ZEISS HISTORICA

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The Zeiss Historica Society of America is an educational, non-profit organization dedicated to the exchange of information on the history of the Carl Zeiss optical company and its affiliates, people and products from 1846 to the present.

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On The Covers

Front Cover: Contaflex with Teleskop on a brochure cover, January 1955.
Back Cover: Zeiss Werkzeitung's back cover, Issue 1, New Edition, October 1925.

Illustration Sources

Contaflex and Teleskop and front cover, Joseph K. Brown.
When Jena Meant Eisfeld, Nicholas Grossman.
Jena at Last, Larry Gubas.
Hensoldt in Wetzlar 1850-1997, Larry Gubas.
Monoculars - Past and Present, Marc James Small.
Back cover, Larry Gubas.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Carl Zeiss, the lens and instrument maker, has a mixed history with respect to photo lens manufacture. Always known as a reliable source of top-grade lenses, and widely respected for technical leadership, the firm has not (since 1910 or so) been involved in manufacturing cameras, preferring to act as OEM (original equipment manufacturer) supplier. Zeiss Ikon, the camera maker, and required by policy to use Carl Zeiss lenses, was the most illustrious, if not longest-lived, of their clients.

The marketing and promotion of the photo lenses was traditionally left to the client firms. While Zeiss Ikon, Ihagee, Rollei, and Linhof were the undisputed leaders in their respective fields this worked well. But the photographic industry's epicenter shifted from Germany to Japan in the fifties and sixties, culminating in the demise of Zeiss Ikon in 1972. The Carl Zeiss brand names Tessar, Planar, Distagon have gradually lost their clout with the average American camera buyer and are now thought of as quaint, rather than synonyms for quality.

Recognizing the changes in a dynamic market, the Stiftung commissioners' new approaches aim to enhance Zeiss's visibility and viability into the 21st century in all fields, while building on 150 years of tradition. Finding the right people to direct the efforts of the new Zeiss includes hiring relatively young persons, with expertise in highly competitive fields and modern information systems.

Last March in Oberkochen I met briefly with the new Vice President, Mr. Ralf Coenen, of the Photo-Optical group. He's young, bright, aggressive and eager to address the challenge of convincing the difficult and price conscious American market that a) Zeiss lenses are better than the competition, b) they're still available, and c) they're worth the extra money. The size and importance of the USA market makes this proposition compelling.

Zeiss will become active in this process, working side by side with Kyocera-Contax and Hasselblad, which still use Zeiss lenses. Mr. Coenen and his team will travel to major trade shows and markets to demonstrate this superiority. A trip to New York for Photo-Plus (ex Vis-Comm) in late October is planned. Contact Blake Ziegler at Contax (800-526-0266) to ask if you, a Zeiss Historica member, may be included.

We welcome Thomas J. Miller, previously with Siemens Medical Systems, and recently named President of Zeiss Optical Systems, Inc. (formerly Carl Zeiss Inc.), Thornwood, N.Y. Thanks to editor Marion Husid and printer/publisher Mark Layne for updating the appearance of our journal. We, too, are modernizing and streamlining as we look to the future.

Charlie Barringer

The Contaflex and the Teleskop

Joseph K. Brown, San Antonio, Texas

Image and reality: A Contaflex I with Teleskop 1.7x positioned on the cover of a Zeiss Ikon promotional brochure 3032 dated January 1955. Note the satin chrome front rim of the actual Teleskop versus the black rim of the printed image; also the different placement of the carrying strap lugs. The brochure cover shows a Teleskop with a prototype (V=Versuch) serial number.

In previous issues Zeiss Historica has profiled Zeiss optical systems that convert the prime lens of a camera to a telephoto objective. Such conversion lenses are the Magnar, Duonar, and Mutars as applied to the Rolleiflex and, though different in principle, the 8x30 monocular, which works in conjunction with the prime lens on some postwar Contaflexes.

A dramatic looking auxiliary telephoto attachment is the 1.7x Zeiss Teleskop that turns the 45mm Tessar of the Contaflex I and II into a nominal 80mm 'short telephoto'; it is a conversion lens that was designed specifically for use with the Contaflex that Zeiss Ikon brought to the market in the early 1950s. Its use so transformed the rather staid appearance of the Contaflex I and II that their original aspect completely disappeared.

The Contaflex, too, has been described in other issues of ZH, and this attractive 35mm camera, apparently so innovative when it appeared in 1953, represents a greatly missed opportunity on Zeiss Ikon's part when it failed to keep pace with other developments in single lens reflex design and fell behind the innovative SLRs from Japan. The Contaflex was something of a surprise to camera fans of the fifties who at that time equated the name Contaflex with the prewar twin lens Zeiss Ikon (860/24) camera, a landmark design that featured the extremely novel idea of a built-in photoelectric exposure meter. This was a heavy and complicated camera whose 1936 price tag of $650 put it in the far upper reaches of the price scale.[1]

In contrast, the postwar Contaflex in its many permutations is also of collector interest and, while the later 'Super' models can share the shelf with the magnificent Contarex range, the equally interesting initial models, the Contaflexes I and II, mark Zeiss Ikon as a once strong postwar contender in the international photo marketplace, despite the staggering vicissitudes that the marque and its people endured during the war, the collapse and reconstruction.

The Contax S of East German Zeiss together with the first Contaflex from Stuttgart introduced the type that became ubiquitous in the postwar photo world, the world of the SLR. These two designs moved beyond the old Exakta-Praktiflex viewing systems of waist level finders by giving the photographer an eye level viewfinder made possible by the pentaprism, or Penta roof-prism as early promotional brochures called it. The Contaflex used the first-line Zeiss photo lens, the Tessar, in a 45mm, very slighty wider than normal, focal length and a maximum aperture of f2.8 that gave the camera a rather conservative appearance.

Zeiss Ikon, with the f1.5 and f2 Sonnar lenses, had introduced the wide-aperture 'picture window' look to 35mm cameras in the 1930s. Those big objectives on the Contaxes gave them an unsurpassed appearance and appeal in the photo shops, so it seems surprising in hindsight that the Contaflex was limited to an f2.8 maximum. The use of the Teleskop 1.7x

A Contaflex I with standard 45mm f2.8 Zeiss Tessar (top) and with the auxiliary Teleskop 1.7x converter (below) personify a Zeiss Ikon version of Clark Kent and Superman. The camera's outward and visible appearance changes dramatically when the Teleskop and its attaching bracket are put into place.

conversion lens, however, changed the look entirely - from lamb to tiger. It now seems incomprehensible that this lens accessory was not chosen to be featured in more display advertising. It was and is an easy to use attachment, affixed by means of a well-designed bracket that attaches to the camera's lens board and provides a rigid and stable mounting to the big Teleskop.

The vertical section diagram reveals the particularly 1950s use of thin air spaces as phantom lenses, a practice made possible by the Zeiss-pioneered 'T' process of lens coating in conjunction with optical glass of higher refractive indices. Zeiss Ikon's rival, Leitz, greatly touted their own use of this design technique in their ads for the Leica's highly regarded Summicron lenses.

The Teleskop 1.7x telephoto attachment was not adapted for use with other models of the Contaflex. These used other converters, the Pantars and Pro-Tessars, which allowed wide-angle conversion as well as telephoto. And so the Contaflex I or Contaflex mounted with the Teleskop 1.7x can be considered a unique and collectible mini-system. Had the Contaflexes been upgraded earlier to SLRs with instant return mirrors and built-in internal light measurement, they may well have carried Zeiss Ikon much farther along the photomarketing time line. But the company's top management apparently dismissed a little announcement in the photo press of June 1957 describing the availability of an instant return mirror in SLRs of the Asahi Company of Japan.[2] This piece of news doomed all 35mm SLRs which did not adopt this innovation to end picture black out. Ads of the era described loss of viewfinder image in cameras not having instant return mirrors.

