

Again Is Raised the Question of Who Made the First Camera in the U. S. and Took the First Photographic Portrait

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

WHO made the first camera in America? What pioneer photographer first used a "fast action" picture-taking machine to get a successful portrait of a human being?

According to a recent Associated Press dispatch from Hampden Sydney, Va., honors belong to Dr. John William Draper, an Englishman who was educated at the University of Pennsylvania, became a professor of chemistry at Hampden Sydney college more than a century ago and achieved a wide reputation not only in chemistry but in physiology, history and philosophy as well. This dispatch said:

An old box-shaped camera left at Hampden Sydney college in 1839 by Dr. John William Draper is going to be taken from its century-old resting place to a niche in the Smithsonian Institution, officials of which have accepted it as the first camera in America and the first "fast action" camera in the world. The presentation probably will take place at the June commencement.

To prove that it was the first camera of modern type, eight years of research was conducted by the Rev. Howard C. Cobbs, who was a professional photographer at Charleston, W. Va., before he began his studies for the ministry.

The college asked Mr. Cobbs to make a picture of the camera in 1839 for George W. Eastman, president of the Eastman Kodak company. The young student learned its history from Dr. J. H. C. Bagby, professor of chemistry. He tried it with modern film and it worked. He learned that Dr. Draper made his famous "first portrait" of a living person at New York university in 1839 or 1840, soon after leaving Hampden Sydney.

Mr. Cobbs became convinced that the camera here was older than the one used at N. Y. U. and was the first modern-type camera. Everything he unearthed indicated that he was right in his belief, but he could get no "iron-clad" proof.

Mr. Cobbs took his data to the Smithsonian. Officials congratulated him on his work, then suggested that he study records there. He found just what he needed, and it was in Dr. Draper's own words in a letter to the Photographic and Fine Art Journal, published in 1858, in answer to an inquiry "who made the first photographic portrait?"

Dr. Draper explained that he had worked with sensitive plates before anything was published in Europe by Daguerre or Talbot; that he had tried a lens of large aperture and short focus to speed up action enough to permit portraits of living persons; that he succeeded notably later with information about Daguerre's more sensitive plates.

It was while at Hampden Sydney that he carried on his experiments, he said, even trying mirrors from a telescope before obtaining a lens. The telescope is here and will be presented with the camera.

His connection with portraiture, he said, dated to the summer before publication of Daguerre's process. Daguerre's process was published in August, 1839. Dr. Draper went to New York university in September, 1839, and with Daguerre's more sensitive plates and his methods succeeded.

Had he discovered the more sensitive plate, Virginia might have claimed the honor of the first portrait as well as the first camera.

Despite the assertions in that news story, however, it is possible that some one may soon rise to challenge Dr. Draper's right to the honor of having made the first camera in America and being the first to get a successful portrait. Here's why:

Last year was celebrated the "Centennial of Photography" during which honors were paid to Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre, the Frenchman, who is universally acclaimed as "The Father of Photography." On the eve of that celebration the MacMillan company of New York published "Photography and the American Scene—A Social History, 1839-1896," the result of more than six years of research by Dr. Robert Taft, professor of chemistry at the University of Kansas.

In the first two chapters of his book, Dr. Taft gives a well-documented account of the work of the pioneer "daguerreotypists" in this country who became interest-



DR. JOHN W. DRAPER
(From an ambrotype made by Mathew W. Brady about 1857.)

ed in the new art very soon after articles about Daguerre's process had been reprinted from French and English journals in American newspapers as early as March, 1839. One of these was D. W. Seager, an Englishman, who was living in New York in 1839. As a result of Dr. Taft's investigations, he makes the statement that Seager "was the first person to make a successful daguerreotype in the United States; which he did on September 27, 1839."

As for the claim that Draper made the first successful portrait of a human being, Dr. Taft's conclusions also give that honor to another man. Alexander S. Wolcott of New York. Wolcott, who was an instrument maker and manufacturer of dental supplies, took a daguerreotype of his partner, John Johnson, on October 7, 1839, according to Taft, and this was the "first photographic portrait."

Draper's Contributions. Although denying to Draper the honor of being the first to make a successful photographic portrait, Dr. Taft sums up his important contributions to photography thus:

"He was among the earliest to attempt photographic portraiture.



The earliest photographic portrait which has survived. It is a daguerreotype of Miss Dorothy Catherine Draper, made by her brother, Dr. John W. Draper, probably in the summer of 1840.

These attempts were based on such scientific principles as were then known; he sent abroad an early daguerreotype portrait, apparently the earliest which has survived; he published an extensive account of these experiments, thereby enabling and encouraging others to benefit from his experience; and he became associated with Morse in the opening of an establishment for the purpose of taking portraits, thus becoming one of the founders of a new profession."

