

# Contact Sheet

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## History of Photography

How long has photography been around? From the first time someone put an image on a piece of pewter without using brushes or paint has only been about 179 years, not a very long time in the scheme of things. At the June meeting of EIPS, **Jan Larcom** gave a short history of where we came from and possibly where we are heading.

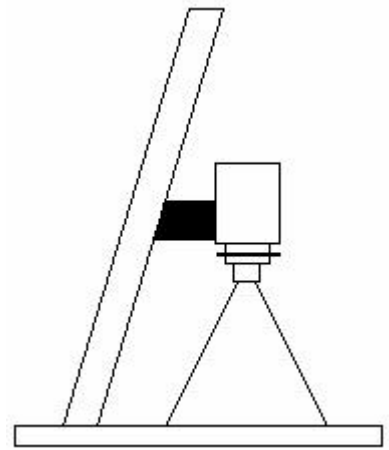
Photography is the capture of light on some type of media. It literally means “writing with light”. But can you imagine someone at the end of the dark ages trying to understand that: “Light is a form of electromagnetic radiation which moves in waves rather similar to the ripples on a pond, except that light is vibrations of electric and magnetic forces. Described thus, light behaves as a form of energy. But whenever light interacts with matter – as when it is absorbed by a substance or emitted from a lamp – it behaves as a form of matter, composed of a stream of infinitesimal particles called photons.” p. 13, *Color*, from Time-Life series.

A photographer must use his vision, and the technology of the times, to create images. Technology both expands and contracts your horizon. As an example, when color film came along, we could show images with color that we never had previously, but we lost some of the textures and shapes that could only be seen in the B&W photo.

Our origins of photography began because painters wanted some way to capture an image on their canvas. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, a **Camera Obscura** was invented. It had a pinhole in side of tent/ darkened room and light would shine on the opposite wall or a sheet of ground glass. The artist would then draw the upside down image on the canvas or ground glass. The problems with this process were that you had very long exposures, much light was needed, and you could not record any movement.

**500 years later**, in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, Giovanni Battista della Porta put a lens on the Camera Obscura to gather more light. He put on a play outside the tent and patrons inside were so frightened by the small people upside down on the screen, he was ostracized by a Papal court as someone who practiced sorcery. He promised never to do that again and snuck out of the country. With this type of prevailing thinking, you can appreciate why advances were so slow.

All of the sciences were in their infancies. What was light at that time? The people thought they lived in a “luminous sea”. When light went through a prism and was split into the spectrum of color, those colors were thought to originate **from the glass**. In 1666, Sir Isaac Newton, at age 26, put light through a prism to create a spectrum of color. He then took a second prism and brought the spectrum



of color back to white light proving that the glass of the prism was not the source of the color. The light sensitivity of silver salts was noted about this time, but the discovery of iodine didn't happen until 1811. Hyposulphate (or fixer) to stop the action of light on the silver salt was not discovered until 1819. All of these discoveries had to happen before silver based photography could begin. Part of the progression of the chemistry of photography was slowed down by the alchemists' beliefs that you could mix a heavy metal such as lead with another compound to create another heavy metal such as gold. Much of the advances were based on luck and trial and error.

In 1826, the French inventor Joseph Nicéphore Niépce (1765 – 1833) created "Heliography", the first image created by the process itself which did not require someone to use a pencil, pen, or paintbrush. He used a piece of pewter coated with bitumen of Judea, a type of asphalt. He put a portable camera obscura (invented by Johann Zahn in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century) on his windowsill for eight hours of exposure. Niépce had noted that bitumen of Judea hardened in sunlight. He would then treat the surface with lavender oil which would remove the soft bitumen quickly. Acid was then used to etch the pewter so that lines would show up on the metal. He created the first photo, an image that did not require a pen or paint applied by the artist

At about the same time (1835) in England, Fox Talbot worked with silver salts soaked on paper. Most of images went dark after a short while since he had not found a way of removing silver salts completely in the unexposed areas. He used concentrated salt to stop the action of light on silver. Only after communicating with John Herschel in

1839 did he start to use fixer on his prints to stop the action of light. He would then make a contact sheet picture of his original "picture" to create the picture that you could recognize. He could take several pictures of his original picture so that the original image was the "negative".

