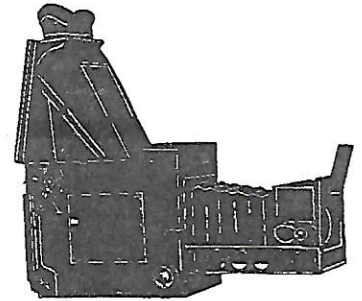


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FEATURES

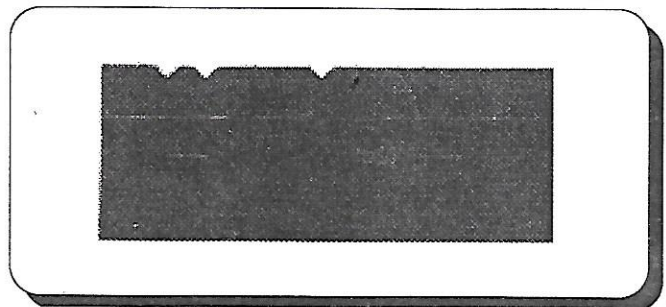
Available Light Photography 1
Letters to the Editor..... .5
Letter from Roger Adams.....6
Letter from Graflex.....7

Available Light Photography with the Speed Graphic by Joe Koski

Kodak introduced 35 mm Tri-X film in 1956. Soon the camera magazines of the day (*Modern Photography* and *Popular Photography*) featured pictures taken with the light of a single candle or match. With their f2 or faster lenses and push processing to ASA (now ISO) 800, photographers with 35 mm cameras could take "available light" or "existing light" pictures. Photography and photojournalism changed forever. Although some newspapers, for example, the Milwaukee Journal, were experimenting at that time with the use of 35 mm for press photography, the typical 1950's newspaper photographer was lugging around his 4x5 Speed Graphic with a 200 watt-second electronic flash unit that required a ten pound, shoulder-strap supported power pack. While this arrangement took excellent photographs, it did not capture the mood and realism often provided by available lighting. Pictures often had that "deer caught in the headlights" look caused by a single flash unit attached to the camera. A year or so after the introduction of Tri-X, Kodak introduced a new 4x5 film, Royal-X Pan that

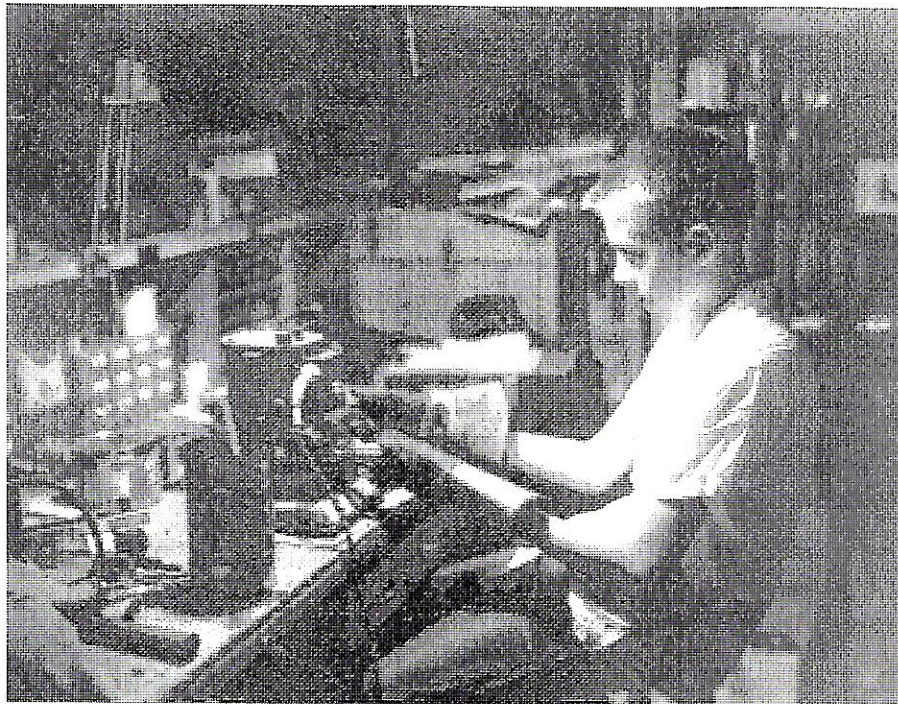
promised to give even the large format camera user a chance at photography with low light levels.

