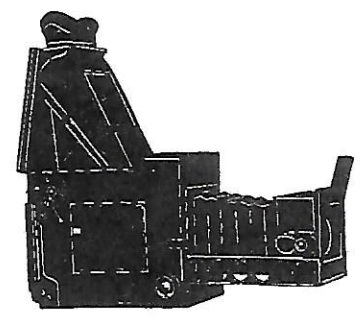


GRAFLEX HISTORIC QUARTERLY

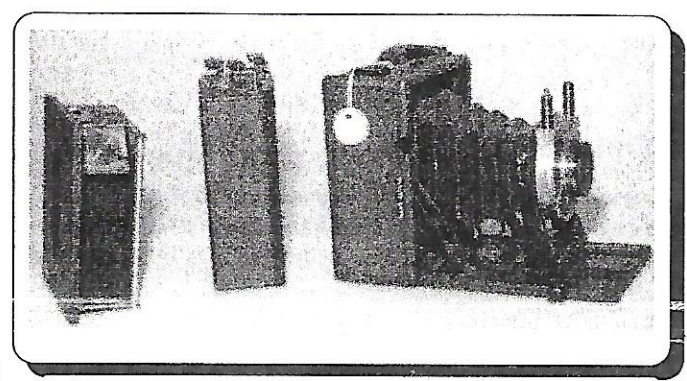


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FOURTH QUARTER 1997

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Folding Pocket Graphic with Roll Back

DOES YOUR ADDRESS LABEL HAVE A RED R

on it? If so, this is your **LAST ISSUE** unless you renew. Each year's subscription is 4 issues. If you think the notice is in error, please contact us. Address on back. **PLEASE RENEW NOW!** This is your only reminder.

(Mike Hanemann, on an October tip to Rochester, NY, visited a well-known museum which has many one-of-a-kind Graflex items. He reports to us this and subsequent issues on his visit.)

**GRAFLEX TREASURES
UNEARTHED AT GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE
by Mike Hanemann**

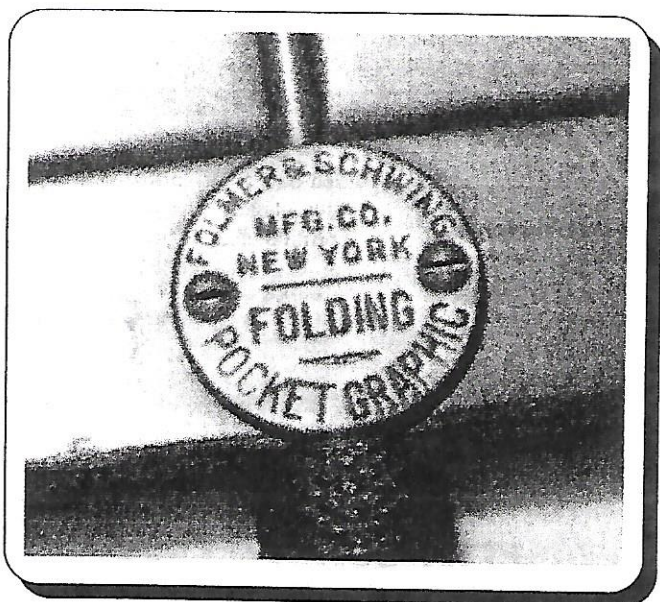
Installment 1

One of the neatest Graflex cameras at the George Eastman house is the Folding Pocket Graphic, in 3 1/4 x4 1/4 film size. It is barely larger than the film holder! Its unique feature is the removable ground glass back which is replaced by a roll back. While that is not really unique, the methodology is very simple.

The back is held on, as it is in many early cameras, by 2 springs; one on top and one on the bottom of the ground glass plate. Holding this camera in both hands, you can however gently push out on the ground glass back with both thumbs. The plate comes off easily. The roll film back has 2 pins on one side. The pins fit into holes on the camera where the ground glass was. When you place the back pins in the holes on the camera back, it pivots easily so that the side away from the pins rests against the other side. The roll back has 2 flat springs on the side opposite the pins. The two springs, when held down, slip under metal plates on the camera. Releasing the spring tension, locks the roll back on the camera. To release, push down on the roll back springs, tilt back and lift off the roll back.

