

[REDACTED]
San Angelo, Texas,
November 10, 1954.

Mr. Ivar Skarland,
Director of the Museum,
University of Alaska,
College, Alaska,

Dear Mr. Skarland:

Am shipping to the University, by parcel post, the camera that Lt. Frederick Schwatka used on the Alaskan Expedition he headed for the New York Times in 1886, when he made an unsuccessful attempt to scale Mt. Elias. Also included in the shipment is one plate holder and the original lens mount, with one Waterhouse stop. The lens itself was remounted years ago and is not available.

The camera was made by G. & H.F. ANTHONY & CO, 59I Broadway, New York, N.Y., probably in 1884 or 1885. It includes features patented on Mar. 23, 82; Mar. 20, 83, and Nov. 11, 84.

May I point out some of the differences between this camera and the modern view type-

1. The bed lets down from the rear and when folded protects the ground glass.
2. The ground glass frame is permanently hinged to the back.
3. The back of the camera is attached to the moving carriage by four lugs that fit into slots. To change from the vertical to the horizontal position the back is pushed sideways until the lugs clear, then turned manually and placed in the slots on the horizontal side.
4. A turn table on the camera front allows the bellows to revolve when changing from the vertical to the horizontal position. The movement is confined to one fourth turn on one side only.
5. A single track and cog is used on the rack and pinion focusing arrangement. The track is located in the center of the bed and is unsupported except for one brace.

6. The bed is held in the down position by hooks.
7. Two hooks hold the plate holder in place.
8. Plates are inserted into the holder from the lower end by removing a detachable bottom, that is held in place by a U shaped retainer on either side of the holder.
9. The camera was designed for 5x8 plates, a size discontinued years ago.
10. The original lens was a $6\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ Aristoscope Rapid Rectilinear (F-8), in a barrel type mount with Waterhouse stops, that were inserted into a slot on the top of the barrel. A lens cap was used to make exposures.

Although this camera is an antique it is still serviceable and provides practically all the functions of the modern view camera. You will note that, after sixty eight years, the rawhide thongs that were used to brace the front of the track are still intact.

I have long felt that this historic relic belonged in Alaska, so was happy to learn that such a responsible institution as the University has a museum where it can have a permanent home.

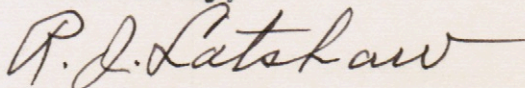
An enclosing an affidavit of authenticity and a clipping from the San Angelo Standard. The local paper has contacted the New York Times in an effort to procure some of the Alaska pictures made by this camera and if they are available shall endeavor to procure copies for you.

I feel sure that you are familiar with Lt. Schwatka's history and, no doubt, have in your library copies of his books, "Along Alaska's Great River" (1885), "Nimrod in the North" (1885) and "The Children of the Cold" (1886). Another, not so well known, volume was "A Summer in Alaska". His Arctic journeys were also described by his comrade, W.H. Gilder, in two books, "Schwatka's Search" (1881) and "The Franklin Search Under Lt. Schwatka" (1881).

Unfortunately, my collection of his books, along with many original notes and drawings, were stolen out of storage while I was in the Service. Other wise they would have been available to you.

If I can be of further service to you please let me know.

Yours truly,



R.J. Latshaw.

December 7, 1954

Mr. R. J. Latshaw

[REDACTED]
San Angelo, Texas

Dear Mr. Latshaw

Lieutenant Schwatka's camera arrived a couple of days ago. Your letter with all the pertinent information had preceded it by a week.

We appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity in letting us have such a valuable heirloom on your wife's side of the family. The camera will receive good care and take its place among the historical objects in the museum.

Mr. Keim, who handles University news releases, wants to do a short article on the camera. It will be sent to you as soon as it appears.

Our library has most of Schwatka's writings, and the books are well used. In some ways he was way ahead of his contemporaries. For example, on his Canadian expedition, as you know, he used snowhouses, ate and dressed like the Eskimos, and knew how to be safe and comfortable where most white people suffered.

Thank you again for the splendid gift.

Very truly yours

Ivar Skarland
Director of the Museum

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Schwatka's camera was donated to the University of Alaska Museum by Mr. R. J. Latshaw of San Angelo, Texas in November of 1954. ~~Mr. Latshaw's~~ Mr. Latshaw's wife, Ada Durham Macfie, was Schwatka's niece and the camera came to her after S.'s death.

The camera was used during the 1886 New York Times expedition to Alaska when Schwatka, William Libbey, and Heywood W. Seton-Karr ~~was~~ explored and mapped the area around Mount St. Elias.

The camera was manufactured by G. and H.F. Anthony and Company, of New York ca. 1884-5. The camera includes features patented on March 23, 1882, March 20, 1883 and November 11, 1884.

It used 5x8 glass plates. The lens* was a 6 1/2" x 8 1/2" ~~Aristoscope~~ ~~Aristoscope~~ Aristoscope Rapid Rectilinear (F-8) in a barrel type mount with Waterhouse stops, that were inserted into a slot on top of the barrel. A lens cap was used to make exposures (ie, as a shutter) A drop cloth was used.

* we do not have lens .

folded up, camera is 4" x 6" x 11 1/2"

open, it is 10" long x 8" wide x
11 1/2" high
(this is without lens, which we
do not have



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the 5X8 view camera made by G. & H.F. Anthony & Co., 591 Broadway, New York, N.Y., and presented to the University of Alaska by R.J. Latshaw, was the property of Lt. Frederick Schwatka, the famous Alaskan explorer, and was used by him during his 1886 Alaskan expedition.

After Lt. Schwatka's death the camera was given to his niece, Ada Durham Macfie, (my wife) and has never been out of the possession of the family.

R.J. Latshaw

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 10th day of November 1954.

Phyllis Mergott
Notary Public in and for
Tom Green County, Texas

PHYLLIS MERGOTT, Notary Public
in and for Tom Green County, Texas