



GRAFLEX Journal

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT GRAFLEX AND THEIR CAMERAS

ISSUE 3, 2016

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Figure 1 A late Graphic 35 with Universal Spectramatic band.

THE GRAFLEX GRAPHIC 35

By Michael Parker

Ken Metcalf has done a thorough job of seeking out and accumulating historic material about the Graphic 35. This article is based on Ken's research, on the short piece by Tim T. Holden in the *Graflex Historic Quarterly*, Volume 2 Issue 2 (mid-1997), on Tim's "Black Book" of personal data about production and on some files provided to Ken by Tim's daughter. My recent article on the Cee-ay 35 ended with a brief discussion of the Graphic 35 as a related but somewhat distant cousin. Now, thanks to Ken and Tim, we have more information, and it's clear that the Graphic 35 deserves a comprehensive overview.

The Graphic 35 is the result of an overhaul of the Ciro 35 marketed by Graflex up to 1955, and despite some outward similarities, it bears only faint resemblance internally. The camera is an interesting mix of innovation and tradition. The focusing arrangement and the front mounted

shutter release, both designed for ease of operation, were modern and unique, while the separate rangefinder window, separately cocked shutter and knob wind were outdated at a time when most competitors had lever wind combined with shutter cocking and a single viewfinder/rangefinder window.

The Graphic 35 came with a Prontor-SVS shutter with speeds from 1 to 1/300 sec with self timer, M & X flash synch., and from May 1955, a choice of 50mm lens with f/3.5 or f/2.8 aperture. The top deck carries a hot shoe, frame counter showing how many pictures are left, wind and rewind knobs and a neat, bright blue Graflex logo. A clearly visible distance scale sits just below the top deck in a fan-shaped cutout and is surrounded by engraved aperture numbers indicating depth of field. The camera came with "handsome scuff-proof silver grey covering, satin chrome finish and diamond turned knobs." Some later coverings seem to have been more black than grey.



Figure 2 Back view Graphic 35 – Rangefinder window is on the left. Photo by John Wade.

The main sales features for the Graphic 35 were "push button focusing" and "Universal Spectramatic Flash Settings," and these are treated in detail below. Entries from Tim Holden's Black Book let us know that the first shipments of the camera were on 25 February 1955, and a press showing - part of a marketing blitz - was held at "Toots Shor's famous New York restaurant" on 8 March 1955. The Ciro 35 had been advertised as "the only rangefinder camera

109
 GRAPHIC 35
 1st shipment 2/25/55. Press show 3/8/55
 50mm f/3.5 Rodenstock lens. Bronter SVS
 Double segment distance dial Oct 1, 1955
 screw in filter ring - Entero July 1, 1955
 f2.8 Emma Wark lens, double color band Nov 11, 1955
 Oct at center of Depth field scale instead of f/3.5 or f/2.8 Nov '55

110
 Front cell threads 31.5 ± .25 mm O.D.
 DFN 30mm by .5mm ± .030 - .003 mm 3 full threads in front of front cell ring. Entero # 526
 Unimbral spectramatic f/2.8 first delivery. Apr. 24 1956
 191 - blue f/11, black index line
 271 - black f/11 pink " "
 29 - black f/11 red " "
 10 - black f/11 black " "
 Chrome no lacquered finish Jan '57

Figure 3 Notes from Tim Holden's Black Book.

Graphic 35 INTRODUCED AT SPECIAL PRESS SHOW IN N. Y. CITY

Simultaneous with its announcement to Graflex dealers across the nation, the new Graphic 35 was introduced to editors of leading photographic publications, camera columnists, and writers for syndicates, news services and consumer magazines.

The occasion was a press preview at Toots Shor's famous New York restaurant.

An audience of more than 50 key editors and writers saw the Graphic 35 demonstrated; viewed a parts display showing the details of the mechanisms which go into the camera; and saw an exhibition of color and black and white photographs taken with a Graphic 35 camera by famed photographer, Joseph Janney Steinmetz.

MAGAZINE ARTICLES

In preparation for the press showing, editors of the principal photo trade and fan magazines were loaned cameras some time ago for testing. Articles reporting on their tests will appear in dealer and fan publications beginning in April.

GRAPHIC 35 ON TV

In addition to these photo magazine stories on the Graphic 35, a number of network television breaks for the camera have been arranged including regular appearances on the "On Your Account" program and a special placement on one of the Homer Bell TV programs in which stage and screen star Gene Lockhart will "purchase" a Graphic 35 during the program.

Other publicity activities include use of the Graphic 35 in a nation wide newspaper supplement which will provide newspapers with outdoor living stories to appear in summer. Also, national travel and women's service magazines will feature the camera in summer publications.

COUNTRY-WIDE COVERAGE

The combined force of advance photo magazine notices, along with numerous newspaper, magazine and television placements, will provide maximum impact in all areas during the introduction of the Graphic 35.



GRAFLEX 1955 PHOTO CONTEST BRINGS RECORD NUMBER OF ENTRIES

Without a doubt, the 1955 Graflex Photo Contest has created more interest than any previous contest conducted by the company. As we went to press, stacks of last minute entries were still coming in, indicating the success of this year's contest.

According to Don Calver, Graflex Advertising Manager (and Contest Manager), the volume of entries is expected to exceed by at least 15% last year's record-breaking number.

Non-professional Class most popular

Photos already "logged in" have been submitted to date from 36 states and from 5 foreign countries, and the quality of the prints is very high.

The greatest volume of prints submitted this year has been in the non-

professional class closely followed by the teen-age classification.

A new classification for industrial photographs has produced a number of very high quality pictures, pointing up the extent to which this branch of photography is growing in importance and vigor on the national scene.

Another new classification, a press class for weekly newspapers, has also proved a successful addition to the Photo Contest. Contest directors are closely watching this section, which stimulates a fast-growing market of camera buyers.

Winners to be announced

The contest, open from January 1 to March 1, will be judged during March, and winners will be announced in a coming issue of Trade Notes.

under \$50." This new and improved camera was still great value at \$77.50. A complete outfit in March 1955 with f/3.5 lens, flash unit and case retailed for \$89.50. In May 1955, the same outfit, but with the new f/2.8 lens, retailed for \$99.50.

How many were made?

A comprehensive production table produced by Graflex for the Graphic 35 provides detailed statistical information. Cameras were generally manufactured in batches of 2,000 or 3,000 with production starting in August 1954 and ending in July 1957*. Despite the short production life of about 3 years, a total of 68,269 cameras were made and distributed. Serial numbering started at 550,000 in August 1954, continuing to 599,999 in January 1956. Numbering then recommenced at 1,100,000, finishing with camera number 1,118,269 in July 1957.

