

ROCKLEIGH MEMORIES

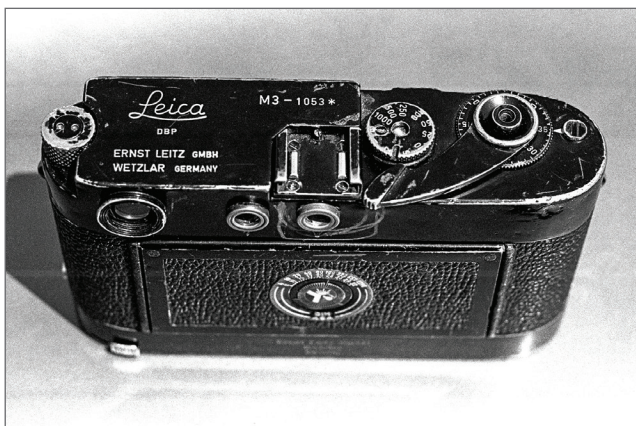
by JIM LAGER



#1. Grey IIIcK with grey MOOLY-C



#2. Black Summarex 593285



#3. M3-1053*

My employment with E.Leitz, Inc. Rockleigh, New Jersey began in February 1971. Has it really been more than 50 years since I joined the Leica Technical Department? Between 1971-1975 I dealt with most facets of the Leica System on a daily basis. Cameras, lenses, and accessories. In many instances it was an initial meeting. Allow me to recall a few of these encounters.

It was during a sunny Summer day when a customer arrived with an extraordinary assemblage. A Luftwaffen-Eigentum grey IIIcK coupled to a grey MOOLY-C motor. (#1) I was aware of the black or chrome motif but the grey finish was new to me. Out came my Leicaflex SL to document this rarity. Another first encounter centered on a well worn black 8.5cm Summarex. (#2) The lens carried a tiny engraving reading Red Richards which I surmised to be the name of a previous owner. This lens survives today cherished by an LHSA member.

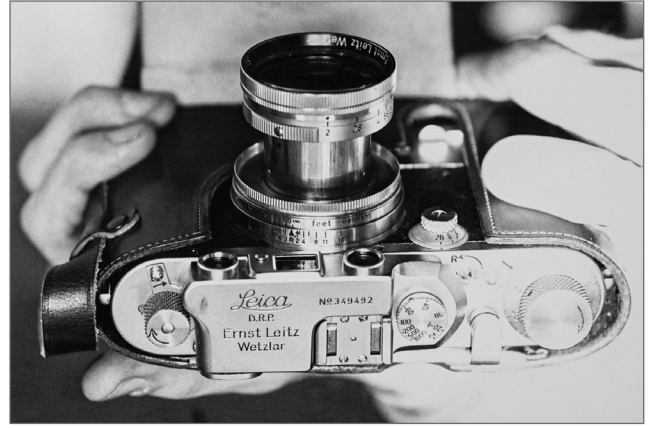
How about a 1940 Leica IIIb with MOOLY and beautifully crafted leather case? (#4) Again I went to the SL. No time for proper photos but quick snapshots were better than nothing. Highly trained service department technicians would regularly summon me with "Jim, we have something here you should see". I went immediately. There it was on the workbench. An absolutely battered black M3 with unusual engraving M3-1053*. (#3) Years later I realized this was a prototype MP prepared for evaluation by prominent photojournalists. Then a 1930 rim set Leica B so worn you could not read the entire serial number. (#5) Leica IIIc 386101 converted to a IIIf. (#6) Future research indicated original shipment to Japanese occupied Shanghai in 1942. An early KE-7A with 5cm ELCAN 276-001 for in-house evaluation. (#7) Null series M5 1287002 being shown to the M specialists. (#8) They were seeing the new M5 for the first time. I watched and listened from the appropriate distance and distinctly remember uttering "My God, what has Wetzlar done to my M3".