To replace the ground glass is a bit more troublesome. You lift up both of the springs that held the ground glass back enough to allow you to slide the ground glass back under the springs till the screws on the back are right under the spring. Drop the springs insuring they catch the screws on the ground glass back.

The overall size is 5 1/2 x4 5/8 inches. The sample's serial number is XX39. It is fitted with a Graflex Rapid Rectliniar lens and a Sektor shutter. Both the camera and the roll back can be seen in the 1904 Graflex catalog; the camera on page 34 and the



"Cartridge roll holder" on page 60. These were the days of Folmer & Schwing without Kodak, and their proud medallion can be seen in the accompanying photo of the camera's bed.

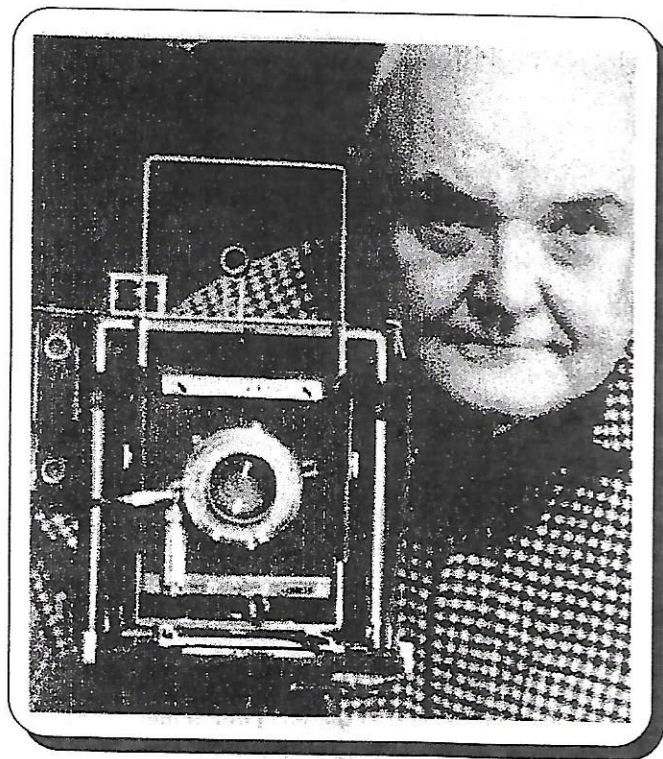
SOME MEMORIES OF GRAFLEX AND GRAPHIC CAMERAS
BY ED ROMNEY

My first memory of the Graflex was having my picture taken with it as a toddler and watching Dad shoot portraits and groups in his home studio. He bought the camera, a RB Tele 4x5 with No. 33 F4.5 Kodak Anastigmat lens, serial no. 153xxx, new old stock on Bromfield Street in 1933. It cost \$120 with a bag mag and one holder. This was a month's salary in those days, equivalent to the price of a Hasselblad today. Dad was already a serious free lance and advanced amateur photographer who had sold many newspaper photographs taken with a Voigtlander plate camera he also owned. He was quite a conservative man even when he was young. The Graflex SLR was really a 1920's camera, its heyday had already passed by 1933. The 1932 book, "Press Photography" by Jack Price recommended three cameras equally for news work: the Speed Graphic, the Graflex reflex, or a 10 x 15 cm German camera with F4.5 lens and spring back such as the Zeiss Orix.