Graphic "35"

	550,000 - 600,000	8/11/54 - 11/10/55	1,100,000
8/11/54	550,000 - 551,999	25171	2000
8/11/54	552,000 - 553,999	25172	2000
8/11/54	554,000 - 555,999	25173	2000
8/11/54	556,000 - 557,999	25174	2000
11/8/54	558,000 - 559,999	25116	2000
1/19/55	560,000 - 560,999	25199	594
1/19/55	561,000 - 562,999	25213	2000
1/24/55	563,000 - 564,999	25218	2000
3/11/55	565,000 - 565,999	25116	1050
3/15/55	566,000 - 566,999	25116	325
5/5/55	567,000 - 567,999	25354	1500
5/5/55	568,000 - 568,999	25355	2000
5/5/55	569,000 - 570,999	25367	2000
5/23/55	571,000 - 571,999	25440	3000
5/23/55	572,000 - 572,999	25454	3000
6/24/55	573,000 - 573,999	25469	3000
6/24/55	574,000 - 574,999	25470	3000
9/9/55	575,000 - 575,999	25550	3000
9/9/55	576,000 - 576,999	25551	3000
11/21/55	577,000 - 577,999	25630	3000
11/30/55	578,000 - 578,999	25643	3000
11/30/55	579,000 - 579,999	25644	3000
1/10/56	580,000 - 580,999	25747	3000
1/27/56	581,000 - 581,999	25769	3000
3/5/56	582,000 - 582,999	25808	3000
8/29/56	583,000 - 583,999	25867	3000
11/16/56	584,000 - 584,999	25950	2000
11/16/56	585,000 - 585,999	25954	1100
7/1/57	586,000 - 586,999	26108	2000
7/1/57	587,000 - 587,999	26110	2000

Figure 5 Graflex's tabulation of production figures for the Graphic 35.

Push button focusing

The precursors of the Graphic 35, the Cee-ay 35 and Ciro 35, used a sliding tube focusing arrangement with a pin engaged with a curved slot in the lens barrel and activated by the up-and-down movement of the focusing lever. The Graphic 35 persisted with the sliding tube arrangement, but thanks to the ingenuity of Graflex instrument maker Lewis Traino, this became a much more sophisticated but still robust arrangement with the in-house designed "wing focusing." Wing focusing uses a system

Figure 4 Graflex report on the press introduction of the Graphic 35.

of gears and levers activated by ridged piano-key style buttons on either side of the lens to push the lens barrel back and forth while activating the split-image range-finder.

Push button focusing was an important aspect of the sales pitch for the Graphic 35 and was highlighted on the cover of the Graflex trade newsletter for March 1955. Advertising stressed the ease of focusing the camera and the way the focusing system could be used even while wearing ski gloves. Some advertisements stressing simplicity of operation seem to have been aimed particularly at women. There will always be critics, and some apparently objected to the push-button system on the grounds that both hands were occupied in focusing with no provision to cradle or steady the camera.



Figure 8 Graflex trade announcement for the "New Graphic 35".

Push button focusing was rarely attempted after the Graphic 35. In fact, only three cameras worldwide used a similar or comparable system. Graflex reintroduced push button focusing (and Spectramatic flash setting) with the short-lived Graphic Jet of 1961 (made by Kowa). The Jet used push buttons similar to those of the Graphic 35, but this time, the buttons moved the film plane, not the lens barrel. The Dacora-Matic of 1960 (also sold as the Ilford Sportsmaster and Hanimex Electra II) used a series of four shutter release buttons each marked with a distance symbol and each button modifying the lens focus setting accordingly. The subject distance determined which shutter button the operator would use. The Fotron camera made by the Triad Corp. of Glendale, CA, used a system of three shutter buttons to set focus similar to the Dacora camera but complicated by a fourth indoor/outdoor button that changed each focus setting.

Spectramatic flash system

In his 1997 article, Tim Holden says that: "Our Director of Engineering Vernon Whitman...came up with the idea of color scales for automatic determination of correct flash exposure, which was a big problem with most camera users - especially those not mathematically inclined."

The idea for the bands was to free the photographer from the burden of memorizing or calculating guide numbers and film speed, and so the first style of band was calibrated solely for specific flashbulbs and film types. Progress in both these areas and the increasing influence of electronic flash forced changes.

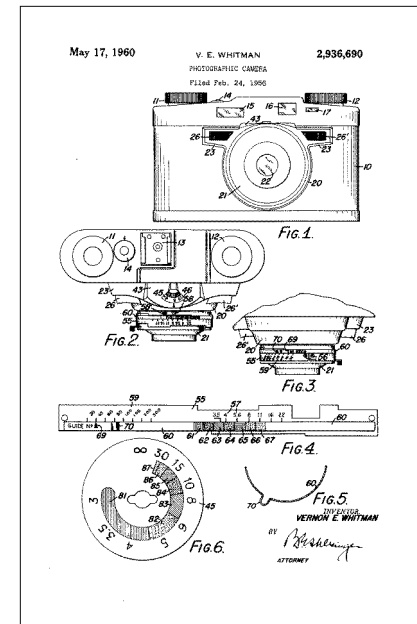


Figure 9 Patent for the Spectramatic system with Vernon E. Whitman as inventor.

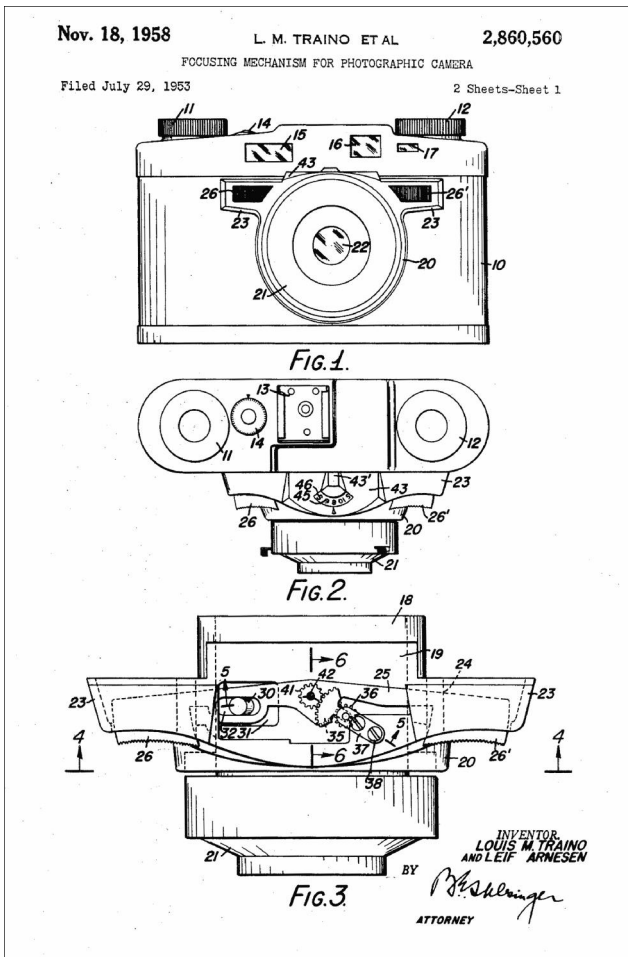


Figure 6 Focusing mechanism patent with Louis M. Traino and Leif Arnesen as inventors.

