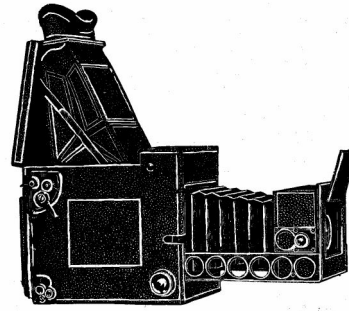


# GRAFLEX HISTORIC QUARTERLY



**VOLUME 8 ISSUE 1**

**FIRST QUARTER 2003**

## FEATURES

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only mildly interested, because I already had a number of German stereo cameras. The pictures refused to load that night, I think because they were coming from a Russian source which was closed down at that time. When I awoke at 6 a.m., I leisurely surfed the cameras again and



Originally published by Underwood and Underwood in 1905.

## The Find of the New Century!

For those of us looking for extremely rare cameras at unbelievable prices, this story brings hope. Here is subscriber Larry Hayda's story: "It was a real adventure getting a Triple Lens Stereo Graphic on Ebay. The camera came onto Ebay on a late Saturday night, listed as a 'Rare two lens German Stereo Camera.' I was

thought to check that ad. This time the pictures began to load, but only a quarter inch at a time. It was grueling. But then, as the scene became revealed more and more, I saw the name tag 'Folmer and Schwing,' and my heart began to pound. I couldn't believe it. It was the very camera I had seen on the stereo card [shown above], and in well-preserved condition. What a find! It wasn't long before I excitedly hit the 'Buy it Now' button and secured the purchase

for \$850. The camera had belonged to a famous Russian photographer named Vladimir Ivanov, and his family turned it over to a Russian giftware company to put on Ebay. The viewing shield did not come with the camera, and the seller was unable to find it even after I offered him a nice sum to track it down. If anyone knows of such a shield, I would love to see one and photograph it so that I might make a replacement. The septum [Roller Partition] is also missing, but everything else is intact and working.”

In addition to being extremely rare, Larry's camera is unusual and both answers and poses interesting questions. Here are some of them:

1. The name “Folmer & Schwing Co., Rochester, N.Y.” appears stamped on the slide bar holding the lensboard and on a tag on the front of the camera. As Folmer & Schwing, Co. was the first name used by Kodak (from 1905 to 1906), it appears that this camera was manufactured, at least for a short time, by Kodak. Also, because I believe Kodak would have used a Folmer & Schwing Division, etc. tag if the camera was sold after 1906, it seems reasonable that the camera was produced between 1905 and 1906.
2. The camera is fitted with the one-piece “Auto” shutter, which was first shown in the 1906 Graflex catalogs.
3. The shape of the cover for the focusing lens door is the same as the ruby window cover shown at least as early as the 1912 catalog on the Magazine Plate and Cut Film Holder.
4. The tension and aperture plates of the camera are also interesting. The lower, tension plate, (as well as the focusing knob) is identical to the one used on the rear-hinged, 1916, Auto Graflex, while the upper, aperture plate, is the same as the 1912 3¼ x 5½ “top handle” Speed Graphic. Close examination of the camera shows a cut line in the leather under the plates, suggesting that the leather was either removed or replaced. Based on the foregoing, it is quite possible that the camera was returned to Graflex around 1916 for an updated shutter and new hardware.
5. Two holders (stamped “Folmer & Schwing Div., E.K.Co.”) were received with the camera which takes 5x8 plates. According to Todd Gustavson of George Eastman House, “The 5x8 was a fairly 'popular' size for view cameras at the turn of the last century. EKC provided 5x8 plates at least through 1930.” The 5x8 plate holder also fits an Anthony stereo camera in Larry's collection and is the design used on the Tourist Graflex, and illustrated and described

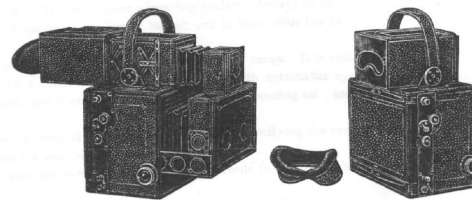
in earlier issues of the Quarterly. Given that this camera was listed in both the 1901 and 1904 catalogs as a 5x7, it would appear that this example was custom-made in the 5x8 size.

