



CASCADE PANORAMA

CASCADE PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Portland, Oregon • Founded 1974
Ralph London - Editor • Charlie Kamerman - Desktop Publisher

November-December 2002

Nov.-Dec. Meeting: Wednesday, December, 4, Instrument Sales and Service,
33 NE 6th Avenue, 7:30 pm. Doors open at 7:00.

December 4th Program — *Five Decades* by Gerald H. Robinson, photographer, historian and writer

Five Decades is a one hour slide and talk show, primarily about my more than fifty years of photography work and my interaction with several notables in the history of West Coast Photography such as Brett Weston, Ansel Adams, Ruth Bernhard, Minor White and Wynn Bullock.

The show consists of 53 slides (plus ten title slides) of my photographs, divided into segments on Portland, the Oregon coast, Oregon landscape, San Francisco, Point Lobos, Hawaii, Ireland and Nudes. Included are portraits of, and ten examples by, the other West Coast photographers who were friends or with whom I worked. These images are keyed to some descriptive comments about these significant individuals and their contributions to the West Coast tradition.

Gerald Robinson graduated from Reed College in 1948. He earned a Master of Arts from Columbia University in New York and a J.D. from Columbia Law School. He retired from the practice of law in 1997 and focused on his other life, photography. He has been a serious photographer since 1948 and has worked with a variety of camera systems including the Leica, Rolleiflex, 4x5, and 8x10.

He is Adjunct Instructor in the History of Photography at the Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham, Oregon; publishes articles about photographic history; and still manages to carry on his personal photography. Robinson's photographs have been published widely and he is known for using a variety of subject matter including landscapes, urban scenes, nudes, and abstractions. His prints are sold by Carl Mautz Vintage Photographs, 530-478-1610, and some are displayed on the website at <http://www.carlmautz.com>

Robinson was a member of the Oregon Centennial Fine Arts Committee and brought Minor White back to Oregon in 1959 to give a series of workshops and classes that profoundly affected photography in Oregon. In addition to White, Robinson was a friend to many other major photographers of our time, including Brett Weston, Ansel Adams, Wynn Bullock, Ruth Bernhard, W. Eugene Smith and Don Ross. He photographed with Brett Weston throughout the Southwestern United States, and in Alaska, Oregon, Washington and Hawaii.

Cascade Photographic Historical Society members receive the *Cascade Panorama* about 8 times per year. Our calendar year dues are \$15. Visitors and prospective members are welcome at our informal meetings. Society information day or evening: 503-692-9108, 503-654-7424 or 503-292-9714.

Other photographica societies and collecting groups may reprint material provided credit is given to the *Cascade Panorama* and any author. We'd appreciate a copy of the reprint. Reprinting by others requires specific permission.

Deadline for material for January issue — January 8

Even when he was active as a lawyer, Robinson found time to teach workshops and to have many one person and group shows, some of which traveled internationally. His writings on photography have been published in *Aperture*, *Popular Photography*, *Camera*, *LensWork*, *Cascade Panorama*, *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, among others. His book *Elusive Truth: Four Photographers at Manzanar*, has just been published by Carl Mautz Publishing. It is an evaluation and comparison of the photographic work of Ansel Adams, Clem Albers, Dorothea Lange and Toyo Miyatake done at the Manzanar Relocation Camp in which 11,000 Americans of Japanese origin were incarcerated during World War II. Professor Peter Bunnell, the noted photo historian, wrote about the book: "I come away both informed and moved. Your text is very good and so too the documentation."

Robinson's photographs are included in various private and institutional collections such as the Chicago Art Institute; George Eastman House, Rochester, N.Y.; Oregon College of Arts and Crafts, Portland, Oregon (Collection of 1000 prints, 1948-1990); Oregon State University; Portland Art Museum; Princeton University Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Art; State Capitol, Salem, Oregon; University of Oregon Library, Special Collections, Eugene, Oregon (67 print selection); and the University of Oregon Museum of Art.

On Friday, December 6, 2002, there will be a book signing of copies of *Elusive Truth* at the Great Northwest Bookstore, SW 13th and Stark Streets (next to Jake's Restaurant) beginning at 5 p.m. Everyone is invited.

2003 Dues

Dues will continue at \$15 for calendar year 2003. As we have done since 1996 with no apparent problems, the January *Cascade Panorama* will be the last issue for those who have not renewed their membership. The date on your mailing label indicates how long we think your membership extends.