For his invention, Mr. Traino received \$4,000 (\$35,000 today), the largest cash award ever made from the Graflex suggestion plan. Mr. H. A. Schumaker, VP of Sales and Advertising, in tune with the times, coined the phrase "Push Button focusing." This innovation, apparently more than any other, compensated for the shortcomings of the camera on film advance and shutter setting.



IDEA PAYS OFF—Louis Traino (right) gets \$4,000 check from Edward F. Burns, Graflex suggestion chairman.

Idea Worth \$4,000 To Graflex Worker

A \$4,000 windfall descended on the family of Louis Traino, 31 Canary St., today.

As a result, the Traino family of six—ma, pa and four kids—are going to have a new home, including a workshop for pa. Mrs. Traino insists on this.

The down payment for the new Traino home came from Graflex, Inc. as a result of Traino's development of a basic idea for rapid focusing and increased operating efficiency in the Graphic 35, introduced a year ago by the company.

It was the largest cash award ever given under the Graflex suggestion plan. Traino, who is an instrument maker in the firm's experimental shop, worked out the idea in his basement workshop. That's why Mrs. Traino in-

sists on a workshop in the new home they intend to buy. Maybe more ideas will come out of it, she reasons.

Traino, a graduate of Jefferson High School, has been with Graflex since October, 1950. His interest in photography and photographic instruments has in great measure been the outgrowth of his employment, he says.

P.S.—By the time Uncle Sam and the state get an income tax bite out of that \$4,000, Traino will have about \$3,200 left.

Figure 7 Report of the award to L. Traino in the Rochester Times-Union of August 8, 1955.

Initially, a single color scale dealt only with Kodachrome at 12 ASA. By April 1955 when more film types had entered the market, a second band was added to cover high speed Ektachrome and Anscochrome. In April 1956, the company established a single "universal" colour band and added a scale at the base of the lens barrel for the user to set the guide number appropriate for the flash being used. The first deliveries of the universal band camera were on 24 April 1956.

In use, after setting the guide number, the photographer focuses the camera, observes the colour associated with the distance reading (the "visi-ready dial") and uses the same colour coding on the aperture scale to set the lens aperture. In the illustration, the distance measure of 3.5 feet shows red.



Figure 10 Universal Spectramatic band aperture adjustment and distance scale. Photo by John Wade.

This indicates that the aperture pointer should be moved to the red (last) segment on the aperture scale (f/16-22). For anyone familiar with the calculations for guide numbers, distance, film speed and aperture, this is a straightforward arrangement to simplify flash exposures. According to Tim Holden, however, the system was not well understood or accepted by dealers or the public, and the main selling point for the camera remained push-button focusing.

The 1953 Bolsey B22 Set-o-matic also had a system to change aperture according to distance for flash photography using four combinations of film and flashbulb labeled A, B, C and D. The system did not seem to meet with great success, and the sale of all B-series Bolsey cameras ceased in 1956.

Lens/shutter assembly

In 1954 the Wollensak Company was purchased by the Revere Corp., and the Graflex Ciro 35 may well have been the last 35mm camera to be equipped with a Wollensak lens/shutter assembly. As part of their upgrade to the Graphic 35, Graflex had to look offshore for this component and settled on a German supplier. The shutter selected was the high-quality Prontor-SVS (1- 1/300 second), and this was coupled initially with a Rodenstock 50mm f/3.5 lens. In May 1955, the camera became available with an f/2.8 lens, and the shutter speeds changed from the old system (1/10, 1/25, 1/50, etc.) to the new one (1/8, 1/15, 1/30, etc.). Tim Holden's Black Book records that on 11 November 1955, an Enna Werk 50mm f/2.8 lens was used on the camera with dual Spectramatic colour band.

It is difficult to determine which lenses were made by which manufacturer, since all variations were labeled "Graflar," and catalogue information simply states "Graflar f/2.8 or f/3.5 lens color-corrected and coated." Some lenses are labeled G. Rodenstock along the front rim, but others have no overt indication of the actual manufacturer. An eBay search by Ken Metcalf suggests

that Rodenstock also made the f/2.8 lens, so it is possible that the German assemblies were put together with whichever lens (Rodenstock or Enna) was available at the time. The cameras with f/3.5 and f/2.8 lenses were sold side-by-side at different price points. A November 1955 Graflex information sheet to dealers states that the new faster lens camera "enables you to step up both your dollar sales and your profit by more than 11%."

Another company information sheet of May 1956 states that the Universal Spectramatic system was available only with the f/2.8 model. This period of exclusivity seems to have disappeared within a year.

IT'S HERE! ANOTHER GRAPHIC 35 f/2.8 EXCLUSIVE



THE ONLY CAMERA IN THE WORLD THAT HAS UNIVERSAL SPECTRAMATIC FLASH SETTINGS

Makes Indoor Flash Photography Practically Automatic With Any Type of Black and White or Color Film

Now, the Graphic 35 camera with f/2.8 lens is further out in front than ever before for the new Universal Spectramatic Flash Setting means more sales for your store. This newest feature permits quick, easy, practically automatic indoor flash pictures regardless of the type of film used. Anscochrome, Kodachrome, Ektachrome . . . any color film or black and white film . . . from the slowest to the fastest . . . can be used with this new system. It entirely eliminates the use of calculations in determining the correct aperture settings.

Universal Spectramatic Flash Setting, together With Push-Button Focusing, offers Two Big Reasons why the Graphic 35 will continue to be the fastest-selling 35mm camera in your store.

Order NOW! The quantity you need by using the order form enclosed. Get them in stock ahead of the publicity and advertising which is being held until July 1st. Remember: the New, exclusive, Universal Spectramatic is available ONLY on the Graphic 35—and only on the f/2.8 model (not available with the f/3.5 edition).

Figure 11 Graflex May 1956 trade announcement for the Universal Spectramatic band.

The comma-shaped and grooved shutter release (see Figure 1) is actuated with a sideways motion. It sits beside the lens barrel and is linked to the shutter release by a bent rod lying mainly outside the camera body. An internal mechanism prevents shutter release before winding on, although it is possible to bypass this for intentional double exposures. The focusing buttons and shutter release are intended to act as an ergonomic duo, and marketing literature states: "the index fingers rest on the focusing buttons, while the middle finger of the right hand is perfectly positioned to trip the body shutter release lever."

