

# IMAGE

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AN 1850 NEWS PHOTOGRAPH. When the American Hotel in Buffalo burned down in March, 1850, D. McDonnell took this daguerreotype. Curious spectators have crossed the barrier to inspect the ruins. The original (6 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 5 $\frac{3}{8}$  in.) is in the Buffalo Historical Society's collection.

## WHAT IS THE NPPA?

by Joseph Costa

*The George Eastman House is proud to sponsor, with the National Press Photographers Association, the Rochester Photo Conference which brings together, on September 13-18, leaders in the photographic and publishing world to discuss common problems. Joseph Costa, Chairman of the Board, here describes the aims and organization of the Association.*

**T**HE NATIONAL PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION, founded in 1945, is a professional society in which cameramen of the nation's newspapers, wire services, magazines, newsreel and television companies are associated for the advancement of photo-journalism. The NPPA is not a labor union, and is prohibited by its charter from becoming involved in labor relations. Our program is designed to benefit both our members and those that we work for. These are our basic aims:

1. To help every press photographer to become more proficient in his craft by attaining greater technical competence.
2. To give all possible assistance to colleges and universities that are training press photographers.
3. To make it possible for every press photographer to function in the public interest without fear of illegal interference or physical attack.
4. To make a firm and continuous effort to open public doors now closed to the news camera by the courts, legislatures, and government groups.
5. To represent the press photographer at the national level in dealing with military and civil agencies of government.
6. To establish an employment clearing house for the benefit of both publishers and photographers.
7. To encourage and assist manufacturers in developing and producing better technical equipment needed by press photographers in keeping photo reporting abreast of the times.
8. To maintain the NPPA as a professional organization concerned with craftsmanship and technical competence, rather than with labor relations.

There are two classes of members: active, who are voting members, and associates, who do not vote. Active membership is open to working news cameramen who have had a minimum of two years experience. Associate membership is open to apprentice cameramen, freelance photographers, editors, executives, and manufacturers of technical equipment.

NPPA members are located all over the United States—and may be on assignment anywhere in the world. In any given year you may find that the president works in California, the secretary in Virginia. You will find vice presidents from Boston to Shreveport, from Des Moines to Chattanooga, for the country is divided into ten regions, each with its elected vice president.

Some of the biggest names in professional news photography are on the roster. But every press photographer, whether he works on a country weekly or a metropolitan daily, is assured equal representation at national level. Veteran by-liners and aspiring youngsters alike meet on a common plane of fraternity and professional competence. To be a Fellow of the National Press Photographers Association has become a distinction of great merit.



FIRST FLASH BULBS of 1929 were filled with aluminum foil.

### THE FIRST FLASH BULB

**P**ERHAPS no technical advance has meant more to the news photographer than the invention, by Johannes Ostermeier in Germany in 1929, of the electric flash bulb.

Only veteran cameramen can remember the danger and the inconvenience of using flash powder. Each exposure was, literally, an explosion. If the photographer was not burned, it was a miracle. The room in which he was working became filled with dense smoke; further photography became impossible until the air had been cleared. The noise of the explosion terrified people to such an extent that they became apprehensive the minute the photographer set up his flash lamp and sprinkled powder into the pan. To put his sitters at ease one enterprising Boston photographer in 1890 set off a preliminary, mild "flash in the pan," intended "educationally to acclimatise the subjects for a second one, which was that by which the exposure was made."

Ostermeier's revolutionary invention was a bulb filled with oxygen under pressure and very thin aluminum foil. It had a small screw base which would fit a standard electric hand flash-light. When current was passed through priming wires inside the bulb, the foil instantly combusted—at a speed estimated to be 1/50 of a second.

At first the bulbs were used without a reflector, and there was no means of synchronizing the firing with the release of the shutter. The "open flash" technique was universal: the camera was placed on a tripod, the shutter opened, the flash set off, and the shutter closed.

## PHOTOS BY WIRE

ON FEBRUARY 1, 1907, distinguished guests of the French magazine *L'Illustration* saw a photograph of the President of the Republic sent by wire from Paris to Lyons and back. The demonstration was made by the inventor, Alfred Korn, a professor at the University of Munich.

