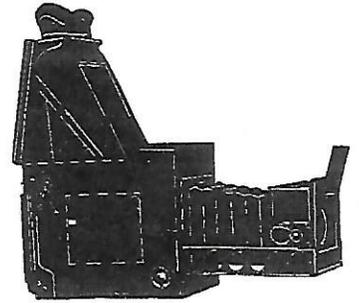


# GRAFLEX HISTORIC QUARTERLY



VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

SECOND QUARTER 1996

## FEATURES

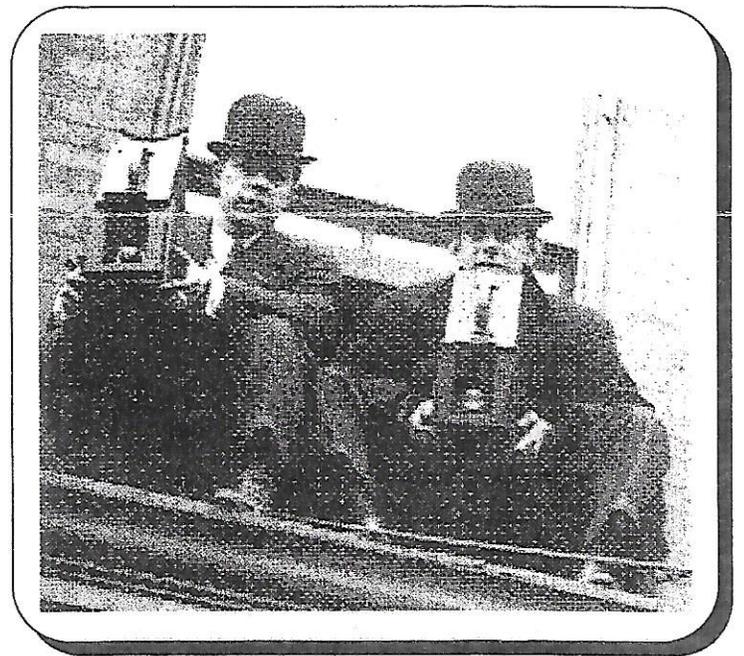
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## GHQ Premiers

The Graflex Historic Quarterly has published its first issue, following in the tradition of the Graflex Historical Society Journal. Like the Journal, the GHQ tries to print articles about the various cameras and other equipment manufactured by Graflex and the company that started the line, Folmer-Schwing. Items of historic interest as well as experiences with Graflex and Graphic equipment by current day and yesteryear users will be featured, along with advertisements and related articles.

GHQ is being started by two Oregon Graflex enthusiasts, Mike Hanemann and John Welch. As the name implies, they plan to publish it four times a year, while keeping subscription costs as low as possible (SEE SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE ON BACK PAGE). News items and contributed articles are welcome, the editors stressed, and they need not be in polished form.

The editors also wanted to appeal to readers of the newsletter to contribute -- not only articles written by themselves, but also information, hints, or anything which may be of interest to other enthusiasts.



## QUESTION:

What cameras are these men holding? Are they Graflexes? (GHQ does not have the answer!) The men, however, are watching a strike. Who can identify the equipment and the probable period?

**NOTICE TO FORMER SUBSCRIBERS OF THE GRAFLEX HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL: IF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO THAT PUBLICATION WAS STILL CURRENT WHEN IT FOLDED, YOU ARE ENTITLED TO TWO FREE ISSUES OF GHQ (INCLUDING THIS ONE) TO EXTEND YOUR PAID SUBSCRIPTION. RATES AND ADDRESS ON BACK PAGE.**

## The Graflex XLW -- Wide Partner of a Versatile System

by J.C. Welch

The first XLW I ever obtained was part of a trade for some much older Graflexes. It looked sort of like a bulging pancake, with its 47mm f8 Schneider Super Angulon on the front. There was only a folding sports finder on top, not an optical finder of any kind on this 2-1/4x3-1/4 camera. Its ground glass back didn't work very well, due to the slanted rays from the wide angle lens. You really couldn't see the whole image from any one position.