Although Graflex designed the camera upgrade, the integration of the German lens/shutter assembly into the US body is not optimal. A more sophisticated design would have linked the shutter cocking lever with the film advance and kept the shutter release mechanism and lever inside the camera. Perhaps Graflex was at the mercy of the lens/

shutter suppliers (presumably Alfred Gauthier in Calmbach, Germany) and that company's possible reluctance to modify their product to suit the new camera.

The Graphic 35 entered a competitive market.

In this post-war period, 35mm cameras with leaf shutters and coupled rangefinders had established a place as the camera of choice for the keen amateur, and there was plenty of competition from US, German, and Japanese makers. The rise of leaf shutter cameras with interchangeable lenses was just beginning, and while one or two Japanese single lens reflexes were starting to edge into the market, the most recognizable reflex examples (Praktica and Exakta) came from East Germany.

In his 1997 discussion of the Graphic 35, Tim Holden makes the point: "...The camera should have been rejected by the public since it used a knob (not lever) wind, had a non-combination film wind/shutter set, and used a split image rangefinder with separate viewfinder at a time when all other cameras, of which there were many, had abandoned these designs."

So it's interesting to review just what competitor rangefinder cameras were available to the US buyer in the 1955-57 sales period for the Graphic 35.

Not surprisingly, German-made cameras were at the top of the competition ladder; The Voigtländer Prominent with f/3.5 Color Skopar sold for \$157 and considerably more with faster lenses. The Vitesse L with f/2.8 color-Skopar cost \$139, and the Kodak Retina IIc with f/2 Retina-Xenon was \$175. None of these could compete on price with the Graphic 35 at \$77.50 or \$89.50 for the outfit with flash.

The two US-made competitors were the Argus C4, marketed from 1951 to 1959, and the Kodak Signet 35 (1951 - 58). The Argus had an initial selling price of around \$100, dropping to \$84.95 in the final years of production but still well above the cost of a Graphic 35. The Kodak Signet was the real competitor and had the advantage of a single viewfinder/rangefinder window. Like the Graphic 35, it had knob film wind and separately set shutter but a reduced range of speeds (1/25 to 1/300 on the Kodak Synchron shutter). The Signet initially sold for \$99 but would have been more competitive when the price dropped to \$75 in later production years.

Most other competition came from imported or rebadged German cameras. The Ansco Karomat (made by Agfa)

had similar features in a compact folding body but cost \$112.50 with f/2.8 lens and \$125 with f/2 Xenon. The Ansco Super Memar, another Agfa product, had very similar specifications to the Graphic 35 but in addition had a single viewfinder/rangefinder window and lever film advance. The Super Memar with f/3.5 Apotar sold for \$69.50, cheaper than the Graphic 35. The Super Memar was also available with f/2 Solagon for \$124.50. The Zeiss Contina I and II and the Voigtlander Vito B were competitive in price but lacked rangefinders; the Kodak Retina IIc was a superb rangefinder folding camera but at \$132 was almost twice the price of the base Graphic 35.

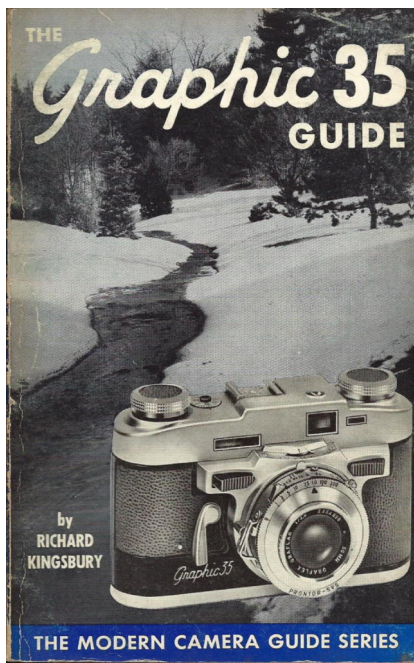
Japan was beginning to make its presence felt in the US market, but even though most offerings of this type of camera came with lever wind, single window finders and auto shutter cocking, Japanese cameras were perhaps less trusted than the US or German products. The Aires 35-III, marketed between 1949 and 1957 for \$99.50, had impressive specifications including a single rangefinder/viewfinder window with bright-frame finder, rapid lever film advance, and an f/1.9 lens. Other well specified Japanese cameras were the Kalimar B for \$44, the Konica II for \$89 and the Minolta A \$50.

Despite this crowded and competitive marketplace, according to Department of Commerce figures available to Tim Holden, more Graphic 35s were sold during their first year of production (1955) than any other single camera model in the world! In addition to a solid advertising budget, this success must have been the result of three factors: price, manufacture by a respected American company, and a novel focusing system. A fourth factor might well have been the rise of flash photography and the efforts made by Graflex to simplify the arithmetic associated with flash guide numbers.

* Although production records show 4,000 cameras made in 1958, this date is not supported by other company records and the introduction of the Century Graphic 35 in 1957 and appears to be an error.



Figure 12 The Kodak Signet camera was a serious competitor for the Graphic 35. Photo by Holger Schult (camerasdownunder.com).



123-page 1956 Kingsbury Guide, with photographs by Bill Inman.



199564

By Maurice Greeson

After reading the 2009 [GHQ](#) article, "The 3¼ x 4¼ Speed Graphic of 1935-1939," I pulled mine down from the shelf where it had been collecting dust for a few years. Acquired at a Southern California camera show, I never actually shot with it or looked at it very closely. It has some of the early features described in the article, including the Graphic-style spring back using Graflex slotted film holders. Those features include:

- Serial No. 199564*
- Lensboard style A (3¼ x 3¼)
- Adjustable lower lensboard retaining bar
- Side handle
- Folding optical viewfinder
- No velvet lining in the back
- Early style focusing scale
- Lens: 13.5cm f/4.5 Zeiss Tessar (uncoated)
- Front shutter: Dial Set Compur 1-200th sec. T&B

Since I recently acquired some fresh 3x4 sheet film and had some of the correct film Graflex holders, I decided to try out the camera. Shooting it had me remembering the FAST acronym (Focus, Aperture setting, Shutter setting and THINK!) from the 8th Edition of [Graphic Graflex Photography](#). But to actually make an exposure, I had to first check to see the focal plane shutter was open, cock the front shutter, set the time and f/stop, then insert the film holder, pull the dark slide, check the focus scale, and then release the shutter and re-insert the dark slide. It sure takes longer to describe the process than to actually do it!