The 180mm 1:3.4 ELCAN-R came with the understanding I could shoot with it but not photograph it. (#9) It was during the Cold War and the lens was classified. Built for the U.S.Navy and later commercially introduced as the Apo-Telyt-R. Important visitors from Leitz Wetzlar had concluded their meetings and were about to depart. Suddenly without warning a tiny M lens was handed to the Leica Technical Department. I mounted the 15mm 1:8 Hologon to an M5 and shot exteriors of the Rockleigh headquarters building. (#11) The special variable density filter reduced vignetting. A lens for the specialist. All of the transparencies I shot with the 180mm ELCAN-R and Hologon were Company property, hence, I do not have them. A silver Haliburton case arrived filled with M equipment never seen by the service department. A Leica MS with two lenses and special viewfinder. (#10) This equipment was forwarded to ELC in Midland. See the LHSA *Viewfinder* 53-3.

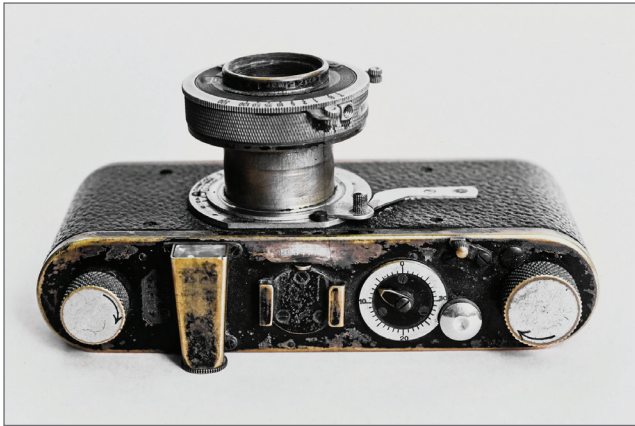
A first style 400mm 1:6.8 Telyt emerged from storage. (#12) It was just like the one used by DDD at the 1968 presidential conventions. Fifty of this style were prepared with single piece construction



