the Photographist

JOURNAL OF THE WESTERN PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION
AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY
NUMBER 102/103 • P. O. BOX 4294, WHITTIER, CA 90607 • SUMMER/FALL 1994

[Annotated 2022]

SIMON WING

AFTER SIMON WING

PHOTOGRAPHY WAS NEVER QUITE THE SAME

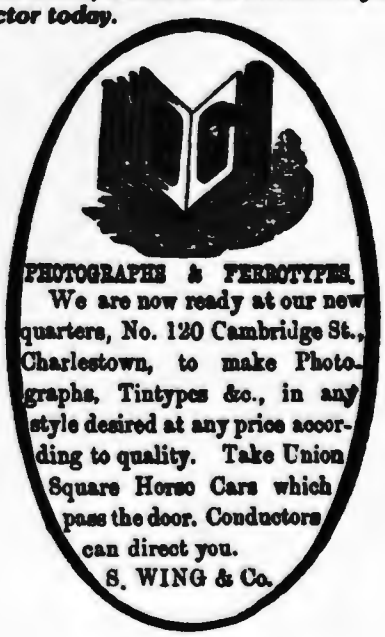
by Mike Kessler

(Above)
In this half-plate daguerreian likeness, Simon Wing appears to be between 20 and 25 years old. It was probably taken before he opened his first studio in Waterville, Maine. Images of Simon Wing are extremely rare. Only two others are known; a 3/4" tintype portrait on his business card and a half-tone reproduction of a lost photographic original, showing him as an old man.

(Opposite page)
This engraving, taken from a catalogue in the Fred Spira Collection, shows the S. Wing & Co. offices and factory at 120 Cambridge Street, Charlestown, Massachusetts, sometime in the 1880's. The oversized version of a Wing Multiplying Camera perched on the roof (if by some miracle it still exists) would be an incredible find for some lucky collector today.

It was a typically crisp and sunny autumn day in 1972 as a tall, well-dressed figure carrying a good sized parcel climbed the steps of the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. Once inside the man asked the receptionist if he could see someone in charge. The nature of his business, he politely informed the lady at the desk, was to present the popular photography museum with a gift; a camera made by his great-grandfather. On that day David Wing Nilsson, by coincidence a professional photographer himself, enhanced the already voluminous Eastman House collection with a unique example of a "Wing" camera - a diminutive, 4X5 version of Simon Wing's original multiplying apparatus.

Not long afterwards Mr. Nilsson was "discovered" by several east coast members of the burgeoning camera collecting movement. One by one, soon-to-be dealers and future mega-collectors traveled to his Massachusetts home to view an extensive (and now for sale) accumulation of Wing cameras and related photographic memorabilia - and one by one they all passed on it. After all, two thousand dollars was a pretty steep price to pay for thirty or so cameras, an original tintype display, a chest full of parts and camera-making tools and a mountain of other photographic material, including such esoterica as the S. Wing & Co. safe and Simon Wing's violin. (In all fairness it must be stated here that collecting as we know it today hadn't really taken off, and many people were still not convinced that any of this old stuff could really have lasting value. - MK)



Unlike all other examples of Simon Wing's famous multiplying camera, this one, apparently made for his own use (all parts are stamped zero), was constructed of solid Rosewood. This was also the only Wing camera to sport decorative carved wood supports on its sides.

An enterprising stereo collector, Richard Russack, apparently realized the inherent worth of the collection as he quickly arranged to sell it on consignment. In no time the majority of the pieces were disseminated throughout the collecting community. Some of the same collectors who originally declined, now, with great regret, paid more for a single camera than the entire collection could have been purchased for only a few months earlier.

This is where I came in. I had been collecting pre-1900 cameras for several years and I was vaguely aware of the existence of Wing cameras, primarily from an illustration of a "New Gem" camera in Harry Gross' "***Collecting Antique and Classic Cameras***"; then the only book out on the subject. Of course, I was basically a west-coast collector, and even though I had already begun my series of yearly trips to the east coast I wasn't quite in the "loop" yet, and all this business with the Wing material had taken place entirely without my knowledge.

The way to get hooked on collecting any particular subject is to get the best piece first, and that's exactly what happened. New York dealers Allen and Hilary Weiner had purchased the key item from the collection, Simon Wing's personal camera (serial number 0) - a solid Rosewood, scrollwork-decorated version of his classic 1870's multiplying camera. Allen promptly sent me a photo of it displayed prominently on top of a grand piano in their Manhattan apartment. As I fondled the Polaroid print I felt that old familiar collector's impulse - unbridled, unadulterated lust.

Then one fateful day I got a call. The Wing camera was just too physically overpowering for their apartment and would have to go. Was I interested? The telephone was still rocking to a standstill in its cradle as I slammed the door on my VW "bug." It's unthinkable to me today, but when I got that call I drove to New York and returned in less than a week, just to insure the camera's safe transport back to California.

Along with Wing's own camera came the story of the Nilsson collection and its subsequent dispersal - so, having just acquired the best, I felt that I might as well try to get some of the rest. It took nearly twenty years but eventually I managed to acquire virtually every Wing-related item, except for some duplicate cameras, in that original lot; some from as far away as England. I found more Wing material from other sources too, eventually becoming known, somewhat derisively, as "Mr. Wing." Even today hardly a month goes by without someone sending me a Wing reference in some obscure magazine, or a copy of a Wing CDV that I've never seen before.

A single exposure with Wing's nine-lens shutter block produced an image like this on a 4-1/2 X 6 inch tintype plate. With proper masking and a series of steps and repeats however, the same lenses could easily make as many as 144 tiny images on the same plate.

Simon Wing's first studio in Waterville, Maine, sometime between 1856 and 1862, where he occupied a second floor studio complete with north-facing skylight. He may have lived downstairs in rooms behind the Eastern Express Co. Telegraph Offices. Just to the right of the entry door there are a pair of display frames filled with samples of his work. (John Craig collection)

Just as rare as daguerreotypes of Simon Wing are daguerreotypes taken by Simon Wing. So far this is the only identified example, a sixth plate portrait of Albion C. Walker of Richmond, a town about 30 miles south of Simon's Waterville studio. (gift of Jorden Patkin)

About the only thing I didn't end up with from that original cache was Simon's violin. (The S. Wing & Co. safe, all 1000 lbs. of it, sits, awaiting better quarters, in our garage).

For nearly sixty years, from 1859 to 1916, Simon Wing, and later S. Wing & Co., produced a bewildering array of photographic materials, cameras, stands, accessories, ferrotypes, photo mounts, albums and the like; the majority of which were destined for the "penny picture" market in the fairs and on the boardwalks of America. I've always felt that the cameras produced by Simon Wing and later his son, Harvey, expressed a certain feeling, absent in most other cameras; an innate, thoroughly American cleverness with their intricate, Chinese puzzle-box faces. Although they definitely belong to the "form follows function" school of design, they also possess distinct sculptural beauty. Amazing as it seems, these were sold exclusively through a combination of personal contact and word-of-mouth recommendation, with hardly a hint of actual advertising.

S. Wing & Company was active until 1937.

Wing's unique, articulated designs are now considered to be among the more important American cameras and are highly prized by collectors all around the world. No comprehensive collection is complete, most European and American collectors agree, without a daguerreotype camera, an original Kodak and a Wing camera.

For years I voraciously collected anything I could lay my hands on related to Simon Wing, barely aware that, more than amassing a fascinating collection, I was reassembling a fragmented portrait of a man whose ideas both reflected and affected his era. Only now am I beginning to understand this ingenious Yankee inventor and entrepreneur who left such a bold mark on a fledgling photographic industry.

From Maine daguerreotypist to Presidential candidate, Simon Wing stuck by his strict code of ethics -- tough and aggressive, but balanced by a sense of fair play and a willingness to put himself "out there" on the front lines. This was the toughest part of the business; leaving his family for extended periods to promote his line of photographic materials and studio franchises from Boston to California and beyond.

When David Wing Nilsson, the last direct link to Simon Wing, died some years ago, a great bounty of information on his famous relative and the business he created was lost forever. If only I had gotten to him with a tape recorder, piecing together the life of Simon Wing would have been a whole lot easier. As it is, we know him primarily from three sources: the physical evidence of the photographic business he

An unidentified photographer strikes a dignified pose with the tool of his trade, a medium sized Wing camera. The heavy, cast-iron camera stand probably predates the camera in this carte de visite photograph.

Actual size tintype gems of one of the daughters of photographer S.J. Lovewell of Dubuque, Iowa. Below the portraits are examples of product photography with some multiple images of an office blind-embossing stamp. Simon Wing throught these miniature tintype likenesses were an ideal way to promote new businesses and products.

tiny tintypes they left behind; the court records of a seemingly endless series of lawsuits, enjoined as he labored to protect his multiplying camera designs from infringing competitors; and the fortunate discovery of a trove of business and personal correspondence recorded, as was the practice of the time, on penny postcards.

Here then is a patchwork portrait of Simon Wing, fleshed out as much as possible by all the wonderful "things" he left behind.

Simon Wing was born in a log cabin on his father's farm in St. Albans, Maine on August 29, 1826, and died in Charlestown, Massachusetts on December 17, 1916. * In the 90 years in between, he was responsible for much of the pleasure that the average citizen derived from photography during that era.

Simon spent his early years on the farm until he "came of age." Not much is known about his schooling, but he apparently opted for more than the usual grade-school education. As stated in the March 1917 issue of the "OWL" (a genealogical publication written expressly for the Wing family), in a biography published there shortly after his death, Simon Wing was in school at the age of 20 when a classmate, Benjamin Merrill, showed him a daguerreotype he had made of his cousin, Mary Merrill. Overcome by both the daguerreotype and the subject, Simon asked his friend to teach him the process and also, apparently, for an introduction to Benjamin's cousin, as he married her not long afterward.