The next step in my foray into Graflex nostalgia was to process the film. A friend recently gave me a "Price Monotank" daylight tank for cut film developing hangers, and I had plenty of Kodak No. 4A hangers. I loaded up ten sheets of film and developed for 12 minutes in D76 di-

I l u t e d
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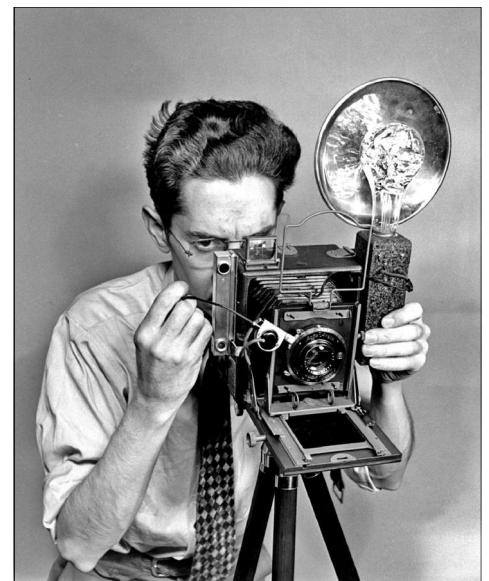
scanned them on my Epson 3200 Photo Scanner. Okay, the next time I shoot some film, I'll make silver prints in my makeshift darkroom using my 3x4 Graflarger back on my Pacemaker Speed Graphic with the Graflok back removed.



I built a six-foot-wide bench with the riser and made a bracket to hold the standard 54" rolls of studio backdrop paper. I bought a 48" two-tube fluorescent fixture

and replaced the tubes with daylight balanced tubes. I put 5500K fluorescent bulbs in a Smith-Victor 10" reflector on a light stand and put one in an old drafting lamp that's on the left. I often take the Smith Victor off the stand and move it around by hand to get the best result. Then off to Photoshop to tweak the Nikon D300 images.

So, I guess Graphic photography is in my blood. My grandfather is pictured here posing with his 3x4 Pre-Anniversary Speed Graphic. (Note the Kalart flash synchronizer.) My father had a 2x3 Speed Graphic and then moved up to a 4x5 Speed. My first Speed Graphic was a Pre-Anniversary 3x4 that my father bought for me when I was in high school. I shot a lot of Kodak Super Panchro-Press Type B, one of the favorite films of the day (1959).



* Based on the description of this camera, a batch of 350 (199388-199737) should be added to the cameras probably originally available with a Graphic-back that used slotted Graflex holders.

GRAFLEX EXHIBIT

The George Eastman Museum's History of Photography Gallery is dedicated to rotating installations that demonstrate photography's historical trajectory through photographs and cameras drawn from the collection. The selections change approximately three times a year, continually refreshing the experience of visiting the Eastman Museum and offering regular opportunities to display the museum's treasures. The current rotation includes a collection of Speed Graphic cameras presented below.

Speed Graphic

The Folmer & Schwing Division of Eastman Kodak Company introduced the Speed Graphic in 1912, and it would become one of the best-known cameras of the twentieth century. In the early 1930s, newspaper photographers caught on to it, preferring it to the company's larger 5x7 Press Graflex. Commonly fitted with Graflex flashgun, the Speed Graphic became press photographers' camera of choice from the 1930s until the early 1960s.

The Speed Graphic married the body style of the company's Cycle Graphic camera (cycle cameras were self-casing portable view cameras; their small size when folded made them popular with bicyclists in the early 1900s) with the Graflex rubberized-cloth focal-plane shutter. The Speed name was in reference to the camera's fast 1/1000-second shutter, touted for its stop-action ability.

Over the course of its production run (1912–1973), the Speed Graphic evolved. Features were added by Graflex, but also by other manufacturers. US companies such as Kalart, Hugo Meyer, and Mendelsohn supplied bolt-on accessory rangefinders and flash synchronizers; lenses were also supplied by a number companies such as Eastman Kodak and Wollensak Optical, both based in Rochester, New York, as well as C. P. Goerz, Schneider Kreuznach, and Carl Zeiss, based in Germany.



Left to right:

1916 Speed Graphic (top handle) Folmer & Schwing Division at Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, New York

The Speed Graphic first appears in company catalogs in 1912; they are easily identified by the top-mounted handle. With the Speed, Eastman Kodak Company combined several of their best-selling products into one, mating the portability of the Cycle Graphic camera to their cloth focal-plane shutter. This example sports a few upgrades not typical of the early models: a Zeiss Tessar lens mounted in a Compur shutter, folding sports finder, top Leica rangefinder, and Kalart flash holder with external synchronizer. By serial number, this is the earliest Speed in the museum's collection.

1937 Speed Graphic (pre-anniversary) Folmer Graflex Corporation, Rochester, New York

A 1926 application of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act required Eastman Kodak Company to separate the Folmer & Schwing Division from its holdings, and the latter became the Folmer Graflex Corporation. In 1930 Folmer Graflex updated the Speed Graphic, fitting the camera with a larger, 4-inch-square lensboard to accommodate larger, faster lenses. A folding sports finder was also added, and the carrying handle was moved to the side of the camera. The camera was described as having all of the features of the regular Graflex cameras, but in a more compact package—something quickly noticed by press photographers, who began to favor the Speed over the larger Graflex camera.

1941 Anniversary Speed Graphic (USS *West Virginia* camera) Folmer Graflex Corporation, Rochester, New York

In 1940 Folmer Graflex updated their now-popular press camera and renamed it the Anniversary Speed Graphic to commemorate the company's fiftieth anniversary. Among the numerous changes to the camera were a metal drop bed and focusing rails, both designed to accommodate wide-angle lenses. The camera now sported satin chrome trim and telescoping frame finder. For many years, the Speed Graphic was used by the US armed forces. This example belonged to the US Navy and was onboard the USS *West Virginia*, a Colorado-class battleship targeted and sunk at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

1942 Anniversary Speed Graphic (D-Day Invasion camera used by S. Scott Wigle, US Coast Guard photographer) Folmer Graflex Corporation, Rochester, New York

The Anniversary Speed Graphic was one of a number of cameras used to document World War II by both civilians and the military. The satin chrome parts on cameras produced during the war years were painted black. This example was used by US Coast Guard photographer S. Scott Wigle to produce the first American-made image showing Coast Guard landing craft crossing the English Channel on June 5, 1944, at the beginning of the D-Day invasion.



1944 Anniversary Speed Graphic (Iwo Jima camera) Folmer Graflex Corporation, Rochester, New York

Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal produced his iconic photograph of soldiers raising a US flag during the Battle of Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945, with an Anniversary Speed Graphic. For many years, this example was thought to be the camera he used. Rosenthal is pictured at Iwo Jima with two cameras, one fitted with a Leitz rangefinder and possibly this one, which is fitted with a Graflex back, capable of accepting pack film. Most Anniversary Speed Graphics from the WWII era were fitted with a spring back, which accepted sheet film holders. In numerous

interviews describing the photograph, Rosenthal stated he preferred using pack film. It is not known definitively which camera he used to create the Iwo Jima image.

