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Goldbeck's Panoramic Photography Captures Family History

Deanomax

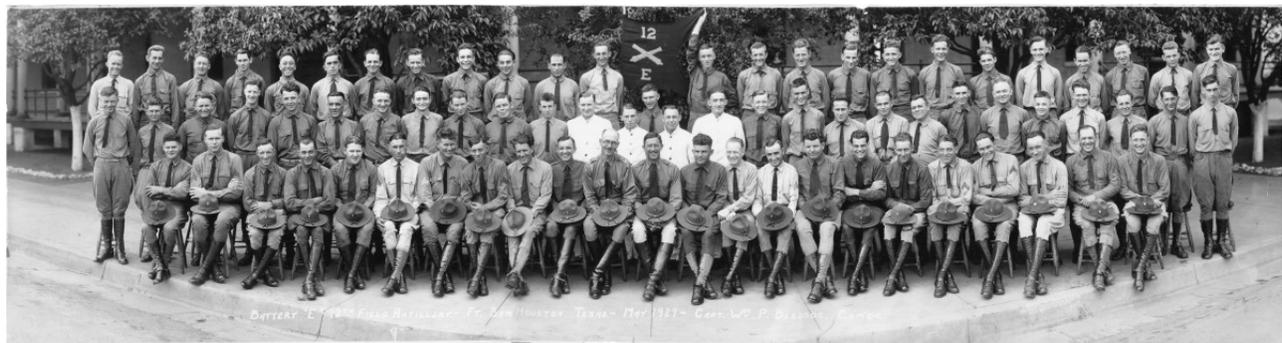
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As a child growing up in my grandmothers house, I can remember the old photographs hanging on the wall. She would tell me stories about my grandfather who was a career soldier in the U.S. Army's 12th Field Artillery. I would ask her which one was grandpa and she would point him out. Little did I know that there were two of my grandpa's in those photos.

Years later, as I grew older, I became more interested in my families history. After both my grandparents past away, I started asking my father about his youth. He told me that the grandfather I knew was his step-father and that his real father had past away long before. He said that when he was a boy his father had died of typhoid

fever and his mother was remarried to his fathers best friend. This was very interesting and a bit of a shock. Thus began my research into the origins of those wonderful photographs.

Sgt. William Albert Clugston: top row 5th from right. Sgt. Eldridge "Jimmy" Lee Crawford: middle row 7th from right.



**Bttry E 12th Field Artlry 1929 Texas
"Grandfathers"**



The photographs that I grew up with were taken by Eugene Omar Goldbeck who was born in San Antonio, Texas in 1892. He was the second child born to Benno and Ida Goldbeck who were German immigrants. In 1901, at the tender age of 9, Goldbeck decided to

become a photographer after he took a picture of President William McKinley with a borrowed camera as he passed by in a parade. Weeks later he bought his own camera and began taking pictures of his classmates and teachers and selling them the portraits. While in high school, he worked as a freelance photographer for the two city newspapers in San Antonio and graduated from Main Avenue High School in 1910. Goldbeck worked a series of odd jobs while selling his photographs in order to finance his travels to South America, the West Coast and Alaska. He also took so called “kidnapped” photographs where the pictures are taken with no financial obligation to the subject and then offered for sale, feeling confident that once the subject saw the picture, he would ask to buy it. It was during this period that Goldbeck bought his first Cirkut camera and began experimenting with the panoramic format which would become his specialty. Mounted on a revolving tripod and geared so that the camera and film would rotate simultaneously, the Cirkut produced long narrow prints ideal for capturing large groups, aerial views of cities and sweeping landscapes. Throughout his prolific career Goldbeck used the panoramic group photographs for a steady source of

income. Realizing that the more prints he sold from a single negative, the more profitable the photographs were.

"Einstein" 1922 Arizona



Another major theme in Goldbeck's photography was the use of large military groups as subject matter and during his service in World War I, Goldbeck was assigned to the Signal Corps' Aviation Division and soon began teaching at the Signal Corps' School of Photography at Columbia University. In 1919 he married Marcella Fox and they had four sons and a daughter. After a short but profitable time photographing returning

veterans for the Pictorial News Company of New York City, Goldbeck returned to San Antonio where he began working for Fox Photo. In 1921 he established the National Photo Service which became the first and only independent news photograph supplier headquartered in Texas. He employed several photographers to assist him in recording groups and events throughout the country and the company prospered. In the 1930s Goldbeck began providing motion picture footage to newsreel companies and renamed his company The National Photo and News Service.

Goldbeck became known as the “unofficial photographer of America's military” and he conducted three, one year tours to all the major military bases in and out of the United States until the demand for military group photographs diminished after World War II. During this time, he began working with ever larger groups and pushing the limits of his craft by arranging hundreds and even thousands of subjects into intricate designs. In his largest group shot, 21,765 men were arranged to form the Air Force insignia and he spent over six weeks building a 200 foot tower, drawing blue prints of the formation, and planning the attire of the subjects. This photograph was later featured in Life

magazine and is one of the most popular and frequently reproduced prints from Goldbeck's work.