In 1839, the French inventor Louis Jacque Daguerre (1787-1851) created the **Daguerreotype** which used silver coated copper plates and iodine to capture the image, and then treated the plate with mercury vapors to get the image to show correctly on the plate. The advantages over prior process were that it only took ½ hour of exposure and gave incredible details and was very archival. In fact, some of these images still exist, especially gold toned images. (Using Herschel's fixer in late 1839 to remove residual silver, he got exposure time down to just 3 minutes.) However, the disadvantage of the process was that you only got one image from each exposure with no chance of copies. Also, when viewing the image, you could get different light intensities so that at times you would see the negative image, then moving slightly to the side, the positive image would show.

Photography loves dichotomy. From its infancy, one group wants extreme sharpness, details, no alterations; the other group wants soft, "artistic", images. Now we have one group wanting digital, the other group championing silver based. Et Cetera! The history of photography is still in its infancy, only 179 years old. Look how far the cave pictographs have evolved in the way people paint images. We will see hills, valleys, and plateaus in the direction our craft proceeds. Each of us will contribute to its ultimate direction and flavor.

## Club Notes

Roger reminds us that we have a continuing need for prints or slides for the Idaho Falls magazine. It is good exposure for you and our club.

Remember that a publication such as this has a deadline about 3 months ahead of the season. Therefore, in the spring they need summer photos - - and so forth. They like slides that tell a story, are a very good scenic representation of our area, or show a little humor. If you present a digital image, the file size must be about 30 Megs in size.

Roger also mentioned that the Chamber of Commerce is going to have a projector as part of their display in their building. They need summer recreation photos. Roger said that he can scan these images onto a CD for us so that your slide or print does not fade with constant light exposure.

We need some feedback from members as to whether they wish to participate in the Snake River Settlers' Festival at Tautphaus Park on Monday, July 4. We realize that this may interfere with other celebrations that you may already be involved with and this is why we need more input. We will be able to set up a couple of tents - - and there will not be a charge for our space!

We voted on our Articles of Association at the last meeting. It passed. We can now apply for a tax exempt status so that we may get more contributors to our October Juried Show. This will also allow us to apply for state grants for the Arts.

**We have been invited to participate in the Smithsonian**

**Institute's traveling exhibit that is called "Barn Again!" It will be at the Eagle Rock Art Museum from August 4 to September 24. We submitted our images at the last meeting so that they may be judged by the Art Guild for inclusion in the show.**

There will also a "Barnanza" on August 20 to showcase the barns of Bonneville County with crafts, quilts, farm memorabilia, and games of farm children that we are invited to participate in. This should be good exposure for our club since this is a major show associated with the Smithsonian Institute. So get those barn pictures ready!

## Advancement Program

**The theme for July will be: *Photographer's Choice*. Please bring your three best slides / prints and join us on July 21 at 7:30 p.m. at the Conference Room at 1900 Grandview. Even if you do not have pictures to show, remember that your photography will improve the more photographs you see. Join us, please.**

### For Sale:

Neil Andreason was a long time member in the early years of our club. He did a lot of sports photography for local schools. After his recent death, his wife has several Canon based items to sell:

Canon AZ – needs cleaning - \$50.  
Sigma 400mm, f/5.6 for Canon, \$160  
Canon body, 7E, no lens, \$100  
Sigma 300mm, f/2.8, for Canon, \$1600  
Bogen tripod, 3001, with head and case, \$50

Nikon FM, maybe

Please contact Mrs. Andreason at 357-5584 for further information.

## Monthly Meeting

**Date: July 7, 2005**

**Time: 7:30 p.m.**

**Location: 1900 Grandview**

### **Program:**

Summertime sometimes makes communications difficult with other club members. I do not have the listing of the July lecturer; but I can assure you, from past experience, you will enjoy the topic

## Graffiti

EIPS is a group of amateur and professional photographers who have joined together to further the art and craft of photography. Please join us and expand your horizons. Sharing knowledge makes all participants better at their craft. We meet on the first Thursday of each month for our educational lecture. Then the third Thursday is our Advancement Program where we share some of the images we have done. We meet at 7:30 p.m. at 1900 Grandview Ave in the conference room.

Krista Soderquist – President  
494 North 1200 West  
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221  
Membership Info  
Web address: [www.eips.net](http://www.eips.net)