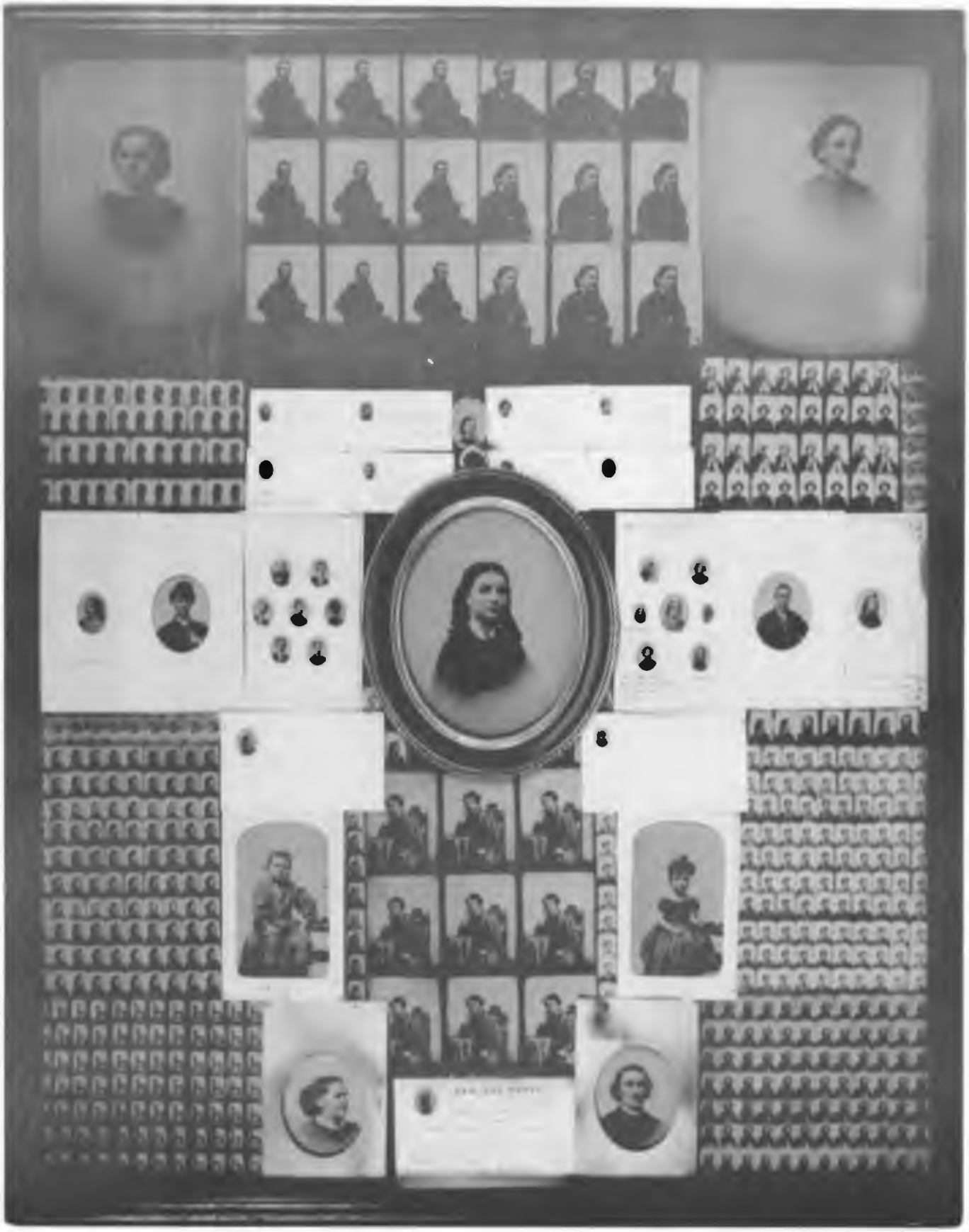
Little is known about Simon's life for the next ten years or so, except that, during that time, he taught the art of daguerreotyping to his brothers and cousins. Then in 1856 he opened his first studio in Waterville, Maine. Though apparently successful, he seems to have neglected to identify the majority of the images he produced there. The only daguerreotype that I know to have been taken by him, a sixth-plate portrait of a man, bears the handwritten inscription on its onionskin binding, "taken by S. Wing." (See page 10.)

About the same time Simon Wing was busy in his Waterville studio, Boston daguerreotypist Albert Sands Southworth was putting the finishing touches on a unique camera back. By moving the plateholder to various positions behind the lens, he could place successive exposures on a single silver plate, speeding up the formerly tedious process of making multiple daguerreotypes at a single sitting.

(Continued on page 16)

* Simon Wing died December 17, 1910.

This view of Washington Street, taken around 1870 and enlarged from one side of a stereo card, shows two of Simon Wing's advertising signs for his studio at the 257 address. The large banner suspended over the center of the street was one of wing's non-photographic patents. Cut-out letters were attached to a cloth mesh enabling the banner to resist blowing in the wind.



This Show Case Over 70 yrs old

Made up about 1866 or 67, was probably used at the door of one of Simon Wing's Tintype Studios to attract customers. My father Simon Wing had two at this time, one at 210 Washington St, near cor. Summer, and one at 290 at n.e. corner of Bedford St both on East side of Wash'n St We lived in rooms at 210 but moved across the street to 257 (afterwards the number was changed to 425) still later the location at 210 was destroyed in the Great Boston Fire of 1872. At the lower right hand corner of this frame is a sheet of small tintypes of A. A. Robinson (an employee) Next above is a sheet of myself at age of 3 or 4 yrs I judge. Next above is a strip of the of S. J. Lovewell, of Dubuque, Iowa. to whom Father sold a Camera when on a trip with Mother, Sister Anna and I, in 1866. Mr Lovewell was a Photographer but Had never seen Wing's Multiplying Camera. Father advised him to always make extras; they used to make 4 exposures ~~on a plate~~, but Father would make ~~5 on a plate~~. Lovewell protested and told his wife who waited on customers that she could have the proceeds from sale of extras. She soon bought a Piano with her money. This portrait in the oval frame is Lovewell's daughter.

This Frame has never been opened till now about 72 yrs later, for cleaning Harvey T. Wing. June 25" 1939.

(Above)
Imprint from the back of a carte de visite photograph showing Wing's Multiplying Camera. The 257 Washington Street address is the same as that seen on the hanging mesh banner in the photo on the previous page.

(Left)
This 18" X 24" wall frame is filled with over one thousand tintypes, including those of Simon Wing, his wife, Mary, and their son, Harvey. Originally hung in front of one of Simon Wing's Boston studios, it was handed down through the Wing family along with numerous o ther photographic items. In 1939 it was opened for cleaning by Simon's son, Harvey Thayer Wing, who added the handwritten note seen here.

SIMON WING AND FAMILY IN FERROTYPES

(Left) A bearded Simon Wing peers stoically from the corner of his business card, while his wife Mary (above) seems a bit too somber to be wearing such a flowery bonnet. Harvey, on the other hand - seen in multiple tintype on the facing page - appears to be the only member of the Wing family able to crack a smile.

* Southworth patented his invention in 1847, covering as well the movement of the lens to achieve the same multiple images. Eight years later, on April 10,1855, Simon Wing and Boston photographer Marcus Ormsby jointly purchased exclusive rights to the Southworth patents and began using the multiple backs in their respective studios. By this time, however, the daguerreotype process was fading fast so Simon, well aware of the advantages inherent in the wet collodian / tintype photographs, hitched his (photographers) wagon to this rising new star.

Printed on the front of an 1892 S. Wing & Co. catalogue is the statement "Established 1859." This seems to infer that in that year Simon Wing evolved from being the proprietor of a photographic studio to the head of a company. This is in close agreement with another statement, found in a 1900 flyer advertising the "Yankee Multiplier" camera, which refers to "...the old and celebrated Wing Multiplying Camera invented by Simon Wing in 1860." In all probability then, Simon Wing made the first few multiplying cameras to be sold during the years 1859 through 1861.

William Welling, in his excellent book "Photography In America - The Formative Years", describes one of these cameras as follows