Royal-X Pan was rated at ASA 1250 with standard processing of 6 or 8 minutes in Kodak DK-50 developer. By pushing the development time in DK-50 up over 20 minutes, the film could be rated as high as ASA 12000. This gave Speed Graphic and other large format camera users a chance to take pictures under low light conditions. As development times lengthened, the film developed an increasing, gray, uniform fog. Kodak claimed that the fog helped in the printing of the negatives because it lowered overall contrast. Film grain size was large, but with the 4x5 negative size, it was much more acceptable than the same grain would be with smaller negatives. The cut film notch pattern initially had the three v-notches of Tri-X, but with the third notch separated from the first two as shown in the illustration. Later versions of the film had the three v-notch pattern of Tri-X along with a rectangular notch that was separated from the first three.



Initial cut film notch for Royal-X pan

After existing for a year as a film that was available only by special order (SO-4166) from Kodak, exclusively for professional press photographers, the film became generally available in 1958. At that time the author was



Author's first test shot on Royal-X pan

very limited even at moderate apertures, especially at closer distances. For all photographs, the Speed Graphic's focal plane shutter was used, since many photography books of the day stated that the focal plane shutter was better than a leaf shutter at stopping movement. Several of the Royal-X Pan negatives still exist, and they scan easily today on a flat bed scanner with a transparency adapter.

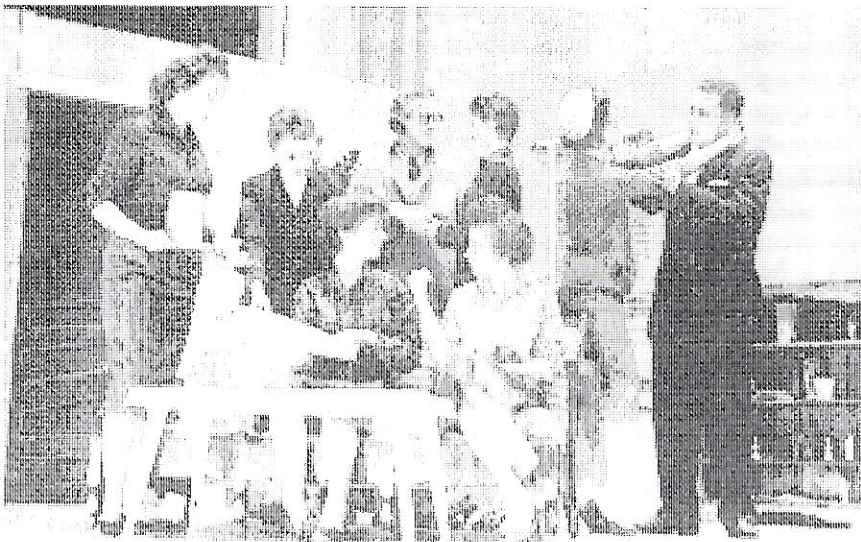
With the initial trials complete, the first natural location for trying to use the film was to capture the stage lighting in the school auditorium. The student production of Down to Earth was photographed both with flash on Royal Pan (ASA 400) and with stage lighting on Royal-X pan. The Royal-X Pan

shot with stage lighting was used on the front page of the school newspaper.

