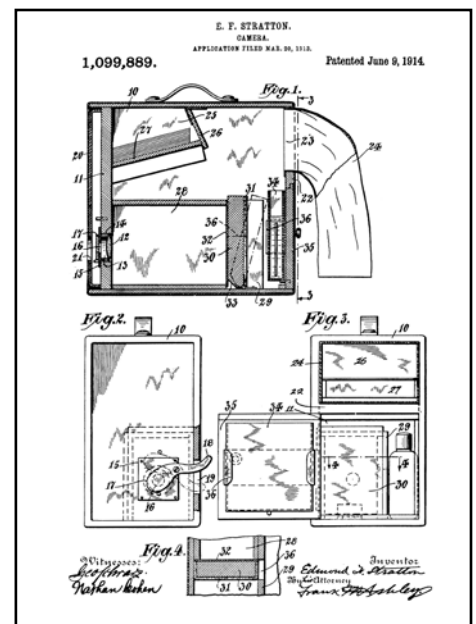
Interior showing wooden slab that was extricated and found to be a light trap. Safety box, lid with cloth hinge.



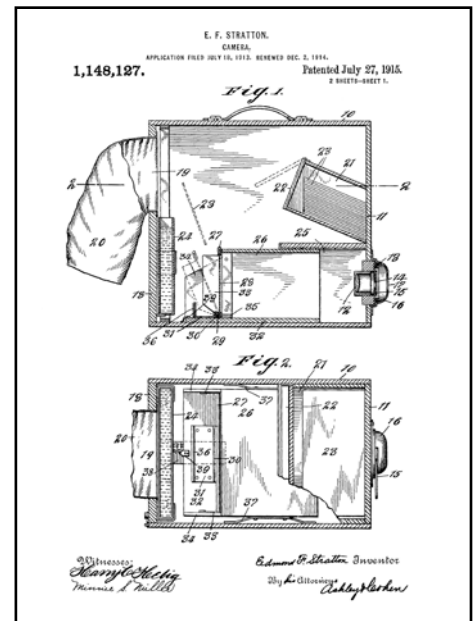
Tank moved lower, half out bottom.



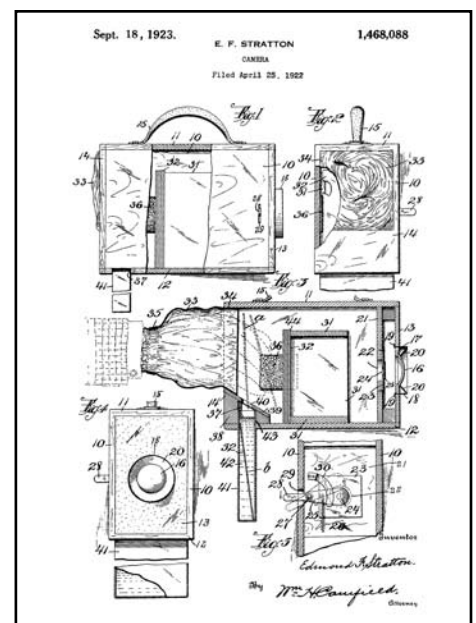
Tank even lower, card pack held by friction.



U.S. PATENT 1,099,899 JUNE 9, 1914



U.S. PATENT 1,148,127 JULY 27, 1915



U.S. PATENT 1,468,088 SEPTEMBER 18, 1923

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Write to-day, enclosing Express or Postal Money Order, and the camera and supplies will be sent to you promptly. Your money back if not satisfied. Address:

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 object. Prices. \$2

The third U.S. patent shows a much altered design which we have yet to confirm was ever manufactured. The processing tank has been lowered out of the camera allowing the camera to be reduced in size. The image is upright and is fixed focus. There is no storage box.

Three British patents were found for 1921 (179,451; 188,397 and 191,185) which illustrate gradual improvements: the tank, in stages, is moved lower through the base of the camera; the camera becomes reduced in size; the retention of a *pack of cards* at the film plane is attained by friction at the sides; there is no storage box; a spring wire adds tension to the shutter, keeping it closed until used. These improvements are seen in the 1923 U.S. patent.

Karl Kabelac has provided yeoman service in finding citations and adding to our total collection of ads in six publications—all using the same general text and only for the spring/summer of 1913. It would seem the company blew its budget in one big swoop. It caused the Chicago Ferrottype Company to counter Gordon's efforts with the new *Mandel-ette*, a \$5.00 version of their popular street camera.

The Gordon advertising plays up "Two Minute Processing" yet others promise a "Post Card in One Minute." In prominent newspaper ads they aimed NOT at the street photographer but for general amateur use — *We want every man, woman, boy and girl in the world to see this wonderful camera....* In an editorial advertisement the *Salt Lake Telegram* resorted to Hollywood ballyhoo with: *Photography Revolutionized by New Invention — Films, Plates and Dark*

OGDEN. PROVO. LOGAN.