Please bring your \$15 to a meeting or send it to Milan Zahorcak. Checks should be made payable to Milan Zahorcak whose mailing address is 20600 SW Shoshone Drive, Tualatin, OR 97062 USA. Email: mzahorcak@worldnet.att.net. Home phone: 503-692-9108.

New Meeting Place Needed

To continue meetings as in the past, we will need a new meeting place shortly. Early in 2003 our current spot at Instrument Sales and Service will no longer be available because ISS is planning to move near to the Portland Airport. We could meet in their new location, but we should also consider other places.

The discussion at the October meeting asked each person to propose at least one possible meeting site. It could be a room similar to the ISS conference room or our previous room in Wilson High School. It could be a restaurant, perhaps with a separate room, or a private home. Bring suggestions to the meeting on December 4 or send email to Ralph London (London@imagina.com) or to Milan Zahorcak (mzahorcak@worldnet.att.net).

CPHS Calendar

Meetings and Activities — To be determined.

A Special Retina Camera

by Ralph London

While visiting Australia and New Zealand in October, Bobbi and I decided to visit the Auckland Museum. We knew they were celebrating their 150th anniversary and that there would be a special exhibit featuring the life accomplishments of Sir Edmund Hillary. When we arrived at the museum's lobby, we were completely surprised that the speaker was actually Hillary. As he finished and a way was prepared so he could leave, he passed directly in front of us.

The photohistory highlight of the Hillary exhibit was seeing the Retina camera he used to take the famous photograph of Tenzing Norgay on the top of Mount Everest. It is identified in the exhibit simply as a Retina II.* Hillary wrote that he guessed the exposure and hoped that he would be successful. The camera is well used, showing brassing around the viewfinder and elsewhere. Four other photos are displayed: Hillary's views of spectacular scenery from the top looking north, east, south and west. There is no picture of Hillary at the top, presumably because he did not wish to risk passing the untethered camera to Norgay.

*probably a.I, Type 118 (to be continued)

Southern Exposure

Stocking Stuffers

by Mike Kessler

Dear Santa,

Everything I want is either really *large*, really *heavy*, or really *breakable*! If I ever sent my wish list to the jolly old elf, that's the way it would probably read. Why is that? I don't have a clue except that nearly every category of photographica I collect was begun because nobody else wanted it. As a kid, all the smart collectors were collecting stamps or matchbook covers, so I collected rocks. Even with rocks I was an extremist. Not satisfied with tiny specimens glued into souvenir boxes, I lusted after a halftone boulder of Amethyst crystals on display at Knotts Berry Farm, right next to the foot-long Tourmaline crystal beckoning from its own half-ton chunk of calcite. Fifty years later I was offered both pieces but turned them down; thanks to the photographic collection there was no place big enough in the house to display them.

In later years the smart money went either into paper photos or daguerreotypes. A multi-million dollar collection can fit into a small cabinet. What was left? Glass. Now our house

is filled with person-sized stereoscopes filled with glass views. My favorite images are Autochromes. A box of 50 Autochromes comes close to balancing the scales with a '65 Chevy engine block.

Even in cameras I tend towards the 8x10's rather than the pinhole jobs. An 8x10 daguerreotype camera isn't anything to be ashamed of though, and one of my favorite pieces in the collection is an 8x10 Schmidt detective camera.

That's why the latest addition to the collection literally wrecked my back, causing me to shuffle like Stepnfetchit when I lifted it down off the kitchen counter where I had been admiring it. I found it by accident, misidentified on eBay (stereopticons are those projector things while stereoscopes let you look at 3-D pictures). It didn't look that big in the jpeg, and it was something I had lusted after for many years — a combination stereoscope and six-tune cylinder music box. I had flown all the way to Philadelphia a year or so ago to look at a similar one, but I turned it down for its poorly refinished condition, something not reflected in its steep price. This one seemed to be in pretty much its original condition with both the music box and stereo card changing mechanisms working just fine. When halfway through the bidding the seller offered it to me for less than I had been planning to pay, I snapped it up. Only when it finally arrived, professionally stuffed into an oversize TV carton, and I had got it all unpacked did I realize that I was now playing in a bigger league. I haven't borrowed a scale to weigh it yet, but I'm a fairly strong six footer, and it's all I can do to lift it a couple of inches off the carpet so I can drag it from room to room.