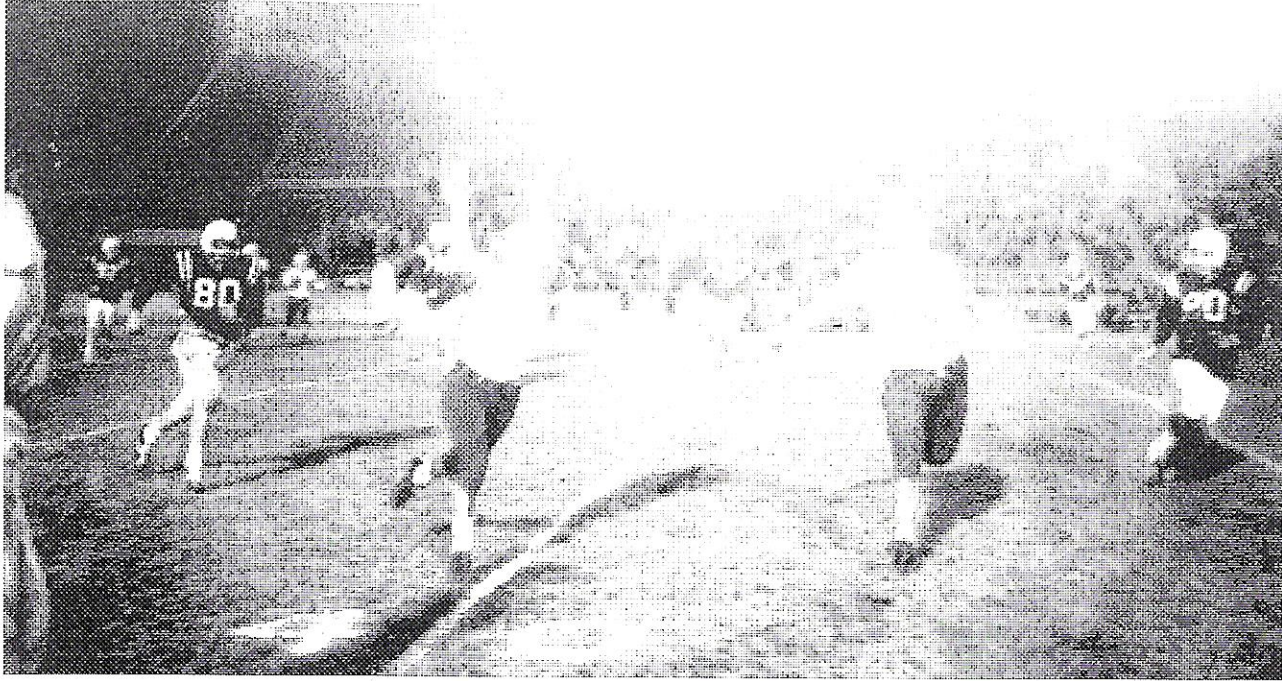
in high school and the photographer for the Carter-Riverside High School Eagle Record newspaper in Ft. Worth, Texas. How well did Royal-X Pan work for low light photography? A brief history of my experiences will give you a flavor.

Probably no one other than the journalism teacher and myself knew why the lighting of the photo appeared the way that it did. The shot taken with flash would have been usable, but it had the one-sided artificial shadows

Armed with a 4x5 Anniversary Speed Graphic equipped with an uncoated 135 mm f4.5 Zeiss Tessar lens, experiments with the new film began in 1958. As with any new film, initial trial shots were taken around the house with everyday subjects. One of my first images was of my brother molding lead pistol bullets with an electric furnace. Illumination was from a single incandescent desk lamp, probably with a 100 watt bulb. Good shadow details in the face are visible in the photo as well as in other parts of the picture. In all likelihood, these initial shots were at the nominal rating of ASA 1250 with normal processing in DK-50. The narrow field of focus indicates the lens was probably nearly wide open, although with a 135 mm lens, the depth of focus is



Royal-X Pan shot of Down to Earth



Football action shot with Royal-X. Note blur in football and legs

characteristic of a single flash unit near the camera. In general, this initial photo set the pattern for my use for Royal-X Pan. After some flash shots were taken to assure that a good image was available, shots with ambient light were then taken with Royal-X Pan on an experimental basis. In actuality, ASA 400 film, a good tripod, and a slow exposure could have recorded such ambient light shots as well or better, but lugging around a tripod was not a typical activity.