The sending set looked like an Edison cylinder phonograph, minus the horn. A positive photograph on film was wrapped around a cylinder, which was caused to revolve. A narrow pencil-like beam of light was adjusted to shine on the cylinder, and the light which passed through the photograph was converted to electrical current by a selenium cell. The scanning light slowly traveled the length of the cylinder.

The receiving set was not dissimilar, but was enclosed in a lighttight box. Around the cylinder was wrapped photographic paper. A scanning light, modulated in brightness by the distant photo cell, slowly created exposures over the length and breadth of the paper. When developed, a facsimile of the original picture was shown to the audience.

Like photography itself, the discovery of the wire transmission of photographs cannot be attributed to any single person. At the very time that Korn was working out his selenium cell process, Edouard Bélin in Paris perfected a similar method in which the current was modulated by mechanical means.

These early techniques were used to transmit spot news photographs as early as 1914, when a picture of President Poincaré at Lyons was sent to Paris and published in *Le Journal* of April 1.

World War I put a halt to further experimentation, but by the 1920s wire transmission was revived. In 1925 the American Telephone and Telegraph Company opened a commercial service between New York, Chicago and San Francisco. A modification of Korn's technique was used.

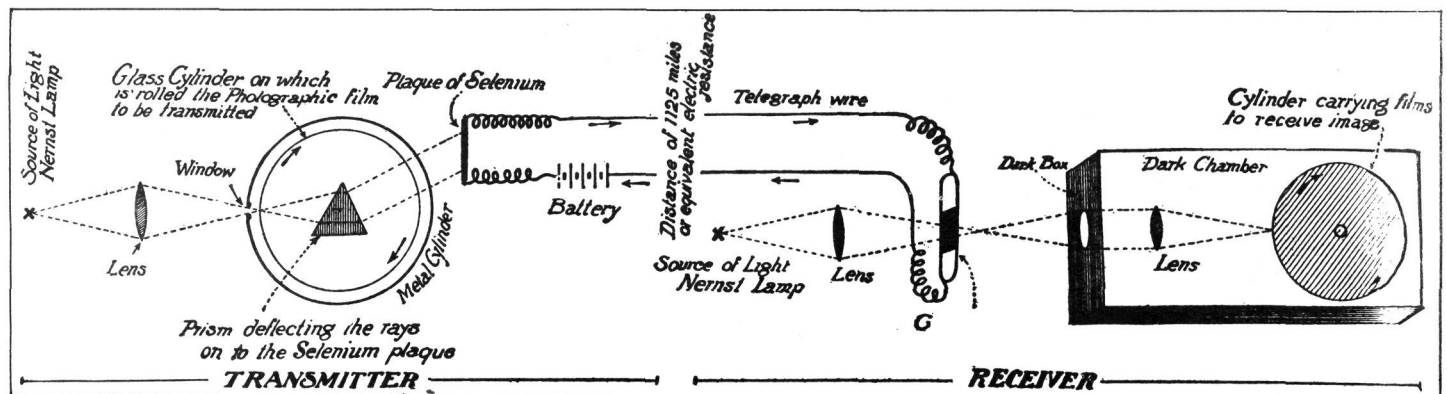
Today wire transmission is routine. The three wire services (Associated Press Wirephoto, United Press Newspictures Tele-



WIRE PHOTO of the Crown Prince of Germany, transmitted 1,000 miles in 1906. From *The Scientific American*, 1907.

photo, and International News Photos Soundphoto) have a total of 311 stations. Each of these services transmits from 60 to 70 pictures daily. The result of this technological development is that all over the world daily newspapers bring us photographs of events which happened within the day or—in some cases—within the hour, no matter how distant.

BASIC PRINCIPLE of Korn's wire transmission of photographs, invented in 1904, is used today. From *The Scientific American*, Feb. 16, 1907.