It is a real beauty though, all polished mahogany with turned columns on either side and a glass window to display the shiny, nickel plated music mechanism. It's German or Austrian from around 1875 and plays two tunes when you pop a coin in the slot. I found several German and Belgian coins from the early 1900s stuck into some of its never cleaned nooks and crannies, but US pennies work just fine. As the songs

tinkle out, a revolving belt of stereo views passes behind a pair of turned mahogany eyepieces. Even the cards weren't bad. After weeding out a handful of junk, I ended up with fifteen or so French tissue cards in respectable condition.

So the die is cast and I can't seem to fight it. Offer me a diamond in one hand and a rhinoceros in the other and guess which one I'd choose. Well, got to go now. My back's feeling better, and Gladys thinks the music box would sound better upstairs. Or did she say "attic?"

The Image Seeker

Benjamin Gifford Photo

by Norma Eid

Mention Benjamin Gifford's name when talking about photography in Oregon, and most listeners will conjure up a mental image of Mt. Hood, Crater Lake or some beautiful scene along the Columbia River. But for some that name will bring up memories of family photos such as the one that accompanies this article. The blind stamp which is hardly visible at the bottom of the photo mount states, "Gifford, Artist, The Dalles, Oregon." He was active at that location from 1899-1910. For sometime after he moved to Portland, the location was still referred to as the Gifford Building.

At some point during the eleven years that Gifford practiced his artistry in The Dalles, Bobbie Lohey was brought into the studio to have his photo taken. Even though Bobbie has a haircut suitable for a young boy, he is still wearing a dress, a sign that he was still wearing diapers. Instead of just plunking Bobbie down in a chair or on a bench, Gifford created a scene for him. The scene included a small table with some reading material (although it is upside down) to engage Bobbie's interest. At one point Bobbie turned his bright, smiling face toward the camera, and Gifford snapped the shutter.



On the back of the photo there is a notation that this particular photo was presented to Grandma and Grandpa. How delighted they must have been. This photo is somewhere between 92 years and 102 years old. When it was no longer valuable as a family photo and was sent away, probably to Goodwill or some similar organization, it was picked up by a collector who, quite possibly, may have been more interested in the fact that it was a Gifford photo than a photo of Bobbie Lohey. There is no way of telling when the photo left the Lohey family or how many owners the photo has had, but for now, Bobbie has found a safe haven based on the endearing quality of his photo as revealed by Gifford.

A Likely Story It Takes Two — Maybe Three

by Milan Zahorcak

A little while ago, friend and fellow CPHS member, Ben Ehrman, asked me if I had an Expo Watch Camera outfit. Now, I'm pretty sure that Ben knows perfectly well that I have a very complete outfit and so, I suspected an ulterior motive. In fact, I'm almost certain that Ben was present at several reunions when another friend and fellow member, Geary Hufstedler, and I dusted off "The Expo Story" (concerning my cornering the Expo market for about three hours one Saturday afternoon at Wichita, but that's for another time). At any rate, regardless of Ben's suspect motives, it got me thinking about one of the rarer, more esoteric Expo items and how "I got mine," so to speak.

As if there isn't enough discussion about eBay in collector circles these days, this is an eBay story, but it has its quaint moments. This took place years ago, back before eSnipe and automated last second bidding, back when you had to be up at all odd hours, primed, using split screen and two browser windows, your synchronized stop watch ticking off the seconds — remember those glorious old days? When were they? Two, maybe three years ago?

Now, Expo cameras have been around for a while, actually about 100 years, and while they aren't really historically significant, they are wonderfully cute and even long time collectors of ancient optics and wet-plate wood, may have one sitting on their shelves just for the sheer cuteness of it.

And, of course, because the way you do anything, is the way you do everything, the fanatic will try for the full outfit, boxes, instructions, appropriate viewfinder, film cassette and so on. The camera isn't all that rare, and at one time, if you had the bucks and were patient, you could usually put together a relatively complete outfit in a year or two. Now, with eBay, maybe a month or so.

However, the rarest of the Expo accessories, the little box enlarger, has always been tough to find and even in the recent past, it had achieved something of a mythic status. We knew they existed but few of us had ever seen one.

A few years back, they were valued at around the \$250-\$300 range, about the same as the camera in nice shape, but rumors had it that nice ones were scarce and no one could say what they were truly worth.

And so, about 5-6 years ago when an OK but slightly tatty one popped up on eBay (unfortunately, correctly identified), I was primed and ready to go. It was all I lacked for a truly complete-complete outfit.

It opened at \$5.00, no reserve, and it stayed that way for 6 days, 23 hours, 59 minutes.