Price suggested taking indoor pictures by placing the camera on a table and shooting for 2 sec. at F4.5. Synchronized flash bulbs were in use by 1933 on the Speed Graphic for both news work and home portraits. The Graflex SLR focal plane shutter would then only synch at drop curtain which was about 1/5 sec. Dad attached a leaf switch he made to the side of his Graflex to synch bulbs. But usually he fired his bulbs at "open flash," opening the shutter with one hand and firing the bulb in an Agfa hand flashgun with the other. It worked pretty well for posed shots. Dad liked to shoot full open at F4.5 with the Graflex whenever he could and diffuse the background. He used photofloods a lot. The depth was so little full open that he could even diffuse people's ears in portraits, which were often ugly and wrinkled

otherwise. It saved retouching. We had to use 4 x 5 negatives because most portraits and even smaller groups were hand retouched on the negative. The prestige of large format was important too, Dad told me later. The public demanded that a large camera be used for any picture they paid money for, he said. We knew one man, an itinerant photographer who cheated. He cut a hole and stuck an Argus 35mm into the lensboard of a view camera. The subjects thought he was using the large camera. There was no practical color film in the 30's except the exotic Agfa additive transparency plates which Dad tried.. Mom had to hand color all his prints. The cut film was about ISO 24. Dad used only cut film by then and avoided plates which he had used in the 1920's. Our enlarger, a Kodak autofocus would only enlarge 3.5x. Many films of the time would show serious grain if enlarged more than that.

Dad's photo business was only a moderate success and he worked hard long hours. As prosperity returned just before World War II, Dad took a salaried job in electronics, his real career field. He was so burned out on portraits, weddings and picky customers, he closed the studio and never touched a camera again for many years. I, on the other hand, was fascinated with photography. I took my first picture at age six. By junior high school age I was using his equipment and developing and printing pictures myself. This was during World War II. You couldn't buy roll film easily but there was plenty of cut film for sale in the professional camera stores. We had a lot of film, paper and chemicals left over from the 1930's for me to shoot up, too. Soon at about age fourteen I was hired to shoot house pictures for a real estate agent. I used the 6.5 x 9cm



Ed with an Old Friend

erman camera because the Graflex was too narrow angle. That is always its serious problem. I did portraits soon with the Graflex; first passport ID pictures, then more serious work. I did some news pictures with the Graflex including a fire that made the front page of the newspaper.

These Graflex limitations made me wish very much I owned a Speed Graphic instead. I did get to borrow a 23 Miniature Graphic with Optar lens on occasion from a friend to do a wedding. The big advantage of the Speed Graphic is its suitability for flash synchronization. It was easy to mount a solenoid on the big lens board. It is almost impossible to mount solenoids on roll film cameras and German plate cameras. If you have a solenoid rigged to work the shutter by cable release, it is a very erratic mechanism and you will have many failures. Mechanical flywheel synchronizers such as the Kalart are not fully reliable either, although the model mounted on the shutter is better than the one working through a cable release. Synchro shutters did exist after the war, Supermatic in particular. But they had a zip timer; you had to wind separately for each shot when you used foil filled bulbs. If you forgot, the picture would be spoiled. So pros preferred the solenoid until well into the 1950's. The Wollensak Graphex MX synch shutter was good, but we tended to avoid the Optar lens then because it was made by Wollensak, which we considered a low price lens maker. That was a mistake. Optar can easily equal Ektar but we didn't know it back then.

My real experience with Speed Graphics was using 4 x 5 Anniversary Speed Graphics belonging to two studios I worked for after graduating high school. That was pretty much the standard pro camera of the time. Both had uncoated Zeiss Tessar 135mm F4.5 lenses in Compur shutters and were synchronized by solenoid. The solenoid was completely reliable. The photographers then felt no urge to replace them with internally synchronized shutters or coated lenses. We felt lens coating was eyewash. Both cameras had Kalart rangefinders, the tubular eyelevel finder and Graphic backs. Graflok was a later item of the 1950's. I also borrowed another similar 4 x 5 camera for some freelance work I did. The Anniversary Speed Graphic is really the historically important Graphic camera. It covered World War II and dominated all the 1940's. I remember in the early 50's most Graphics you saw were Anniversaries. The 1947 Pacemaker series were fine cameras too, but they were very expensive - over \$300 fully equipped in 1947, enough to buy a good used car! The Crown Graphic, we old timers felt then, was a lesser camera, sort of a stripped down economy model. That is not the opinion today.