Air Force Insignia 21,765 men 1947



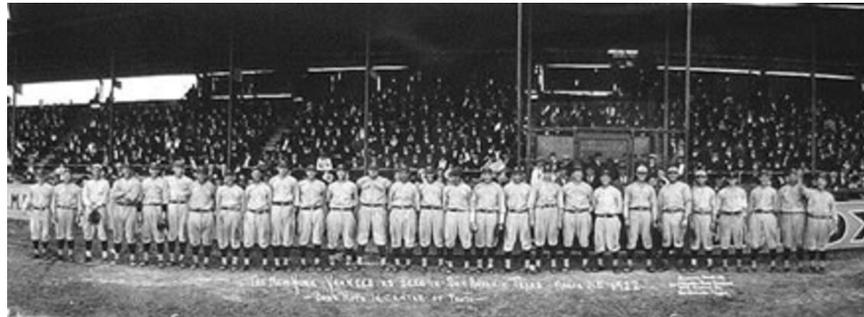
"The 55th" 1958



Goldbeck's fascination with panoramic photography had become more than just his life's work. It had become his passion, and in later years, he would record beautiful landscapes and city skylines, often only for the sheer pleasure. His travels throughout the world would offer many opportunities to photograph famous locations and he took wonderful pictures of the Parisian skyline, the

Pyramids and Sphinx of Egypt, and the ancient city of Machu Picchu in Peru. Along the way, Goldbeck began patenting many improvements in the Cirkut camera and would refine the device extensively.

New York Yankees w/Babe Ruth 1922 Texas



Critically acclaimed for his panoramic group photography, Goldbeck's work included a wide range of subject matter including early photographs of Texas landmarks and historical locations. Goldbeck's artistic intuition along with his ability to capture striking, yet simple compositions from various elements, and his talent for revealing the character of his subjects, brought him praise from photographic historians worldwide.

In 1967 Goldbeck discovered that many of his early negatives had deteriorated while in storage. Determined to preserve the remaining records of his earlier work, he donated 60,000 negatives and over 10,000 vintage prints to the Harry Ransom Humanities Research

Center at the University of Texas. The collection has attracted the attention and admiration of photographic historians, artists and photography students from around the globe. Goldbeck's work was also the subject of a wonderful book by Marguerite Davenport called *The Unpretentious Pose: The Work of E.O. Goldbeck, A Peoples Photographer* (1981).

Goldbeck continued to work tirelessly well into his eighties, recapturing familiar scenes in color with special film that had been developed for panoramic cameras.

He died on October 27th, 1986 shortly before the publication of *The Panoramic Photography of Eugene O. Goldbeck* by Clyde W. Burleson and E. Jessica Hickman. He was laid to rest in Mission Burial Park South, San Antonio, Texas.

Knowing the rich history behind those wonderful photographs that I grew up with, has given me renewed appreciation for the pioneers of photography and especially for the Grandfather, Eldridge "Jimmy" Lee Crawford, I never knew and the Grandfather, William Albert Clugston whom I barely knew. And most of all, for my Grandmother, Tincie Juanita Crawford-Clugston who, lovingly preserved and cherished those

photographs so my family could continue to honor those great men.

This story is lovingly dedicated to:

Scroll to Continue

Tincie Juanita Clugston

Jimmy and Ellen Clugston

all my brothers and sisters

Eugene Omar Goldbeck



Eduardo on December 17, 2014:

My husband and i ended up being now peeufacl that John managed to finish off his basic research with the precious recommendations he got in your site. It is now and again perplexing to simply find yourself giving out concepts which men and women might have been trying to sell. We really discover we need the writer to thank because of that. The entire explanations you have made, the easy web site menu, the relationships you will help to instill it's all extraordinary, and it's really aiding our son and the family do think that topic is fun, and that is pretty essential. Many thanks for the whole thing!

rebelyell1938@yahoo.com on February 06, 2012:

I HAVE AN E.O. GOLDBECK PHOTO OF "FRED BEEBEE'S RODEO" DATED JAN 25th 1924 - far right on panaramic is written in white ink "National PHOTO SERVICE - 737 E. HOUSTON ST.SAN ANTONIO, TX." it is FOR SALE

France Travel Inf on December 05, 2010:

Eugene's photos are amazing. He was my husband's great uncle so we are very fortunate to have some of his panoramas, including one of my father-in-laws company

at Ft Dix, one of Pearl Harbor and some other amazing views from Alaska, to Arizona to Paris.

Eastern_Ky_Hlbly on March 12, 2010:

I have two stamped and numbered, original frames, panoramic photos from 1938 of the B Company 13th Armored Cavalry Mechanized unit from Fort Knox, KY. Photo #5228C and 5228A or 5223A. Does anyone have any information about this unit? Capt. George W. Read, Jr. was the Commanding officer with 1st Lt. George W. Coolidge, Lt. Robert S. Leach and 1st Sgt J.R. Murray.

Deanomax (author) on March 03, 2010:

Dwight,

The UT Harry Ransom Center in Texas is one possible source for the questions both you and I have. I am still trying to find more info about my grandfather and hopefully the Goldbeck archives will help. Having attempted to access military records from the period with no luck, I'm afraid nothing short of a trip to Texas will help. But I could be wrong, so please keep trying Dwight. Deanomax

Dwight Windle on March 01, 2010:

I am looking for information about a photo by E.O.

Goldbeck showing a military formation from the 1940s.

My father was being shipped off to Korea from San Antonio, Texas and The photo is a panoramic view of the Battalion before being shipped off. I would like to know exactly when the photo was taken and what unit was it of. My father was a in a tank unit in Korea. Any information that you could send my would be greatly appreciated. My email address is dleewindle@hotmail.com Thank you. Dwight Windle

odan on October 21, 2009:

Looking for anyone in a 1938 photo from Bat. A 15th FA at Fort Sam Houston on 3-26-1938. My Dad was on the second row left, second man in - Bob Brown. Any body that knew him or knows of this battalion, please contact tcodano@aol.com Thanks