The real challenge with Royal-X Pan was to get sports action shots at night. The Fort Worth high school football stadium was built during the Great Depression. Lighting on the playing field was two or three f-stops lower than what is commonly encountered in modern sports stadiums. After getting some good shots in the first half of a game at moderate f-stops with an electronic flash with a 1/5000th second flash duration that really froze the action, experiments with the stadium lighting began. In both the flash and stadium light shots, the Speed Graphic was pre-focused to about 20 feet, since there was not time to focus during a play. The accompanying football shot is most of a 4x5 negative with little cropping. The shot was taken with maximum push processing to ASA 12000. The twenty-minute plus development time in the dark room can try the patience. The lens was always wide open at f

4.5 and the focal plane shutter set for something like 1/125th second, although bracketing to 1/200th second was tried. My recollection is that the negatives at the higher shutter speeds were too thin to print properly, so only the lower shutter speeds could be used. Although there is some blurred motion visible, and the uncoated lens shows some flare from internal reflections, the shot does capture the ambient lighting well. The various sports editors for the school paper, myself included, usually selected the action shots made with flash over the Royal-X Pan shots.

A photographer for the now defunct Fort Worth Press came to the night football games with a Pacemaker Speed Graphic equipped with a 7 inch (180 mm), f 2.5 Aero Ektar lens from World War II surplus. This lens was originally used in aerial cameras where its focus could be set to infinity. These lenses still appear from time-to-time on the used market. He was also trying to use Royal-X Pan and stadium lights. I never saw a good photo from his efforts in print. He probably had the problem that, as he opened up the lens, the depth of focus for his longer focal length lens became so narrow that he couldn't keep the action in focus.



Baseball action shot with Royal-X. Better lighting allowed higher shutter speeds

Experiments with a 35 mm camera and push-processed Tri-X or Ansco Super Hypan also failed for night action shots at the football stadium. In general, the Speed Graphic action shots with stadium lighting were much better than the 35 mm shots because of grain problems with the 35 mm negatives. Some candid 35 mm sideline shots, where slower shutter speeds and lower ASA ratings could be used, found their way into the school annual. While the same shots could have been taken with the Speed Graphic, the "window shade" noise of the focal plane shutter and the large bulk of the camera would probably have led to much more self-conscious views of the players, band and cheerleaders.

Fortunately, the baseball stadium, where night high school games were played, had better lighting. Also, the point where the action was likely to occur could be accurately prefocused. The baseball shot of a hit was shot at about 1/200th second at the usual wide-open f 4.5 and ASA 12000. A bit of the fading evening twilight can be seen in the background. This shot did appear in the school

newspaper, and many other usable exposures were taken under those lighting conditions.

Although Royal-X Pan provided an additional tool in the Graflex photographer's toolbox, it never became the mainstay of 4x5 press photography. Perhaps it slightly lengthened the life of the Speed Graphic as the standard press camera. The breath-taking crispness of a well exposed and printed flash exposure on 4x5 film made even the best efforts with Royal-X Pan look inferior. Royal-X Pan was also available as 120 roll film. There it compensated for the relatively slow 80 mm f 2.8 or f 3.5 focal length lens often used, and allowed photography under most conditions that also permitted 35 mm photography.

The Kodak Master Photoguide from 1978 lists Royal-X Pan as an available film. This means that the film outlasted Graflex camera production by several years. Now both are relics of the not-so-recent past.

Letters to the Editor

When Graflex introduced the 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 pre-Anniversary in 1935, it was available with either a Graphic or Graflex back. What is interesting is that the Graphic back was designed to only take Graflex holders! According to Morgan and Lester's 8th edition of Graphic and Graflex Photography, "The first models which appeared in 1935 and 1936 were equipped with a Graphic Back designed to accept the Graflex rather than the Graphic holders, which were not available at that time." Though an odd reason, this may be due to the fact that the 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 size Graphic had not been produced since 1927. The quickest way to see if your camera is of this type is to check the right side to see if the Graflex holder style metal ridge is present.