About 1947 I replaced Dad's Kodak enlarger which was pitifully slow and would only enlarge 3.5x, with an Elwood AM 23 enlarger that cost me \$15. I think the old man who sold it to me was trying to help me. It was very fine. I equipped it with the F6.3 Zeiss Kodak Anstigmat from a defunct No 0 Graphic, a wonderfully sharp enlarging lens. Incidentally I used the No 0 Graphic for a while too. It had been converted to 120 film. It was an excellent camera, but when the curtain ripped that was the end of it. I did not restore cameras as I do now. However owning no 4 x 5 enlarger then limited me to 2 1/4 x 3 1/4 size cameras.

My first personal Speed Graphic was of this size, bought when I was in college. It was a second hand Miniature Speed Graphic with an F4.5 105mm Zeiss Tessar in Compur shutter that had retrofitted X synch and synched focal plane shutter. I used the camera mainly with 5ms SMgas filled bulbs and, by 1955, with a home built strobe. It was good for photographs of summer camps, weddings, landscapes and portraits taken with the 7 1/2" lens from the Graflex, used as a long focus lens. I had an 83mm Voigtlander Skopar which I bought for \$5 and had synched. It was my semi wide angle lens. I soon got the little Graphic, a Graflok back, and a 120 rollback. In most ways this was an excellent camera. It has these limitations:

1. The 23 Graphic lensboard is too small. It will only accept a lens of 50mm diameter. The 10 inch Graphic Tele-Optar will fit, but not the 15 inch Tele Optar lens. The camera will not close with F2.8 lenses.
2. The rising front works only on horizontal landscape format. In the Pacemaker cameras you have both a rise and shift to the front.
3. The normal lens, a 101mm or 105 mm is rather long focus for 2 x 3 film. which measures only 52 x 75mm in usable area. In a crowded group in a small living room for a wedding or party, I have had real difficulty getting all the people into the picture.
4. It is hard to get your eye close enough to the finder with a rollback. These are the reasons why the 23 Graphics never replaced the 4 x 5 Graphics in an age when cameras were getting smaller. The mystique, the prestige of owning and using a Speed Graphic in the 1940's is hard to imagine now. Everyone knew what it was. You could get by fire and police lines at an accident carrying one. I have done so many times. Wealthy amateurs would buy a Graphic which they regarded as the best camera in the world and get the local photo studio to load their holders and develop the films. I did a lot of this work. People thought in the 1930's and 40's that a German lens was best. That is one reason so many Graphics, including mine, had Zeiss Tessars. But I never could see that they were any better than a Kodak Ektar. By the mid 1950's, Rolleiflex took over much professional work done by Graphics. Then the Graphic prestige faded out gradually.

I can give you the feeling of using a Graphic or a Graflex in the old days best by describing some of the jobs we did with them.

Sports photography: for basketball, we used a medium size Press 40 or No. 11 bulb. We would sit in the front row, prefocus for 20 feet, set aperture and wait. The favorite shot was jumping for the rebound. Sometimes the people would jump up in front of us and ruin the shot. A ball hitting the camera would push back the front from infinity or bend the wire finder or break the flash bulb. But Graphics were rugged enough so no serious damage occurred. The Graflex SLR was never practical for basketball, too narrow angle; impossible to see through. I never had any success with football with it either. The mirror image was reversed and there was a 1/5 sec time delay in the mirror which confused me completely. But some photographers did learn to use them. I found the Graflex SLR excellent for baseball. I would pre-focus on a base and catch someone sliding



into it. Remember that the 190mm normal Graflex lens is as sharp as a 200mm lens on a 35mm camera. You can simply enlarge a small portion of the film if you want a tele effect. By then we had fine grain developers like D76 and Microdol.