Well, I knew I gotta have it and \$300 was not an issue, but I also knew that some lunatic out there would be thinking the same thing. So with 12 seconds left, I throw in a \$577.77 bid, about twice the "going rate" if there was such a thing. My bid hits with 3 seconds to go — and I'm beaten! Four bids showed. I'm the underbidder, probably a close second, at least one bid off naturally, but second. The 3rd and 4th bidders are both under \$100.

Damn! Who in their right mind is bidding \$600 or so for essentially a plain old box?!? I am deeply offended, and in a fit of pique, I immediately email the winning bidder, whose ID I don't recognize, and ask him how his treatments are going. What drugs is he on, etc., and what the hell is wrong with him?

Interestingly, the instant I hit the send button, I also receive an email, this from the winning bidder who thinks he does know me (my eBay ID is "milan"), asking me if I have gone completely bleeping insane, what the bleep was wrong with me.

Turns out it was another old friend of mine, and a long-time, well-known collector as well. Alvin

(not his real name) is still ticked off at me. Turned out to be an expensive lesson for the both of us, perhaps worse for him, but he did get the enlarger. The old saw about "the underbidder determines the final price" was really hammered home that day.

Now this is the time when we should all go look up McKeown's Second Corollary, in which I am a big believer.

I figure that this auction should have caught anyone's attention who had an Expo enlarger sitting around, and sure enough about two weeks later, another one turns up. Beautiful condition, \$75 opening bid and *no* reserve. This one from another old friend and well-known collector, whose eBay ID I do recognize, but let's call him Dean for the sake of anonymity.

As with the first one, this enlarger goes unbid until the last second as well. Again, I throw in a \$577.77 bid ... and I get it for \$75. There are no other bidders.

Dean is furious. He actually calls me and rants for about 10 minutes. I point out that I actually did bid a small fortune, but that no one else countered. And I also remind him that he could have called me the day after the first one sold and offered to sell his to me for \$500, but he didn't. Nothing seems to console him.

And get this, within a minute or two, I get an email from Alvin, who naturally is also an old friend of Dean's, and he semi-seriously demands a \$200 rebate from me, suspecting collusion of some sort. Huh? Everyone is completely insane and sure it was some sort of a plot.

Pretty funny if you were me. I was just tickled though. Dean graciously sent it along, nicely packed but I unwrapped it very carefully when it arrived, figuring that he might have sent some sort of ugly surprise as well. Oh, well, the universe at work. Go figure.

Those were the first, last, and only two enlargers I've seen until recently. Average price, \$332 or so — a little higher than what the pundits originally thought, but in the ballpark.

Alas, another one recently sold on eBay for \$67. I should have bid on it, maybe could have averaged down and cornered the market.

A photo of an Expo outfit with enlarger can be seen at:

<http://home.att.net/~mzahorcak/mzpics/Misc/Expo.jpg>

(the capitalization is significant)

Nikon Notes

It's All in the Numbers

by Mike H. Symons

In late June I received a very friendly email from a woman in Louisiana. She had picked up my name from eBay as somebody who knew something about older Nikon rangefinder cameras. Her mother-in-law (hereinafter referred to as MIL) had solicited her assistance in selling her father-in-law's (FIL) older Nikon rangefinder camera outfit. Would I be interested in offering her some assistance: identification of items and approximate value of each piece on today's market, etc. Well, folks, that was like asking me if I liked hot sandy beaches and blue tropical water vacations away from rainy Victoria, B.C. winters. I answered her email and found out that her FIL had been a military doctor stationed in Yokosura, Japan (US Fleet Activities) in the mid-1950s. While there, he bought a Nikon S-2 rangefinder outfit with some lenses, plus a pair of 7x35 "Mikron" binoculars. All these items were purchased from the Military Exchange Post.