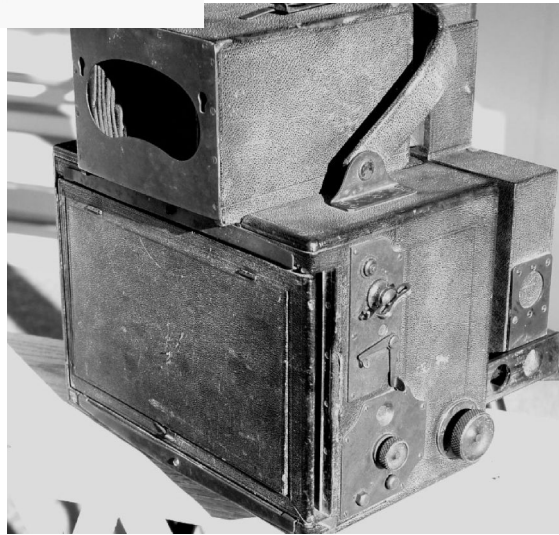
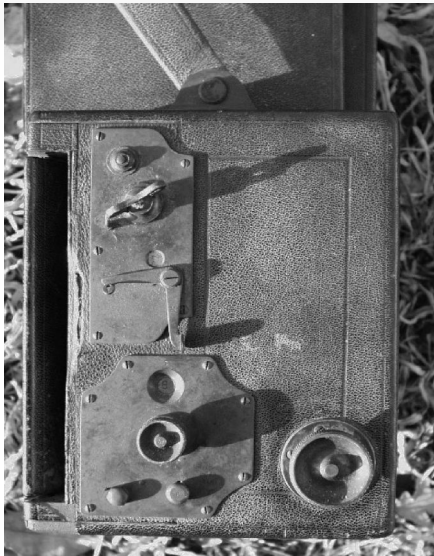
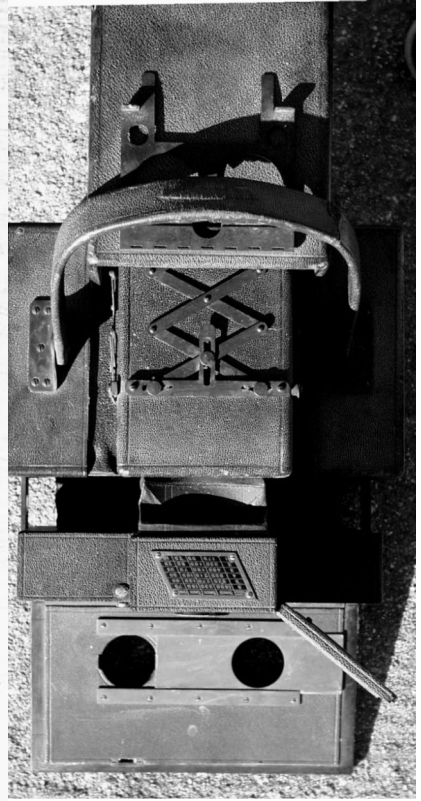
6. When the camera shown in the stereo card is compared to Larry's camera and the 1904 Graflex catalog illustration, it is apparent that the telescopic front on the stereo card camera is somewhat larger, suggesting that the triple lens was, indeed, often custom-made.

7. Finally, the most mysterious part of the camera is what appears to be a flip-up finder that is mounted to the top of the focusing housing. There are five round openings, plus a squared cutout centered on the top. It is Larry's opinion that the two large holes side-by-side are used to estimate the taking field of the lenses. The little holes were just stamped out to cut down on weight. The squared opening gives an approximate width of the image on the ground glass. Reader suggestions as to the uses of these items, as with other aspects of this camera, would be welcome.