## AN 1886 PHOTO INTERVIEW

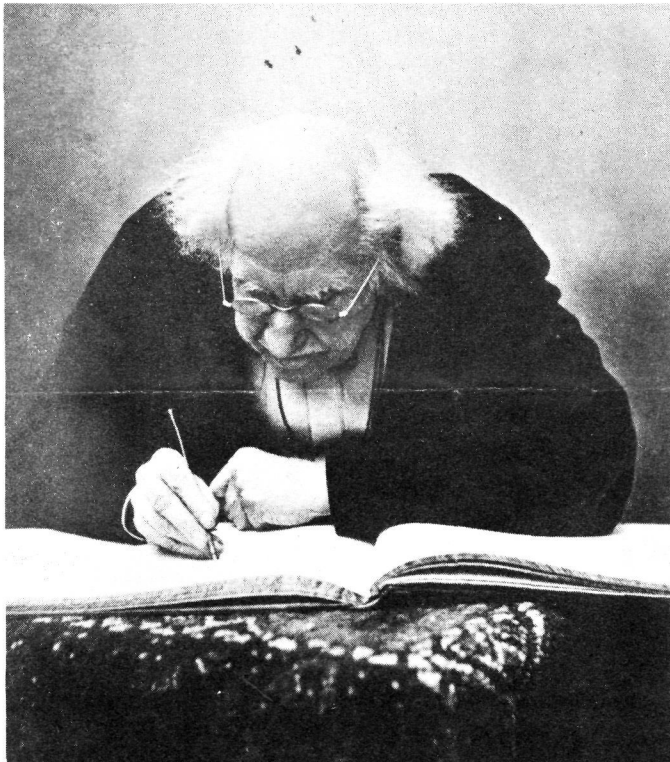
ON THE OCCASION of the 100th birthday of the famous French scientist Marie Eugène Chevreul in 1886, the Paris newspaper *Le Journal* brought its readers something new: a photographic interview. While Nadar père, the photographer, engaged the centenarian in conversation, his son Paul Nadar made exposures at snapshot speed on the newly introduced dry plates. At no time was Chevreul asked to pose, and the extraordinary sequence photographs here reproduced were "candid." "I had the thought," Paul Nadar wrote, "of adding to the camera a phonograph . . . but as Edison had not made the phonograph commercially available, I engaged a stenographer to take down the spoken words."

The newspaper, which devoted four pages to the interview, printed beneath each picture the very words spoken by the scientist at the moment of each exposure. We reproduce seven of the 21 photographs, with a translation of the captions. Chevreul's words on color refer to his law of simultaneous contrasts.

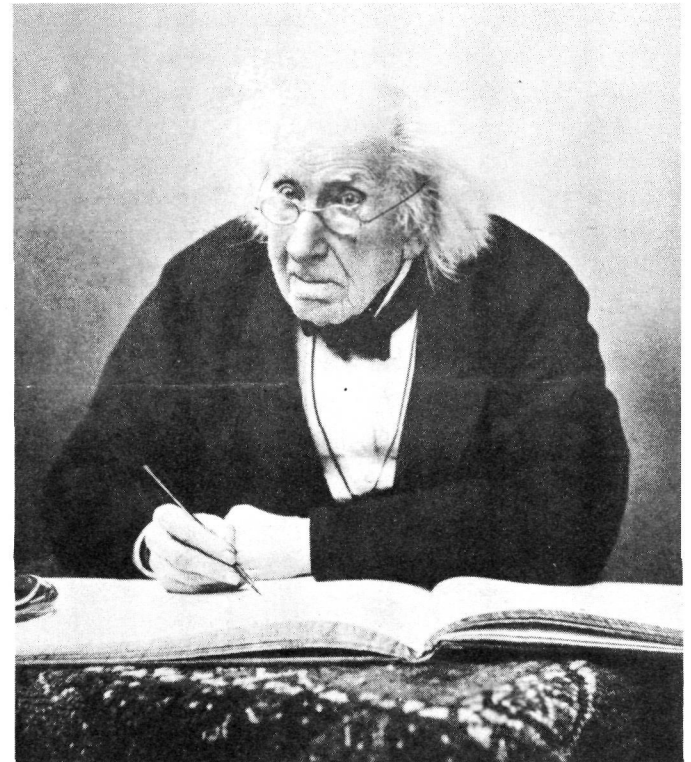
In the George Eastman House is an album of prints made by Nadar which he presented to the Austrian photographic historian, J. M. Eder. Years later it was acquired by George Eastman. A full cycle was thus completed, for Nadar was George Eastman's agent and the photographs, if not taken on Eastman's first dry plates, were certainly printed on paper of his manufacture, for each bears the dry stamp "Papier Eastman."



What do you want me to write in your reception book?