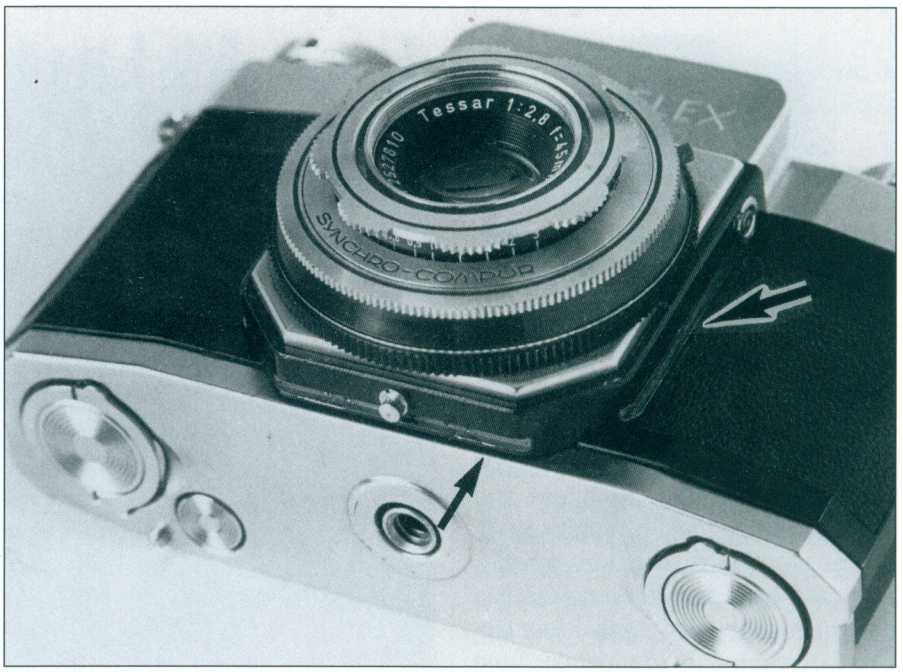
Zeiss Ikon's topline and very expensive Contarexes were indeed fully featured, but the mid-priced Contaflex faded like the twilight as other brands with more modern designs captured SLR buyers with cameras that looked much like the pioneering Contaflex, but offered far greater convenience and ease of operation: All at a lower price.

Sic transit gloria Contaflexis.

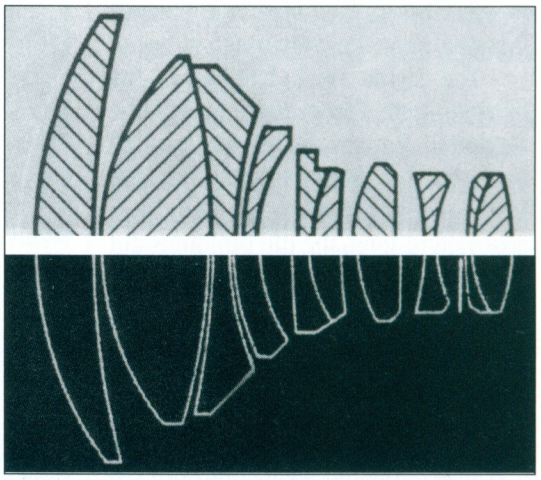
Footnotes

1. It would be difficult to imagine an equivalent camera coming on the market even today but it was certainly a technical and marketing bombshell in 1935. Dedicated Zeiss Ikon collectors find it irresistible still, especially when they see one in its leather and plush combination case along with one

Easy to assemble, the auxiliary teleconverter and its mounting hardware form a rigid unit that transforms the Tessar into an 80mm portrait lens.



Grooves in the Contaflex's lens (above) mounting panel provide anchor sites for the Teleskop 1.7x assembly and for the Steritar A, the stereophoto accessory which used the same carrier as the Teleskop 1.7x.



Optical vertical section of the Zeiss Teleskop 1.7x is diagrammed in two slightly differing versions. The white line diagram is from brochure 3032; the other is from a 1954 price list. Note the thin air spaces between the elements which act as extra lenses.

or more of its interchangeable lenses: a package that reminds one of the well-worn maxim, "once expensive, always expensive." Maybe "out of reach" is even more apt.

2. The credit for the very first instant return mirror in a 35mm SLR has been given to the little known Hungarian Gamma Duflex of 1949: see Foto-Magazin (Munich) January 1977 and Modern Photography (USA) October 1979.

Zeiss Historica Society member and Contaflex authority Paul Edstrom contributed to this article and Julius Foris of the Leica Historical Society of America furnished information and references concerning the Gamma Duflex.

Zeiss Ikon Catalog Numbers

	Old System	*Decimal System*
Contaflex I	861/24	10.1201
Contaflex II	862/24	10.1211
Teleskop 1.7x	861/03	11.1203
Steritar A	812	20.2004
Carrier to accommodate either above accessory	861/07	20.0200

Photo lenses by Carl Zeiss Jena, around 1900

Jena At Last

Larry Gubas
Randolph, New Jersey

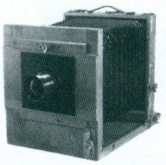


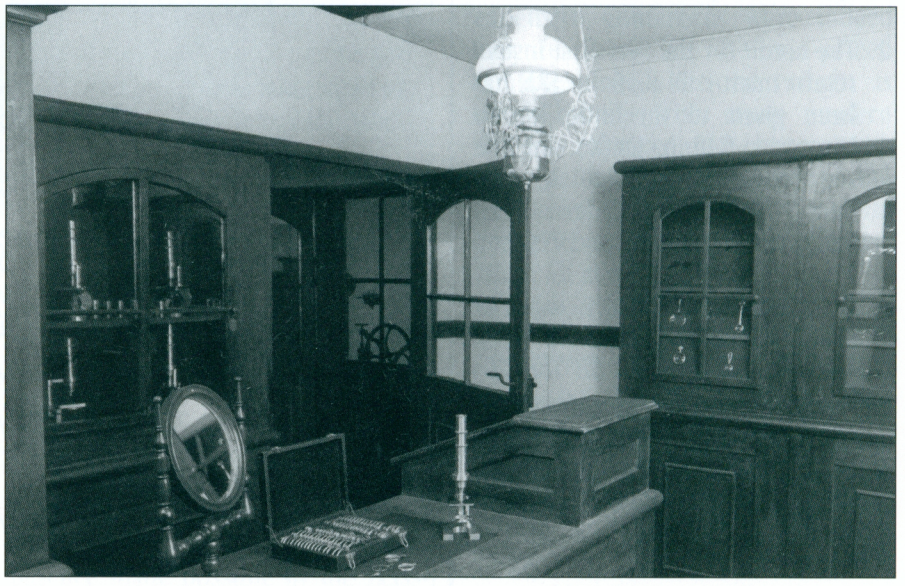
Plate camera with Anastigmat by Carl Zeiss Jena, end of 19th century

After many years of wishing, I finally got my chance to visit Jena for the first time at this time last year. After more than 25 years of collecting the wondrous products of the various Zeiss firms, I could now reach out and touch the things that I had only seen in drawings and pictures before. For this born and bred New Yorker, Jena is a nice quiet little town nestled in a valley surrounded by mountains and forests. It is a place of style and grace that made me feel very much at ease.

The sights were familiar – the original Jena Planetarium, the Abbe Denkmal. But the buildings that had been in the pictures had changed. When the Berlin Wall fell and Zeiss returned to Jena, the old buildings did not come back to the firm but rather went to a new firm, Jenoptik. Those buildings were in desperate shape and required almost total renovation but somehow, the facade, although greatly changed, still reflected the character and style of the old. One could still see the telescope observation dome on top of the pristine new buildings and some of the artwork of the older buildings was able to be remounted on the side of the facade. Carl Zeiss did have a presence but it was at the location of the South Works.

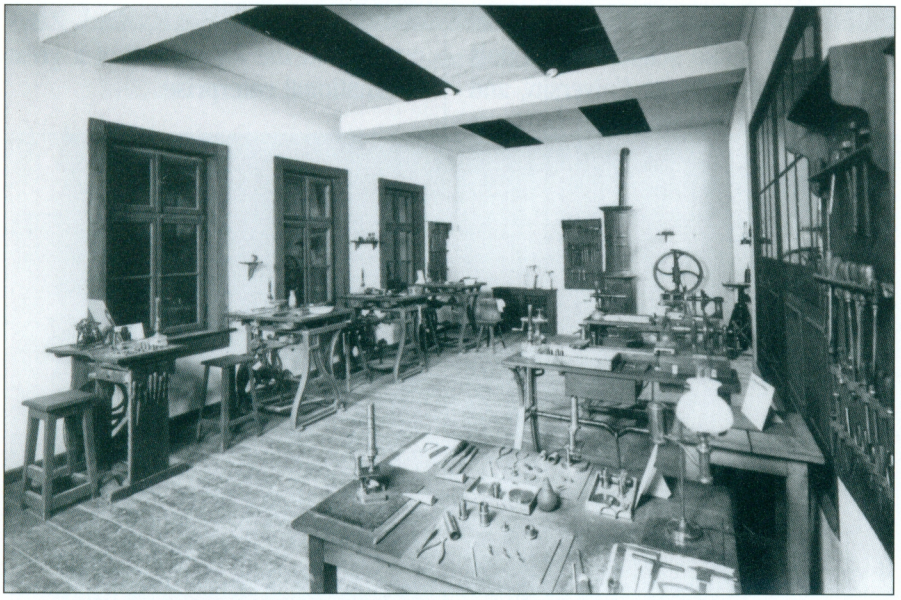
I quickly gravitated to the Optical Museum which to my surprise is not a Zeiss museum but rather one administered by a separate entity called the Ernst Abbe Foundation. Although the museum does not have the Zeiss name on the door nor the letterhead, the presence of the firm was easily found in every display case in the museum. Since it was a museum of optical inno-

The business was in a typical building in the university town and the entrance disguised the workshop with the entrance to a showroom. The window looked into the workshop and not the outside of the building and the gas lights were all overhead in this reception area.