As shown in the accompanying illustrations, the camera could be used either with the covers open or closed. With the taking lenses, a plate with a single hole slides to one side to allow shooting through the hinged cover with coupled shutters, which were made by Bausch and Lomb, Rochester, NY (serial number 1247208), and matched Bausch and Lomb Zeiss Tessar Series IIb lenses, Pat. Feb. 24, 1903 (numbers 1492871 and 1492877).

Though much has been learned about this camera from this example, a number of questions are unanswered. Readers are encouraged to send in their thoughts and theories, and we will publish them in the next issue of the Quarterly. Also, if a reader has this camera or knows where one is located, Mr. Hayda would like more information about the septum and shield.





## Ask Tim Holden....

Tim Holden has graciously volunteered to answer subscriber questions in a new quarterly column. Mr. Holden is eminently qualified as he worked for Graflex from 1935 through 1973. In his own words: "I had the title 'Service Department' at the start. The title changed many times over the years, but the job was always the same, only more so. Briefly, I represented the company to the public and vice versa. I was responsible for all non-dealer correspondence. Being the only one with technical photo training, I handled most technical matters with the dealers. We were a small office. My boss reported to the President, and sometimes I did. My job included everything that nobody else was assigned to do, and a few other things. That included price lists, instruction books, reviewing the copy and writing articles for *Graphic Graflex Photography* and finally reviewing advertising copy for accuracy after a couple of embarrassing ads which caused us trouble in writing to customers. Sometimes I was the 'Department', but after WWII, I had as many as 13 people working with me. During the later years, from early 1960s, I had regular meetings with quality control, and I was always the official representative to the Engineering Department. It was very interesting, and never dull. I was present at the Graflex exhibit at numerous trade shows. In the 1960s and 70s, I did some market research on a number of products, one of which was the Strobomatic Flash line and another which was ahead of its time, but eventually emerged as the Graflex Caramate. Now, I am working with the George Eastman House in identifying Graflex products which have come from all sources, Graflex, Kodak, and others."



*Q: Did Graflex have a collection of its own cameras? If so, how extensive was it, and what happened to the cameras when the company was dissolved?*

A: Yes, Graflex had a collection of its cameras, going back to the time when they were first made. The collection was quite extensive, including finished models, as well as those made by the Engineering Department, which had leather covering on just the spots where the metal parts, or working parts, would fit over the leather, so they would know the dimensions were accurate and that the equipment would run satisfactorily. These cameras were kept in the Engineering Department, but as the company moved around and departments changed locations, it proved to be impossible to maintain the complete collection. Consequently, most were turned over to the George Eastman House. This was done long before they acquired a lot of equipment, so they had space for it at the time. The cameras were identified, but not necessarily with sufficient accuracy, so I've been spending time since then going over them. There were also many cameras which had been given to Graflex as outright gifts or in exchange for

some other equipment, so we also had many duplicates. Since our equipment had been turned over to the Eastman House by the time Graflex was dissolved, there was nothing left in the Engineering Department which would be of any interest or value. The equipment was almost entirely at the Eastman House. [Some cameras have been found at warehouses leased by Graflex, namely the J. Hungerford Smith facility at Goodman and Main in Rochester.] At the present time, George Eastman House is going over the stock of cameras, trying to eliminate duplicates to give them more space, and I have been participating in this activity.

