

# Marion & Company - Photographic History at Historic Camera

The firm of Augustin Marion was established in the mid 1830's by Claude Mames Augustin Marion selling fine French stationery. The business is believed to have been located at 14 Cite Bergere, Paris. The names Augustin and Auguste were used interchangeable in some advertisements.

In approximately 1842 a branch of the firm was established at 19 Mortimer St. London, selling fine stationery and fancy goods imported from France.

In 1846 The firm moved to 152 Regent St. London and the business name was changed to include "and company" which implies that the business was flourishing and expanding.

Around 1854 the firm began to stock "photographic papers" in addition to the fine stationery at the Regent St. location. Marion advertised that they stocked papers manufactured expressly for Photographic purposes, including Positive and Negative (not prepared) papers; Simple Salted and Salted Albumenized Positive; Simple Waxed, and Waxed Iodized Negative; Gummed Paper, and Cards for Mounting Proofs. The firm also reported that it has received the unanimous good opinion of the most successful operators.

By, 1857 the firm was credited with introducing Carte-de-visite to great Britain. They had a thriving wholesale business of celebrity photographs.. They maintained a large stock of portraits, taken by many famous photographers and would supply the leading shops of the day. In 1862 Mr. Frank Bishop the managing director of the of the Soho warehouse stated that "50,000 carte-de-visite passed through the firm's hands every month". This operation was bigger than all the countries competitors combined.

In 1863 the company name was changed to Auguste Marion, Son & Co. and had moved to 23 Soho Square, London.

By 1866, The firm expanded had opened a warehouse and showroom at 22 & 23 Soho Square, London.

In late 1867, Claude Mames Augustin Marion, the elder retired from the business and the business was then taken over and operated by three business partners, including Claude Mames Augustin Marion's son, Auguste Leon Marion, Henry Edward Gery and George Bishop. the company name was changed to simply "Marion & Co."

With the photographic boom in the 1880s and 90's, due to the introduction of dry plates and flexible film, the business of Marion & co. expanded with supplying a wide variety of [photographic cameras](#), equipment and materials. In 1884 the company published one of the most successful photographic hand books, "Marion's Practical Guide to Photography, embracing the new formed amateur market. In 1886 the company built its own factory in Southgate, Middlesex, producing photographic plate, papers. and in 1903 roll film cartridges. Beginning in this period, Marion & Co. collaborated with the firm of Kershaw & Sons Ltd, for a series of reflex cameras that

would become very popular. They also imported and sold hand and pocket roll film cameras under their name.

In August 1901 the firm was registered with capital of £100,000 as Marion & Co. Ltd with the following managing partners, Auguste Leon Marion, Henri Louis Guibout, George Bishop, Frank Bishop and John Pattinson Kirk.

In 1921, Marion & Co. Ld was absorbed by the Amalgamated Photographic Manufacturers ( A.P.M.) Ltd. company. The merger included the Page Prize Co., Rajar Ltd., Marion & Co., Marion & Foulger Ltd., A. Kershaw & Son Ltd., The Kershaw Optical Co. Ltd., and the Rotary Photographic Co. (1917) Ltd. The share-capital of the combined concern was £1,100,000, with an estimated 10,000 customers scattered throughout the world.

Ref:

1852, The Post Office London Directory.

1867, 16th October, The London Gazette

1901, December 14, Pharmaceutical Journal, p16.

1901 Photographic Dealer, p74

1902, Photographic Dealer, p128

1926, photo-era magazine

2007 Encyclopedia of 19th Century photography, John Hannavy, p893

[CLICK HERE](#) for a listing of Marion & Co. Cameras.