A Brief History of Photography
Notable developments since 1519
Sir John Herschel

- First coined the term “Photography” in 1839, the year the photographic process became public.
- Derived from Greek words:
  - “Photo” = “light”
  - “graphy” = “writing”
Early Photography

- Have you ever used a film camera?
- (How is it different to use a film camera than to use a digital camera?)

- Two processes made early photography possible
  - The **optical** process and the **chemical** process
The Optical Process

- 1519, Leonardo da Vinci creates diagram of a camera obscura
  - A small, dark room or building with no windows
  - Small hole in one wall
  - Resulted in an upside-down image of the world on the opposing wall
The Optical Process

- Became used as an aid to drawing
- Technically the camera existed before photography!
The Chemical Process

- Could not do much with just camera obscura
  - needed a way to capture the image
- 1816 – Nicephore Niepce combines camera obscura with photosensitive paper
  - Paper that hardened and changed when exposed to light
- 1826 – Niepce creates first photograph
The Chemical Process

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How to Make it Practical?

- Niepce’s photographs took **eight hours** of exposure
- Photography needed to become more practical
- Two men tried to solve this problem:
  - Louis Daguerre
  - William Henry Fox Talbot
The Photography Wars

- **Louis DaGuerre**
- A partner of Niepce’s
- Developed photographic plates called **DaGuerrotypes**
The Photography Wars

**Pros:**
- Took only half hour to develop
- Very sharp image
- Only one image could be made (unique, valuable)

**Cons:**
- Expensive
- Only one image could be made (can’t give your mom a copy!)
- This was a **big** issue
The Photography Wars

- William Henry Fox Talbot
  - Used paper soaked in silver chloride and salt solution to produce first **negative** images
  - Called pictures made **Calotypes**
The Photography Wars

- **Pros:**
  - Cheap
  - Could make unlimited prints from one negative

- **Cons:**
  - Lower quality than Daguerrotypes
Rapid Developments

- Who do you think won the war?
- 1839, practice becomes public
  - Sir John Herschel coins the term photography
- 1853 – “Nadar” opens first portrait studio in Paris
- Worldwide boom in portrait photography ensues
Reactions to Photography

- How do you think the church reacted to photography?

- “The wish to capture evanescent reflections is not only impossible... but the mere desire alone, the will to do so, is blasphemy. God created man in His own image, and no man-made machinery may fix the image of God.”
  —The Leipzig City Advisor
Reactions to Photography

- General society – crippling concerns about having image "stolen"
  - For some, having picture taken = rape
Reactions to Photography

What do we think about this?

- Does having many images of ourselves floating around “cheapen” our images?
- Should we be careful of social networking sites like Facebook? (Some people refuse to have their pictures on these sites!)
The Birth of Photojournalism

- Roger Fenton was one of the first to use photography for a political purpose.
- Known for his coverage of the Crimean War (1853-1856).
- Propaganda – tried to show the well-being of troops.
- (Gruesome pictures were not very marketable.)
The Birth of Photojournalism

Photojournalism grew to be an important political force.

1861-1865: Mathew Brady and staff cover the American Civil War.

Exposed 7000 negatives.

Emphasized honesty and truth in his photographs.

Portrayed the brutality of war.

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The Birth of Photojournalism

- This iconic photo captured the devastating effects of the Great Depression
The Birth of Photojournalism

- This photo encouraged those protesting the Vietnam War
The People’s Camera

- 1878: Dry plates began being sold commercially
  - For the first time, cameras are accessible to the common people
- 1888: First Kodak camera
  - Contained 20-foot roll of film – enough for 100 pictures
The People’s Camera

THE KODAK CAMERA

100 Instantaneous Pictures!
Anybody can use it. No knowledge of photography is necessary. The latest and best outfit for amateurs.

Price $25.00.

Send for descriptive circulars.

The Eastman Dry Plate & Film Co.
Rochester, N.Y.
The People’s Camera

- 1914: Oscar Barnack, employed by Leitz, develops first **modern** camera
  - (you could take the film out!)
- 1935: Kodak introduces first colour film
  - Calls it “Kodachrome”
- 1947-48: The first **Polaroid** camera is developed by Edward Land
The Future of Photography

- 1990
  - Logitech introduces first digital camera
  - Adobe introduces Photoshop

- The possibilities are now endless!!
But is this a good thing?