*Q: After Graflex was sold by Kodak in 1926, what was the relationship between the two companies?*

A: In 1926 Graflex had no outlets or distribution capability whatsoever. Therefore, Graflex came to an agreement with Kodak which would involve wholesaling the cameras for five years to the Kodak dealers. In addition, the cameras were advertised in several photographic magazines, and these ads (which were paid by Kodak) appeared over the address of the Eastman Kodak Stores, which were scattered around the country. Over the years, Graflex decided to build up a distribution setup with some traveling salesmen, and working with the major dealers in the major cities, we developed quite a list of worthwhile outlets. The agreement with Kodak was renewed every five years until 1946, when the break was made with Kodak. However, it took people a long

time to realize that Graflex was not part of Kodak. Because the cameras were being advertised over the Eastman Kodak Stores' name, it promoted the belief on the part of most of the customers that Graflex was still part of Kodak. Also, the Service Department handling correspondence at Kodak continued to answer letters about Graflex equipment, although if they got too "sticky" or too involved, they sent them to me, and I handled them directly. This was particularly true during the last few years of the contract, since the Speed Graphics were so popular, and we offered so many different types of rangefinders and flash equipment, the poor guys at Kodak just could not keep it straight. In 1945 Graflex established its own export department, and in 1946 the fourth five-year contract dealing with the wholesaling of Graflex cameras to Kodak was not renewed. Graflex had a very fine group of photographic dealers and salesmen covering the entire country. All of this was due primarily to the ability of one H. A. (Hod) Schumacher. He was very much a "go-getter" and directly managed to get people behind Graflex.

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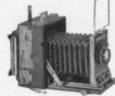
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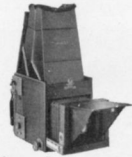
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1933 and 1934 ads introducing the National and National II Graflex cameras.



## Gulliver's Contax – The Graphic “70”

By Jim Chasse

**D**esigned at Graflex by Hubert Nerwin, formerly of Zeiss Icon, and sold to the U.S. Army Signal Corps as a combat camera, then marketed as a civilian camera in 1955, this 70mm format camera looks like a 35mm rangefinder camera on steroids!

I have been able to find three of the military version of this fine camera, along with a collection of accessories. I was also fortunate enough to locate a periscope attachment, which I will describe in a future article. The Camera Set was given the designation “KS-6 (1)” and the camera with a normal lens, “KE-4 (1).”

When introduced to the civilian market, the camera boasted of the following features:

- They claimed “the highest resolving power ever achieved in any production camera.”
- A “fast handling rangefinder and viewfinder system (250% more accurate than top-rated 35mm cameras).”
- “Big negatives proportionate to standard print sizes” (double perforated and measuring 56mm x 72mm). The film was available in Kodak “bulk loaded” cassettes that provide 50 exposures, and uses a cassette-to-cassette loading system. Cassettes have self-threading cores to avoid the necessity of

opening, which could destroy light-tightness.

- All three lenses are lightweight aluminum mounts, have click stops, depth of field scales and individual filter-retaining lens shades which accommodate the same size filters for all three lenses. Each lens also has a compensating cam for the rangefinder system. The bayonet mounted lenses are wide angle (f4.5/2½”), normal (f2.8/4”) and long focus (f4/8”).
- A spring-wound film transport (10 shots per winding) is coupled to the shutter mechanism, “permitting taking pictures in rapid succession, more than 8 shots in 5 seconds, if needed.”
- A unique film signal system “using red and white discs that show if the film has advanced properly. An automatic reset-style exposure counter is visible through a window on the back of the camera and is coupled to a numbering counter, which photographs each exposure number on the film outside the picture area.”
- “The camera is equipped with a self-capping focal plane shutter with a rubberized nylon curtain and ball bearing mounts for smoothness and accuracy. Curtain travel is less than 1/8” from the film plane with an efficiency of 80% at the highest speed, and correspondingly higher efficiency at lower speeds.” There are nine measured speeds from 1/500 to 1 second, each being indicated by click stops. “The shutter curtain travels from right to left, synonymous with the image of an object passing in front of the camera from left to right. Cocking of the shutter is automatically provided as the film is transported, preventing double exposure.”
- “The camera body is a die-cast, light-weight magnesium alloy, designed in four major parts in case of field servicing, if required.”
- The Graphic “70” is designed for use under the most severe climatic conditions, is sealed against

fungus and the entry of water, and operates satisfactorily at  $-25^{\circ}$  F and can be operated with "heavily-mittened hands."