"Just how do you use it?" I asked a fellow Graflex collector, while looking at his XLW. He couldn't add much to the obvious method of simply setting the distance on the big plastic focusing lens barrel (calibrated from one foot to infinity), then peering through the wire finder. Evidently the depth of focus was so wide that there was seldom a problem; a rangefinder wasn't considered necessary by the factory for this lens.

The basic system is simply called Graflex XL, and is totally modular. This last hurrah of a fading company was truly modern, appearing in 1965 and lasting until the company's demise in 1973. With three body styles, several lines of lenses, and a wide variety of back options, it was a pro's delight. "Finest cameras made," boasted the advertising. Similar in style to the Linhof Tech 70, it featured the finest lenses of its day: Zeiss Tessars, Planars, and Sonnars, Rodenstock Grandagons and Heligons, as well as the Schneider Super Angulon. Roll backs, film holders, pack holders, and even a Polaroid back was available. The 47mm f8 lens on the wide body actually covers the 3-1/4x4-1/4 area of the Polaroid back, just

nipping off the corners! This coverage measures 104 degrees, on the diagonal.

Graflex also made a 4x5 back for the system, allowing about a 3x4 inch image. This accessory, pictured on the next page, was in the 1973 price list.

The most common body had a rangefinder, which adjusted to MOST of the lenses by pressing a button on top after switching the big barrels. The standard body, without rangefinder, was smaller, and the wide body, which was the only one that could take the 47mm lens, could even be transformed into the standard by adding a 1" spacer (one of several, usually reserved for close-ups).

Despite the dazzling first impressions of the system, limitations become apparent to the user. The viewfinder has only general framing marks, and doesn't, with all of the lens and back combos, usually show exactly what will be in the picture. Graflex relied on a large series of sports finder masks, not much fun if that mode of viewing didn't appeal to you (in other than grab-shot vocations, for example. Close-ups were a chore, adding this spacer and that. The Mamiya Press camera, which appeared about the same time, had convenient rear bellows which even allowed tilts! Its rangefinder accommodated its wide lens (a 50mm), and needed no final button adjustment like the Graflex. Another drawback to the XL is that it isn't very idiot-proof, I constantly forgot to cock the shutter, advance the film on the roll holder, or remove the dark slide. The Koni-Omega rangefinder camera, also appearing during these years, did everything with one push-pull motion and refused to allow an exposure on top of another, unless desired. Furthermore, newer Japanese optics of the day were superb, and costs were very competitive.

*(Below: excerpt from sales brochure for XL system)*

### xl Super Wide Angle Camera Outfit

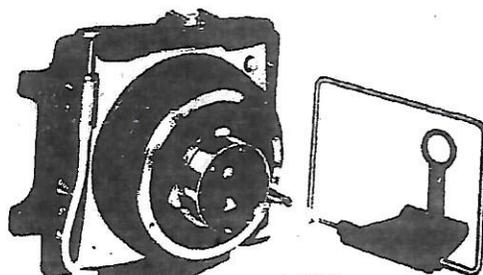
The camera no professional can afford to be without. Gives you the widest angle possible in medium and large format cameras. The Schneider 47mm Super Angulon lens covers an angle of view with 2 1/4" x 2 3/4" ideal format of 87°. The 3 1/4" x 4 1/4" Polaroid\* pack film holder jumps it to an amazing 104°. Enough to shoot in a closet or cramped conference room. The xlsw Super Wide is ideal for dramatic advertising display perspectives. Simply set up at close range and shoot at any angle you choose. As with all xl cameras, you can choose from five negative sizes or formats. The xlsw camera body is the only one that accepts the 47mm Schneider Angulon Lens.

\*Reg T.M. Polaroid Corp.