Dr. Taft's mention of "the earliest daguerreotype portrait which has survived" is a reference to Draper's famous portrait of his sister, Miss Dorothy Catherine Draper, which is still in existence and which is owned by the Rev. Sir John C. W. Herschel of England, grandson of Sir John F. W. Herschel, the distinguished English scientist to whom Draper sent it in the summer of 1840. It was accompanied by a letter, the full text of which is printed for the first time in Taft's book. In this letter Draper stated, that "I believe I was the first person

who succeeded in obtaining portraits from life."

"It will be noted that the letter is dated July 28, 1840, and that no reference is made to the date on which the portrait was made," comments Dr. Taft. "It will also be noted that the exposure of this early daguerreotype portrait was only 65 seconds. Previously published accounts concerning this daguerreotype have given exposures ranging from 10 to 20 minutes, which have evidently been based upon such general information as was available in Seager's exposure table (printed in the American Repertory of Arts, Sciences and Manufacturers for March, 1840, the first ever printed in this country).

"Judging from these facts, the date of the letter, the relatively short exposure required and an examination of the portrait itself which shows rather great contrast, I am of the opinion that it was taken outdoors during the summer of 1840."

In September, 1840, Draper published an article in the London, Edinburgh and Dublin Philosophical Magazine in which he described in detail his method of making photographic portraits, such as the one of his sister. He stated that in his earlier attempts he dusted the face of the person sitting for the portrait with white powder (probably flour) to secure greater contrast but that a few trials showed him that there was no advantage in this. To get greater illumination on the subject he used mirrors to reflect the sun directly upon the sitter "but in the reflected sunshine, the eye can not support the effulgence of the rays." In order to support the head and keep it still during the long exposures required for these early pictures, a staff terminating in an iron ring was attached to the sitter's chair and so "arranged as to have motion in all directions to suit any stature and any altitude."

"The modern patron of the photographer's art may not recognize the instrument of torture described above," writes Dr. Taft, "but to those who had photographic portraits made in the long ago it will be remembered as the familiar head rest which was part of every photographer's equipment, a device which was used, as can be seen, from the early inception of the art up to fairly modern times."

It must have been a very trying experience for Miss Dorothy Catherine Draper and it is doubtful if many of the belles of 1840 would have been willing to endure their complexions by having flour smeared over it or sitting exposed to strong sunlight for long minutes while trial pictures were being taken, not to mention enduring the discomfort of that "instrument of torture," the iron head rest. So she deserves great credit for her contribution to the development of the art of photography and even though it is debatable if her brother can justly claim the honor of being the first to make a photographic portrait, there is little doubt that one distinction does rest with the Draper family.

Dorothy Catherine Draper was the first photographic "model"—the ancestor of the "glamour gals" who smile so bewitchingly at us from the pages of thousands of magazines and newspapers today.

War Adds Odd Words to Talk

Language Habits Affected By Conflict, Survey of Speech Reveals.

WASHINGTON.—Bombs and guns of the European war have jolted the language habits of this nation's "man-in-the-street" even though he lives safely 3,000 miles from the front, a survey of popular speech here reveals.

Strange foreign words, and curious English phrases that he never heard until last September already are a part of the average man's speech because he is "bombarded" with them daily in his newspaper and in speeches he hears.

"Blitzkrieg"—the German word for lightning war—is one of these. It is on the lips of nearly everyone to describe any swift thrust or surprise victory in sport or business. Even children play at "blitzkrieg." In Latin-America it is translated "guerra relampago."

To the Germans it means the type of thrust made into Poland to smash or paralyze the enemy with an overwhelming force of airplanes, tanks and other swift instruments of destruction.

"Blackout" is common. "Blackout," the word to describe total darkness in cities on defensive against air raids is another popular new word.

"Lebensraum," the German word which denotes the resources and land for which the Reich leaders say they are fighting also has been popularized.

There are few other German phrases in the current war speech, however.

French words are absent because of relative quiet on the Maginot front. Most of the popular words are from the English, either new, or revived from nearly forgotten times.

"Trojan Horse" is one of the last class. It refers to the ancient war when Greeks captured Troy by secretly infiltrating troops into the city inside a staturesque wooden horse which the Trojans supposed was a prize of war.

"Safety zone" which describes the 300-mile wide ocean belt drawn by the American nations around the continent from which they hope to bar any belligerent action, is also new and widely known.

"Combat zone" is another term which has grown out of American reaction to the war. It is purely of United States origin because it refers to the sea zones in Europe from which United States ships are banned in the hope that they will thus avoid being sunk.

"Total war" introduced. "Total war," which means a nation employing every agency in its power without restriction, to win a war, also has been popularized recently.

"Leaflet bombs," "war of nerves," "air-raid warning," "all clear," "scuttle," and similar words also have just come into popular use. Some of them are revived after virtual extinction as applied to earlier wars.