After being advised of approximately what the outfit contained, she asked my opinion on the best method of disposing of it. I suggested three possible avenues: running an ad in the local paper; taking it to a reputable camera store; or selling it on eBay. We discussed the pros and cons of each method and finally decided that

eBay would be the best platform, as it would be given world-wide exposure. I offered to assist her in the selling process and suggested that she first have the outfit sent to her from her MIL who lived out of state. Up to this point she didn't really have the details of what was in the outfit, estimate of condition, serial numbers, etc. Her MIL agreed to first send her an inventory (snail mail) and then we would see what was involved. I advised her how I would like this information conveyed to me. Sure enough, a week later, she sent me a detailed email with all the equipment particulars. Initially I was amazed at her level of detail. Here was a woman who didn't really know much about collectable cameras, and yet she sent me a completely detailed recap, as thorough as by any one of my camera mavens! One thing that initially caught my eye was that many of the items were rated under condition as "10." Could this be? The camera was a late 1955 or early 1956 chrome (chrome-dial) S-2 with a chrome 5cm/f1.4 lens, with leather case, lens cap, lens shade and original box. The 2.8cm/f3.5 lens outfit was the older chrome version with chrome viewfinder and boxes for both lens and finder. The 8.5cm/f2.0 lens outfit, from the serial number given, appeared to be a chrome version, and also came with boxes for both the lens and viewfinder. Finally there was a battered but authentic Nikon leather compartment case, albeit with a sad shoulder strap.

We decided on the eBay option, but with a bit of an unusual twist. Being that I was a "foreigner," her MIL didn't want to send the package to a virtual stranger to photograph and put up on eBay. I fully understood her stance on this, but that created some problems as I like to control the images myself and take pride in my eBay presentations. After numerous emails back and forth, we decided on a course of action.

Working as a team, we chose to put up four individual auctions with her shooting the jpeg images, emailing them to me to incorporate with the descriptions that I would write. Turns out (she was full of neat surprises!) she had the same digital camera as I use for my eBay shots, a Nikon Coolpix 990. Since I had the exact same

equipment as her FIL in my Nikon collection, I shot a series of jpeg images layouts of each of the pieces from my collection, asking her to attempt to shoot duplicate layouts of her FIL's equipment. Although she didn't have the proper flash setup conducive to decent lighting, especially for close-ups, she managed to shoot an amazing series of jpeg images. I assisted her in doing some minor "tweaking" with my photo software (Paintshop-Pro7). Then I was greeted with a surprise: the jpeg photos of the 8.5cm/f2.0 Nikkor-P showed a very early black painted version of the older chrome Nikkor! Based on the serial number she had initially given to me (400134), it clearly fell within the final chrome series, before they switched to a lighter black painted version. Then I checked my inventory records and was in for another surprise: I have a chrome version of this particular lens, 2 digits away from hers. To a collector this is excitement supreme! I then asked her if I could personally buy this 8.5cm/f2.0 Nikkor from her MIL, and we agreed on a fair price. I was happy, as this lens filled a gap in my Nikon RF collection.

Turns out that this lens, a type 2 post-MIOJ (Made on Occupied Japan), a black painted version of the older chrome 8.5cm/f2.0 Nikkor-P, was introduced in limited numbers, with the first recorded black lens being #398800. On the other hand, chrome examples of this series have been found up to serial #404273, indicating that perhaps the black painted examples were introduced very sporadically to see how the users (mostly professionals and serious amateurs) would take to them. The third and final series, beginning at serial #496000, were all black, and were introduced with a newer, lighter aluminum barrel with a newer type of knurling. The black, two-piece screw-in shade for the black painted chrome second series copied the older style (painted black), whereas the type 3's all carried the lighter, clip-on metal shade.

The outfit arrived in early November, and I was delighted. It looked like it had hardly been used by the good doctor, and consisted of a silky smooth mint black lens, black painted metal screw-in shade (see above), black metal front and rear caps, the leather case, the inspection tag

(with serial number), the box (with the lens serial number on the underside), the boxed 8.5cm chrome viewfinder and original onion-paper purchase receipt (from the "Ship's Store Ashore") dated the 17th April, 1956. All items are marked <EP> signifying that they were bought at a military "Base-Exchange" store. The price for the brand new 8.5cm/f2.0 Nikkor-P boxed lens outfit was \$46.00! The price for the Nikon chrome viewfinder? Just \$3.00. God, how things have changed!

Future Northwest Show

Next one is March 1 in Portland

How did the three remaining auctions do? They were widely received and sold quickly for hefty collector's prices, so everyone was happy. One guy from New Jersey bought both the Nikon S-2 camera outfit and the 2.8cm/f3.5 W-Nikkor lens outfit. It was certainly a win-win situation for all involved.

Reference: Robert Rotoloni, *The Nikon Rangefinder Camera*, Hove Photo Books, 1983.



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First Class Mail

**Meeting December 4, 7:30 pm, the
Wednesday after Thanksgiving.
Gerald Robinson talks about his
fifty plus years of photography.**

Bring suggestions for a new meeting place.

Pay 2003 Membership Dues