#### The xl-703 Super Wide Angle Camera Outfit includes:

- xlsw Camera Body (7301)
- xl Lens—47mm Schneider Super Angulon f/8 (7330)
- xl Graflok Back (7305)
- xl Sportsfinder (7361)
- Body Cable Release (7382)

**NOTE:** When fitted with a one-inch xl spacer, all lenses and applications of the xls Standard become possible with the xlsw Super Wide Angle Camera.



xl 703

## THE GRAPHIC GRAFLEX PHOTOGRAPHY BOOK(S)

by Mike Hanemann

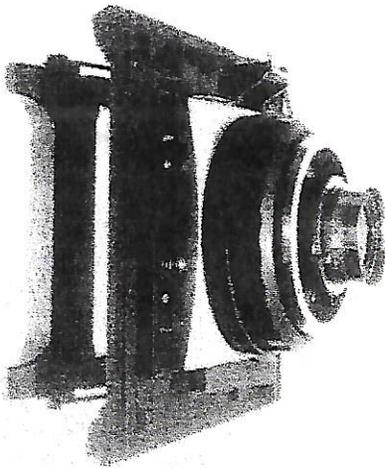
This work is the most complete and definitive work on the Graflex line of equipment. Unfortunately it is not an all encompassing view of the company history, but is the best available in one book. There are eleven editions and a facsimile copy of the 9th edition. In all there were 17 editions or printings: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-7(2)-7(3)-8-8(2)-8(3)-8(4)-9-10-11 and 9-facsimile. The chronology is: #1 published in January 1940, #2 in May 1940, #3 in May 1941, #4 in January 1942, #5 in January 1943, #6 in March 1944, #7 in November 1944, #7 second printing in June 1945, #7 third printing in January 1946, #8 in June 1947, #8 second printing in January 1948, #8 third printing in October 1948, #8 fourth printing in October 1950, #9 in July 1952, #10 in January 1954, #11 in September 1958 and the facsimile printing of #9 in 1971 was the same as the original #9. The tenth edition, January 1954, was a 6"x9" sized book. The previous editions were 8"x10."

The size and cover lettering remained constant from the First Edition in January 1940 until the tenth edition in January 1954. This was 8x10 inches. The cover stated the title in bold lettering, GRAPHIC GRAFLEX PHOTOGRAPHY in the upper right of the cloth cover. Across the bottom is the statement "The Master Book for the Large Camera. The tenth edition dropped to a 6x9 inch size but remained about as thick as the previous editions. The cover contained only the title. The eleventh edition returned to the 8x10 size but is only half as thick as the previous 10 editions. The book's color binding changed 7 times. Editions 1-2-3 were a tan color, 4-5 are gray, 6-7,7-2, and 7-3 are orange. All 4 printings of the eighth edition are again colored gray. The ninth edition, both regular and facsimile editions are green. Number 10 is tan, and number 11 is navy blue.

In addition to the editions for the general public, the book was reprinted for the United States Armed Forces Institute. It is Educational Manual MA 875. It might also be EM 408 as that number is on the title page. This edition was copyrighted 1950. Except for the soft cover and army number, it appears to be a copy of the eighth edition, fourth printing.

This ends phase one of the GRAPHIC GRAFLEX BOOK story. The next phase is a look at the content, illustrations, and equipment featured along with advertisers over the years. I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to Ralph London who assisted in encouraging this effort and in suggesting editorial changes. I also salute Tom Robinson for surfacing a previously unknown (to me) military edition of the book.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: Graphic Graflex Photography, common and often ignored at swap meets, is one of the most complete and detailed books covering all phases of photography. It covers large format work as well as very specific models and specifications of Graflexes and Graphics. It is by no means outdated. I carry a chart from this book, showing swings and tilts, every time I go out with a view camera.)*



While musing on the limitations of the XL system, I continued to use my XLW. I learned that another camera had become available during those years, compatible with the XL: the Brooks Veriwide. The main advantage of the Brooks really caught my attention; it sports an optical finder. Coincidentally, right after reading about the Veriwide, another XLW became available. This one carried not only a Brooks finder, but had also been upgraded to the 47mm f5.6 lens, a later model that in addition to a wider f-stop, covers the Polaroid image size completely.