The showroom had various spectacle lenses for testing on the table which were another product of the period (remember there were no opticians or eye doctors yet) as well as magnifiers and spectacles themselves in the case to the right. Behind the desk are some of the microscopes of the period and the brass canisters for the objectives. A simple compound microscope is on the table next to the case of lenses.

On the other side of the showroom was a register and another microscope example with some samples of lenses and a contemporary measuring tool. The workshop can be seen through the window but the modern flood lighting shows the room in much greater detail than would the contemporary small lights at each station.



An interior view of the workshop shows what seems to be a coal stove on the exterior wall and seven separate working areas. Note the tools on the wall are very simple tools with mostly files but some pliers, wrenches and screw drivers. Most of the stations have a treadle on the floor for power turning devices but there are some hand turned devices as well. The three locations on the far wall are all glass grinding devices with the typical reddish rouge of the day. The two benches close to the front are: on the left, an optical bench with tools to mount the objectives and eyepieces and on the right a mechanical bench for mounting screw threads and assembling the parts of hardware.

vation and Zeiss had lead the world in this field since the early 1870s, Zeiss products were everywhere.

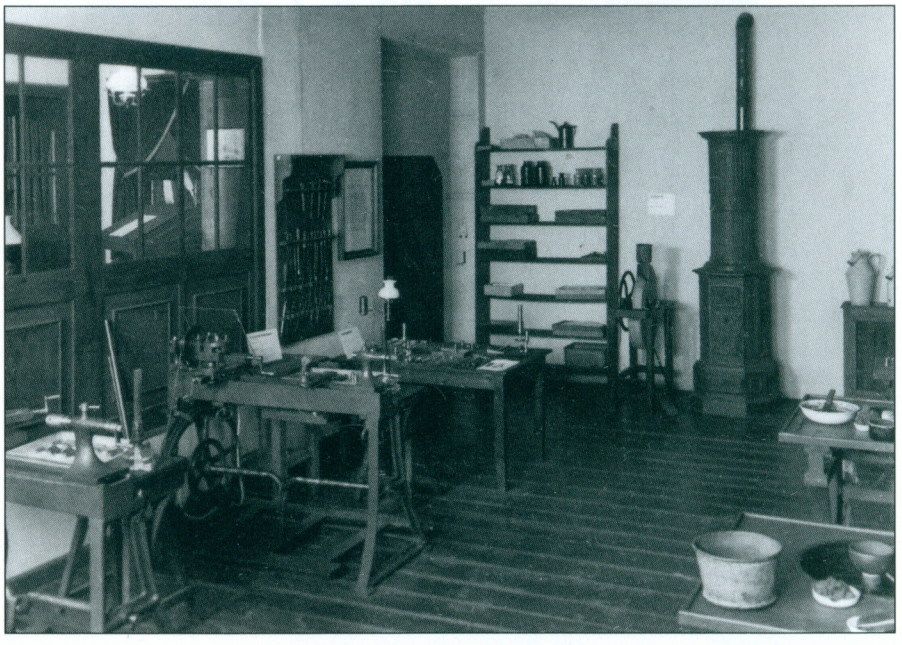
First, I stepped into the room where the microscopes were displayed. On some of the shelves were beautiful samples of familiar products that I had seen in my catalogs and books, but also there were many many things that were totally new to me. There were many early dissecting microscopes that I had never seen pictured. The quality was almost as new, having bright brass patina and wood bases, and arm rests made from what are now exotic woods. There were many 19th century microscopes that were never pictured in the catalogs. The most surprising were two tiny pocket microscopes: their early compound stands were quite different from each other.

There were other sections on photographic items, binoculars, telescopes, scientists who molded the products and the huge collection of spectacles of all types that were the foundation point of the museum so many years ago. Each room had its surprises and unique items. A special exhibition made the wonder of all of these products seem even more unique.

Down the street is a huge structure that was built in Abbe's last years named the Volkhaus. It was a gift to the town and housed one of the greatest public libraries of the time, a small but well equipped training facility for physics, and a huge hall that could seat 1,600 people for lectures and concerts. It also had a grand pipe organ. Here in 1988 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the death of Carl Zeiss, an exhibit was prepared to show how the workshop looked in 1866 when Carl Zeiss brought Abbe into the firm as a free lance scientific collaborator. This exhibit is now a permanent part of the Jena scene.

It was astonishing to see that the tiny little shop was so primitive. One easily forgets there was no electricity in this age and that everything was done via gas or whale oil lights. The tools were powered by hand which meant that two people were working together on almost each and every task. For the most part in those years, there were only two experienced workers, Carl Zeiss and his first apprentice August Lober. All the other hands were apprentices who began with the firm at age 14 to learn a trade. The foundation of the firm included two men and a bunch of boys who lived at home and were not paid until they were 24 and experienced. Carl Zeiss would make only an average of 20 microscopes a year until Abbe's breakthroughs and his computed objectives would energize the firm after 1872. Imagine making a thousand microscopes over 25 years and then making nearly a thousand microscopes a year over the next twenty five years.

This is how far Carl Zeiss in his 20th year of business, at the age of fifty, had advanced the firm. With a special contract to make scientific materials for the faculty of Jena University, and with his retail and wholesale business of optical instruments, Carl Zeiss established the foundation of a great international enterprise.



A closer look at the grinding station provides a sense of how small this place was. Yet this little workshop was famous and sold more than 25% of its wares to foreign buyers.

Many thanks to Dr. Helga Beez, curator of the Optical Museum in Jena, for these pictures (which are much better than mine) and for the personally guided tour.

When Carl Zeiss Jena Meant Eisfeld

Nicholas Grossman, Rockville, Maryland

Zeiss Jena Binocular

Zeiss Oberkochen Binocular

Carl Zeiss Jena binoculars, first marketed in 1894, rapidly became one of the most popular and profitable products of Zeiss. When Americans toured Europe, in the 1930s, they invariably returned with Zeiss binoculars, displaying the well-known trademark introduced in 1904. After World War II, the Zeiss foundation, split along with the political division of Germany, continued to produce binoculars in Jena (DDR). In West Germany, a new manufacturing facility was built in Oberkochen that produced Zeiss binoculars as well.

In the 1950s, as a matter of policy, Carl Zeiss VEB, East Germany, decided to establish production facilities elsewhere: The small town of Eisfeld in Thuringia located southwest of Jena. The story of the Eisfeld Works appeared in Ausbruch aus Not und Enge (Escape from Need and Constriction) authored by the SED in 1978 and published in Berlin. The book presents Zeiss VEB management's explanation for establishing production in Eisfeld in 1952. Among the first products manufactured in Eisfeld, and probably the best known to Zeiss collectors, was the Werra camera. The firm proudly announced the Werra camera line that displayed the well-known Q for Quality symbol on page 73.

In 1968, Zeiss management decided to move the binocular produc-

tion from Jena to Eisfeld. The original Jena trademark was retained, and in 1971, the first batch of binoculars produced in Eisfeld reached the market. The production figures for the first five years taken from page 106 of the book show that business flourished.

1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
71,978	82,122	111,956	128,745	130,480

To many users and collectors this comes as a shock. In some cases the reaction is disbelief and incredibility that binoculars marked Carl Zeiss, Jena produced after 1971 are not from Jena. After reunification, Zeiss's top management faced many difficult decisions. One such decision was to terminate all binocular production in the former East Germany. The production machinery, tools and dies used in the Zeiss Eisfeld plant were sold and shipped to a private company, Docter Optic, in Wetzlar Germany.