Weddings: the Speed Graphic first made candid wedding photography possible. It is difficult shooting fast at a wedding. You grab a holder, slam it in, put in a bulb, cock the shutter, pull the dark slide then snap the picture. Then you must reinsert the darkslide black side out, remove the holder and reinsert it with the other side facing the lens and do all this again. It can be done in 10 or 15 sec. I hold the slide in my armpit. We'd drop the hot used bulbs into a potted plant or a flower bed. Some photographers had as many as 24 holders in their camera case. I had only a half dozen holders and had to use film packs much of the time. You couldn't shoot one picture after another with a Speed Graphic as they do today. But people knew this. They were patient and they would wait. But woe be unto you if you missed a shot! It was gone forever by the time you reloaded. A bride in white and a groom in a black tuxedo were very contrasty subjects. You had to get exposure, development and printing just right so bride, groom and cake all showed some detail and texture.

Architectural, interiors and commercial photography: wide angle lenses were almost unknown long ago except in big city studios. The 127mm had to do the job in 4 x 5. Usually it did OK with some rearrangement of furniture or an unusual viewpoint like backing out a window or a door. You could put a Plus 1 or Plus 2 lens on the normal lens and move the bellows back and get a good wide angle effect stopped to F16 or F22. Zeiss sold Proxar and Distar lenses for this purpose for their famous Tessar. My 83mm WA on the 23 camera was most useful. The rising front was not great enough on Graphics to keep really tall buildings from tilting back. Often we would tilt the enlarging easel. One



trick was to shoot with camera level from far back, then print only the top half of the negative which had the effect of a tilt shift lens. We shot city real estate on Sundays to minimize traffic.

One could also shoot a building across the street from an upper floor of the building opposite it to get the whole building in the picture. Rain on the ground made architectural pictures look better. The day after a storm was a wonderful time to photograph buildings. For technical photography we didn't use white paper backgrounds then because flare would be too great. We shot right out in the middle of the studio and painted out the background on the negative with opaque paint.

There was a lot of business copying diplomas and discharge papers then, work that would now be done with a Xerox machine. A Graflex SLR set on a stack of magazines would do this work very rapidly compared to a view camera. I still use the Graflex this way for pictures of small antiques and things. We put the enlarger lens in the camera because it was corrected close up and use the focal plane shutter. Simple and effective.

Camp pictures: I used my Miniature Speed Graphic. I'd take bunk groups with each kid in them, a giant group of the whole camp, and publicity shots of all the camp activities: canoes, horses, swimming, archery, rifle shooting, arts and crafts, the dining hall with the happy chef, and the bugler blowing taps. I took over 100 shots which I printed 8 x 10 on the Elwood AM enlarger. The new Graphic 120 roll back was invaluable and really saved the day for these big jobs. I'd love to shoot another camp this way with a 23 or 45 Graphic.

Proms, fancy dress balls, celebrities: I'd work with a second flash on a cord usually held by a girl, who was my date. The cord was knotted to my wrist so it could not pull the camera out of my

and. We'd pull the cord from side to side in a radius to move people to make a space to photograph. They didn't seem to mind. Lighting from two bulbs is very beautiful. I've photographed the Governor and people like that. They are much easier to take than average people because they are aware of their appearance and act as if they are posing all the time.

Professional actresses and models are easier to shoot than amateur volunteers. They almost never ruin a picture by some awkwardness. Spot News, fires and car wrecks weren't really difficult. I did a fair number of them. Nothing moved very fast and exposures were normal, like 1/200 sec at F8. Flash was almost always used even outdoors in daylight. Auto wrecks at night took a tremendous amount of light, about eight times as much as the guide number indicated. The trick to all these pictures was getting there in time. I drove much too fast, but luckily never cracked up. I encountered no crime or murders then to shoot. We were small town people and they were virtually nonexistent out there fifty years ago. All this was a lot of fun. I never got really famous or really rich from it, but it was a good living. I loved these cameras and I am glad I had the opportunity to work with them when they were at their peak and I was a teen ager. I still enjoy using them today at age 66.