Another class of new words describes new war materials such as "magnetic mines," and "balloon barrages," but these are still rather technical and not especially common in use.

"A phrase left from the Russo-Finnish war which still has much popular currency is "ski-patrol," referring to small groups of men on skis who intercepted enemy attacks, usually from ambush. The word is used socially to denote daring action in difficult circumstances.

Ship's 'Bad Luck' Hawk Placed in London Zoo

LONDON.—The "bad luck" peregrine falcon rescued when the Japanese liner Terukuni Maru was sunk by a mine has been placed in the London Zoo. The hawk had alighted hungry and exhausted on the ship as the vessel steamed north toward the English channel. Saki, the steward, fed the hawk and gave her shelter. His shipmates pleaded with him to release her. "She will bring bad luck," they said. So Saki released the hawk, which soared high and vanished. Next day she was back, and Saki would not let her go. When the liner struck the mine Saki took the bird with him into the lifeboat and turned her over to members of the crew of the Beaversford, bound for London.

A Bird in Hand Worth Federal Man's Attention

NEW ORLEANS, LA.—Vincent Matassa knows now that a bird in the hand means he goes in the cage. Matassa was freed under \$500 bond for holding a captive mocking bird. United States Commissioner R. H. Carter Jr. ruled that he violated the migratory bird treaty act by being caught with a feathered friend.

Dogs Once Fair Game in Colonial Massachusetts

BOSTON.—Dogs were banned from Nantucket and Duke counties in Massachusetts 200 years ago. The colonial law ruled that any canines found in those counties might be killed, with no action allowable against the person committing the act.

Lights of New York

by L. L. STEVENSON

Cheerful: Here's the latest racket being worked on Broadway—a revival of an old trick yet one that's proving highly successful. A not too busy drinking place is selected and a cheater comes in as a stranger to a confederate who is already at the bar. The stranger gives a demonstration of sleight-of-hand and then, as a final trick, requests the loan of a five spot from the till. The bill is vanished and slipped to the confederate who immediately buys a drink for himself. By this time, the bartender is a bit worried over the fin that has disappeared. So the dishonest one tells him to look in the register and sure enough, there is the identical five, serial number and all. With that, the trickster and his confederate suddenly remember important engagements and depart on their separate ways only to meet and divide their loot.

C'est la Guerre: During a visit to Bill and Dot down in Washington, Dot's mother, Mrs. Louise Hamer, discovered that grandpa, the nestor and pride of Bill and Dot's turtle collection, was not enjoying himself because his particular delicacy, ant eggs, was not readily obtainable in the national capital. So when she returned to New York, Mrs. Hamer visited a downtown pet store. There she learned that ant eggs at present are indeed scarce because they are imported from Russia and Finland. Conditions overseas being what they are, ant eggs have increased in price from 75 cents to \$3 a pound. Fortunately, ant eggs are extremely light, so two packages were sent to Washington and last reports have it that grandpa once again is enjoying the delicacy that appeals to him and thus is able to scorn chopped steak.

Street Scene: Little mothers looking after their charges in the shadows of frowning tenements. . . . One of those horse-drawn, hand-operated merry-go-rounds. . . . With a tired-looking steed standing patiently. . . . While the owner with smiles and gestures invites patrons into the seats. . . . The seats are filled and the merry-go-round man starts to crank. . . . But only for a moment. . . . Eager youngsters spring forward with pleas to be allowed to do his work. . . . and while he rests, youth turns the crank. . . . and the little mothers, as their charges, gurgle and coo, smile. . . . While I, being an old one, am reminded of Tom Sawyer and that job of whitewashing a fence.

Cat Story: Mrs. Lavelle G. Brown of Glendale, Calif., in town with her husband who was here on business, told me of her cat Tony, a short-haired 14-pound regular old tom with a big head, but well beloved nevertheless. One day Mrs. Brown missed Tony and calls, endearing and otherwise, failed to cause him to appear. Fearing that he had been lured away by some siren or a desire for exploration, Mrs. Brown wondered what she would tell her husband whom Tony always greeted with affection. But, as she was preparing dinner, Mrs. Brown opened the refrigerator and out strolled Tony. It seemed that, being attacked by hunger urge, he had gone inside in search of refreshment, and the door had been closed. But, as defrosting was in process, no harm was done and Tony greeted Mr. Brown as usual.

Swing: The other night at Fiesta Danceteria, one of the swing bands had just left the stand when a bus boy carrying a tray of dishes and silver fell down the flight of stairs connecting the upper and lower dance floors. He was unhurt but there was a terrific clatter of china and knives and forks. Immediately several dozen pairs of jitterbugs got up to dance while a more exuberant swing-er nut jumped from his chair and shouted, "Boy, what an arrangement!"