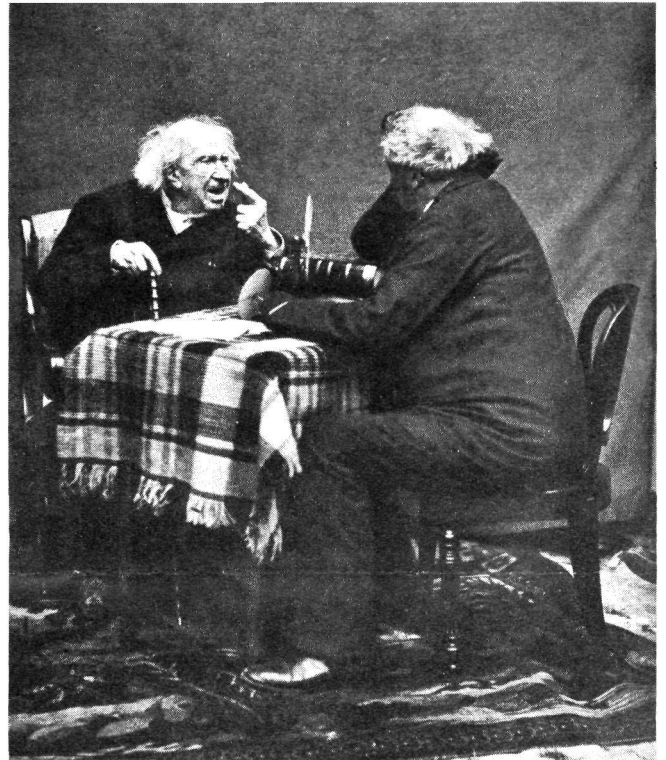
I am going to write for you my first philosophical principle. I didn't write it, but Malebranche. I've not found a better.



"One should certainly strive for infallibility, yet never pretend to."  
(Malebranche.)



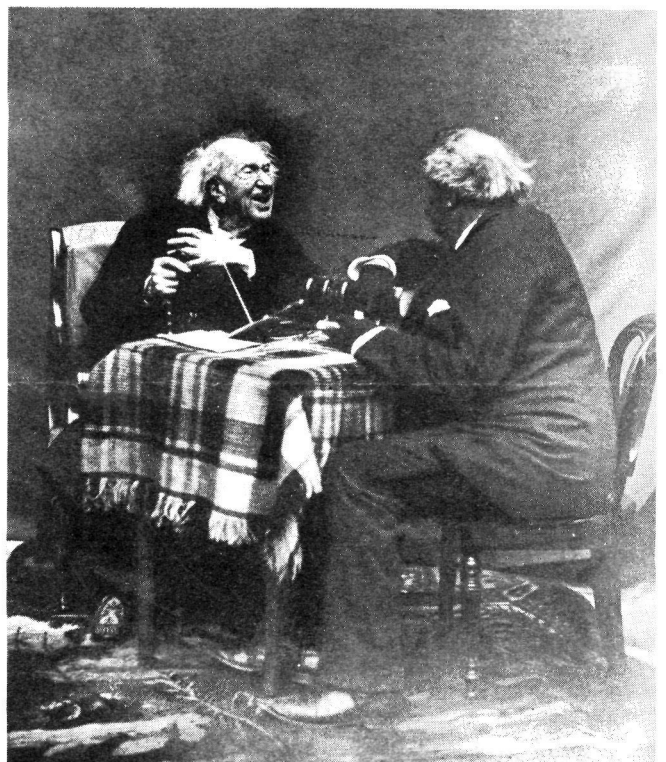
I have never drunk anything but water, and yet I am president of the Anjou Wine Society—but *honorary president only!*