References:

1. *Revisiting Hensoldt, Zeiss Historica, Volume 15, Number 1, Spring 1993, pages 11-13.*

2. *Postwar Hand-held Binoculars From Jena, Zeiss Historica, Volume 15, Number 15 Spring 1993, pages 14-15.*

3. *Ausbruch aus Not und Enge, by SED, published in Berlin, 1978.*

4. *Prime Quality Symbol, Zeiss Historica, Volume 10, Number 1, Spring 1988, page 9.*

Monoculars in Eisfeld

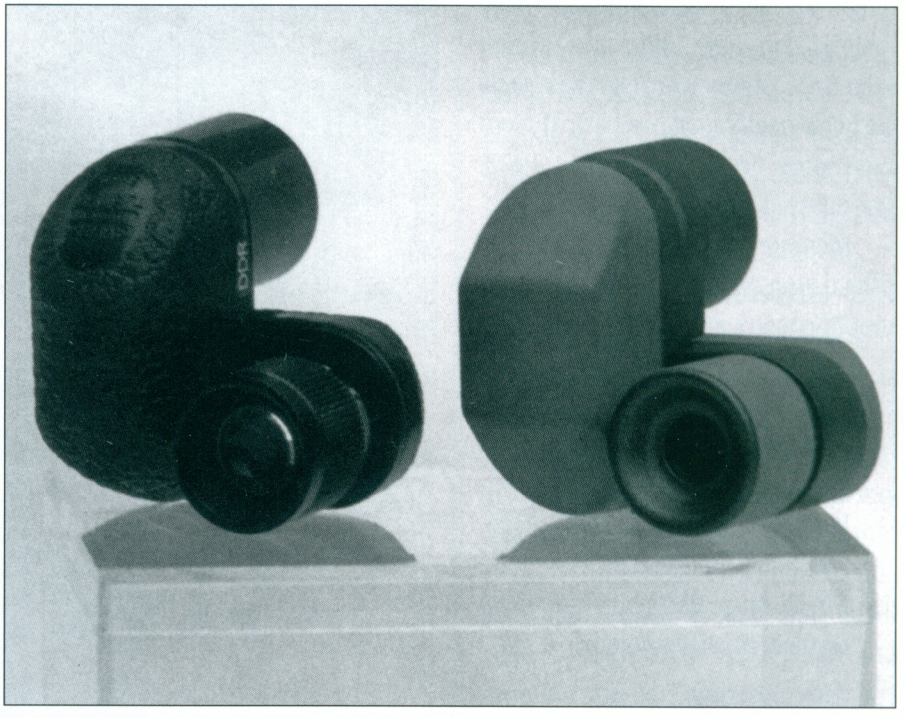
Marc James Small, Roanoke, Virginia

In 1922, Carl Zeiss, Jena first introduced the Turmon 8x21mm folding monocular. An instant success, it remained in their catalogues until the war years and then later. Accessories included a nifty brown leather case and a series of magnifying lenses known as diopters that enabled its use as a pocket microscope.

After the war, Zeiss Jena in the DDR continued to manufacture the Turmon. By the late 1980s, the covering had become rather mediocre and the pocket case was now black. Nonetheless, the optics, now coated, remained qualitatively superior. All Zeiss Jena binoculars and monoculars were consolidated and manufactured at the Eisfeld plant some miles away from the original factory.

With reunification in 1990, a West German firm, Docter Optic Technologies of Wetzlar purchased the Eisfeld works. Today, the Turmon is still available and remains a living tribute to the genius of Carl Zeiss, Ernst Abbe, and Otto Schott, as are the three Docter Optic Classic binoculars that have retained their sixty-odd year old Jena identification.

The Binoctar 7x50 glasses, the Deltrintis 8x30mm glasses, and the Dekaris 10x50 glasses were produced in both individual and center focusing versions until 1994: The 8x30 Deltrintis and Deltrintem binoculars have now been dropped. Although the Turmon has been renamed, the Docter Classic Series binoculars still bear their former Jena names proudly engraved on their rear prism covers. They differ from the prewar variants only in their coated optics and in the case of the Deltrintis and Deltrintem, by having rubber fold down eyecups. Hard leather cases, leather regenklapp (rainguards), and gelbglasser (yellow ocular filters) are also provided, straight out of the 1931 Jena offerings.



A late East German Turmon side by side a Docter Optic current production.

The contemporary Turmon, renamed the 8x21 Monocular, a drab though descriptive name, carries a hard gray color finish and arrives in a soft velcro-fastened black case. Still a folding monocular that is easily carried, the 8x21 Monocular flexes into its using position without difficulty and remains as good and fine as ever. It works.

The added joy is that Docter continues to produce the series of diopter lenses that convert the 8x21 Monocular into a pocket magnifier of great capacity. Along with these, Docter markets a neat and useful light table and stand, enabling the Monocular to be used as a slide or negative viewer.

In 1922, the Turmon was a remarkable device in the same year the Ford Model T hadn't yet reached its peak of production and when the Zeppelin provided the means for long-range aerial transportation. These vehicles are gone, but the Turmon (aka 8x21 Monocular) survives. Only the Leica camera, whose basic dimensions were first introduced in 1922, has survived similar production.

Members interested in further information concerning Docter Optics should contact me at:

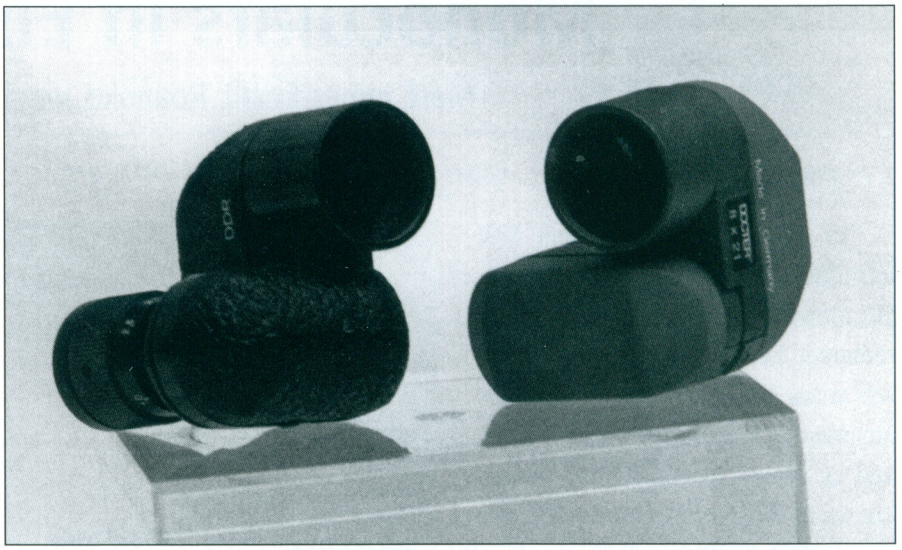
Post Office Box 2901,
Roanoke, Virginia,
24001-2901, USA.
Voice telephone +703-981-1036
Fax +703-343-7315
E-mail: msmall@roanoke.infi.net
or marcsmall@aol.com.

For further reading:

J.K. Brown, Turmon Monoculars, Zeiss Historica, autumn 1989, p.6.

Carl Zeiss Field Glasses of 1931, pp. 18-30. This was a 1994 dividend to all members. Copies of the manual are $5. each. Requests to:

Zeiss Historica Society
300 Waxwing Drive
Cranbury, N.J. 08512
USA



The ocular end of both a late CZJ and a Docter variant of the Turmon. Note the CZJ version still retains a diopter scale on the focusing eyepiece.

The stand, light table, and Turmon assembled for use. The light table's European electrical connection needs a 120-220 volt adapter.

Hensoldt In Wetzlar 1850-1997

Larry Gubas, Randolph, New Jersey

In 1852, Moritz Carl Hensoldt (1821-1903), a precision mechanic with a background similar to Carl Zeiss started his own firm in Sonneberg in Thuringia while his best friend Carl Kellner went to build optical instruments in Wetzlar in the state of Hesse, Germany. Kellner also manufactured excellent compound microscopes and was especially famous for his early innovative eyepieces. When Kellner died of tuberculosis in 1855 his firm continued under the direction of C.F. Belthke. Later, Belthke brought in a partner Ernst Leitz, whose specialty was commerce and marketing. Leitz became the proprietor of the Kellner firm in 1869 and changed the name to his own. On Kellner's suggestion earlier, Hensoldt decided to move his own workshop to Wetzlar.

In those years, Hensoldt manufactured microscopes and various telescopes of the highest quality, on a par with both Zeiss and Leitz. His Galilean field glasses and innovative rangefinders, using prisms before Otto Schott's new glasses, made Hensoldt's products much more useful. His two sons, Waldemar and Carl became partners in 1896, and the firm was named Moritz Hensoldt & Söhne, Wetzlar AG.

In the 1870s when Abbe patented his Porro prism binoculars, Hensoldt became interested in producing like products but had to wait until Abbe's patent expired. In 1897, Hensoldt with his son Carl marketed their first patented binocular with roof prisms. Later in 1905, a second patent for another roof prism reached the market as the Dialyt, and of course the Porro right-angled prisms came later.

In the years following WWI, Hensoldt also made excellent microscopes in addition to a unique high caliber field microscope called the Tami and later named the Super Tami. A tiny apparatus scaled to pocket-size 4" high, and less than 2" deep, this device by Hensoldt continues to attract buyers, but is limited for commercial use only.