Redskins: Harold Lamston, ex-Broadway producer who turned five-and-dime impresario, wanted a pair of Indians in full regalia to symbolize the nickel piece at the opening of a new dinery. After several round-the-town calls, he got in contact with Harry Lee, booking agent. First, Lee wanted Lamston to hire the entire Indian tribe that had worked at the World's fair. Finally, working down from a rate of \$10 an hour, they came to terms and then Lamston wanted to know if the Indians were the McCoy.

"Sure," declared Lee. "These fellows are C. P. I." "What's 'C. P. I.?' demanded Lamston. "I thought you knew," responded Lee. "C. P. I. means 'Certified Public Indians.'"

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

Sign Grows Too Empty; Repairs Are Ordered

FULLERTON, CALIF.—The city council decided something had to be done about the electric sign that is supposed to say "Welcome to Fullerton." First one letter went out and it read: "We come to Fullerton." Then it became, "We to Fullerton," and finally, "We to Full." Then they ordered repairs.

WHO'S NEWS THIS WEEK

By LEMUEL F. PARTON
(Consolidated Features—WNU Service.)

NEW YORK.—If there is a touch of hysteria as we prepare to prepare, it is more among the basses than the sopranos. Councils of important women have been singularly calm and restrained. There is little shrill outcry among them.

Currently, Mrs. Sadie Orr Dunbar, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and Miss Juliet M. Bartlett, the latter taking office as newly elected president of the New York Women's City club, urge calmness. Miss Bartlett says we "should keep our feet on the ground and our heads cool."

Mrs. Dunbar, addressing the federation convention at Milwaukee, stresses the collective need for thought, rather than emotion. "Never in our national history has there been a more desperate need for clear understanding," she says. Mrs. Dunbar's job is "community organization," heading this effort for the University of Oregon medical school. It is understandable that she should emphasize reasoned techniques rather than emotional excitements. "Community organization" seems to describe our present national endeavor.

Elected to the presidency of the federation in 1938, for a three-year term, Mrs. Dunbar represents about 2,000,000 club women. She tells them, "I want women to tune in with modern life." A widow and a grandmother, of pioneer stock, she has behind her a unique tradition of "collective organization." Her grandfather was the first white man to plant corn in Ganger, Mo., where she was born in a log cabin. Her family trekked on to Chanute, Kan., to Fresno, Calif., and thence to Oregon, where, after her graduation from the State university she taught school. She has served 24 years as executive secretary of the Oregon Tuberculosis association. She was one of six children and is the mother of a grown son and daughter.

A GOOD reporter these days should have a diploma from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Making inquiries among experts as to the possibilities of swift industrial and military preparedness, this inquirer finds the answers reassuring, but complicated, to be taken on faith, with political factors still an unsolved X in the equation. Both pertinent and encouraging is a general agreement by authorities that with all our fumbling and faltering, the index of productivity in a free state is higher than in a slave state once it gets going.

Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau recently met with representatives of the machine tool industry in Washington to start team work on tooling and standardization for the mass production of planes. Participating were Dr. George Jackson Mead, vice chairman of the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics. He accepts a newly created post, at \$10,000 a year, the office being established to facilitate decision on types of planes, swift standardization of parts and swift production.

On technical qualifications, Dr. Mead shows a good report card, as one of the leading airplane designers of America. He received the Sylvanus Reed award, for 1933, for his technical contributions to the advancement of aviation, and his professional and business experience has covered both the technical and industrial field.

Mr. Mead attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1911 to 1915. In 1917, he was in charge of the power plants at the laboratories of the United States air station at Dayton, Ohio. He then became a plane designer for the Wright-Martin Aircraft corporation and later chief engineer for the Wright Aeronautical corporation. He founded the Pratt & Whitney Co., and was chief engineer of the United Aircraft corporation. He is 49 years old, a native of Everett, Mass.

HOOFERS and spoofters fade, and men who know something important climb into the headlines. It is Sir James Barrie's play, over again, where specialized knowledge took over at a time of urgency. As our metallurgical industry blueprints a steel matrix of national defense, Walter S. Tower becomes president of the America Iron and Steel institute, which is the clearing house for planned and integrated effectiveness in the industry. Mr. Tower is an expert on both economics and geography.

Out-In Frock With BraidEdged Panels

DON'T you think it's one of the prettiest ideas for cotton prints that ever bloomed in the spring—all set for a summer of great popularity? There's something so perky and young about \$716, with its choice of low-cut or tailored collar finished with a come-hither bow, and panels outlined in braid; to call attention to the supple slimness of your waist! It's simple and comfortable enough to wear around the house,



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Golden Age
The age of gold was the age when gold did not rule.—Lezay de Marnesia.

WEARY DESPONDENT GIRLS: Crying spells, irritable nerves due to functional "monthly" pain should find a real "woman's friend" in Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Try it.

Lydia E. Pinkham's VEGETABLE COMPOUND

WATCH

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THE SPECIALS