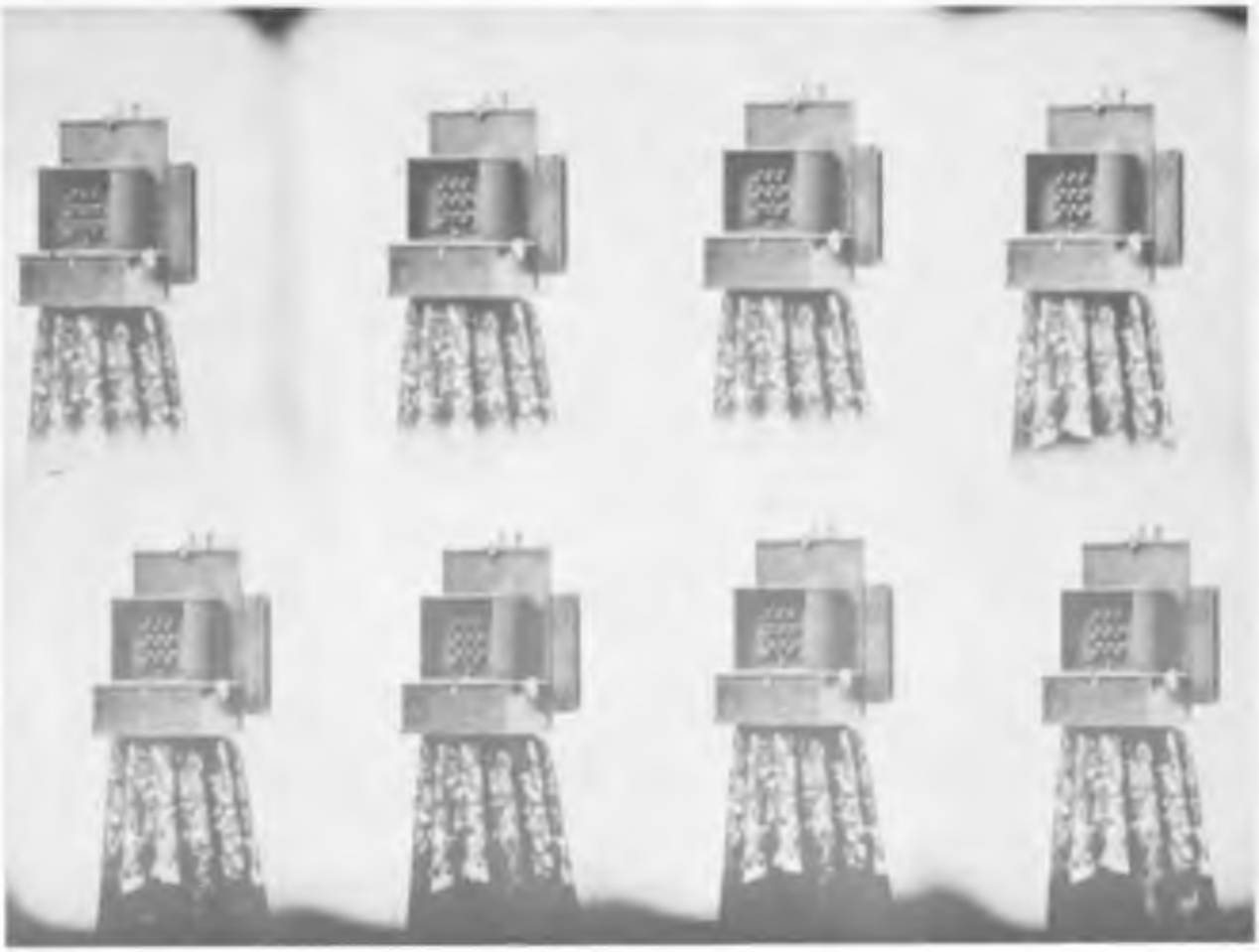
"The four-tube device was equipped with a plate holder which could accept 616 negative images, each a half-inch square, on an area measuring 11 X 14 inches. To secure these images, the operator made a single half-second exposure (using all four tubes) on a corner of the plate, then sequenced the plate in one direction or the other by half an inch and made another half-second exposure, repeating the operation until the entire 11 X 14 inch area was fully covered. All 616 images could be obtained on the one plate in about five minutes, according to Wing, and a single print from the 11 X 14 negative could be made in a matter of about two minutes. By exposing ten plates in this manner at one sitting, Wing said, "it was possible to obtain a many as 184,800 half-inch square photographs in one hour".

(Continued on page 21)

* Southworth's movable back was patented on April 10,1855, Patent # 12,700. For details on Wing acquiring the patent, see the articles by P. & B. Schultz and by M. Safier in the 2022 *New England Journal of Photographic History* .available at https://www.magcloud.com/browse/magazine/876415

In this enlargement from a stereo view, with the handwritten notation on the back: "Country Residence of Mr. S. Wing and family"; we see Simon in the tall hat on the left, his wife, Mary, standing to the right, and their children, Harvey and May, sitting with an unidentified gentleman.

Although we see them here greatly enlarged, the army of Wing cameras shown below are in reality just over 1/2" tall, and were destined for advertising purposes, as shown actual size in the promotional card above. The camera is apparently the one that Wing sold to S. J. Lovewell of Dubuque, Iowa, if we can believe the multiple tintype card seen here to the right. Wing not only photographed the entire Lovewell family, but included their newly purchased multiplying camera as well. (Scrawled notations by H. T. Wing.)




POPULAR
Stamp Photographs.
25 FOR 50 CENTS.
Special rates to Scholars in clubs.
The genuine made only
WING'S
178 Washington Street.


Lovewell's daughter in oval frame
mrs Lovewell
Geo Lovewell Became a Photog a traveller over the World.
S.J. Lovewell

More evidence that Wing's studio moved up and down Washington Street. Compare the church steeple in these two pre-1872 stereo views as well as the view on page 13, also from a stereo card, and you can see that he not only covered the street but tried out both sides as well. The mesh banner only appears once, but the "showcase" sign in the top card, which seems to contain examples of his work, seems to be the same one which hung on the other side of the street, a little closer to the church seen in the view on page 13. (Do you suppose anyone could actually inspect photographs nearly 20 feet overhead?)

To the right is a portrait of A. A. Robinson, one of Wing's employees.

(Continued from page 16)

Both Simon Wing and Marcus Ormsby spent considerable time and money suing and being sued by various other photographers. The idea of a multiplying back obviously appeared to a number of operators soon after photography was invented, and many were using and manufacturing their designs for sale well before the Southworth patents. August Semmendinger claimed his own design dated from 1852, while another photographer, Philip Haas, swore that he had built and used a similar design as early as 1840. The courts upheld the Southworth patents, but the constant litigation took its toll on Wing. He was engaged in lawsuits against infringers for 25 years, several cases reaching the Supreme Court. He later stated that a patent was practically a letter of introduction to the courts, and that it was of little value until upheld after a contest. Such contests were ruinous to both plaintiff and defendant.

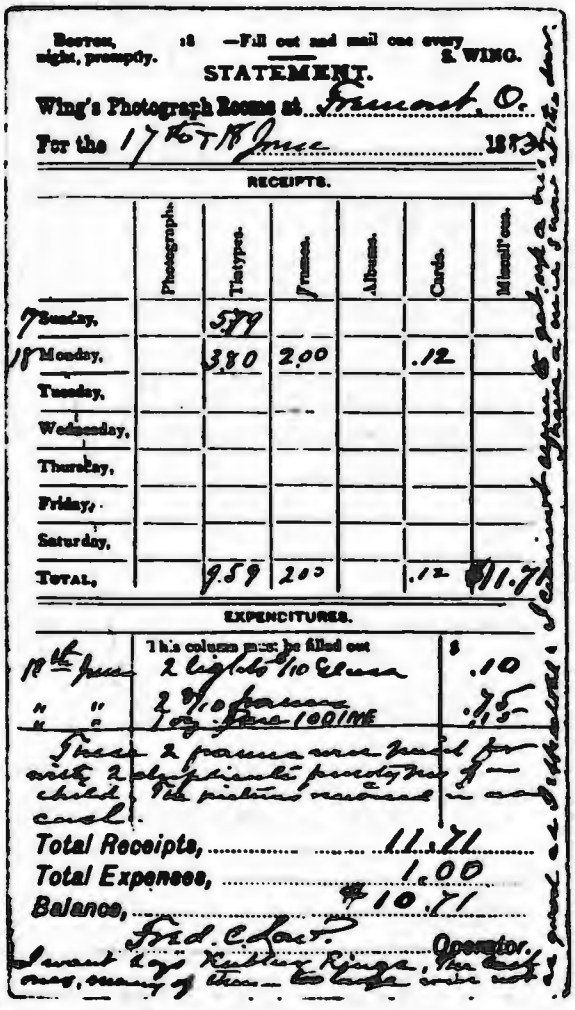
Boston's Washington Street was a prime location for photographers and Simon Wing was one of the most prominent. In the years preceding the great fire of 1872, the Wing studio moved up and down the street to at least three different locations. For a while he operated two studios simultaneously; one at 210 and another at 290. When much of the city went up in flames, Wing's studio at the 210 address was completely destroyed. Fortunately his special Rosewood camera was kept at another location, possibly the 290 address, as it and a small cache of other studio material survived the conflagration. When Washington Street was rebuilt, "Wing's" studio occupied several more addresses there, until the last one finally closed in 1893.

Besides the previously mentioned studio camera, a fabulous tintype display was also saved. Filled with more than one thousand tintypes, from uncut fours and nines to plates filled with hundreds of tiny "gems", it also contains portraits of Simon's wife Mary, their son Harvey, and a tiny bust of Simon Wing himself, peeking out from the corner of a miniature business card. According to Simon's son, Harvey Thayer Wing, the frame, "made up about 1866 or '67, was probably used at the door of one of Simon Wing's tintype studios to attract customers."

Also included in the frame are portraits of the Lovewell family of Dubuque, Iowa, to whom he sold one of his unique "franchises." In this, Simon Wing was a true pioneer. He was the first person to travel extensively throughout the country with the express purpose of selling, not just photographic materials but his patented cameras, along with a "support system" from the home office and factory in Charlestown, a Boston suburb where Wing manufactured cameras, beginning in 1870.

(Continued on page 24)

Wing's first listing as a camera manufacturer appears in the 1869 Charlestown city directory.



Boston, night, promptly. —Fill out and mail one every S. WING.

STATEMENT.

Wing's Photograph Rooms at Fremont, O.

For the 17th to 18th June 1873

RECEIPTS.

	Photographs.	Tintypes.	Frames.	Albums.	Cards.	Miscellaneous.
Sunday, 7		5.79				
Monday, 18		3.80	2.00		.12	
Tuesday,						
Wednesday,						
Thursday,						
Friday,						
Saturday,						
Total,		9.59	2.00		.12	$11.71

EXPENDITURES.

	This column must be filled out	$
18th June	2 Lights & 10 Chairs	.10
" "	2 10 Frames	.75
" "	1 oz. Fine IODINE	.15

These 2 frames were sold for cash 2 dollars each. The pictures remained in and are still in use.

Total Receipts, ... 11.71

Total Expenses, ... 1.00

Balance, ... $10.71

Fred. C. Low Operator.

I want 2 or 3 Rattlers Rings, the last ones, many of them to Lynn, and not

"Fill out and mail one every night promptly." The message was clear. Simon Wing kept a tight reign on his operators and Fred C. Low was no exception. No wonder the S. Wing & Co. factory in Charlestown had its own print shop. They must have been kept quite busy just printing these cards.