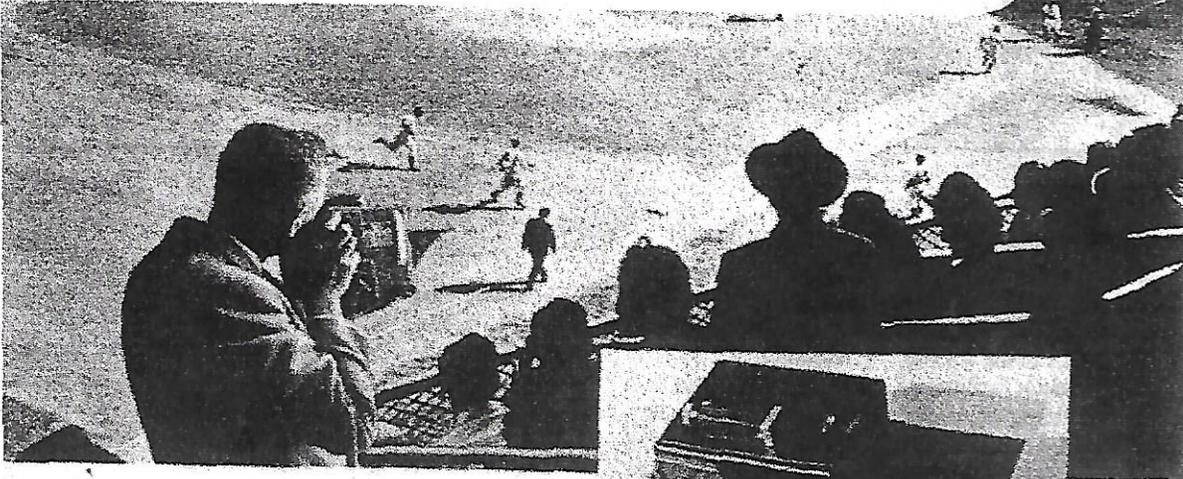
I still occasionally miss having more focus control, but use and enjoy the latter XLW that came to stay (I sold the earlier, unmodified one). One of its best features never appeared in an advertisement: taking candid shots is easy. You can just wear the XLW around the neck, letting it hang in front of you. Tripping the almost totally silent Compur shutter with a cable release is unobtrusive, especially if you are looking directly at the subject, or elsewhere; not through the camera. What you want is usually in the negative, and in focus. Even pointing the camera at an object near someone will often include them without their knowledge; people don't expect such wide coverage. Moreover, the superb lens quality doesn't distort, and produces excellent prints, even if cropping out half or three-fourths of the negative.

### RESTORATION TIPS

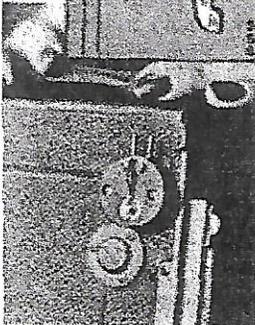
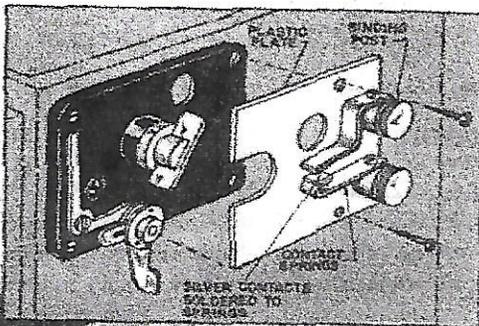
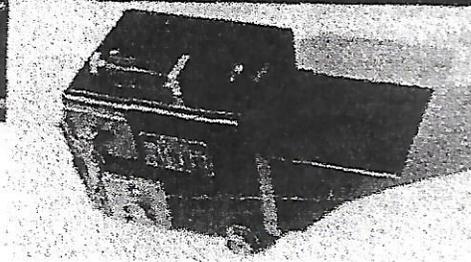
*A paint suggestion for lensboards & film holders: Dupli Color Bright Beauty Lacquer, semi-gloss black in spray cans, multiple coats rubbed in-between with 0000 steel wool. Found in automotive paint stores, or from Dupli Color Products, Elk Grove, Ill. 60007. Submitted by Ken Metcalf, who reports he received the information from Dick Paine.*

The following article appeared in *Photography Handbook #12* from 1949. Many collectors would be aghast with the idea of altering a collectable, but users of yesteryear found these ideas quite helpful.

