

The Naylor Collection

- considered by many to be the finest
privately-owned photographic collection in existence -
will be sold at auction in New York, October 18 - 21

Thousands of items - from the very earliest photographs
to the rarest and most historic cameras - to be sold at this unprecedented event.

The time was World War II and a decorated flying "Ace" - Thurman "Jack" Naylor - had a chance encounter with famed photographer Margaret Bourke-White. An amateur photographer himself, Jack marveled at the opportunity to meet the first woman to reach the highest levels of professional photography. (Among her many accomplishments, Ms. Bourke-White took the photograph that appeared on the very first cover of *Life Magazine*.) A friendship developed and indeed, one of the most well-known images of "Maggie" (standing in an aviator suit next to Jack's fighter plane) was taken by Jack. Meeting Margaret Bourke-White was indeed so inspirational for Jack that photography rapidly became his passion.

A successful business career with manufacturing plants around the globe afforded Jack the opportunity to build his photographic collection. Pure and simply, money was not an object. If an item was important and fit into a niche within his increasing assemblage of the rare and wonderful, Jack bought it. Other friendships with such accomplished individuals within the photographic world as "Doc" Edgerton (the father of flash photography) and Dr. Edwin Land (Polaroid) helped the Collection grow. And grow. Today, Mr. Naylor, now approaching his ninetieth year, oversees a collection that is world famous. Over the years, he has headed numerous photographic societies, written countless articles for photographic publications and received many awards for his efforts. Dr. Anthony Bannon, Director of the George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film, describes The Collection as a "marvel." In the 1980's, *Smithsonian Magazine* devoted its cover and lead story to Jack's collecting efforts and his espionage collection, while Martin W. Sandler, author of more than twenty books on the history of photography refers to The Naylor Collection in the following way: "It is the most unique and valuable private photographic collection to be found anywhere. It is rare. It is priceless..."

On October 18, 19, 20 and 21, Guernsey's will be conducting an unreserved auction of 2,000 of the most noteworthy lots from The Naylor Collection. Following several days of public previewing, the event will be held live at the Americas Society landmark mansion located at 68th Street and Park Avenue in New York City. Those unable to attend in person will be able to bid from anywhere. The balance of The Collection will be sold on-line approximately six months after the October event. A beautiful catalogue documenting The Collection and October Auction can be reserved from Guernsey's.

The Naylor Collection has been described as representing the "complete history of photography." In truth, The Collection is really many collections each representing a period in time or an important category within the development of photography. For example, there is the Daguerreian period... the earliest age of photography. Naylor's assemblage of Daguerreian material is nothing short of astounding as it contains literally thousands of the rarest Daguerreotypes (both American and European) taken between 1839 and 1850 by the masters of the new art including Southworth and Hawes, Whipple and Plumbe. The Daguerreian portion of The Naylor Collection is also replete with the rarest Daguerreian

cameras, lenses and studio furnishings. It also contains a collection of Daguerreian and early photography nudes and erotica. And as this is being written, a stunning early image of Edgar Allan Poe has been discovered in the vast Daguerreian archive.

Though the Daguerreian period is universally accepted as the beginning of photography as we know it, The Naylor Collection includes significant "pre-photography" objects and curious devices of many descriptions from around the world created in the centuries and decades prior to the advent of the Daguerreotype as mankind attempted to capture and project the two dimensional image. One of the most outstanding of these devices is the Megaletoscopio, created by Venetian photographer Carlo Ponti in 1859. Nearly eight decades before the advent of color photography, this beautiful creation provides for the viewer the illusion of color. From those earliest of times, The Collection progresses through the late 1800's with specific categories devoted to the work of Mathew Brady, stereo and Stanhope microscopic photography.

It should be noted that although The Naylor Collection is all about photography, there are sections of The Collection that stray from the main focus in exciting ways. For example, well-known for his work related to the Civil War, the Mathew Brady section leads into an even larger 150 item Civil War section that is largely not photography-related. It includes the rare Wedgwood abolitionist medallion given to Ben Franklin and the life mask of President Lincoln. Among the other non-photographic items are Queen Victoria's purse and what is believed to be the first print made in America - a 1727 engraving of Reverend Cotton Mather. Yet another remarkable non-photographic artifact in The Collection is an American flag actually taken to the moon by astronaut Neil Armstrong and gifted to Mr. Naylor.

The landmark work of Edward Curtis and his photographic depictions of the North American Indian is legendary. Significantly, The Naylor Collection contains many of Curtis' original glass plate positives. It was from these very plates that some of our most beloved images originated. In that most of Curtis' other plates have been destroyed, this offering is nothing short of remarkable.

Clearly, hundreds of the rarest cameras and lenses in existence are included within The Naylor Collection. The smallest sampling of these range from Dr. Edwin Land's instant photography prototype, the earliest efforts of Kodak, Jacques Cousteau's first underwater cameras, multiple lens cameras from the 1860's, Leica's best efforts including a 1930 gold-plated, lizard skinned Luxus 35mm and the 8" x 10" Deardorff used by *Playboy* to capture thirty years worth of centerfolds! Of particular note is the Espionage Collection of one hundred and sixty five specialized cameras and other related items used by Soviet, German, British and American spies throughout the 20th Century with several 19th Century examples as well. Imagine, if you will, the German WWI aerial spy camera worn by homing pigeons. (Due to its absolutely unique nature, the entire Espionage Collection will be sold as a single lot.)

What would photography be without the prints themselves? Almost needless to say, The Naylor Collection is rich in vintage photographs (many of which have been signed by their photographers)... like twenty one images Margaret Bourke-White took while traveling in Russia in 1930. Many will recognize landmark, signed prints from WWII including the joyful "kissing" scene in NYC's Times Square and the stirring image of the Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima. Original studio prints of Dr. Bradford Washburn's haunting images of the world's most unapproachable terrains and thrilling "stop motion" pictures captured by "Doc" Edgerton add to The Collection as do the photographic portraits of Marilyn Monroe, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Douglas MacArthur, Winston Churchill and the memorable image of Nastassja Kinski and the serpent boldly autographed by Richard Avedon.

Although the above is far from a complete category listing of this amazing collection, Mr. Naylor's impressive library of rare photography books certainly needs mention. It, along with many rare examples of ephemera, will be exciting to paper collectors universally.

The auction of The Naylor Collection will be conducted without minimum reserve. It is hard to imagine a more comprehensive - and exciting - collection relating to the history of photography ever coming to auction. For complete information, interested parties should visit the auction house's web site - www.guernseys.com - or contact Guernsey's at 212-794-2280 or auctions@guernseys.com.

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