CORRESPONDENCE

Not only was a large portion of Simon Wing's photographic business conducted by mail, but with Simon's travels and several studios to run in the Boston area, the Wing family often found themselves separated for long periods of time. This required a lot of correspondence of their own.

When Simon wrote home he often started the card with "Dear H & M & May; referring to his son Harvey, his wife Mary, and their daughter, May.

Much of what they wrote about was merely the mundane business of ordering materials or quoting prices, but some of the more personal notes make us aware that life then was hard and photography a difficult business. These examples, taken from more than 100 Wing-related penny postcards in the collection, may help add voices and feelings to the cold tin of the Wing family portraits.

Mr. H.T.Wing
No. 120 Cambridge
Charlestown, Mass

Postmark: TOLEDO
OHIO
NOV 24, 1881

Toledo, Ohio Nov 22nd 1881 Dear H. & M. & May yours of 21 is at hand and all read with care. Yes I rec letter from 'Chicago' and assign contents to you. Now I am glad to hear all is going along well. _ - John set-up two cards, oval & arch for Macumber and got them electroplated as I don't want spoil our type. You may telegraph for mr. (J?) Allen wants to buy a lot of albums. He and I will run down and see him around. They might use the big box until the one from Grand Rapids arrives and we would use our second hand 7X10 of yours. Now we can sell blanks for more than 20 cts so I don't care to use ink for less than nothing do you? Don't get uneasy, we will fetch alright. Of course I expect to pay you for work when on my stock and share all profits on your stock as well as share all expenses and losses . No I don't see selling 3 for 5 dollars as long as we can get 6 at wholesale. $7.00 would be about retail price. I guess it would be as well to let Codman sell the stand at 22 and we will not have the bother of boxing or collecting pay & I agreed with Codman not to sell for less than 25 at retail and 15 for No. 2 at retail. If French orders any stands tell him our retail price is fixed at $25 for No. 3, $15 for No. 2 and discount 20% off to him and to Codman and that we agree not to sell for any less at retail and we shall expect him to sell them as we do for we have sold items too low to hear of it. I will make a bill to Thayer.

S.W.

Mr. H.T. Wing
Charlestown, Mass
No. 120 Cambridge St.

Postmark: TOLEDO
OHIO
JAN 19, 1882

Toledo, Ohio January 17th 1882

Dear H & M & May. Yours arrived Yes (Yesterday), Bissell owes for envelopes & for advertising centers more than one year aqo. also a balance on a note of 20 odd dollars. the acct is about ten dollars. I sent him a bill after a time a year ago last Oct or Nov. before I came here. a year aqo I had some letters from which I guess you can find if in doubt . Find the charge on the book. I charge Taft for 4000 cards printed - 10.00

for paper less-4	6.00
for 8X10 (tinted?) mats	1.00
for extra rim for plate holder	1.00
for 100 Cabinet envelopes not printed	.80
for express to city & tax	.35
	$19.15

S. Wing

Messrs. H. T. Wing & Co.
120 Cambridge Street
Boston (crossed out)
Charlestown, Mass.

Postmark: DYERSBURG
TENN
JAN 31, 1883

Dyersburg Tenn. Jan 30/83

Messrs. H.T. Wing & Co.
Sometime since I ordered 300 of your improved Ferrotype envelopes at $1.00 I now wish to know what 300 or more will cost me with my name printed on back. Those you sent me were very nice. I like them better than any I have had. Simply want my name and occupation on the cards.

Yours

N.C. White

Mr. H.T.Winq,
Charlestown, Mass.
No. 120 Cambridge St.

Postmark: WASHINGTON
D.C.
FEB. 13, 1883

8 AM No. 805 Pennsylvania Ave. Washington D.C.

Dear H. & M. & May. I am still here and well and thinking every day I shall start for home or to the car and through (Canada?) but I want to hear from you first so I will stop here until I hear from you. I am teaching a young man to run our box and make gems and I shall leave the camera and _____ here and probably sell them to him if he ever pays for them. I think the demand for the No. 6 cards will soon be very good. I sold 50 to one man today and he wants them of all colors and styles and some of the last lettering forms and some roses & you may mail 200 to me here. I think I shall have a large stand sent here and fill the box with advertising cards.

Wing's Boston Gem Gallery

H. T. Wing
120 Cambridge St.
Charlestown

Postmark: IPSWICH
MASS
OCT. 13, 1884

Dear son. I missed not seeing you when I was home - Hope you had a nice time and returned in good spirits - We are back at the car - nice weather but the people are rather slow - but - our mark tells yesterday only 4.75, but I hope for better today. May was kind of miserable yesterday but slept well last night. She likes to stay with the children at our boarding place - The weather is quite cool this morning - hot yesterday - the wind blows now enough to blow everything all away - hope it will calm down soon so the babies can come in. How does (Bill?) go it - Mother

When a photographer bought a Wing camera, he also bought a territory for a number of miles around. No other Wing cameras would be sold in the area for as long as the purchaser remained in business. If the photographer couldn't afford to buy the package outright, Simon would set him up with a pay-as-you-go program, with a percentage of the profits to be returned to the company until the debt was paid off. To facilitate this he supplied the studio with suitably printed penny postcards which were to be filled out and mailed back to Boston each evening.

In 1884 one of these operators was Fred C. Low, proprietor of "Wing's Gallery" in Freemont, Ohio. He wrote the following postcard to Simon regarding the difficulties of transportation around the northern part of the Buckeye State:

Hessville, Ohio, April 9,1883

I moved to this place today intending to go through to Freemont if possible and about a mile and one half from here I found one of my wheels giving out and I had hard work to come on and will have to have almost a new wheel. The hub is all gone and will have to have new spokes as they never use old ones again. The expenses were Tolls .85 cts dinner for self and teamster and team .90 cts and expenses for team of four horses $4.75. I expect to have to remain here two weeks so the roads will be in condition to go off the Pike through Lindsey. Now the road is awful and I should have tried to have taken the body off the running gear and rolled it through (bridge?).

Yours truly

Fred C. Low

Simon Wing designed, patented and produced all of the paper mounts with their arched and oval openings for tintypes, the tiny albums that took the miniature "Gem" tintypes, and a host of other albums and card mounts. The little tintypes became such a hit that a number of other manufacturers soon offered their own gem albums. Even so, as the sole supplier to his franchisees, Mr. Wing was assured of a good, steady income.

Now known as S. Wing & Co., Simon's establishment conducted a great deal of business, as did most others of the day, by mail, using penny postcards. Several collections of these have survived, giving us an insight into, not only the day-to-day workings of the business, but also a glimpse into the personal relationships between Simon, his wife Mary and their three children: Anna, Harvey and Mary (whom everyone called May, probably to prevent confusion with her mother's name). This correspondence shows that Simon often spent weeks and months in lonely midwest hotel rooms, brightened only by a weekly postcard from home. During those times when Simon was home and running the Charlestown factory, his wife Mary would take their traveling photographic "car" to nearby Ipswitch, where she and her teenage daughter May would stay in a boarding house while operating the mobile studio at the seaside resort.

Mary would return to run the Boston studio and Harvey the factory, while Simon traveled as far away as San Francisco to sell materials and franchises. As mentioned earlier It's not clear just what the details of these business arrangements were, but buying a "territory" apparently required the inclusion of Wing's name on the studio. In San Francisco there was Wing and Allen; in Worchester it was Wing and Ellis. In other cities all across the country however, from Leadville to Grand Rapids, it was usually just "Wing's Gallery." Some of these, of course, may have been outright purchases by Wing. In the collection there's even a "gem" tintype album with an engraving of the Wing Multiplying Camera on it from Sydney, Australia. I have no idea if Simon gave his famous personal service that far away.

Wing manufactured his cameras for nearly thirty years with little change in their basic structure. Each Wing Multiplying Camera consisted of a large, hooded and hinged box containing two or three slots for lensboard locations, a square, rubberized-cloth bellows that remained out of sight until the box was extended, and the famous Southworth patent multiplying back which employed a pair of brass knobs with gears that engaged brass racks in both the camera body and the plateholder. All this was positioned on a large, flattened box with a hinged front door, used for storage as well as a base for the camera. Generally made from Mahogany with a pedestrian shellac finish, they were solid and quite heavy, far more so than other more normal studio cameras.

One of my most treasured of the Wing items from this early period is a wonderful little Mahogany chest with edge moldings matching exactly those on Wing's personal camera, and with drawers stenciled with notations like: 8 X 10 o (over?) 3 X 4-1/2, 8 X 10 o 4-1/4 X 6-1/4, and 10 X 12 o 6 X 8. It probably originally held "kits" used to adapt the various plate sizes to the standard plate-holders, but it came with much more fascinating treasures; parts and pieces of various Wing cameras, wooden patterns for sand castings, and even a set of number stamps inscribed with the S. Wing name. Now when I restore a camera I use these to authentically restamp the serial number.