## MODERNIZE YOUR GRAFLEX

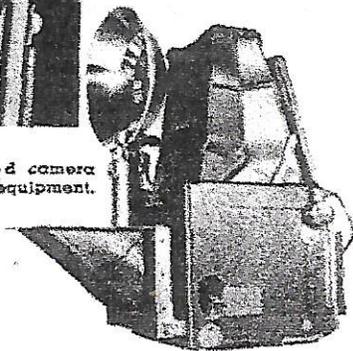


The Graflex, modernized as described in text is ideal for sport shots. Photo at right shows installation of direct view, tubular view finder.



Above: Detail of home-made flash synchronizer. Flash bulb is in series with battery. Left: A commercial flash installation.

The revamped camera showing flash equipment.



- Flash Synchronization
- Automatic Flash Calculator
- Direct View Finder
- Built-in Focusing Scale
- Action Shots Without Mirror
- Roll Holder for Color Film
- And a Foolproof Self-Timer

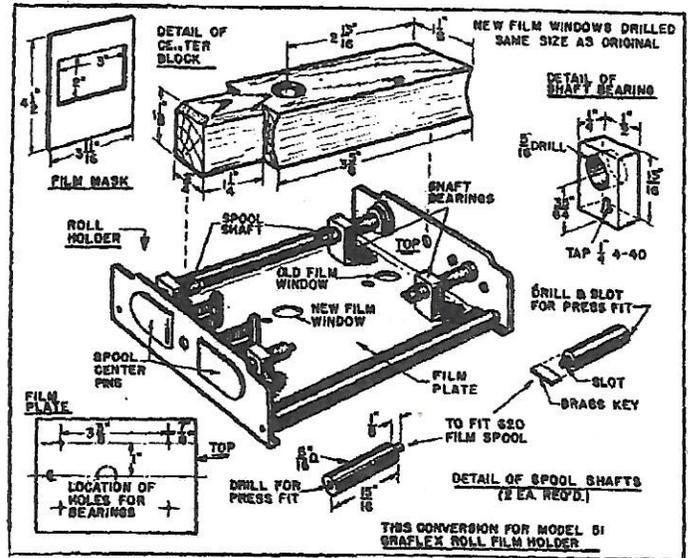
By Robert Brightman

THAT old war horse, the Graflex camera, has of late been overshadowed by its more glamorous sister, the Speed Graphic. This, despite the introduction of the Super D Graflex with its automatic diaphragm. Yet, with a little ingenuity, plus the application of a few bucks, you can not only make this camera as versatile as the Speed Graphic, but actually surpass it.

"H'mm, and how? Flash, too?"

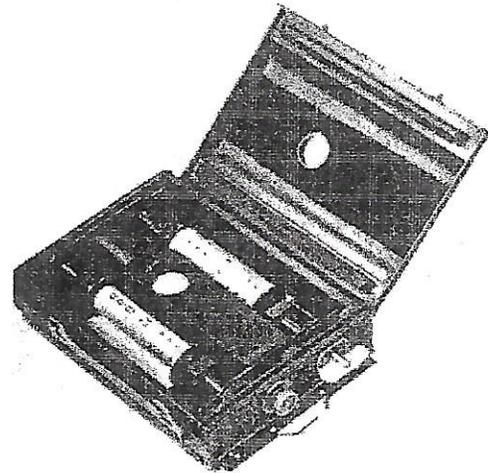
You bet! Flash, of course, is the No. 1 goal in this modernization program. A number of manufacturers will either synchronize your Graflex for flash or else will sell you the equipment so that you can

do it yourself. Most of these devices are designed to operate on the winding key of the Graflex camera or in conjunction with the opposite end of the roller. All they do is complete an electrical circuit when the curtain descends. The camera illustrated uses such a device. It was installed by Saragino of New York City. As the mirror flips up the upper axle of the curtain starts to rotate, thus completing the circuit. If you do not care to use a commercial synchronizer, you can make one very simply as per the accompanying drawing. A battery case, cord and reflector complete the installation.