According to Tim Holden:

1. Because Graflex did not anticipate large demand for this format, they did not produce a Graphic holder. There was, however, huge demand for the format.
2. Though records are not quite complete, Tim believes a batch of 250 cameras with velvet-lined backs (normally used with Graflex backs) was produced with serial numbers in the 185403 to 185652 range. Then, when it was discovered that inserting the holder in the spring back tore the cloth, a second batch of 250 cameras was produced (serial numbers 186574 through 186823) without the cloth. Problems persisted because the ridge was not high enough, and the holder frequently came out when the slide was removed. When the next batch of 250 was manufactured (187433 through 187682), Graflex had produced new holders and returned to the familiar Graphic holder for the Graphic back. If you have this type of camera or have the standard back in this range or shortly thereafter, please let us know, and we will publish your information.
3. According to Tim's memory, 3x4 Graphic holders were made and the Graphic back put on later models, without a specific recall or replacement statement or policy.

Ken Metcalf

Thanks, Ken for bring this odd fact about early Speed Graphics to us. Undoubtedly many readers will be heading immediately to their examples of this camera to see if they take Graflex holders

To: Editor Graflex Historical Quarterly

The recent article on the Auto Graflex makes the unsupported statements that the term "Auto" was never explained by Graflex and that this possibly had to do with the mirror automatically releasing the shutter. However, in at least the 1918 catalog at several places, Graflex states (capitals added) things like "the shutter in every Graflex camera is actuated to give AUTOMATIC exposures from

1/10 to 1/1000 second" and, for the separate focal plane shutter, "while constructed for high speed work, it is also adapted for slow AUTOMATIC exposures" Thus "Auto" certainly refers to the shutter itself without relation to the mirror. Further, it is believed apparent that "Auto" refers to the fact that the exposures are automatically determined by simply selecting an aperture and a tension without the clumsy adjustment needed for a variable aperture as on the earlier two-curtain Graflexes.

Steve Church

Thanks, Steve, for shedding light on a question which is often asked about these early SLRs.

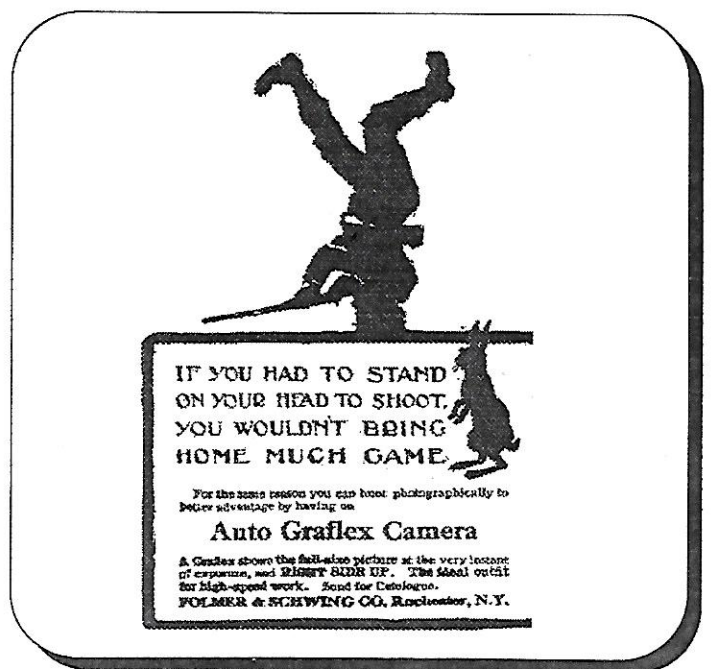
Dear Editor:

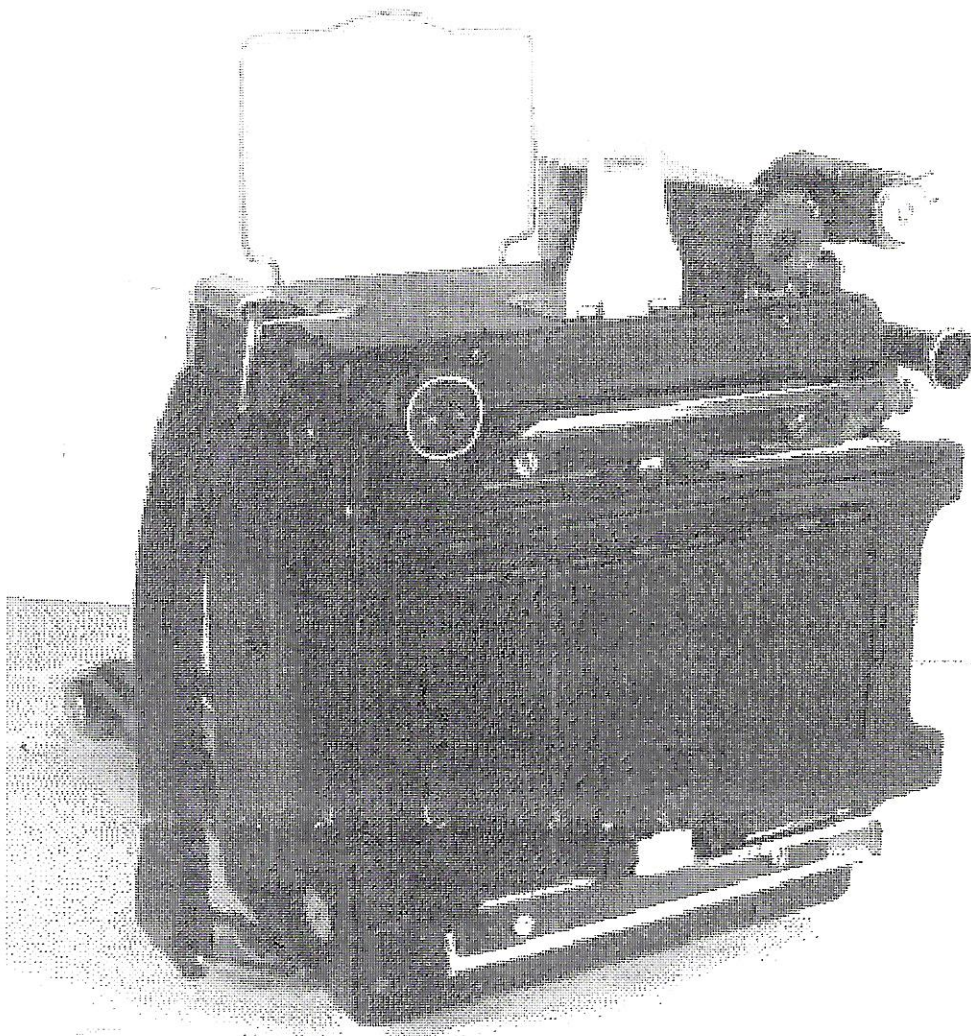
I have a Nat'l Graflex series I (one) That has an interchangeable lens like the II - McKeown seems to think this feature only appeared on the II, What is the story?

[name withheld by request]

The writer refers to a well known camera collector's guide, Cameras by James and Joan McKeown. The National Graflex SLRs, produced from approximately 1933 to 1941, came in two versions. The first version was not labeled "I," but the second one was labeled "II." The main change was to allow the camera to accept a telephoto lens, after removing the standard one. The other changes are not as noticeable. They include a different position for the mirror cocking lever, and a cable release provision.

The most striking feature of a model II is that it is labeled as such on the viewing hood, which can be mounted on a Model I and vice-versa. We have not seen a true model I with interchangeable lens mount. But if someone had put a I hood on a Model II, it would appear to be a model I. This misleading switching has also caused many other Graflex SLRs to be misidentified, since the hoods usually carry the identification/shutter speed plates.





**Factory Made 2x3 Graflok Backs
for Miniature Speed Graphics**
*- a Letter to user Mike Bergen
from Roger Adams*

Dear Mike,

What threw me at first was your description of the Graflok back on your Miniature Speed Graphic as being made out of "sheet metal." Once I saw the picture, it was clear as to what it was. The picture made the difference. Thanks for sending it.