LETTERS

...This is to put in my entry on the "size and model Graflex" quiz [Vol. 2 Issue 2]. Welch sent me a dog biscuit for guessing right on the previous one, and I expect at least as much on this one for my greyhound who right now is waiting patiently....

From Paine's invaluable book...it is apparent that: the camera is a "C" or "D" because of the gusset below the lens flap door. The camera is a "34" since the machinery plates on the box's right side are too close together for a "45." The camera is a "C" because of the hood which, unlike the "D," has a triangular panel in the middle of the side, and has no fur.

Now you must explain: What are the little rectangles in the middles of the box's right and top side? Why is the "RB" revolved say 30 degrees from latched? What is the kitten standing on? Why is the "C" being used as a prop instead of taking the picture?

— Steve Church

Well, Steve, we didn't take the picture; it is about 50 years old, and we can't say why it is the way it is. But it's obvious the photographer, if he had any smarts at all, used ANOTHER "C" to take the picture. And, yes, another dog biscuit is on its way down to you for your correct guess being first. - ed.

Dear Bill Baker,

We tried your method of Graflex SLR handle mounting from your article last issue. We like it!!

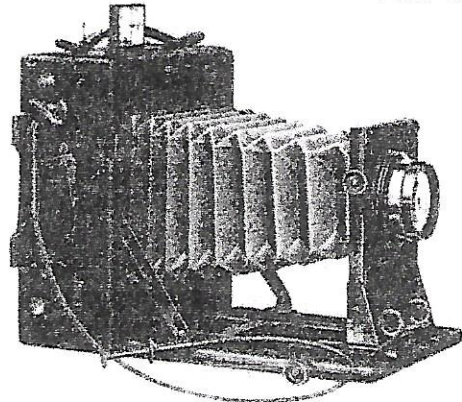
- The Editors

GRAFLEX ON THE INTERNET!!

IT'S WORTH REPEATING; IN FACT IT'S BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER! THE GRAFLEX WEB SITE CARRIES A HUGE AMOUNT OF REFERENCE MATERIAL AND INFO ON ALL KINDS OF GRAFLEX PRODUCTS. HATS OFF TO EDITOR LEIGH KLOTZ FOR A FINE JOB!

<http://www.graflex.org>

THE SPEED GRAPHIC



A high grade Focal Plane Shutter Camera, made in the Graflex Factory.

The Graflex Focal Plane Shutter, working at any speed from "time" to 1-1000 of a second, is built into the body of the Speed Graphic, and a big, generous front board permits the use of fast Anastigmat Lenses. The long, black leather bellows harmonizes perfectly with the oxidized metal and black ebonized woodwork.

Full particulars are given in the Graflex Catalog—free on request.

FOLMER & SCHWING DIVISION

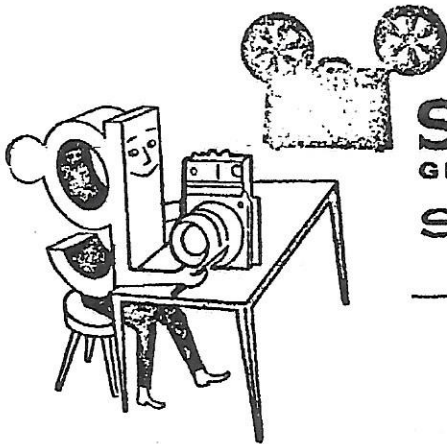
EASTMAN KODAK CO.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

USER TIP

Sinar 4x5 Reflex Viewers fit the top of RBB 4x5, possibly also the Super D SLR; fitting is easy. The image is then eye-level, although upside-down. Calumet 4x5 finders work on 3x4 Graflexes or might be used for the ground glass back.