In 1928, Moritz Hensoldt's descendants asked the Zeiss Works in Jena for financial aid, and Carl Zeiss purchased 54% of the comp-

This distinctive signature was the original trademark of the firm. However, since this was difficult to place on the actual binoculars and telescopes, the trademark appeared only in block styled letters on the instrument.

In the early 1900s, with fame of their roof prism binoculars' high quality came the new trademark of the roof prism. Wacht in German means Guard or Sentry. This mark remained until about 1920.

The replacement trademark after 1920 was like many other optical companies who chose the outline of their lens products as a framework for their trademark. The early versions had two dots to balance the design.

any. Hensoldt, however, continued to operate under the direction of Carl Hensoldt with product lines parallel but separate from Carl Zeiss. In 1954, the Carl Zeiss Stiftung (Foundation) still held a majority ownership of Hensoldt and by 1968 became sole owner. The Hensoldt name was never changed.

Carl Zeiss soon discontinued the production of binoculars and riflescopes in the Oberkochen plant and moved it to Hensoldt in Wetzlar: Their products lines merged. From that time, the Hensoldt trademark became identified with their military contract work(15-20% of the business) most of it for NATO countries. The Carl Zeiss trademark appeared on all civilian products and the factory continued to be known as Hensoldt.

Periodically the firm performed additional optical tasks by manufacturing less expensive photographic lenses such as the Novar and Lucinar for Zeiss Ikon cameras. Today, Hensoldt continues its liaison with Carl Zeiss and also manufactures prisms for Hasselblad viewfinders under a subcontracting agreement. Hensoldt also made a small line of cameras: One named Reporter is a rare collectible. With Leitz now moved from Wetzlar, Hensoldt is the major optical firm in town, and in 2002 will celebrate its anniversary of 150 years.

After World War II, the lettering and outlines became bolder. Moritz Carl Hensoldt's workshop shared the town of Wetzlar with another famous optical company founded by Carl Kellner which eventually evolved into the firm of Ernst Leitz.

HENSOLDT
WETZLAR

The firm used both black on white and white on black versions of the lens cell shaped like no other: a flat top of the upper element and an angular lower portion.

HENSOLDT
WETZLAR

When Hensoldt took over the manufacture of Carl Zeiss binoculars in 1968, and even earlier, their trademark identified the company as a member of the Zeiss Group of companies. Before the reunification of Germany, West Germany appeared below Zeiss-Gruppe.

HENSOLDT
WETZLAR
Optische
Werke AG
Zeiss-Gruppe
Germany

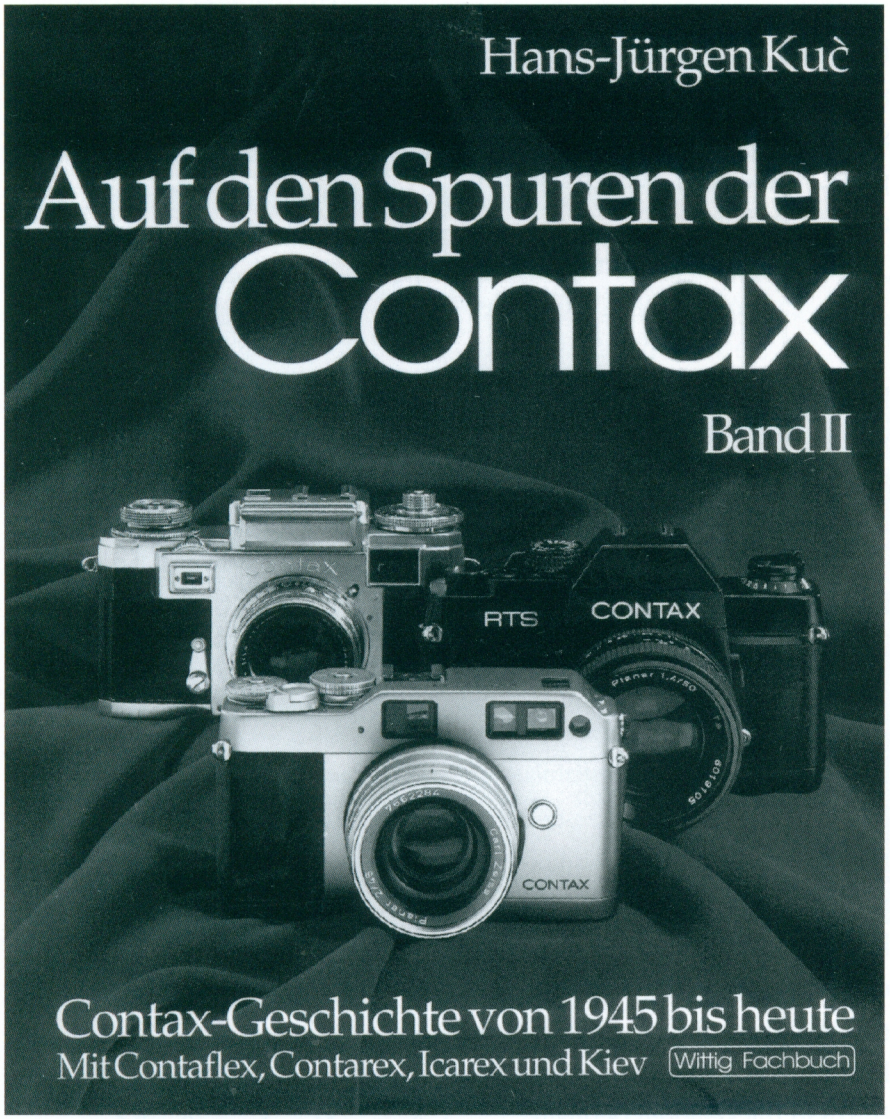
This picture of Moritz Carl Hensoldt in his later years shows the founder of the firm with one of his early and successful telescopes. All Hensoldt products are highly prized collectibles.

M. HENSOLDT & SÖHNE • OPTISCHE WERKE AG • WETZLAR

LARRY GUBAS REVIEWS

Auf den Spuren der Contax Band II
(On the Trail of the Contax, Volume II)

by Hans Jürgen Kuc̀



As most of you who read these pages know, I tend to get down to very specific details in my collecting of Zeiss Ikon cameras and accessories. In my years of collecting, I have never found anyone who addresses the details of Contax and the Contax family of cameras quite as well as Hans Jürgen Kuc̀. Every time he publishes something, I am quite pleased in seeing him moving himself and his readers yet another rung up the ladder of knowledge. I spent a week just looking at the pictures and illustrations of his book in 1992 Auf den Spuren der Contax Band I that covered the development of the Contax family of cameras from 1932 to 1945. This past March, he has presented us with the second volume in this series covering the post 1945 Contaxes and other 35 mm cameras of Zeiss Ikon and the optics of Carl Zeiss in support of these and other 35mm camera manufacturers.

I have the opportunity to tell you about his second volume, Auf den Spuren der Contax Band II. I was not surprised to see the continuing high standard of illustrations as well as

many totally new items of interest. This book covers many items unfamiliar to even the most informed reader. Here are some examples:

East Germany's VEB - Zeiss Ikon produced a Single Lens Reflex version of the Contax. Our knowledge is usually limited to the S and the D models. Well, here are revelations for all of us. Detailed information and pictures of additional SLR Contax variations (E & F variations as well as Pentacon derivatives). All of which goes much further than we would suspect. Since most of this was done behind the Iron Curtain, few of us knew about it at the time and only now are we getting to see some of these quite interesting, innovative and yet exceedingly rare cameras and lens systems.

All of the standard models and accessories are shown in great detail and Kuč has located and photographed many prototype items for our viewing as well. His pictures of the prototype Contax cameras that were developed but never manufactured in Stuttgart by Zeiss Ikon in the 1950s are presented for the first time in a size where you can actually pick out the differences in the features. It includes an additional new rangefinder Contax prototype that was totally new to me.

He covers in text and tabular detail a chronology of all of the different Zeiss lenses for the Contax and identifies the differences and the similarities of the Carl Zeiss Jena, Zeiss Opton and Carl Zeiss groupings of lenses. He also covers the finders of the postwar period with samples of East German prototypes that became West German products. He also discusses and pictures many of the West German prototypes which never made it to market.

The elusive Jena rangefinder Contax is documented in excellent detail and compared with contemporary Kiev cameras to show the similarities and differences. Zeiss Ikon also made some specialty cameras for special military or governmental purposes. These have been researched and pictured, too.

Spuren Band II covers the other 35mm cameras of Zeiss Ikon after 1945 and the Zeiss Ikon/Voigtländer prototype cameras that were produced by other firms and those which did not come to market such as the Weber SL 95.