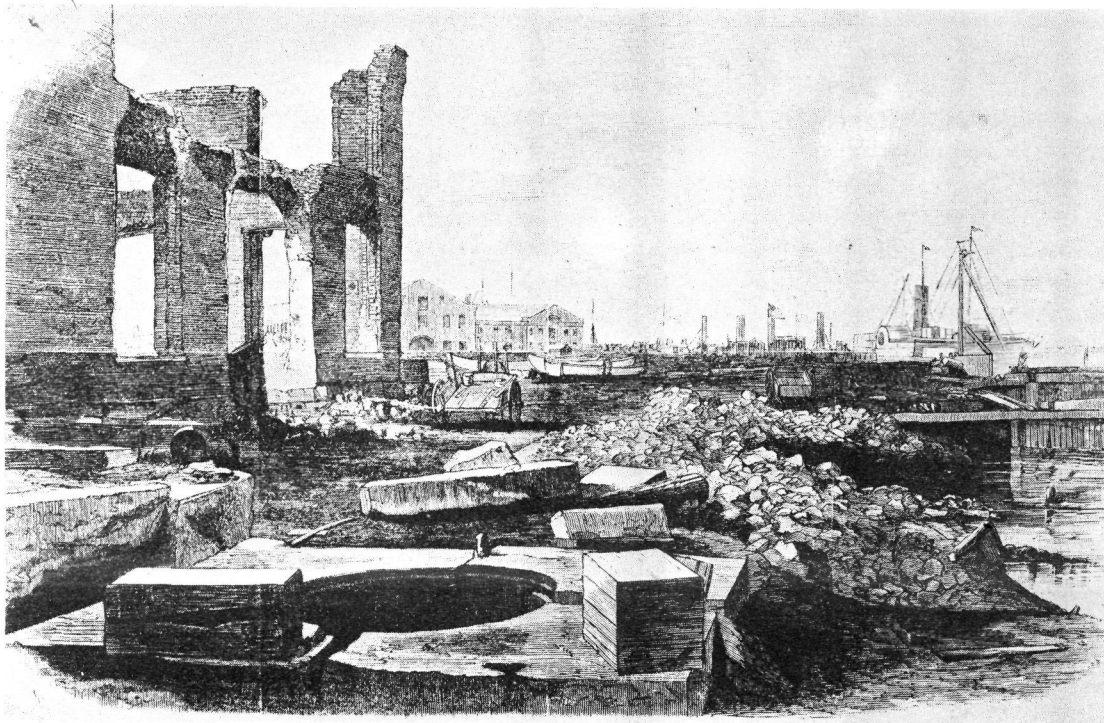
I told him that yellow beside blue gives orange, and that blue along side yellow becomes violet.



He died 20 years later, without ever having come to see me . . . as I had begged him to do.



Note that I am far from censuring what I cannot explain, but I tell you *I must see . . .*



BEFORE HALFTONE was invented, news photographs were reproduced by hand. This wood engraving of the Norfolk Navy Yard was published in Harper's Weekly, April 8, 1865. It is copied from a Civil War photograph by Alexander Gardner.

## FROM NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE

by Vincent S. Jones, Director, News and Editorial Office,  
Gannett Newspapers.

**I**T is tritely true that the best journalism is the product of intricate teamwork.

But photography, the newest member of the team, often seems to be in the position of a rookie sitting on the end of the bench—not fully tested; not fully trusted.

No one factor can be blamed for the failure of photography to achieve its full role in journalism.

Some of the reasons are obvious:

Photography, the youngest of the arts, came on the scene centuries after the printed word had established its role in the field of communications.

While even the most carelessly printed newspaper is at least legible, only a handful of publications present pictures in a manner approximating their full impact.

Despite overwhelming evidence of the power of visual appeal, most editors persist in regarding pictures as of secondary importance, relegating them to the role of an auxiliary medium and rarely grasping the infinite potentialities of Words AND Pictures, artfully combined.

It's a rare editor who wasn't at one time at least a passable reporter or a reliable copyreader. All editorial operating executives know their way around the composing room and the other archaic processes to which we cling.

But the editor who can read type upside down and backwards usually is baffled by its photographic equivalent, the negative. He knows instantly whether a story or a headline can be improved by rewriting or retyping, and how to do it. But usually he assumes that the print laid down on his desk is the one and only possible end result of an assignment.



I know editors who boast that they wouldn't take up photography because it might make them into technicians and who fear that this would blunt their news judgment. Yet these same men are better judges of baseball for having tossed a ball around in their youth. Their approach to words has not been dimmed by having read some books or for having learned how dimly it is to write anything worth reading.

But photographers must share part of the blame for their status in journalism, because of their failure to do a better job of selling themselves and their profession to the editors. A photographer who can face up to a killer on the loose, outtalk a demagogue, charm a bumptious brat, or outlicker the leading egotists of our time should have no trouble getting along with editors.

If the editor doesn't speak his language, why shouldn't the photographer try to educate him?

Supposing a routine assignment, scheduled for a two-column cut, hits the jackpot. Why should a photographer expect the editor to visualize how much better the picture would look in four, or even eight, columns? He can't visualize it on the easel, but he can see it if the photographer turns in a king-size print along with what was ordered.