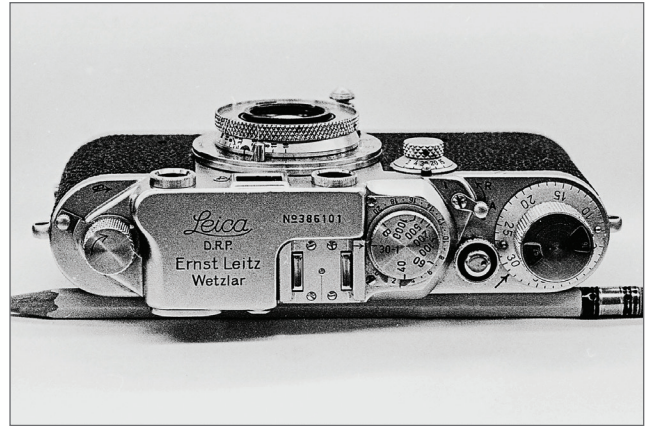
#4A. IIIb with MOOLY and case



#4B. IIIb with MOOLY and case



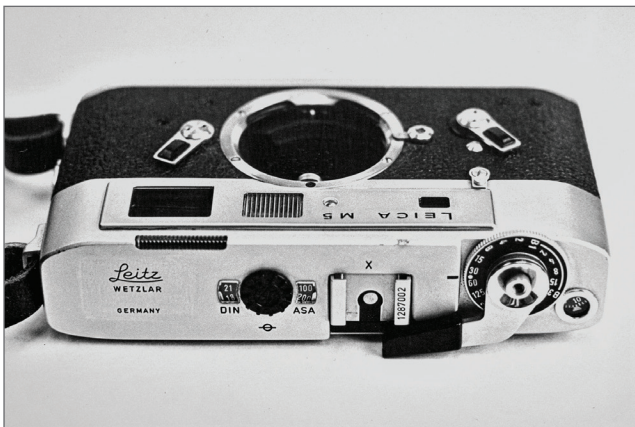
#5. Rim set Leica B



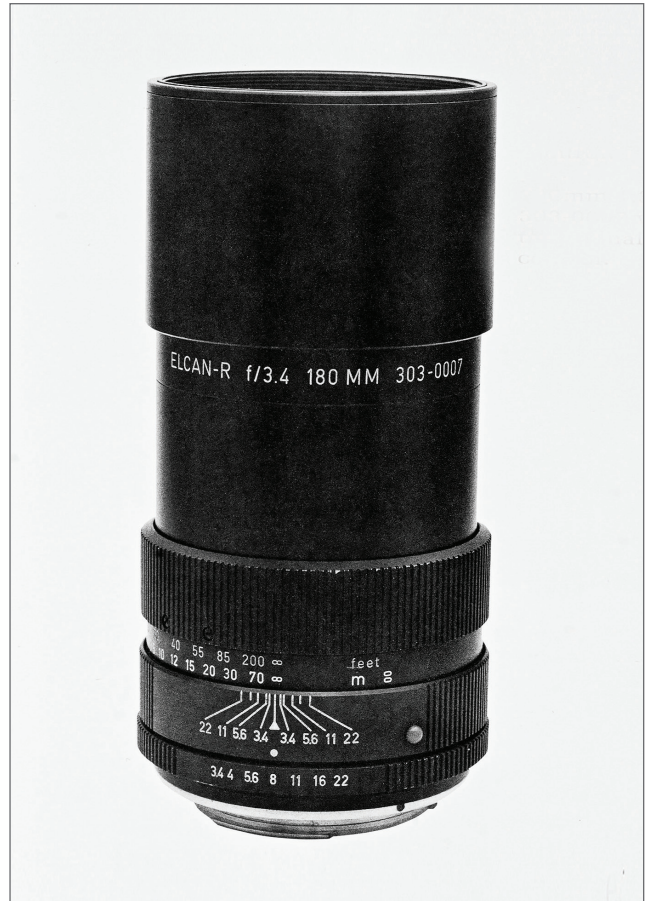
#6. IIIc 386101



#7. KE-7A with lens 276-001



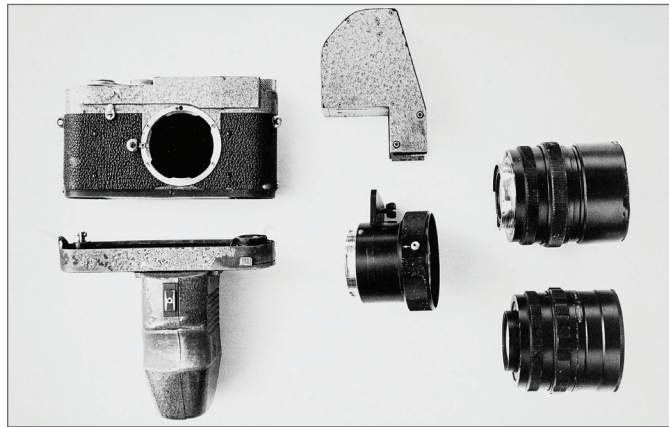
#8. Null series M5 1287002



#9. 180mm 1:3.4 ELCAN-R 303-0055

and no filter slot. Batch 2242001-2242050. A chance discovery in a corner of the stockroom unearthed a container containing viewfinders engraved Leitz Wetzlar. The finders were like the one fitted to the Leica Gewehr in the factory museum. Still wrapped in protective tissue paper the finders had not been used. A few found their way into collections. Very rarely the PLOOT reflex housing is found modified to accept the finder. (#13)

Rockleigh memories. An extraordinary experience I will always treasure. Total immersion in the Leica Universe. Hopefully today's Leica enthusiasts will share my 50+ years passion. 🇺🇸



#10. Leica MS outfit



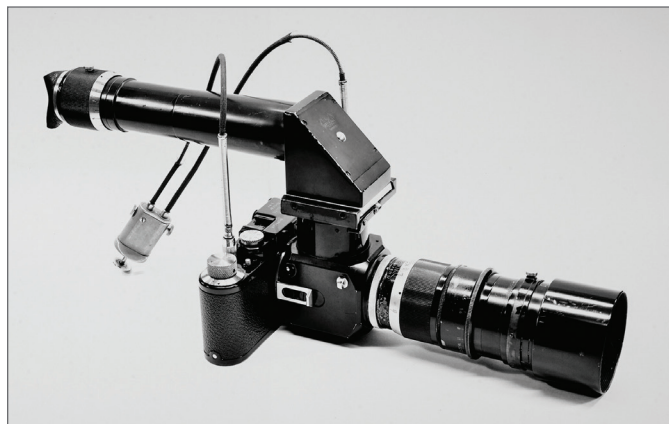
#11. 15mm Hologon on M5 Leitz Photo



#12A. 400mm 1:6.8 Telyt



#12B. 400mm 1:6.8 Telyt



#13A. Special viewfinder on PLOOT housing



#13B. Special viewfinder on PLOOT housing