1/295th of a sec. and Weston 64 film.  
**Direct View Finder.** For taking action shots and for aerial photography, looking down into the hood of the Graflex can at times not only be a serious handicap, but may make picture-taking a physical impossibility such as, when shooting in a crowd. The time lag involved in the mirror getting out of the way before the curtain can drop to make the exposure very often causes the photographer to merely get the tail end of the action he was after. You can get around this by mounting a direct view finder on top of the camera. A collapsible mount can be used or, if you prefer, get one of the more modern tubular kind. The latter has a special eyepiece which can be corrected for parallax. Mount it so that the field of view is not cut off by the camera body.  
**Focusing Scale.** If you are going to use the direct view

Close-up of automatic flash calculator. As lens is racked back or forth, correct "f" value appears. Below: Full size chart for 8 3/8 in. lens.



## **Modernize Your Graflex**

(continued)

finder some means of being able to focus the camera without having to refer to the ground glass is desirable. This can be easily accomplished by mounting a focusing scale to the right hand side of the lens mount. Paste a piece of white paper to the right hand side of the lens support and focus the camera at infinity. Draw a pencil line across the paper at this particular point. Then, measure off 50, 25, 15, 10, 6 and 4 ft. intervals and similarly determine these distances on the scale by focusing the camera carefully at a lighted candle moved to each point. Remove the paper and transfer the markings.

**Action Shots.** To take an action shot, then, all you will have to do is to rack the camera out to the desired distance and apply the eye to the direct view finder. But, what about the mirror? After all, we just said that the time delay occasioned by the movement of the mirror causes many a shot to be lost. This can be remedied in the following fashion: Move the lever on the mirror handle so that the letter *T* will show. Then set the controls to the predetermined speed. Drop the mirror out of the way by pressing down on the mirror release. The shutter, however, will not trip until the lever *M* has been pulled back. What we are doing is accelerating the action of the camera by by-passing the mirror.

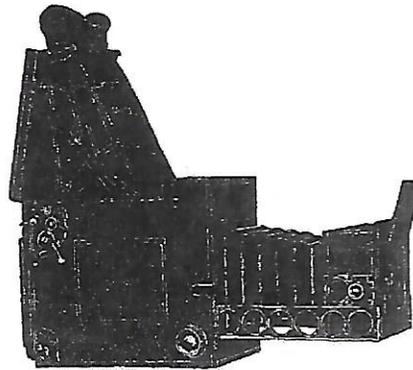
**Roll Holder.** There is no reason in the world why you should be limited to cut film or film packs with your Graflex camera. How would you like to use Kodacolor, or Ansco Color Film with your Graflex? You can do this by converting an old Graflex roll holder to take 120 film or purchase one of the new roll film adaptors especially designed for Graflex cameras. The E. Suydam Co. of Pasadena, Cal., makes a special Roll Film Adaptor for Graflex cameras. With such an adaptor you can then easily use color film in this popular roll film size.

**Self-Timer.** And finally, why not get in the picture yourself? Almost every photographer worth his salt has a complete record of his family but is he in any of the pictures? No! He just trips the shutter. You, too, can get in the act with a self-timer. This is probably the simplest accessory of all to add to your Graflex. Procure any clockwork timer and add a bracket to the bottom as shown in the photograph. This bracket is then pushed into a shoe which is mounted directly below the mirror release. Instead of pushing down on a cable release, the timer, when released, will slowly descend and squeeze the release button of your Graflex. It works like clockwork—and has never failed the author. •

*(Regarding the "Modernize Your Graflex" article: Although most of us don't use focal plane flash bulbs any more, it's noteworthy to read that, at the time this article was published, Graflex reflexes were still one of the major pro lines, but efforts were needed to bring the older models' performance up to that of other equipment, most probably Speed Graphics.)*

*The below advertisement appeared in March 1902 Photo Era Magazine i.e. before the Eastman takeover:)*

# GRAFLEX



The INIMITABLE Camera!  
Pictures as you see them,  
While you see them, and  
At the desired moment.