A photographer is told to take a picture a certain way. He finds a better way to do it. Why shouldn't he take both?

Does the editor demand a print in five minutes? He probably has a reason. If the photographer gives it to him, then shows what really can be done he may make a sale.

Are the assignments dismal? Is the cropping inept? Is the display ineffective? Then the photographers should offer their suggestions. They are the experts in the field. Their advice is valuable. It should be put forward, with or without invitation.

Is the reproduction as bad as it is on most newspapers? It's easy to blame the engravers, the stereotypers, the pressmen, the paper manufacturers. But if I were an engraver and got complaints about cuts, I'd make a little collection of some of the impossible copy we send them. If there is one criticism which may fairly be made against news photographers as a class it is their utter indifference to print quality.

Scientists and manufacturers have given us superb equipment and materials. Almost any picture worth taking can be taken. But, as in so many things, we have permitted the machine to become an easy substitute for thought, for enterprise, and for work. The result is a flood of mediocre pictures and far too few that show imagination and real skill.

The Rochester Photo Conference, broadly representative of all the departments concerned with getting and printing pictures, has an opportunity to examine our mutual problems, to set some high goals, and to chart ways of reaching them.

## PIONEER NEWSREELS

**W**HEN THE motion picture machine first became a practical reality, it was immediately regretted that inventors had been so slow achieving a dream of such long standing. Historic events had cascaded on their way without waiting for the moving picture's invention to capture them.

But once started, the movie men lost no time in filming every event that appeared to be an historic milestone. Fifty seven years ago, they had their first chance at a coronation. Nicholas II was due to be crowned Czar of ail the Russias on the 26th of May, 1896.

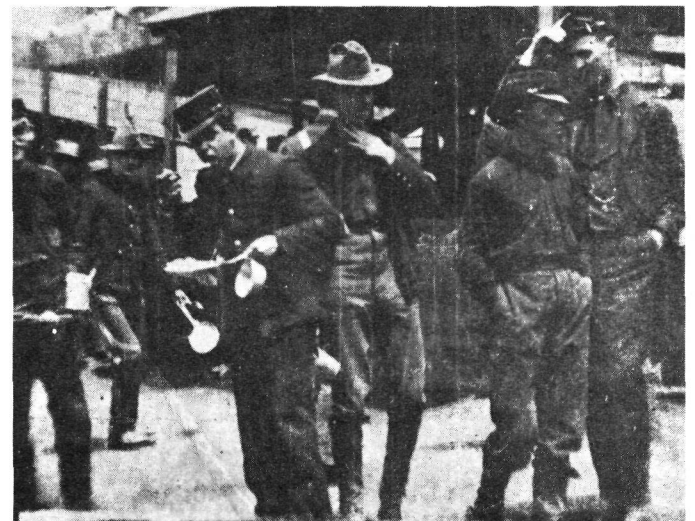
Louis Lumière sent his assistant Moisson and his chief cameraman, Francis Doublier, to film the event with the Lumière Cinématographe: an invention then not quite two years old.

Doublier pictured the Coronation and remained to film the celebrations which followed. Two days after the Coronation the Czar was to greet his subjects on the vast Hoydinsky Plain. Doublier and Moisson had a platform erected for their camera to film this festive occasion. When the day arrived four hundred thousand Russians thronged the plain to see the Czar and get their share of free food and beer. Doublier, trying to make his way to his platform, was caught in a fearful tide of humanity as the crowd surged toward the food stand. Someone hoisted him

above the heads of the throng and he made his way via heads and shoulders to his platform just as a catastrophic panic swept the crowd. First reports listed three thousand killed in the crush. Later the Czar granted a thousand roubles to the bereft families of the victims and the official count was then revised downward to 1,138 killed. But a skeptical news reporter wrote that he himself had counted 1,282 corpses lying alongside the road alone and doubted that the world would ever learn the true figure.

In the spring of 1898, the motion picture camera had its baptism of fire; for the first time it was used to record the spectacle of civilized men destroying one another with scientific weapons. The cameramen were J. Stuart Blackton and Albert Smith, founders of the Vitagraph Company, who under the fierce Cuban sun, dragged their sixty pounds of camera to film skirmishes alongside Theodore Roosevelt's command on San Juan Hill.