- A built-in pistol grip and nylon hand strap permit holding the camera firmly with the right hand, with the shutter release directly under the right thumb, leaving the left hand free to focus the lens. For tripod use, sockets are provided for both vertical and horizontal positioning.

- "The camera measures  $9\frac{1}{4}$ " long,  $4\frac{7}{8}$ " high, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " deep, exclusive of lens projection, and is balanced for one-hand operation. Weight, with normal  $4"$  f 2.8 lens is [a whopping] 5 lbs."

- Flash synchronization is internal, with provision for zero and 20 millisecond delays. A specially designed B-C flash unit, incorporating a replaceable capacitor and an adjustable reflector, accommodated both bayonet and medium screw base flash lamps. It has dual flash lamp ejectors, which are attached to a bayonet mount on top of the camera.

- A coincidence-type rangefinder, combined with a variable magnification optical viewfinder, provides automatic masking and automatic parallax compensation, which are actuated by cams on each lens. "The result is a viewfinder which shows the field of view at all distances for specific lenses in use with an accuracy of 95% to 98%." In the rangefinder, an optical glass bar insures maximum stability, and a Diaspora meter (rotating optical wedges) provides maximum accuracy. Rangefinder images appear under the same magnification as the remainder of the viewfinder image. "The result is a rangefinder with an accuracy 250% greater than current top grade 35mm cameras." An open frame parallax-compensated sports-type viewfinder is provided with adjustment for use with all three lenses.

- Elimination of backing paper and an accurately machined film channel make possible "unmatched accuracy" of film register at the focal plane with  $\pm .0015$ ". (Conventional roll and sheet film standards are  $\pm .007$ ; the result is resolving power 3 to 5 times greater than is possible with conventional cameras).

According to Kodak's CAMEROSITY code, all three of my lenses (all Ektars) were manufactured in 1952. In addition, all three fitted cases were manufactured by Halliburton, with the two military tagged cases painted all olive drab and the civilian case painted a light gray with a crackle finish and chrome hardware. The military camera was painted olive drab, while some of the civilian version may have been painted black.

The basic outfit consisting of the camera, carrying strap, eight film cassettes, five filters (Series 8), a B-C flash unit, cable re-

lease, aluminum case and instruction manual retailed for \$1,850. If you added the 8" (at \$550), and the 2½" (at \$920), the total cost of an outfit was a whopping \$3,320 ... when a Chevy cost \$1,800!

In 1952 Graflex was the recipient of U.S. Camera magazine's Camera Achievement Award. This award was also given to the Signal Corps for its part in the development of the camera. Also, the first three Graphic "70" camera outfits released for civilian distribution were delivered to Life magazine in 1956. According to Graflex, additional civilian delivery was to commence in June of 1956.

As a professional photographer in the 1950s, I used a Rollei and a Speed Graphic. Both the Hasselblad (retailing for \$380 in 1956) and the Graphic "70" (retailing for \$1,850) were considered luxury cameras. If I had been offered one camera or the other at the time, I would have selected the Hasselblad because of the substantially lower cost, single-lens reflex focusing and ease of operation.

As a Graflex collector, I believe these are rare (probably 1,000 or fewer were produced), beautifully-made cameras and are



## Graflex Historic Quarterly

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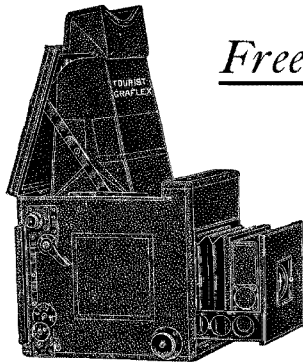
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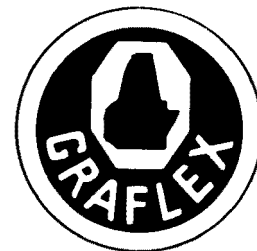
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