1944 Anniversary Speed Graphic with Graflex Flash Folmer Graflex Corporation, Rochester, New York

The Speed Graphic came accessorized with a flashbulb holder; Folmer Graflex introduced its own flash holder and synchronizer in 1941. To synchronize the flashbulb (a single-use device using magnesium wire) with the camera's shutter, they are ignited slightly before the shutter is opened, unlike today's electronic flashes, which fire at the same time as the camera's shutter.

1947 Pacemaker Speed Graphic Graflex, Inc., Rochester, New York

In 1947 Graflex introduced a redesigned version of the Speed Graphic, which they named Pacemaker. Among its advertised 23 improvements over the Anniversary camera were a new focal-plane shutter, aluminum lensboard, tilting front movement, adjustable infinity stops, coated lenses, and a body-mounted shutter release for both front and rear curtain shutters. Driven both by the success of the earlier models and the improvements to the new model, the Pacemaker became the standard camera used by news photographers in the United States.

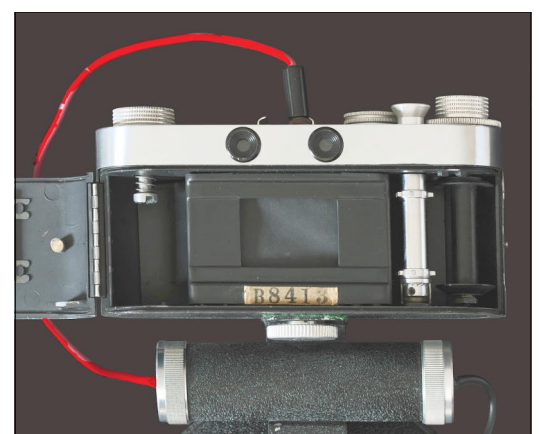
1955 Pacemaker Speed Graphic (top rangefinder) Graflex, Inc., Rochester, New York

In 1955 Graflex updated the Pacemaker's optical finder with parallax compensation. It was mounted in tandem with the focusing rangefinder, now mounted on the top of the camera. The rangefinder was equipped with the Graphic Rangelite, a battery-powered projected light beam used as a focusing aid for nighttime photography. Focusing on the camera's ground glass was also improved with the addition of the Ektalite Field lens, the company's trademarked name for a Fresnel focusing lens, placed in front of the ground glass.



Graflex Journal authors, Michael Parker and Keith Forsey, are members of the Canberra Photographic Collectors' Society (CPCS). Michael also publishes his articles in Australia's prestigious Back Focus and the UK journal Photographic World. Keith and Michael can be found through the editor or in the following directory of associations: <http://communitiesonline.org.au/group.php?id=283>.

Michael will, next year, publish an article on the U.S.-made Clarus MS-35 35mm camera. The Clarus was introduced in 1939 and lasted until possibly 1952. After WWII Clarus Manufacturing moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Journal contributor, Rob Niederman, lives. Rob, knowing of the Minneapolis connection, added the Clarus camera (serial number B8413) to his collection, which is almost exclusively dedicated to antique and 19th century cameras (<http://www.antiquewoodcameras.com/>). Although a much more complicated discussion is warranted, in reviewing Germany's and Japan's post-WWII economic stabilization, their significant success of marketing precision 35mm apparatus in the U.S., and looking into some of Clarus' advertising, Rob believes Clarus was a startup with a market proposition of bringing American quality to 35mm apparatus by making a camera comparable to a Leica but less expensive. Here are several pictures from his collection:



GRAY, BLACK, AND RED

The 2¼x3¼ Century Graphic

By William E. Inman, Sr.
(GHQ Volume 16, Issue 1)

The 2¼x3¼ Century Graphic was part of the Graflex line from 1949 through 1971. The success of this camera was due in part to adapting the camera to changing markets, with lenses, shutter, accessories, and overall appearance.

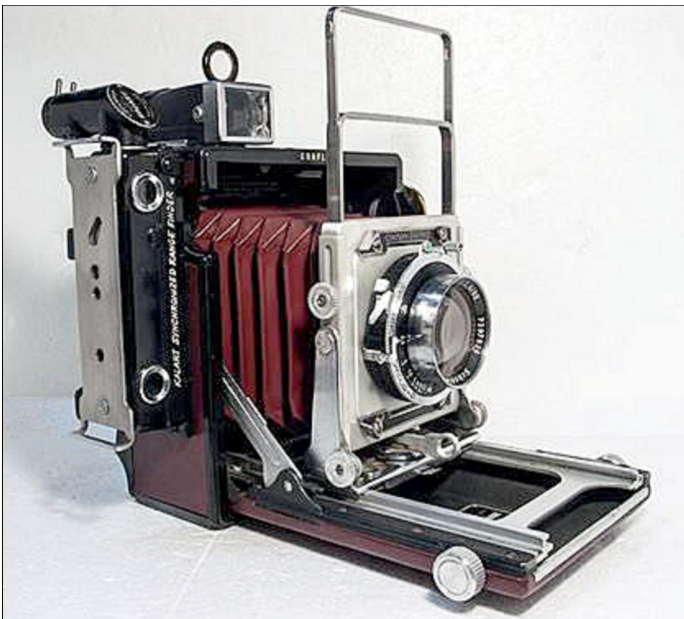
The camera was introduced in 1949, targeting the amateur photographer. It had a black body and was covered in imitation black leather with black bellows.

In 1954 Graflex decided to dress up the Century Graphic, so they gave it a gray body cover and red bellows, an eye-catching improvement to be sure.

In 1963 the Century Graphic was reintroduced with the gray covered body and black bellows in keeping with a more professional look. A Graflex employee and historian wrote that the black bellows were spare parts from the first model. Graflex started advertising the camera as the Century Professional.

RED AND RED

By Keith Forsey



Here is my 2¼x3¼ Century Graphic covered in real (not imitation) red leather. Serial number 528446, scheduled for production in July 1961. It is fitted with a Schneider Xenotar f/2.8 80mm lens. The manufacturing date of this lens, Serial No. 7397626, is about October 1961. This is consistent with the camera production date.