In 1887 things began to change. Simon's son Harvey was managing the company now, and the decision was made to modify the stalwart old multiplying camera as well as bring on some completely

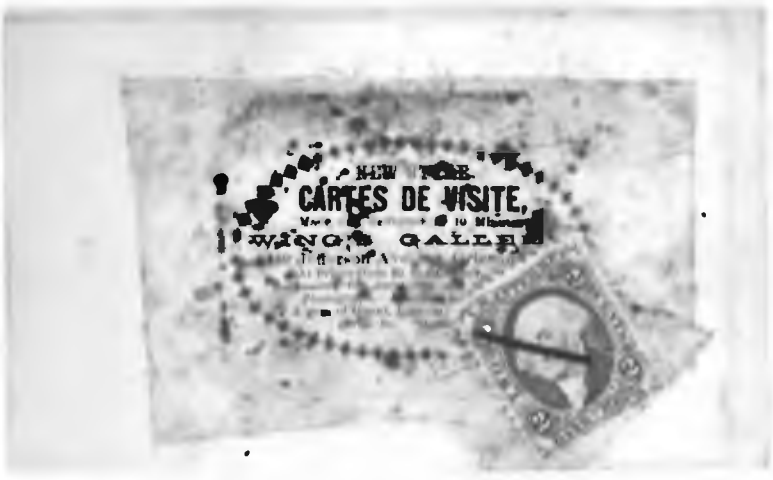
(Continued on page 30)

IMPRINTS

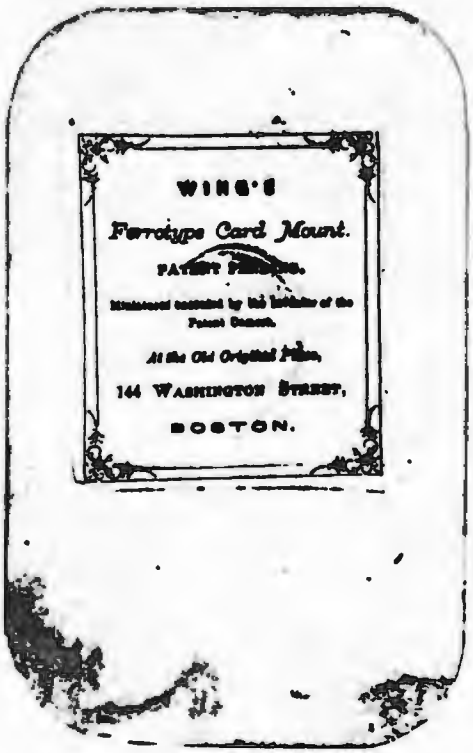
The history of S. Wing Co. may be followed via the advertising cuts found on the backs of tintypes, cartes de visites and, occasionally, cabinet cards. There are no examples in this collection, but apparently they also made a few stereo cards.

S. Wing & Co. seems to have done very little actual advertising, so these imprints, along with the business directories for various cities, are the only means we have to determine just how extensive the Wing network of studios was.

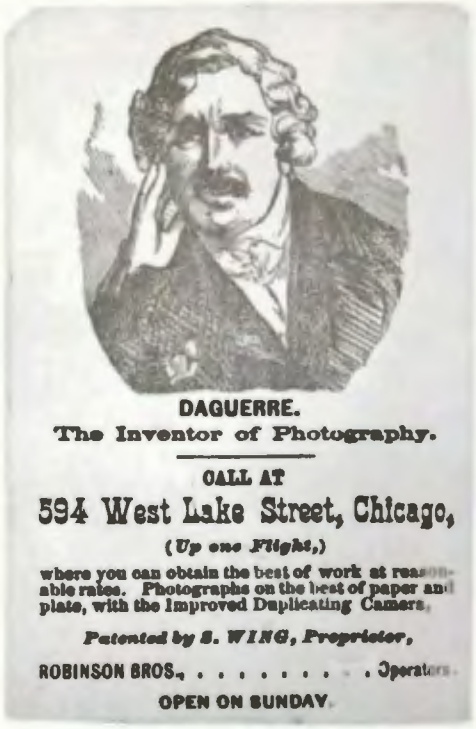
The tax stamp on the back of a Detroit, Michigan tintype (below) indicates that this was one of Wing's earlier (1864-1865) ventures away from the Boston area.

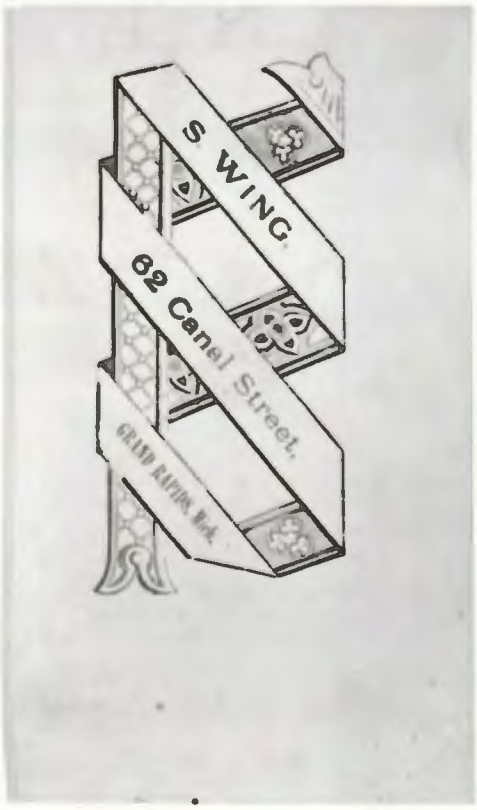



144


WING'S
Ferrotype Card Mount.
144 WASHINGTON STREET,
BOSTON.

S. WING,
PHOTOGRAPHER,
257 Washington St.,
Boston.





The paper mount for tintypes shown above came with several different oval and arched openings, and with an equal variety of printed or embossed borders. These were quite common and all have printed, in extremely small type, the line:

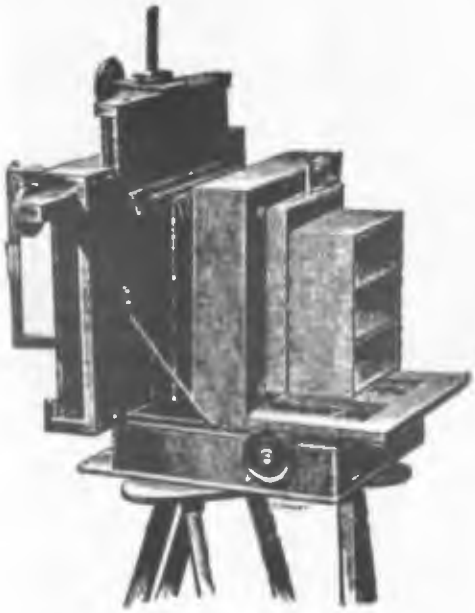
"PATENTED OCT. 13, 1863, S. WING, 290 WASHINGTON ST., BOSTON."

(Opposite page)
Wing cabinet cards seem to be a lot less common than the smaller formats. Actually all paper photos by Wing are scarce as most of his studios specialized in tintypes.


FROM
WING'S GALLERY
Opposite County House.
Duplicates of this Picture can be had at any time

NEW DESIGNS FOR 1887

View camera with sliding panels, Wing's Adjustable Lens Holder and a ball-and-socket lens mount.



Redesigned Multiplying Camera

new designs. The first of these involved an innovative concept for a lensboard; one which used sliding wood panels to allow the lens of an otherwise normal view camera to rise and fall, held in place only by the inherent friction of the panels. Swings and tilts were eliminated through the use of a clever ball-and-socket mount for the lens, while a nearly indestructible, all-metal plateholder provided the finishing touch to this radical new configuration.

The old multiplier got a completely new facelift. Now it was a lot lighter but just as sturdy, thanks to metal bracing and the elimination of both the heavy wooden hood and the storage box base. A shallower base with an open top eliminated the need for a door but still allowed storage of card mounts and "buttons" for the penny picture artist.

A complete line of other, more normal cameras appeared, including a lovely but rather overbuilt copying camera, complete with recessed panels and chamfered edges.

Then, in 1899, it happened all over again, Once more there was a series of new camera designs. The multiplying camera became lighter still. Now called the "Yankee Multiplier", its new slimmed-down design eliminated the need for metal braces, while a tiny viewfinder appeared on the top.

The biggest change, however, was the introduction of a completely new line of deceptively simple box cameras with sliding panel faces taken from the pioneering design of twelve years earlier. This allowed the operator to place 15 or more images on a single 5 X 7 plate. Known as the "Ajax" or "New Gem", depending on the size and focal length of the simple tube lens used, these were fitted with a small wooden viewfinder attached to the lensboard by a brass rod, allowing it to follow the moving lens.These cameras were immediately popular with boardwalk "button" photographers as the relatively large numbers which survive attest to. Both wet and dry plate versions were offered but the wet tintype process was disappearing fast in favor of paper prints, and wet-plate versions of these cameras are quite scarce.

By 1903 Simon Wing had completely turned over S. Wing & Co. to his son, Harvey. Simon's interests had changed a great deal by this time. Now his thoughts ran to such diverse subjects as spiritualism and socialism. Two years earlier he had realized one of his life's ambitions - he ran for the office of President of the United States on the Socialist Labor Party Ticket, the party he helped found in 1892. He didn't make it but that didn't really matter. He got nearly 70,000 votes, and they all couldn't have been from the Wing family...or could they?

(Continued on page 37)

This Mahogany chest measuring 12" X 18" X 15" originally held reducing kits for plate holders. When it came from the Wing family it contained a number of tools and parts for making Wing cameras, including wooden patterns for bronze castings and, best of all, this oilcloth packet contained tool and die makers stamps, probably for marking cameras with construction and serial numbers.

In 1893, C. M. Wood of Manatou, Colorado purchased a complete wet-plate Penny Picture outfit from S. Wing & Co. Along with this receipt for Mr. Wood's purchases (listing just about everything a novice photographer needed to go into business), Harvey Wing replied to a number of customer's questions. Reading the lengthy letter (only the first page of which is shown here) makes one realize that to be a photographer a hundred years ago required more than a little knowledge of chemistry.

ESTABLISHED 1859

Charlestown, Mass., Sept 11 1893

Mr C. M. Wood, Manatou Colo.

Bought of **S. WING & Co.,**

MANUFACTURERS OF AND DEALERS IN

Photographic • Apparatus • and • Materials.