At this writing, I've have had the book for weeks but yet I continue to refer to it and to Band I often. Honestly, if you don't find something totally unexpected or new in every chapter of this book, your name must be Carl Zeiss or you have spent the last 71 years as the photographic analyst at the German Patent office. I highly recommend adding it to your collecting library. It is available from the publisher directly: Wittig Fachbuch Direct, Chemnitzer Strasse 10, D-41836 Hückelhoven,Germany.*

If any of this interests you, you will never see it in better context or detail.

Auf den Spuren der Contax Band II (ISBN 3-390359-34-0) 246 pages, with color and black and white illustrations.

Other Kuč books in German:

Auf den Spuren der Contax

Band I (ISBN-3-88984-118-X),

271 pages, 1992.

Contax RTS & T2, 184 pages, 1992.

Contaflex Contarex, 217 Pages, 1988.

Die Zeiss Ikon Kleinbild Stereo Systeme (Reprints of the Zeiss Ikon full descriptions of the 35mm Stereo System as published in Photographie und Forschung in 1941 and in 1957). 62+ pages, 1984.

Photo Dictionary (English-German; German-English), 174 pages, 1984.

Contax Geschichte Teil I (1932-1945) 1981.

Contax Geschichte Teil II (1945-1982), 109 pages, 1982.

*"On the Trail of the Contax, Vol. II", English edition, will be available by the time you read this review. Contact Marc James Small for more information.

ALL ABOUT MEMBERS

Parade Supplement
Patriot News
Sunday, May 25, 1997

This famous photograph of General Douglas MacArthur's landing at Luzon in the Philippines on January 9, 1945 was taken with a 35mm Contax by Carl Mydans. Had Mydans asked the General to pose for the photograph? "If you knew MacArthur," Mydans answered, "you would never ask if he posed for the picture of him wading ashore... I never knew him to do one thing a photographer asked him to do." Another Colonel Stroh contribution.

Re: Zeiss Historica fall 1996, pp. 14-16

In 1941, I purchased a Super Ikonta B that I carried through WWII and the Korean conflict. In 1942, I also purchased both an 828 adapter that permitted my shooting Eastman 828 kodachrome film in my Super B, and an Albada finder with 5cm and 8.5cm frames.

Since the camera lens was 8 cm and the 828 frame was a bit larger than the standard 35mm frame, the finder was a perfect match for shooting kodachrome.

The floating 5cm frame for shooting 120 film was perfect since 5cm is to 1.5 inches as 80 cm is to 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Because the width of the field concerned me more than the height, I used the Albada for more than ninety percent of my photos. My camera case was adjusted to carry the Albada finder at all times.

Pity the poor Super B enthusiasts who never discovered the Albada finders...a marvelous accessory for the Super B.

Oscar H. Stroh
Lt. Col. USAR-Rtd.,
Harrisburg, Pa.
Member since 1989.

Editor's Correction spring 1997, President's Letter.

The last paragraph should have read:

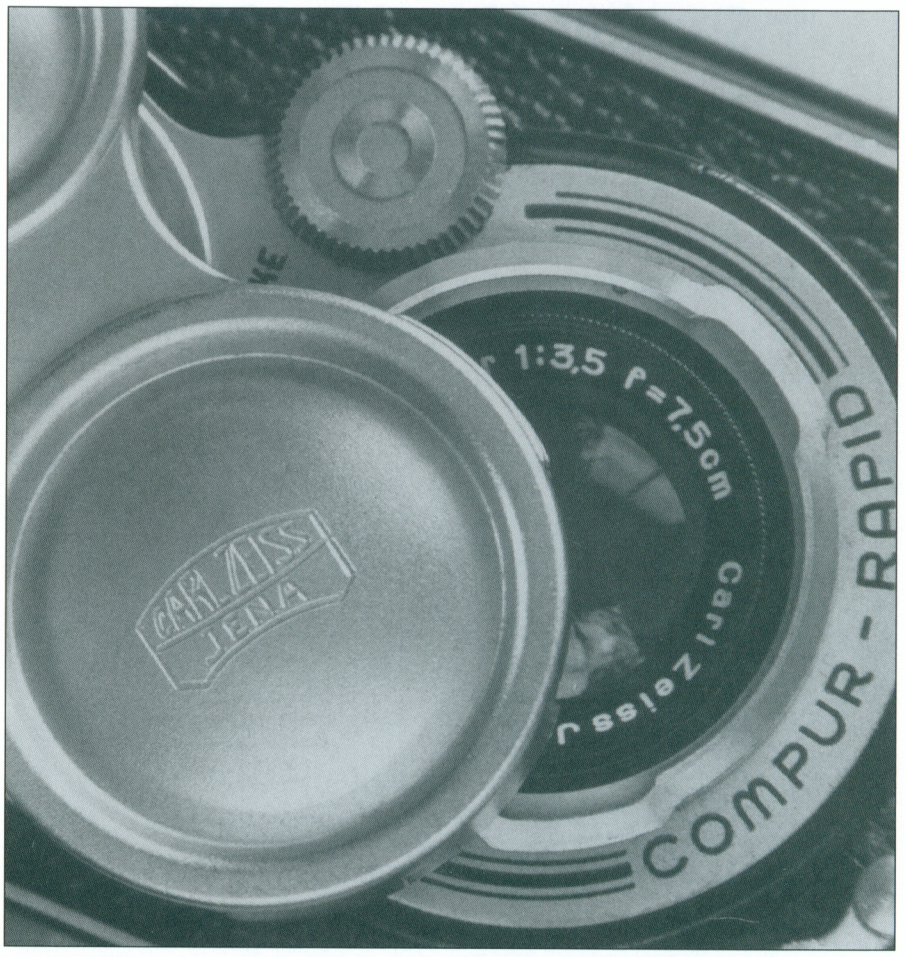
Because of the accessibility of the Carl Zeiss Jena archives, the paperwork [not the lenses] ought to return to their place of origin for all to study. I pledged the Society's resources to this end...It would be a major triumph...for us to contribute to the search and re-establishment of these documents to the archives at Jena... .Marion Husid

Re: Zeiss Historica spring 1997, p.20.

"Thank you for reprinting in translation Hanns U. Christen's Hymn to a Small Camera. It is beautiful and deeply touching. Reading it was a very special experience, and the memory of it will always last. I hope you will tell Herr Schaub how much other members of our Society appreciate his thoughfulness in bringing this to our notice. With every good wish to you."

John Osburn, PhD
Professor of History
University of Central Oklahoma
Edmond, Okla.
Member since 1987.

Franke & Heidecke, manufacturers of the world famous Rollei cameras in Braunschweig, Germany.



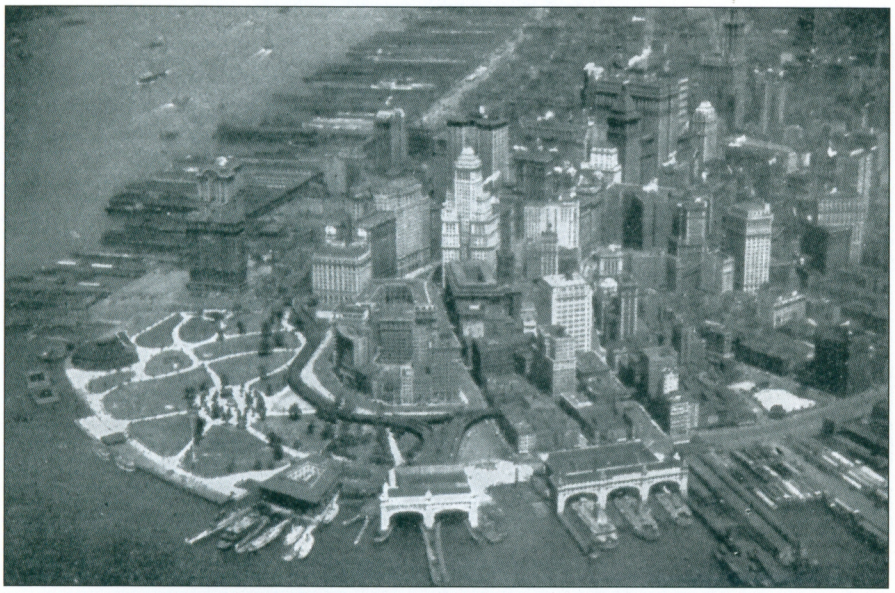
Among the most reliable and consistent customer for Zeiss lenses, mainly the f3.5 7.5 cm Tessar and Triotar, were Franke & Heidecke, manufacturers of the world-famous Rollei cameras in Braunschweig, Germany. F&H were evidently proud of the Zeiss lenses used on their Rolleiflex, Rolleicord, Heidoscop, and Rolleidoscop, so much so that for a time in the prewar years they engraved the Zeiss logo along with their own on the lens caps furnished with their cameras, as on this 1937 Automatic Rolleiflex. This gave them a chance to proclaim to their own customers, "If it's Zeiss, we say it twice."