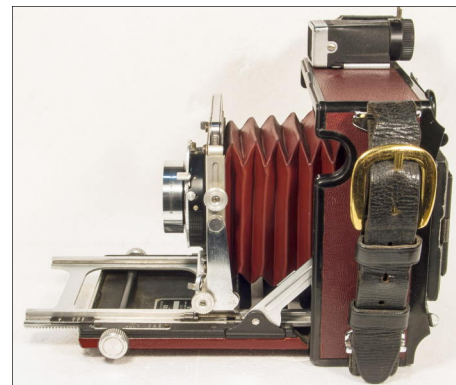


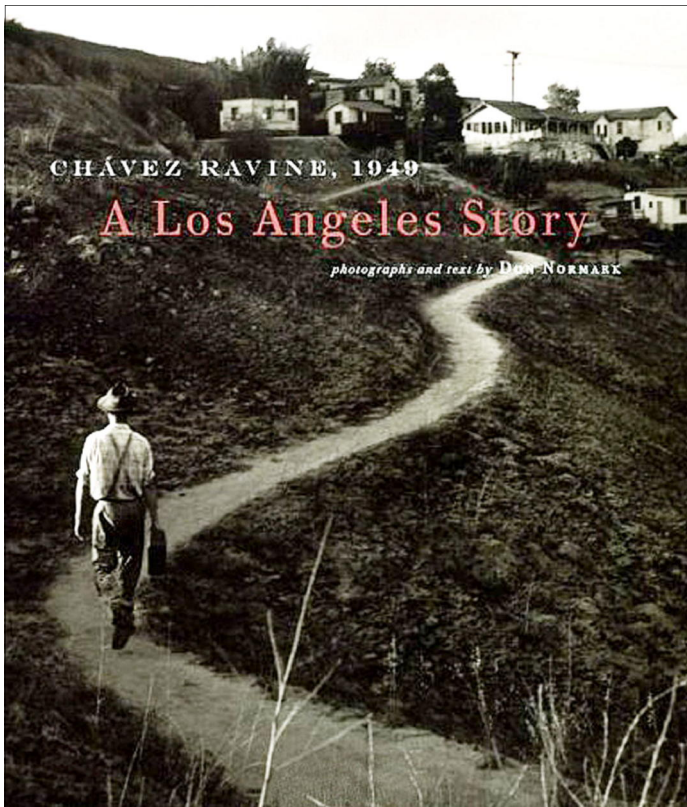
The camera was given to me some years ago by a fellow Canberra collector, Colin Hazelton. I believe he did most of his collecting around Canberra. Back then Canberra, although the capital city of Australia, was small. However, it contained over 100 embassies, the Parliamentary Press Gallery, the National University and many well-traveled public servants. They were a rich source of excellent cameras.

Lacking conclusive evidence, here are some observations that lead me to believe this covering was done by Graflex or done with their supervision.

1. It all fits perfectly on the sides and front. The front panel has inscribed lines 6mm in from the edges, and the red covering folds under the focusing mechanism with no sign of anything non-original.
2. The tooling is identical to that used on leather covered Speed Graphics.
3. Company records for a similar Graflex camera list a red leather covering could be done for an additional US\$25.
4. In the opinion of a Graflex employee and historian, it was something Graflex would have done as a one-of-a-kind test for management to evaluate.
5. The camera is in excellent mechanical and cosmetic condition and does not appear to ever have been used professionally.

I am Secretary of the Canberra Photographic Collectors' Society and glad to share this unique camera from my collection.





**CHAVEZ RAVINE, 1949
A LOS ANGELES STORY
By Don Normark**

Book Review by Randy Sweatt

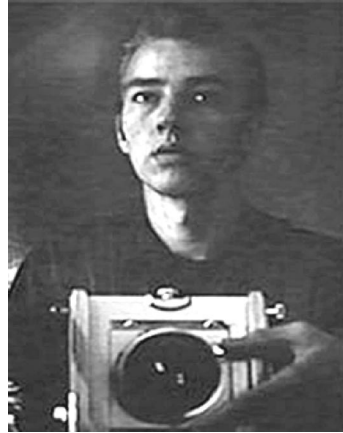
I recently read Thomas Evans' article, "The Ciro 35 and Ciro-Flex Cameras" in Issue 1, 2016 of the Graflex Journal. The article brought to mind a used book that I had purchased a couple years ago titled "Chavez Ravine, 1949 A Los Angeles Story" published by Chronicle Books. Jim Galli, large format photographer, old timey lens aficionado, and regular posting member on the Large Format Photography Forum, had spoken very highly of this book in a post a couple years ago. I figured it had to be worth getting...and it was. The book, published in 1999, has 143 pages with all 79 black and white photographs taken by Mr. Normark. The book measures 9X8".

The photographs in the book are wonderfully reproduced. Any photographer who enjoys shooting B&W film in an old camera should be very pleased with this presentation. But the story that the photographs tell is quite simply the quiet before the storm.*

On the introduction page of his book, Don Normark writes, "The camera hanging from my shoulder was a Ciroflex, a cheap copy of the Rolleiflex."

I am always curious about the equipment a photographer uses. When I look at a photograph that I like, the experience is not complete until I find out what camera/lens/film combination the artist utilized. So when I read the book introduction, I had to Google the Ciroflex brand. It was a camera I was not familiar with.

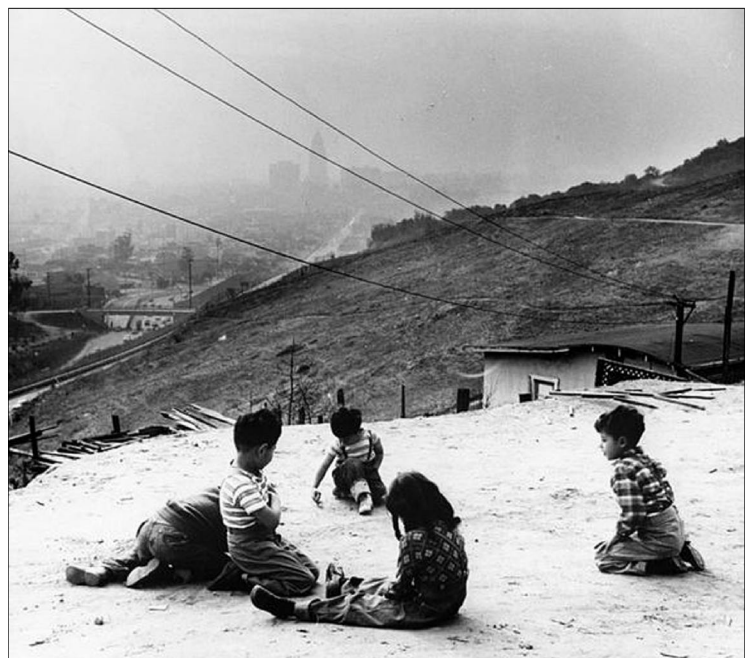
Of course, the Ciro-Flex Normark used was a pre-Graflex camera, since, according to the article by Evans, it was not until 1951 that Graflex acquired the rights to manufacture the camera line, and rebranded the Ciro-Flex.