100 • CAMBRIDGE • STREET

1	Little Giant Camera #1	12 00
1	Set 4 Wx Lenses in Block with S.S. & I. — 1/4	21 00
1	5 Camera Stand	5 00
1	8 X 12 Universal Dipper — in Wooden Box	3 50
2	oz Silver Solution & Bottle Ruby Funnel —	5 00
8	" Hypo Bolloding	50
8	" Tannin	40
2	lbs Sulphate Iron	12
1	lb Acetic Acid	20
1	lb Cyanide	65
1	Bottle Indian Red	10
100	Vanilla Cover for Developing	10
25	" " " Card Size	10
1/4	lb Glycerine and S.P.	25
1	Box Memo Paper	05
3	2 lb Glass Bottle for Boiling Water	90
1	2 lb Glass Funnel	20
50	2 lb Filter Papers	25
500	#18 Paper Envelopes	75
1	Set 4 Wx Lenses in Box with S.S. & I. — Cover	20 00
		70 97
	Less 5% —	3 55
		67 42
	Credit by Check Sept 8/93	65 76
		1 66
	Bill Sept 11	50
	Paid Sept 16	1 16

S. WING & CO.,

MANUFACTURERS OF

Photographic Apparatus & Materials,

FERROTYPE ENVELOPES A SPECIALTY.

FINE JOB PRINTING. MOUNTS, STATIONERY &c.

ESTABLISHED 1865. SEND FOR CATALOGUE.

OFFICE AND FACTORY: 100 CAMBRIDGE STREET.

Charlestown, Mass. Sept 22 1869

Mr E. M. Reed

Worcester

Yours rec'd

Myself & hand from reading & send you the formula but as it takes time to make them over night I can not afford to

For Collodion you better keep two bottles as it keeps better than the two parts separate and mix when wanted

For 2 quarts - Put one bottle (#1) just 1 pint Best Alcohol and add to it the following solution. Dissolve 40 grains to the oz of whole bottle (2 pts - 80 gr) of gun cotton to each oz

Dissolve this - in little pure water as it will dissolve in

and add to it 1 grains to the oz of bottle of Cadmium

Put it and dissolve with as little pure water as possible then pour into the Alcohol in bottle #1 Let it settle and pour off as much as can be filtered after shaking well

Put into bottle #2 one pint of Alcohol. Soluble cotton 40 grains to the oz when well saturated add a pint of best Sulphuric Concentrated Ether which will dissolve the cotton

MORE CHANGES IN 1899

The most popular of all Wing cameras, as evidenced by the numbers which have survived, have to be the "New Gem" and the "Ajax." First mentioned in a few feeble ads from 1899, they were but part of yet another wholesale overhaul of the company's camera lineup which included a re-redesign of the famous Multiplying Camera, now to be known as the "Yankee Multiplier."

Some confusion exists regarding the dates of introduction for the "New Gem" and the "Ajax".

This stems from two sources. Both cameras (essentially the same design but with different lenses) are marked with the April 19, 1887 patent date which refers to the sliding panels introduced on the "Wing View Camera" that year.

Worse yet, the first book on camera collecting, Harry Gross' 1965 publication "Antique and Classic Cameras", dates an illustration of a "New Gem" camera as "circa 1865."

PENNY PHOTOGRAPHS

S. WING & CO.'S

New Gem Cameras

PATENTED

The handiest, quickest, and most complete apparatus ever invented for the purpose. Each and every image can be instantly adjusted without the usual removal of plateholder.

Various sizes to order.

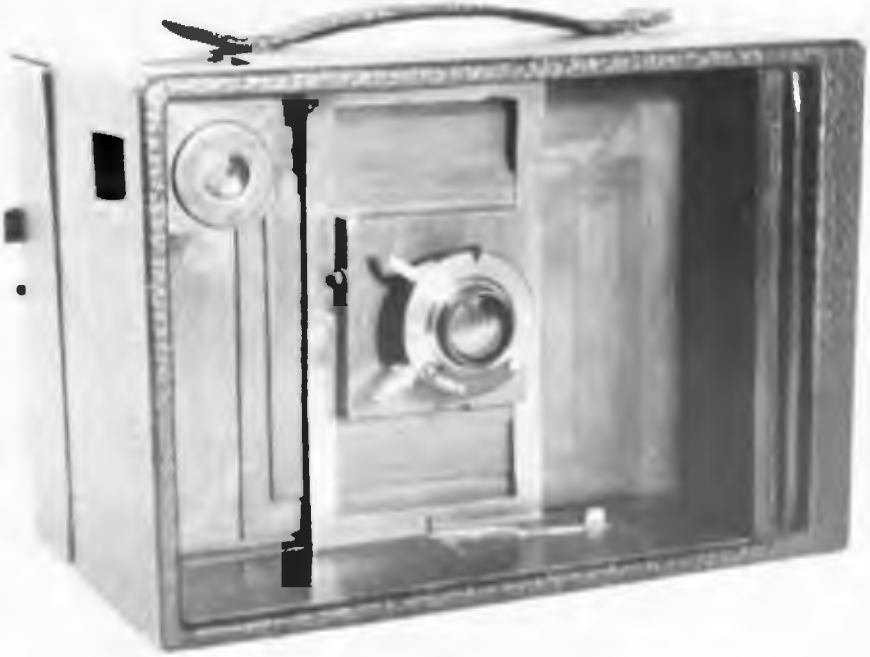
For 5 x 7 Plates including Lens and Finder, $8.50.

With Adjustable Base, $9.75.

Above: A typical fifteen-image print made by any of several "last generation" Wing cameras; most likely though from a "New Gem" or "Ajax." Photographers often changed the pose dramatically between exposures, cut the resulting sheet into three stripe of five images, and mounted them in special five-window cards.

Below: An intrepid group of photographers prepares to "hit the road" with at least one Wing camera.

ONE LAST EFFORT...



In one last effort to get back into the camera business, possibly recapturing past glories, Harvey Thayer Wing patented this unique little box camera on January 20, 1914. Only two prototypes were made.

In the only surviving photograph taken by the camera, Harvey and his wife sit on their front porch in Revere, Massachusetts, perhaps contemplating their new Model T. Ford.

It was too little, too late. This miniature reincarnation of the sliding-face Wing camera depended upon 4 X 5 glass plates when roll film had been around for over 25 years.

Simon settled down to become the beloved patriarch of the Wing clan. For years, at their annual picnic in Sandwich, he was affectionately known as "Uncle Simon."

Harvey was making fewer cameras now and the company was surviving by producing a line of photographic card mounts. More and more their business involved paper products, their obvious skill in this area exemplified by the lovely 1912 promotional calendar shown here.

But dreams die hard and the Wings weren't out of the camera business yet. In 1914 Harvey patented a deceptively simple-looking box camera. Covered in black, seal-grained leather (the only Wing camera ever to use this material), its tamboured-wood face could be pushed aside to reveal a tiny version of the New Gem camera, sliding face panels and all. It was designed to take nine exposures on a 4 X 5 glass plate or cut film, thus producing eighteen tiny photos from each double-sided plate holder. This, Harvey hoped, would make it a good alternative to the now dominant roll-film cameras. Only two prototypes of this wonderful little camera were found in the Nilsson collection, and one of those was incomplete. (See issue 63 of the ***Photographist*** for the complete story of this interesting camera.)

In the only surviving photo taken by the camera, we see Harvey and his wife sitting on the porch of their home in Revere. Unfortunately Harvey was living in the past as far as camera design was concerned. The little hand-crafted wooden camera was an anachronism in view of the "Great War" then raging in Europe with its new technology and precision machinery of destruction. Besides, how could Harvey know that half a world away, Oscar Barnak had built his prototype Leica fully two years earlier.

Simon Wing, the hard-nosed Yankee businessman who never drank or smoke, died in 1916. He was cremated and buried next to his wife, Mary, in St. Albans, Maine. The Charlestown factory closed down soon afterward and lay abandoned. A few years ago I met a gentleman who told of how, in his childhood, he would climb through the boarded-up windows and play among the old, dusty machines. To prove it he presented me with a box of brass 1/9th gem tubes and a selection of the little wooden viewfinders that he found there, trademarks of the once ubiquitous Penny Picture Cameras.

Eventually the factory was torn down to make way for I-93. Every time I drive over that stretch of highway, I'm sure I can hear old Simon Wing himself, whispering in a flat, Yankee accent ..."**If you think you know everything about me you are quite mistaken. I made cameras even stranger than the ones you know about, so get cracking and see if you can find them.**"

Now you may think that it's just the wind whistling past a Volvo roof rack...but I know what I hear and I've got to believe. Why? Because I'm a **WING NUT!**

One of the more ephemeral S. Wing & Co. items to come out of Charlestown was this classy little 1912 calendar. In the end the company probably only survived as long as it did because of their printing department and the myriad photo mounts it produced.

Simon Wing died in 1910. The Charlestown factory did not close until 1937.

THE WING STUDIOS

From a single studio in Waterville, Maine, Simon Wing grew, over the years, to own or be co-owner of a number of photo studios all over the country. Much of the information in the following list comes from Chris Steele of Brighton, Mass.