Joseph K. Brown, San Antonio, Texas. Charter member since 1980.

Then and Now

Aerial view of New York's Battery Park, Lower Manhattan, using a Zeiss Tessar lens, circa 1925.

Almost the same view of Battery Park in the 1990s from Governor's Island. The waterfront's three large piers still ferry passengers. The World Trade Center's South Tower building (there are 6 WTC buildings in all) on the left clearly dominates the world famous New York Financial District.
(Post card photo.)



Aerial view of New York circa 1925 using a Zeiss Tessar lens.

Same place 1990s, postcard.

Zeiss Ikon's Photohauptkatalog

To comprehend what competition the mighty Zeiss Ikon line presented to the camera market in 1938 order a copy of the newly reprinted Zeiss Ikon Master Catalogue (Photohauptkatalog). Although the 1930s economic depression affected overseas and overborders markets, a simultaneous market in amateur cameras was booming. Zeiss Ikon offered cameras in all price ranges, for all interests, with offices throughout Europe and the USA. New York City's Carl Zeiss, Inc. office at 485 Fifth Avenue established in 1925 also kept touch with offices in Chicago and Los Angeles. Business thrived. The Hauptkatalog's inventory extended from box cameras (the Tengors) through the ranks of folding rollfilm Nettars and Ikontas, to the top-notch rollfilm Ikoflex, Reflexes and the Super Ikontas. For 35mm, Zeiss Ikon offered the Tenax sequence camera, the Super Nettel, and the Nettax as mid-market miniatures, plus the superbly crafted Contaflex and Contax rangefinder line cameras with their fast lenses and built-in coupled selenium exposure meters. All are listed in the facsimile reprint available from Larry Gubas, 24 Valley Drive, Randolph, New Jersey, 07869-1028, USA for $35 Postpaid.

Joseph K. Brown

Meyer Megoflex

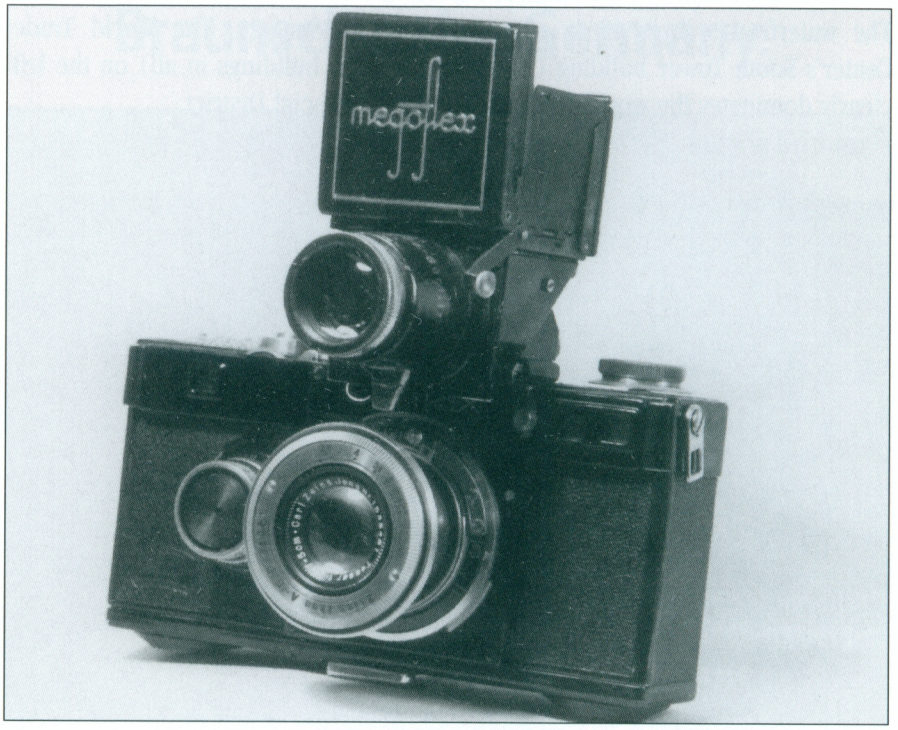
Dr. Pierpaolo Ghisetti, Modena, Italy

I recently succeeded in finding one of the rarest pieces ever produced for the Contax system: The Megoflex of Hugo Meyer in Goerlitz, which is well-known for its lens manufacturing. The Megoflex system consists basically of a lens and a viewfinder, which can be mounted directly on the shoe of a Contax I, transforming it into a twin lens camera.

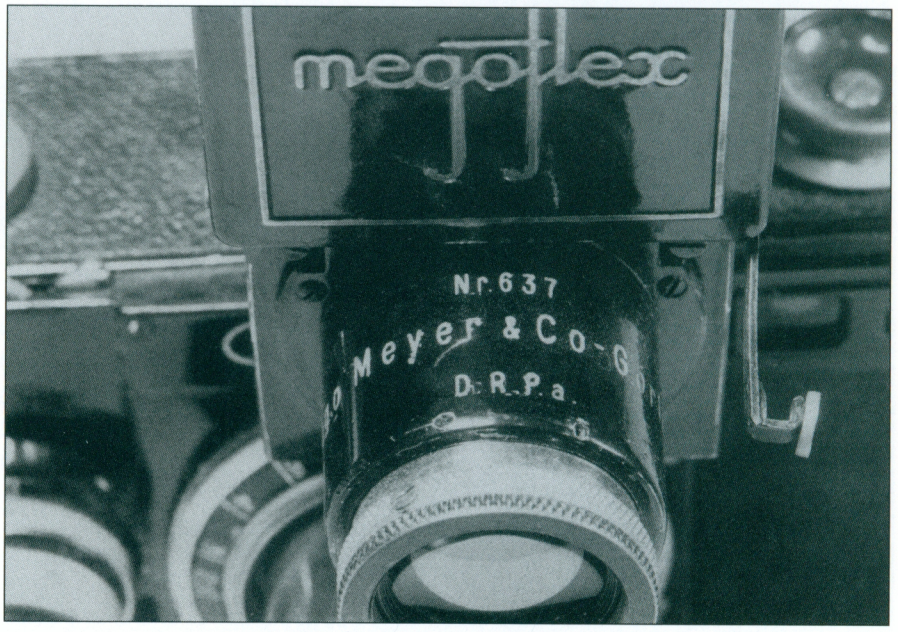
The Megoflex can be attached directly to the shoe of the Contax I and is fixed with the back screw. The finder hood is made of four traditional moving sides which open with a click. Focussing is possible using a little lever placed under the optic without any indication about focal length and brightness.

The most interesting element is hidden inside the camera: Through a little lever it is possible to guide a moving mirror. When the mirror is positioned at 45 degrees, the result is a reflex view with the camera not close to the eye. As there is not a pentaprism, the two sides of the object are inverted and the image is overturned.

What is the point of all this? The photographers of the thirties must have asked themselves the same question, since according to the German expert Kuč, only five examples of Megoflex (six if we include this one) are still available.