*No Focusing-scale, no judging distances, but one  
Shutter and one operation.*

*Touch the button—that's all—*

*Simplicity,*

*Portability,*

*Accuracy,*

*Speed.*

*Equipped with the*

*Graphic Focal Plane Shutter.*

GET THE LITTLE BOOK FROM YOUR DEALER OR

The Folmer & Schwing M'f'g. Co.,

407 BROOME ST., NEW YORK CITY

**GRAFLEX EXPOSURE TABLE**

TEN. NO.	1/8 INCH	3/8 INCH	1/2 INCH	3/4 INCH
1	350	110	40	10
2	440	135	50	15
3	550	160	65	20
4	680	195	75	25
5	825	235	80	30
6	1000	295	90	35

**GRAFLEX EXPOSURE TABLE**

EXP.	TEN.	APR.	EXP.	TEN.	APR.
1000	6	1/8	90	6	3/4
825	5	1/8	80	5	3/4
680	4	1/8	75	4	3/4
550	3	1/8	65	3	3/4
440	2	1/8	50	2	3/4
350	1	1/8	40	1	3/4
295	6	3/8	35	6	1/2
235	5	3/8	30	5	1/2
195	4	3/8	25	4	1/2
160	3	3/8	20	3	1/2
135	2	3/8	15	2	1/2
110	1	3/8	10	1	1/2

**EXPOSURE TABLE FOR GRAFLEX CAMERAS**

DIRECTIONS: PORTRAITS/AVERA, INTERIORS/AVERA, SHADY PLACES, AVERAGE MOVEMENT, FAST WALK, SLOW WALK, STREET TRAFFIC, ATHLETICS/BOATS, HORSE RACING/AUTO RACING

PLACE DISTANCE AND SPEED OF OBJECT OPPOSITE OBJECT ON LOWER DISC.

DISTANCE OF OBJECT FEET: 25' 50' 100' 200'

SPEED OF OBJECT MILES PER HOUR

FOCUS OF LENS: D H B, 7 1/16" 5" 4"

EXPOSURE FOR MOVEMENT AT RIGHT ANGLES: LESS FOR 45°, LESS TOWARD CAMERA

CONDITION OF LIGHT: D - DULL, H - HAZY, B - BRIGHT SUN

**FOLMER & SCHWING DIVISION**  
EASTMAN KODAK CO.  
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

**EXAMPLE**

Camera: 3-A Graflex (7 1/16" focus lens). Subject: Street traffic. Distance: 50 feet. Light: Dull. Revolve disc until slot at right is opposite "Street traffic." Move slot down till 10 (miles per hour) comes under 50 (feet distance). The slot at left shows an exposure of 1/235 of a second with lens diaphragm opening at f.4.5 under D (dull). This is the approximate exposure for subjects moving at right angles to the camera; if the subject is taken at an angle of 45°, exposure may be decreased one-third by increasing shutter speed. If the subject is moving towards the camera the exposure may be decreased two-thirds.

(Think back to those days when cameras didn't feature light meters - and people didn't carry them, either!. From the Hanemann Collection.)

**WANT AD POLICY:**

*Any subscribers wishing to place a want ad selling or seeking Graflex-related items may send them to the GHQ for inclusion at no charge (at this time). The editors reserve final publication decisions.*

Wanted: Help with restoring a 1902 reversible back Graflex. This camera carries no speed plate. Is there someone out there who has one with a plate I can copy, or knowledge of how shutter speed was figured? Please contact J.C. Welch, 1777 Lake Dr. Eugene, OR 97404.

**Graflex Historic Quarterly**

*The Quarterly is dedicated to enriching the study of the Graflex Company, its history, and products. It is published by and for hobbyists, and is not a for-profit publication.. Other photographic groups may reprint material provided credit is given GHQ and the author. We would appreciate a copy of the reprint.*

Editors: Mike Hanemann

J.C. Welch

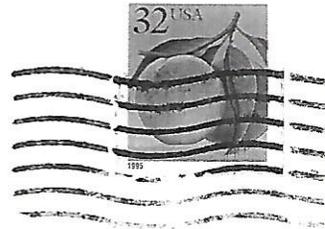
Yearly Dues: \$14

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