WATERVILLE, MAINE 1856 - 1862	(Wing's Gallery) May have been taken over by C.G.Carlton after Wing moved to Boston.
WORCESTER, MASS. 1859 - 1860	(Wing & Ellis) Foster Block
BOSTON, MASS. 1862 - 1863 1863 1864 - 1873 1865 1866 - 1874 1867 1869 1873 1875 - 1880 1886 - 1893	(Wing's) (S. Wing) 144 Washington St. 4 Summer St. 290 Washington St. 23 Hanover St. 257 Washington St. 210 Washington St. 43 Winter St 144 Washington St. 425 Washington St. 478 Washington St.
CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 1871	Brattle St., Harvard Sq. corner
CHARLESTOWN, MASS. 1870 - 1874 1882 - 1886 1887 - 1898 1899 - (1914?)	(S. Wing & Co.) Cambridge St., near Somerville line (listed in city directory as "Camera Mfgr.") 120 Cambridge St. 100 Cambridge St. (100 Cambridge St.?)
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 1863 1870 - 1871 1871 1872 1895 1897 - 1900	(Green & Wing) 59 Clark St. 238 Milwaukee Ave. 184 -1/2 Clark St. 594 W. Lake St. 2253 Cottage Grove 329 State
DETROIT, MICHIGAN (date unknown)	(S. Wing) 149 Jefferson Ave. (corner Griswold)
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 1870's - 1880's	(S. Wing) 62 Canal St.
MONROE, MICHIGAN (date unknown)	23 Front St.
TOLEDO, OHIO (date unknown)	61 Summer St.
LEADVILLE, COLORADO 1889 - 1890	(Wing's Gallery) 506 Harrison Ave.
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 1875	(Wing & Allen) (Bennett G. Allen) 187 "J" St.
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 1874 - 1876 1877 - 1883	(Wing & Allen) 523 Kearny St. 342 Kearny St.
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 1876	(Wing & Allen) 314 Market St.

A GALLERY OF WING CAMERAS

S. Wing & Co. produced many camera designs in the fifty or so years they were in business. In the earliest years of its production the Wing Multiplying Camera underwent many variations until the final configuration was set, thus few if any of those first cameras look exactly alike. Likewise, the final years of the company saw many new models added to the catalogue. Adding to the proliferation was Wing's passion for trying new ideas, as well as giving form to the ideas of others. Much of the fun of collecting is in the search for these "sports." Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are of cameras in the Kessler Collection. Those cameras shown in engravings may exist elsewhere but photographs were not available.

With the exception of the patent model, which can be found in the Smithsonian Institution, this is the earliest known example of a Wing Multiplying Camera. Many of the proportions and details relative to later versions are different. Most notable of these is the rotating cylinder on top which brings several different patterns of holes to bear on a catch projecting from the rising and falling back. It bears the imprint: "Wing's Patent, April 10, 1865" on its top surface. Date: approximately 1867.

(Matthew Isenberg collection)

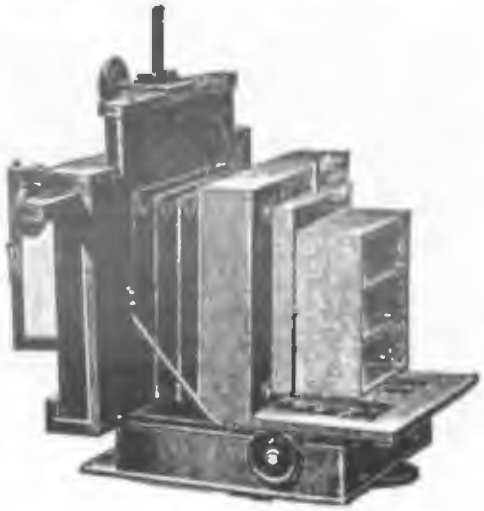
Simon Wing's personal Multiplying Camera, serial number 0, is basically the standard model with three exceptions: The camera is made of solid Rosewood rather than Mahogany, the decorative supports on the sides appear on no other Wing camera, and the three control knobs (the focus knob on the side and the horizontal and vertical rack knobs on the back) are turned from Rosewood as well; all other Wing cameras have knobs of turned metal. Like the standard model it features a hinged top to the lens compartment, with four possible positions for the lensboard. There are small metal fixtures on the top and one side of the lens compartment, with pivoting covers which allow the pull-rod of the shutter block to protrude.

This feature is absent on models too small to use the shutter block. The hallmark of all early versions of this camera is the storage compartment with a door in front. Wing seemed to prefer Darlot lenses almost exclusively, and this example uses nine 1/9th Darlot tubes mounted in a typical Wing shutter block.

No price information is available for Wing cameras from this period. Date: approximately 1870.

The 1887 version of Wing's Patent Multiplying Camera was made considerably lighter by making the storage compartment shallower and eliminating the door. It now became just a deep tray with an open top. The hooded lens compartment also disappeared, replaced by a more normal camera front. All parts of the camera were now made of thinner and lighter stock. A pair of angled metal braces make this model recognizable at a distance. Prices (lenses not included): 5X7 - $35. 8X10 - $55. 11X14 - special order only. Each camera came with a set of "kits" to make smaller plate sizes.

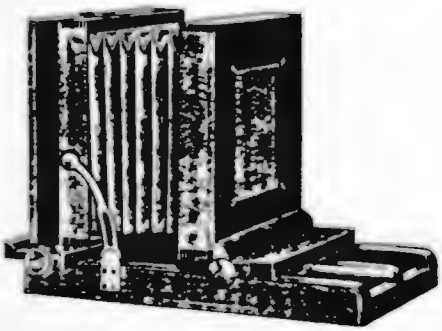
According to the 1887 catalogue, secondhand, old-style multiplying cameras were sometimes available, completely reconditioned, for $25 to $40.



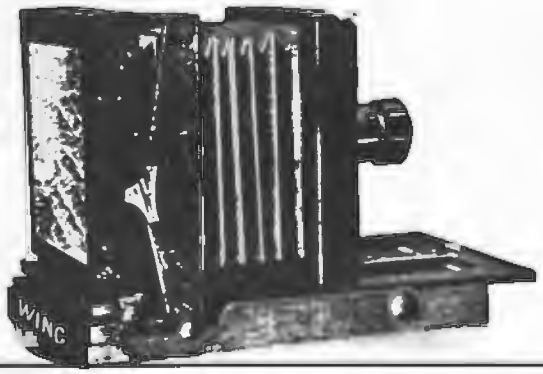
<u>WING VIEW CAMERA, 1887</u>. A revolutionary design featuring a vertical sliding lensboard (an additional sideways movement was $2 extra - see the illustration on page 30), "Wing's Perfect Metallic Plate Holder", a 1/4" thick metal sheath enclosing a tray which held the plate, and "Wing's Adjustable Lens Holder", a ball-and-socket lens mount. Price (including six holders): 8X10 - $24, 5X8 (illustrated here) - $16, and 4X5- $12.

WING VIEW CAMERA, 1887.
A 4X5 version of the previously described camera. The original Wing/ Nilsson collection consisted of approximately thirty cameras, six of which were 4X5 view cameras. Unlike the rest of the cameras, these six were brand-new in the box -- never used. There is no hard evidence, but they may have been made as late as 1910. Price: $12.

NO.1 AMATEUR'S ENLARGING CAMERA, ca. 1890. ***A fixed-focus enlarger designed to enlarge a 4X5 negative to a 5X7 transparency or Bromide print. The 1892 catalogue mentions that "With this apparatus one can enlarge a 2-1/2" Kodak negative to a 31/2" circle." Price: $12.***



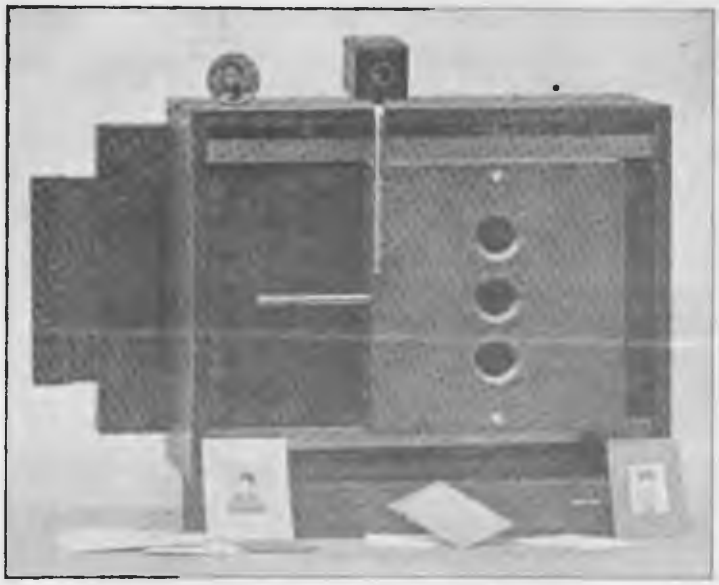
THE LEADER, 1892.
A studio view camera with front focus, side movement (of the plateholder), and a swing back; it featured sturdy Mahogany construction and rack-and-pinion controls. Price: 8X10 - $30.



THE CHARLESTOWN, 1892.
A front-focus portrait camera with single or double swing back, polished Mahogany construction, and rack-and-pinion controls. Prices (depending upon number of swings): 8X10 - $24 to $30. 11X14 - $38 to $50. 18X22 -$65 to $80.

Special Button Camera No. 1.

Makes 15 on a 5 x 7 only.



PRICE, $17.25, NET CASH.

Including Camera, one Plateholder, Lenses, Shutter, Finder and Adjustable Base. Without Base, **$16.00.** Extra Plateholders, each, **$2 25.**

This Camera makes 15 on a 5 x 7 plate by exposing 5 times, making 3 each exposure. The lenses move from side to side by a scale. It is so simple a boy can work it.