Take Pictures in 2 Minutes

The Gordon Camera

No Plates
No Films
No Dark Room
No Waiting

GORDON CAMERA CORPORATION
 98-100 FIFTH AVE., N.Y.C.

Room Made Unnecessary. For a limited time models A, B and C were offered at half price (\$2.50, \$5.00 and \$7.50 plus 90 cents for shipping, sensitized cards and developing powders). They vied with street camera manufacturers in the want ads of *Popular Mechanics* of June 1913.

Eaton Lothrop who unfortunately passed away last year was the guru of street cameras. My question about the camera, put to him back in '97, produced no information. For expert opinions we talked with collector Joe Marlin in Chicago who knew of no write-ups or data on the Gordon. He directed me to Nate Skipper in North Carolina, a former collector who has donated his collection to the California Museum of Photography in Riverside, California. Leigh Gleason, curator of photography at UCR/CMP, informed us: "We certainly do have a Gordon street camera in our Skipper collection... and an original catalogue too. A stamp on the first page of text says: *Special Offer To You. Any Of These Cameras At Half Price.*" In addition, Todd Gustavson of George Eastman House, in Rochester, messaged: "After poking around a bit, I came across a photo copy of a catalogue from the Gordon Camera Corporation of 98-100 Fifth Ave., NYC, ca. 1915. The catalogue lists several models — A for 2 1/2 x 3 1/3, B for 3 1/4 x 5 1/2, C for both 3 1/4 x 5 1/2 and 2 1/2 x 3 1/2, H for 3 x 4 1/2, and J for 4 1/4 x 5 1/2, 3 x 4 1/2 and 2 1/2 x 3 1/2 inch images." Toronto and Hamilton street directories show no trace of a Gordon Camera "factory" to service Canadian customers — possibly a garage or basement operation.

In *Material History Review* 41 (Spring 1995), the article *The Tintype and Prairie*

**No Plates—No Films
New Camera Just Out**

Here is just the very camera the world has waited for—the camera you have always wanted. No experience needed to make pictures with our new *Mandel-ette*. The new camera is simple and easy to use. It is the only camera that makes a picture in a minute—no plates and no films on the spot.

The "Mandel-ette"

A new camera that will give you the best results in the world today and tomorrow. It is the only camera that makes a picture in a minute—no plates and no films on the spot. It is the only camera that makes a picture in a minute—no plates and no films on the spot.

Special Money Back Offer

We will give you the money back if you are not satisfied with the camera. We will give you the money back if you are not satisfied with the camera.

\$5.00 Complete Outfit

Write for this book. Learn all about this new camera. It is the only camera that makes a picture in a minute—no plates and no films on the spot. It is the only camera that makes a picture in a minute—no plates and no films on the spot.

Free Book

Write for this book. Learn all about this new camera. It is the only camera that makes a picture in a minute—no plates and no films on the spot. It is the only camera that makes a picture in a minute—no plates and no films on the spot.

THE CHICAGO FERROTTYPE COMPANY
 4331 Parkway Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Dept. 4331 Public Bldg., 89-91 Delaware St., New York, N.Y.

Canada mentions the Gordon Camera Corporation in an appendix. The article is by Philippe Maurice, an old acquaintance living in Calgary. The story is illustrated with a Gordon camera and Ferrottype cameras. He still has the Gordon camera and will send down pictures and a story to go with them. But it must wait for our next *PC* journal as we are out of space in this issue.

Edmond F. Stratton left his name in printed records but we are unsure the details describe one and the same person. Was there more than one E.F. Stratton? A passport application for 1919 indicates he was born Edmond Gottschalk in Chicago on March 8, 1871. It notes he is "theatrically known as Edmond Stratton" and "residence being at New York City... where I follow the occupation of *Movie Producer*." Six films have been noted as directed by Stratton in 1914 and 1915. *Cultural Chronicle of the Weimar Republic* cites "directed by Edmond Gottschalk Stratton and starring Hedda Vernon and Otto Flint, premieres in Berlin..."

A notice in the *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 16, 1904 mentions he and his wife arrived in L.A.. The writer is quick to emphasize social status by noting "Mrs. Stratton was formerly Mrs. Edythe Grannis, daughter of Col. G. Green of Lake Hopatcond, N.J." A news report out of Ottawa, Canada in the *New York Times* of Oct. 25, 1910 describes the efforts of E.F. Stratton to head up a search for missing balloonists Allan Hawley and Augustus Post lost somewhere over Eastern Canada. The aeronauts, participating in a balloon race out of St. Louis, Mo., after 1355 miles were forced down in the wilderness 58 miles north of Chicoutimi, Quebec. They spent a week travelling south to reach civilization. Stratton was a member of the Aero Club of America, Hawley being President. Obviously Stratton was in high society, playing with rich men's toys. ♣

Thanks to all the contributors.

(To be continued)