—submitted by Jerry Eisner



SINGER

GRAFLEX DIVISION

SERVICE BULLETIN

NO: 7
 DATE: DECEMBER, 1968
 REF: GENERAL

MANUFACTURING CODES

Each Graflex product is stamped with a three digit code showing date of manufacture. The first letter is the month, the second numeral is the year, and the third letter is the revision. The revision letter is changed when a new model is introduced or when a major modification is made to the equipment.

First-Letter		Second-Number		Third-Letter	
Letter	Month	Number	Year	Letter	Revision
A	Jan.	0	1960	A	1st
B	Feb.	1	1961	B	2nd
C	Mar.	2	1962	C	3rd
D	Apr.	3	1963	D	4th
E	May	4	1964	E	5th
F	June	5	1965	F	6th
G	July	6	1966	G	7th
H	Aug.	7	1967	H	8th
J	Sept.	8	1968	J	9th
K	Oct.	9	1969	K	10th
L	Nov.	0	1970	L	11th
M	Dec.	1	1971	M	12th

EXAMPLE: A product with the letters A6C would be one manufactured in January, 1966 to the 3rd modification.

LOCATION OF CODE

AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTS

Graflex 16 Projector -- On main casting just above projection lamp or on serial number nameplate

Messenger -- Under vinyl mat on turntable.

School Master Projector -- Bottom plate.

Overhead Projector -- Left vertical face of cord storage pan.

SM 1000 -- Inside projection lamp access door.

Compact Projector -- Upper part of film track; remove lens.

(OVER)

Graflex Division, 3750 Monroe Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14603

SM 400 Projector -- Bottom plate.

E-Z Viewer -- Inside of end cap.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRODUCTS

Century Graphic Camera -- Bottom of bed yoke.

x1 Camera Body -- Inside bottom of body.

Pacemaker Graphic Cameras -- Bottom of bed yoke.

Super Graphic Cameras -- Bottom of bed yoke.

Lens and Shutter Assemblies -- Back of lensboard.

x1 Lens & Barrel Assemblies -- Next to cam in barrel.

Stroboflash Power Pack II & IV -- Tray.

Stroboflash Power Pack I -- Cap of Capacitor Assembly.

Stroboflash Lamphead -- Chassis frame and back of reflector.

120-220 Roll Film Holders -- Center leaf spring of carriage.

RR/50 Roll Film Holder -- Bottom Center of carriage.

Grafmatic Film Holder -- Inside back cover.

x1 Polaroid Film Holder -- Left front side of adapter plate.

Strobomatic 500 Lamphead -- Back of reflector.

Strobomatic 500 Power Top -- Chassis frame.

Strobomatic 500 RG Base -- Bottom of battery compartment.

Strobomatic 500 AC Base -- Chassis frame.

New Graflex Shutter Material
by J.C. Welch

In the very first issue of GHQ, we printed an article on installing a new focal plane shutter in a Graflex SLR. Of course, the article assumed the user had a new curtain, or more likely a NOS (New Old Stock) one. Anyone who has tried to find a replacement shutter for his camera has probably come upon a hard fact: there are very few replacements available, and many of those which can be located are unlabeled; they bear only a part number. And, no one seems to have lists which can decode the numbers any more. The only solution is to lay out new and old shutters together, and see if they match up. Not only does the old shutter and the replacement have to be the same length, but they have to have the openings in the same place.

In this article, we're not going to get into the intricacies of making a shutter from scratch; making or moving the metal liners for the openings would be an article in itself. However, one of our readers has solved a key part of the job: correct material for the shutter.

Jerry Eisner had a 5x7 Home Portrait which he wanted to use in his business.....to make portraits, of course. He found a repairman willing to replace its non-usable shutter, but evidently had no proper material. After some diligent searching, Jerry found the right fabric and has shared this information with us. It is a nitril-coated nylon called Fairprene, which I had always thought was no longer made. Perhaps it's fortunate I never mentioned my doubt in print, or else the Fairprene Industrial Products Co. of Fairfield, Conn. might have

been rightfully annoyed! They still make the material in several thicknesses, but do not do retailing of it.