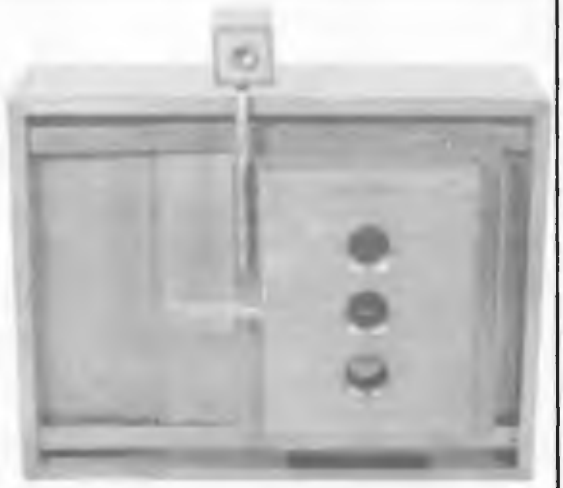
DIRECTIONS.—A thin frame will be found with the Camera, designed to be used directly in front of the plateholder, and the camera placed 5 feet from the lenses to the sitter's chin. Without this frame, the Camera will focus at 10 feet, and the Camera will always be found in focus at one of these distances, 5 feet for heads, 10 feet for groups. If the subject leans forward or backward slightly, it makes no noticeable difference. A stick or rod, cut off the right length is best to measure by. Move the lenses as far as they will come nearest to the operator, adjust the image by the finder on top of the Camera and make first exposure. Next move the lenses from you until the indicator is opposite the first mark, adjust the image again by the finder and make the second exposure, and so on until the plate is filled. The last position of the lenses is as far as they can be moved from you.

The **ADJUSTABLE BASE** enables you to quickly swing and tilt the Camera, and can be fastened to any table, stand, tripod or packing box.

The **CAMERA** is thoroughly well built of Mahogany, and is the best thing for the purpose ever invented. It is exceedingly small, campact, light and accurate. The lenses are best Darlot's, and the outfit will make quick and fine work, depending only on the skill of the operator. It can also be used to make **Penny Photos**, two of the lenses being alternately covered if desired, by an arrangement put on before leaving the factory for **$1.00** more.

This Camera is our invention and is giving first-class satisfaction where ever used.

ORDER DIRECT OF US WE SELL TO PHOTOGRAPHERS ONLY.



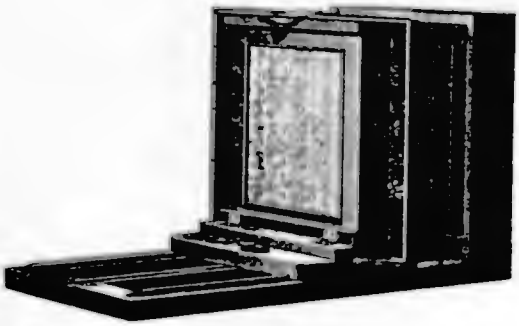
SPECIAL BUTTON CAMERA NO. 1, ca. 1899. *One of the rarest of the Wing cameras, this variation used three vertical lenses to make three rows of five images on a 5X7 plate. The operation of the camera is thoroughly described in the ad on the facing page. Price: $17.25, "NET CASH"*

NEW GEM, 1899.
Probably the most popular of the "late" Wing cameras, this is the one where the lens may be positioned anywhere over the face of the camera. It was normally used to make 15 exposures on a 5X7 plate but when used in combination with various internal masks it could make from 6 to 28 exposures. Several sizes with varying features were available but they all used Darlot 1/9th tube lenses, necessitating a rather shallow box. Price: $8.50 (with adjustable base, $9.75)

AJAX, ca. 1900.
This camera has the same general features as the "New Gem" camera described above, but the lens is a 1/4 size (meaning it was normally used in groups of 4 to make 4 images on a 5X7 plate). The longer focal length gives the Ajax camera a deeper box than the New Gem. Price: $12.00.

All S. Wing & Co. cameras could be ordered with dry plate or wet plate holders. Wing's Penny Picture Cameras represented one of the last stands of the wet-collodian process and the wet-plate version of any Wing camera is always considered more desirable to the collector.

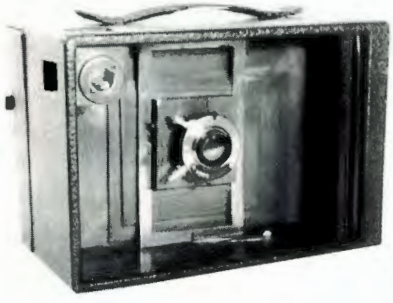
YANKEE MULTIPLIER, ca. 1900.
Final configuration of Simon Wing's classic multiple image camera. It was simplified and made somewhat lighter than the 1887 version, bringing the price down as well. Someone (probably Harvey) was learning the value of interchangable parts as the plate back and holder were the same as those on the New Gem and Ajax cameras. It could use virtually any lens and shutter combination, but with the three lens shutter seen here it could make 15 on a plate, just like the Special Button Camera. Price (without lens): $20.



LITTLE GIANT, 1892.
These were simple, popular cameras, often fitted with multiple lenses for "Penny Picture" work. They had no movements and were thus unsuited for portrait or studio work. Price (without lenses): 5X7 - $12. 7X10 - S14.

CAMERA NO. 2, 1892.
A front-focus version of The Little Giant described above. With no movements, its only use was as a multiple-image, "Penny Picture" camera. The plateholder could be stepped across the back, increasing its multiplying capabilities. The example shown here is fitted with a 4-lens shutter block and velvet-lined shadowbox. Besides cutting down on stray light, the four velvet-lined compartments had another purpose; Small wooden blocks could be wedged in front of one or more lenses to block off portions of the plate. Price: 7X10 - $29.

UNKNOWN, CA. 1900.
The S. Wing & Co. catalogues offered to make custom cameras on special order, and this unusual camera may be one of those. The tintype plates were placed in the cardboard box they came in, inside the camera, and were manipulated through a rubberized cloth sleeve in the back. The viewfinder consists of a tiny lens set in a hole running completely through the top of the camera. Probably a one-of-a-kind. No price available.



PROTOTYPE, 1914.
One of two examples (the second is incomplete). The box is covered in black, seal-grain leather and features a sliding, tamboured-wood front which when opened reveals a 4X5 version of the "New Gem" camera. This elegant final effort of S. Wing & Co. could produce nine exposures on each side of a double plateholder. No price available.

SHUTTERS

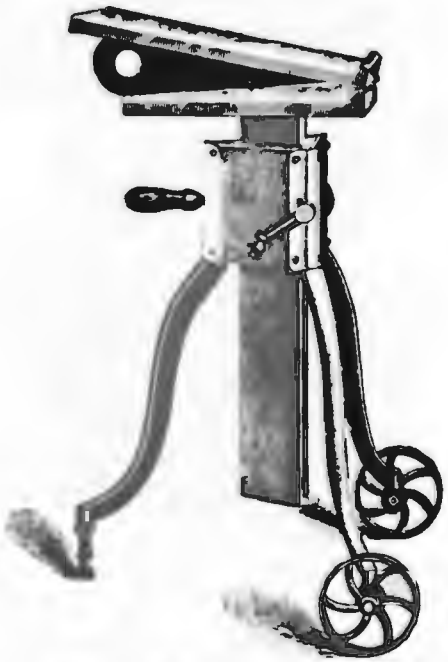
The most easily recognizable feature of any Wing camera is it's unique shutter. The New Gem and Ajax cameras use a square, hollowed-out wooden block with a pair of hard-rubber shutter blades, actuated by an air cylinder on the front. The wooden block is faced with a circular piece of hard rubber with a hole to admit the light.

All the other Wing cameras, when fitted for multiple image work, use various sizes and numbers of Darlot tube lenses, pressed tightly into a wooden block and set behind a sliding wood panel. This is opened and closed by hand with a metal rod set in the sliding panel. Spring-loaded baffles attached to the back of the unit remain in contact with the plate as the camera is focussed. The baffles are lined in black velvet as is the optional shadowbox in front. One could order combinations of 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 lenses.

CAMERA STANDS

Simon Wing claimed to have invented the first three-cornered camera stand in the United States and it's probably true. The turned legs, huge iron wheels, and unique, wedge-shaped brace for the tilt top were features found only on Wing camera stands. There were variations, but these three are the most typical.

Camera Stand No. 3 (left).
Raises to 42 inches with wheels one foot in diameter. With the addition of a 17X32 double wedge top, it could support the very largest camera S. Wing & Co. produced; the 11X14 Charlestown. Price: $20 to $25.



Camera Stand No. 4 (above)
Cranks from 30 inches to 4'2", with six inch diameter iron wheels. Designed for The Little Giant and 5X7 Multiplying Cameras. Price: $10.

Camera Stand No. 5 (left)
28" high, it raises to 4 feet. Price: $5.

Does it Pay
to make
PENNY PHOTOGRAPHS?

As many have expressed an opinion that there is more work than profit in making Penny Photos, we would like to advance an idea or two on this point for consideration.

We would ask first if you are busy on profitable work and have little time to spare? If so, you may not care to consider an increase of business, even if it could be shown profitable. But if you are, like many, waiting for cabinet customers, who are much more scarce than you would like, and the limited demand in your town is divided among several studios, then it would pay to introduce a taking novelty to the young people, get the public into your rooms, give them fine little samples of your work, with your name neatly printed thereon, at a price that will make you popular, treat them well, and get acquainted with the whole town or city.

Does it not pay to get the public into your studio, where the people will see your pictures? It is a grand chance to show your studio, your work and yourself, and to prove how pleasant and agreeable a gentleman your are and how well you can treat your patrons.

It is a big advertisement, and when cabinets and larger work is wanted you stand the best chance of obtaining it, providing your pictures are all right. The amount of labor in Penny Photos should not stand in the way, if it can be done mostly by neat and particular girls, though inexperienced. Many people are glad to get work when well paid for it Yes, well paid, for there is a good profit in Penny Photos, without calculating the benefits from its advertising, if a rush can be obtained

We know one party introducing them to his town, who charged 25 cents for 25 Photos, and who made 2600 sittings in two months. He figured a net profit of $500 He also figured that he would prefer to have the business himself, than to have an itinerant photographer "do up the town" and carry off the harvest. This party does the best work in his town, has the finest studio (although there are several others there), and gets the highest prices.

Figure it out carefully and if you wish to try it we would like to sell you an outfit.

S. WING & CO.,

CHARLESTOWN, MASS.

Ca. 1900