You are correct that the Graflok back was introduced in 1949, two years after the end of production of the Miniature Speed. However, since the Graflok back was so popular and there was still so many people that had and liked the Miniature Speed, Graflex made available a factory produced retrofit Graflok back for the Miniature Speed. It was catalog number 9297 with an Ektalite and No. 9285 without the Ektalite. I can't label it as rare, but by the same

token I can't label it as common. I guess I'd say that it would be unusual to find one.

What makes this Graflok back peculiar to the Miniature Speed is the flash connector on the back, the same as the original back on the camera. The 2x3 Pacemaker back will also fit on the Miniature Speed, and one can often find them that way, but of course it won't have the flash connector, making it obvious that it is not the "correct" Graflok back for the camera.

I hope this helps you, and feel free to contact me any time you might have any other questions regarding Graflex items.

Sincerely,
Roger Adams

GRAFLEX, INC.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT SINCE 1820

ROCKESTER &  NEW YORK, U.S.A.

Dear Graflex-Graflex Camera Owner:

The other day we received the following letter from one of our camera owners:

"Dear Sir:

The details of the Grafmatic #23" film holder received. Many thanks for your prompt reply.

I went to the _____ Camera Co. here and bought one.

While the salesman was showing me how to work it, a man noticed the demonstration and told the salesman that was just the thing he had long been looking for, and he bought one.

This Grafmatic has placed the old plate holder so obsolete that no salesmanship is required to sell the Grafmatic to any Graflex owner.

It is neat, durable, truly a great piece of engineering work.

Yours truly,

/s/ Ralph Drube

Chicago, Ill."

This letter gave us an idea—we thought there must be more of our camera owners who have not heard about the new products we have brought out in the last year. Knowing what swell Christmas gifts they would make, we thought you would want to hear about them.

The enclosed booklet is for you—it will bring you up to date as to the latest Graflex-Graflex equipment. By the way, we have enclosed a gift certificate you will find handy for the camera fan in your family "who likes to pick his own."

Yours for a Happy Graflex Christmas - 1950



RS Schumacher/job

Vice President

THIS SHOULD BE APPROVED BY THE COMPANY FOR ATTENTION OF THE WRITER UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

Interesting factory letter touting the new Grafmatic, circa 1950

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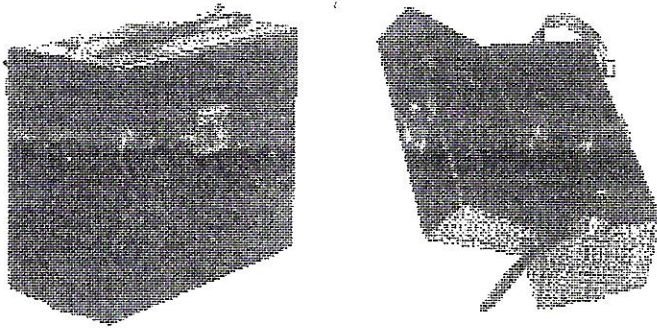
If anyone did not receive the previous issue of this newsletter, please contact the address below. Sometimes one goes

Graflex Historic Quarterly

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New Reflex Carry-All Case Available

Want a reflex carrying case that really satisfies a need? Once again Graflex has met the requests of its Dealers for top quality reflex carrying case... a case that can carry the many accessories used by reflex photographers. You can stock it now the Graflex Reflex CARRY-ALL Case, Furthermore, this new case will take almost any reflex camera on the market.

This new Graflex case is made of top grain cowhide with a beautiful channel grip finish. There are four rubber feet to prevent any marking of the bottom, and a sturdy snap lock to keep the case securely closed. A wide leather strap runs completely under the bottom of the case and up both sides; it is held in place by three

leather loops which are attached to the body of the case. The strap is suitable for both hand or shoulder carrying.

What Can It Hold?

This is one of it's most important features. The new Graflex Reflex Carry-All Case has four compartments, which will hold: camera, extra film, flash unit, flash bulbs, exposure meter, filters, lens shade and other small items.

Order Now!

Don't lose any sales by failing to stock this new case now! At the list price of \$19.95 it's a real, genuine bargain and one which will move fast once you start showing it. Availability? Now!

A promo for an unusual case. Have you ever seen one like this?