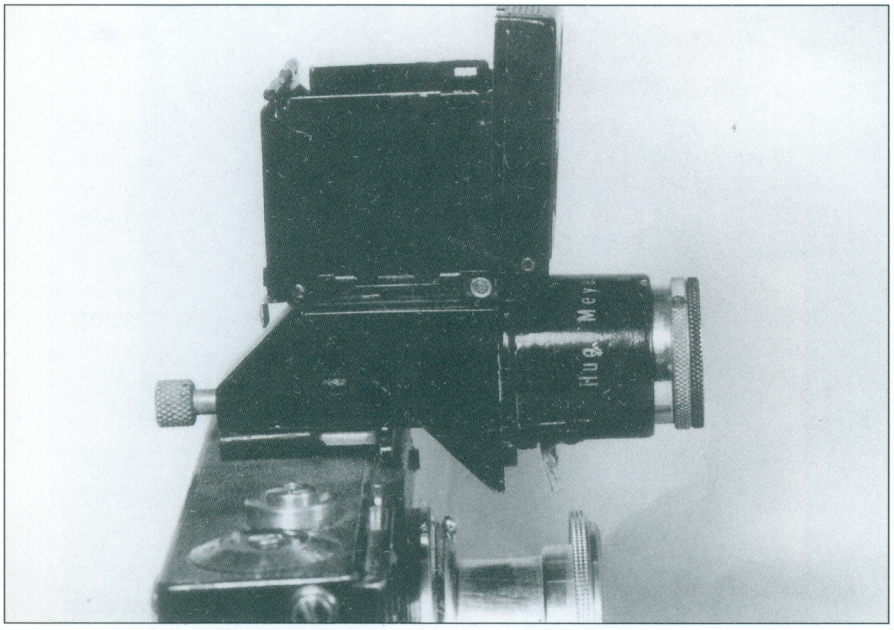
Meyer Megoflex on Contax I



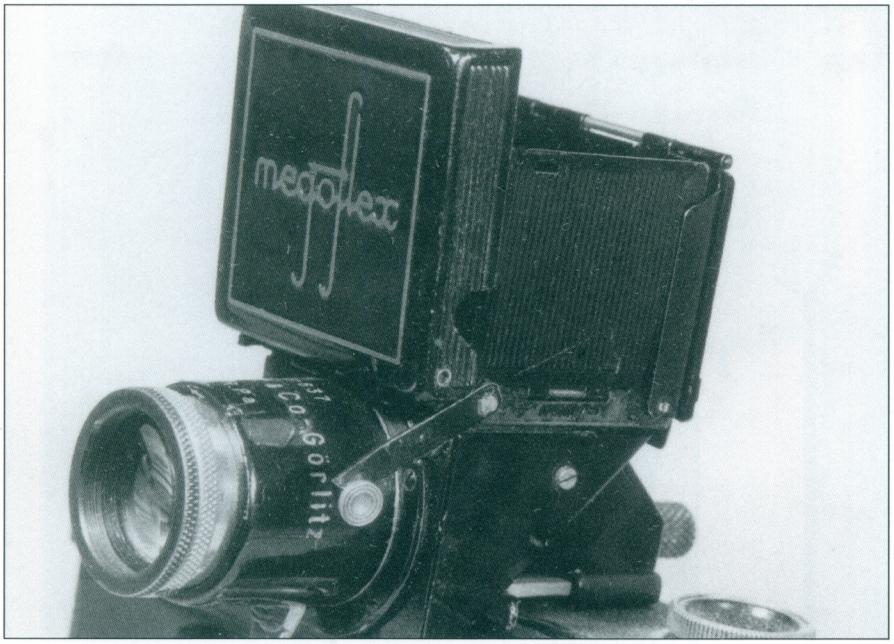
Close up of Megoflex showing number 637 and name.

On the upper side of the Megoflex lens is impressed the number 637. Is it the serial production number or the catalog number? In the former case I could not understand the rarity of the Megoflex, so I suppose it is the catalog number. Anyway, we should not forget the value of this object: It reflects the originality of the photographic systems of the thirties.

Member since 1994.



Profile view of Meyer Megoflex's right side.



Three quarter view of Megoflex from left.

Re: Zeiss Historica spring 1997, p.18.

"The engraving Beli...was the abbreviation for Belichtungsmesser which means exposure meter. The Vitomatic II had an exposure meter, [one] can see the window for the meter's needle on the right, next to the trigger. I like the new face of the journal." Dipl.-Ing. Reinhard H. Kuttner, Vienna, Austria.

Member since 1995.

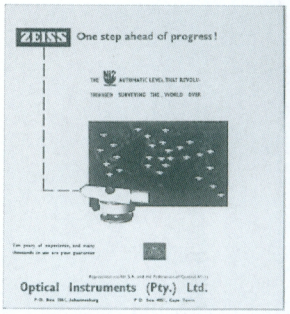
Sacramento Directory for the Year 1853-54 Available.

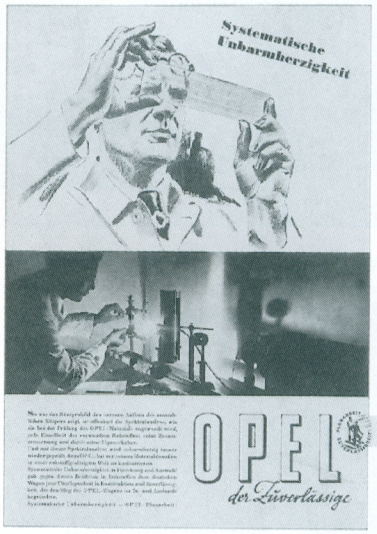
The California State Library Foundation is pleased to announce the publication of an important history book, a facsimile edition of Samuel Colville's nineteenth century directory. The volume includes Dr. John F. Morse's History of Sacramento, the first published history of the river city.

Historian and author Mead B. Kibbey has added a twenty-four page introduction. California State Library, 1225 8th Street, Sacramento, CA. 95814, $37. Plus $4.00 Shipping.

Member since 1979, Mead Kibbey of Sacramento, CA. was the first ZHS member to visit the Carl Zeiss firm in Oberkochen, Germany in 1979.

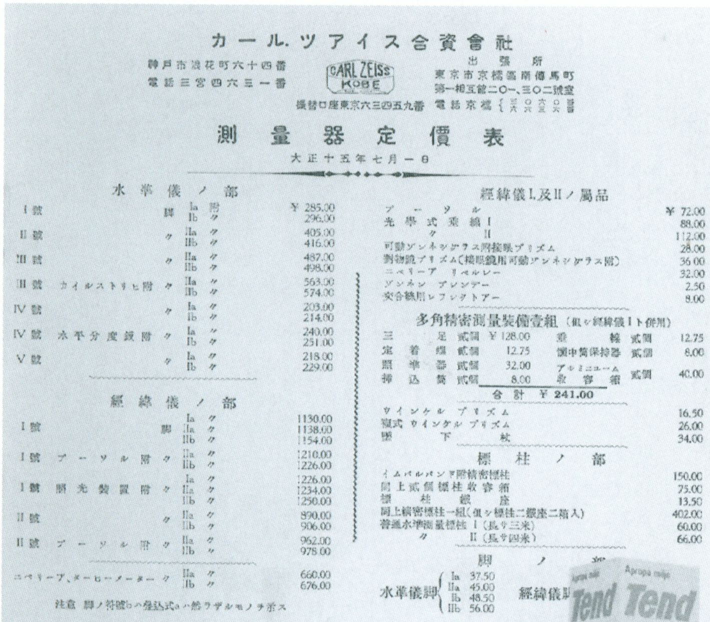
Beyond His Dreams...





Innovation 1, Carl Zeiss, 1996

Carl Zeiss...Around The Globe



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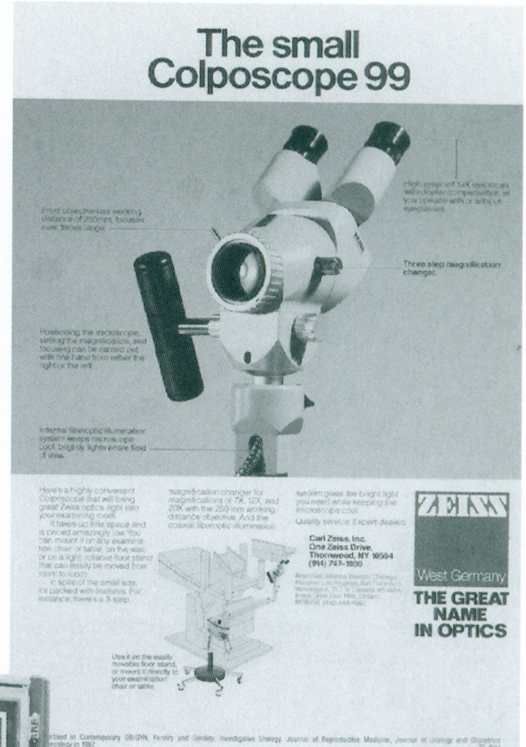

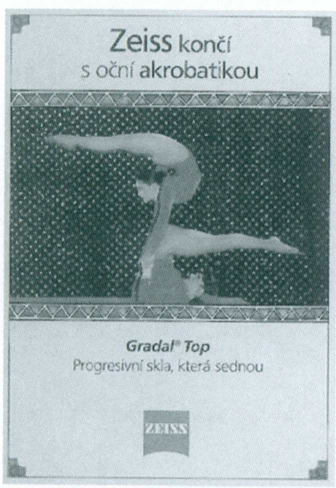

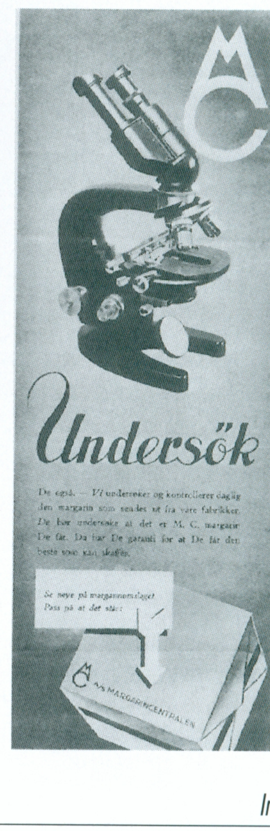

Innovation 1, Carl Zeiss, 1996

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