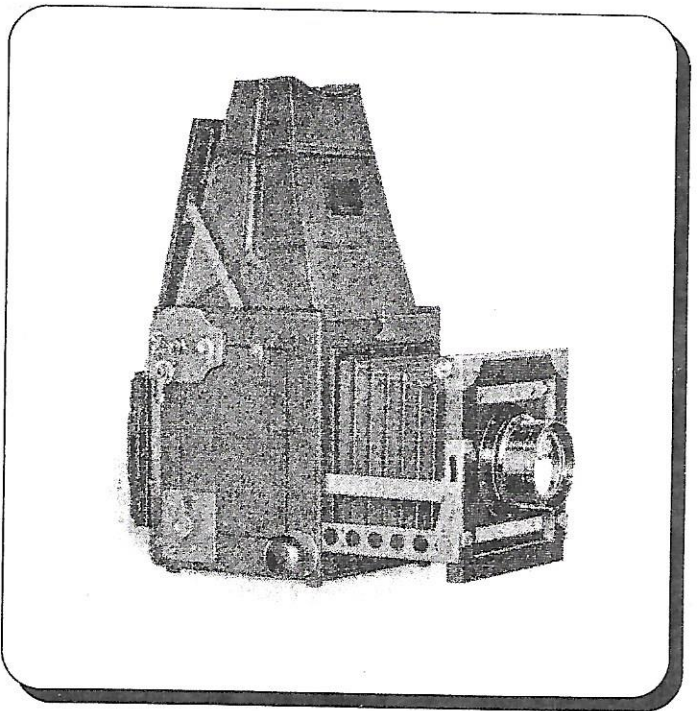
However, a kind Fairprene employee named Betty steered Jerry to the Automated Gasket Corp. of Kirkwood, MO, which was willing to sell him what he needed, by the yard (41 inches wide). Jerry reported that it costs in the neighborhood of \$56 per yard, and that it took two yards to get the proper piece for his 5x7 shutter.

The thickness of material for a Graflex shutter is important, since the camera depends on a certain amount of shutter to be moved by so many rotations of the spools (in all but the early two-piece shutters). For Jerry's camera, .008" was proper, and is Automated's and Fairprene's #BN5027. I can't say whether this thickness is usual for other models, but it shouldn't be too hard to measure it. Fairprene appears to my eye to be the same material used on late model Graflexes; cameras before the 1940's used some other material, but I suspect would profit in usability from the newer stuff, although for collectibility, you'll have to form your own opinion.

Can a photographer in the '90's use an old Graflex successfully? Jerry kindly sent me a print that he had done with the 5x7 HP. I tried to scan it for this issue, but it doesn't do justice to his image of a lovely young woman. The large negative has captured a certain look, particularly in her eyes, that I have not seen in portraits in recent years.

Automated Gasket: 314-821-4630, 333 Sante Av., Kirkwood, MO, 63122

Fairprene Industrial Products [SPECS ONLY - NO RETAIL]: 85 Mill Plain Rd. Fairfield, CONN 06430



5x7 Graflex Home Portrait SLR

WANT AD POLICY:

Any subscribers wishing to place a want ad selling or seeking Graflex-related items may send them to the GHQ for inclusion at no charge (at this time). The editors reserve final publication decisions.

GRAFLEX-GRAPHIC REPAIR

38 years experience
Konny Lang
516-587-7959, fax 516587-7750

For Sale: 2x3 BagMag, looks new, in box \$35. 5-1/2" Kodak Anastigmat f4.5 in dial set Compur, authentic for Pre-Ann or early 34 or 45 Anniversary Graphic. Clean, undamaged, accurate: \$45. Sorry, no other parts. Ed Romney, Box 487, Drayton, NC 29333. Tel. 864-597-1882

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Graflex Historic Quarterly

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FIRST CLASS