Albert Smith confirms the unspectacular nature of the actual battle which later was completely erroneously described as a spectacular cavalry charge of Roosevelt's Rough Riders. The Blackton-Smith combat footage so little resembled the appearance of battle as it had been established in the popular mind



CHOW LINE (1898). Stills from the Vitagraph film, *Fighting With Our Boys in Cuba*, by Albert Smith and J. S. Blackton.

that the producers felt compelled upon their return to fake a *Battle of Santiago* which looked more like the history book conception of war. *The Battle of Santiago* was a great success, while the actual footage contained in a release called *Fighting With Our Boys In Cuba* can be appreciated today as accurate film reporting that has had a direct line of development to the work of combat cameramen and newsreel photographers in the Korean conflict.

### THE GRAPHIC HISTORY SOCIETY

There has long been a need for a common meeting place for all interested in pictures of the past. The founding of the Graphic History Society of America bids fair to fill this need admirably. In the words of Paul Vanderbilt, the founding chairman, the Society "is a new association of collectors, custodians, historians, and others interested in collecting and publishing prints, paintings, photographs and other pictures from the standpoint of the subjects which they represent. The Society intends to publish a bulletin, to sponsor occasional meetings, and to serve as a medium for the exchange of information and promotion of objectives."

The first number of the bulletin, titled *Eye to Eye*, appeared in June. It is a 61-page magazine crammed with information, including a statement of aims by Mr. Vanderbilt, a survey of picture collections by Hermine M. Baumhofer, an illustrated account of his collection of steamboat pictures by Captain Frederick Way, Jr., a discussion of the problems of producing Dupont Company's picture history, and twenty-five pages of condensed, meaty notes.

Subscription to *Eye to Eye* is included in membership in the Graphic History Society of America. Correspondence should be addressed to Paul Vanderbilt, P.O. Box 4402, Washington, D.C.

### ALDEN SCOTT BOYER

It is with profound regret that we record the death of Alden Scott Boyer, the Chicago collector who so generously presented his photographic library, historical photographs and equipment to the George Eastman House in 1950. He died suddenly, of a heart attack, with a book in his hand and a dog at his side, surrounded by treasures which he had assiduously and lovingly collected over the years from all parts of the world. The George Eastman House had no greater friend. We are privileged and proud to preserve and maintain his photographic collection as his lasting memorial.

The next issue of *Image* will be devoted entirely to Alden Scott Boyer and his collection.

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### TO THE EDITORS

Sirs:

Here is a news clipping which I ran across for your collection of photography. It is from the Syracuse, N. Y., *Evening Herald* for June 16, 1903.

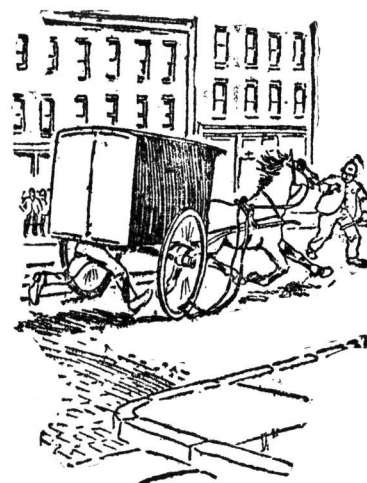
Fulton, N. Y.

Leon C. Baldwin

### HORSE RAN AWAY.

**He Was Hitched to a Dark-Room Wagon and the Photographer Who Was Attached to It Did Some Lively Running to Keep Up.**

**PHILADELPHIA, JULY 20.**—A photographer who goes about with a dark-room wagon had a lively experience and presented a strange sight in Chestnut street one day this week. He had used his camera in "taking" a big



**AT FULL SPEED.**

building, and had gone to the rear of his two-wheeled wagon, which was so constructed as to admit his upper body in such a manner that he could close the doors and make the inside totally dark. The man had shut himself in, and had proceeded to examine his plate, when the horse, which had always before stood perfectly still, became frightened at a small boy and started to run away. The illustration shows the photographer stepping out lively in his efforts to keep up with the horse. Luckily, before the animal could get more than a block a policeman came to the rescue and ended his wild ride. The photographer will tie his horse to a post hereafter.

*The columns of IMAGE are open to all who are interested in tracing the development of photography. Unsigned articles which appear in these pages may be reprinted providing that credit is given the George Eastman House.*