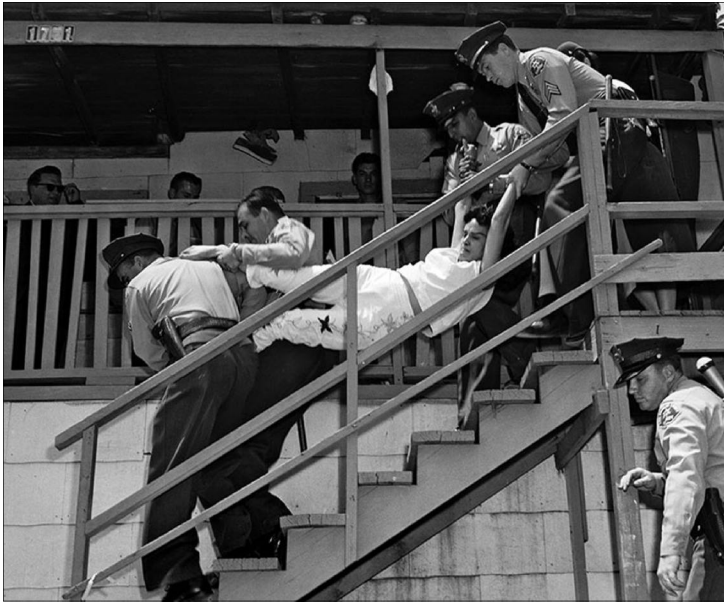
In November 1948, Don Normark was a 19-year-old photography student. Pictured here with a view camera.

As Mr. Normark wrote in his book, he discovered Chavez Ravine quite by accident. He was out looking for a high vantage point so he could photograph the city of Los Angeles. What he stumbled upon in the process was a small Mexican-American enclave on a hill overlooking downtown Los Angeles. This discovery led him to return numerous times over the next several months. The images he captured documented the lives of the Chavez Ravine inhabitants. Unknown to Normark at that time was the fact that he was capturing the last images of a place that was about to disappear. Within the next 10 years, the entire neighborhood would be gone.

The book documents how this Mexican-American community lived and eventually died just in view of the thousands of oblivious passersby on the Pasadena Freeway below.



During the early 1950s, the city of Los Angeles decided to make way for a low-income public housing project, and the area they chose was Chavez Ravine - so they forcefully evicted the 300+ families.



The land was cleared of the homes, schools and church, but instead of proceeding with the housing project, the city sold the land to Brooklyn Dodgers baseball owner Walter O'Malley. He built Dodger Stadium on the site.

The residents of Chavez Ravine, who were promised first pick of the apartments in the proposed housing project, received no reimbursement for their destroyed property and were forced to search for housing elsewhere.



Normark, living in Seattle at this time, was unaware of what had befallen Chavez Ravine until he returned to LA in the mid-'70s. When he attempted to locate the small village, he discovered Dodger Stadium in its place.

Normark retired after a successful career as a freelance photographer and returned again to LA in the mid-1990s to reconnect with former residents of Chavez Ravine. As a result of these efforts, his book was published in 1999.

The book is a medley of words and photographs that successfully tells the story of a disastrous mix of politics, greed, and a forgotten place in time, but the book should also be considered as a testament to what can be accomplished with the successful utilization of, by our modern standards, a rather simple tool - the Ciro-Flex camera.



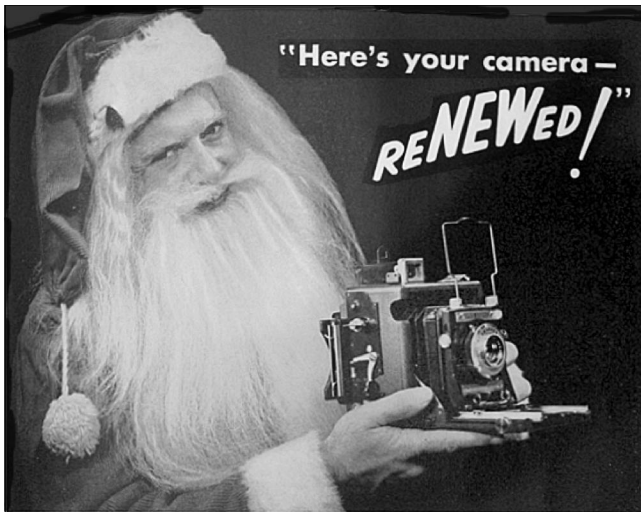
Note: When I recommended this book to Ken, along with the idea of doing a book review, he went online to find a copy. What he discovered was very exorbitant pricing. I am guessing that is because Don Normark passed away in 2014, which is when I purchased my copy for less than \$20. Current asking prices are all over the place - \$50 to well over \$200. I think I even saw some in the \$700 range. I am guessing this is temporary.

As I researched for this review, I discovered that a documentary film by the same name was made based on the book and narrated by Cheech Marin. It aired on PBS in June of 2005 and is available on DVD.

* For further reading, see "Chavez Ravine" and "Battle of Chavez Ravine" on Wikipedia.

Graflex Journal

The Graflex Journal is dedicated to enriching the study of the Graflex company, its history, and products. It is published by and for hobbyists/users, and is not a for-profit publication. Other photographic groups may reprint uncopyrighted material provided credit is given the Journal and the author. We would appreciate a copy of the reprint.



**The Finest Wartime Christmas Gift
for Owners of Graflex-made Cameras**

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Black and white by regular mail, \$3.50 per issue,
 billed annually.

Check out this Graflex site from Thomas Evans!

<http://graflexcamera.tumblr.com/>

It is prepared with care and filled with interesting articles.

OH NO, MORE BIG BERTHA!



Graflex Trade Notes, December 1957.
 "Mickey Stoecker of the Detroit News with cart and housing for extra long lenses. Mickey decided to manufacture this equipment, and if interested, you could write him at the newspaper."

C.H.H.
 G.C.W.
 E.P.H.
 T.T.H.
 L.V.J.
 J.D.H.
 R.P.
 A.R.B.
 J.W.M.
 C.H.R.
 K.M.
 H.C.M.
 W.F.C.
 R.G.W.
 R.G.C.
 J.L.C.
 J.A.S.
 H.A.S.

August 8, 1939

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Establishment of Price
 Line: Custom
 Item: 60" Big Bertha Conversion

Gentlemen:

As you know, we built the only 60" Big Bertha job that is in existence so far as we know -- the Associated Press now having it in use. The purpose of this memorandum is to establish prices for similar conversion jobs. Details follow:

	Net	List
5x7 Home Portrait Graflex (which is the basis of the unit)	160.00	240.00
Alteration of the above camera, and conversion to house the 60" f.8 Dallmeyer telephoto lens	505.80	562.00
Special sunshade for above lens	31.50	35.00
2-wheeled transport carrying case	54.00	60.00
Total, less above lens	751.80	897.00

At last reports the 60" f.8 Dallmeyer telephoto lens was available at a price of \$1650.00 list, with delivery indicated to be approximately six months following placement of order. This information we gave you only for yardstick purposes -- since we would want to make a specific price and delivery quotation prior to accepting another order.

Very truly yours,

H.A. Schumacher
 H. A. Schumacher
 Sales

HAS:MP

1939 Hod Schumacher letter suggests that Graflex may have actually made the Big Bertha camera.