Ernest Marx: Nineteenth Century "Instantaneous" Photographer of New York City and Plainfield, New Jersey

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*Abstract**:** Born in France, Ernest Marx (1852–1903) had a fascinating life and career as a photographer and photographic innovator in New York City and Plainfield, New Jersey, from the 1880s to the early 1900s, but has become undeservedly obscure. Although he produced a range of work, Marx became renowned for his portraits of horses and stop-action photographs to determine the winner of horse races. Marx also was an early photojournalist who photographed boxing and football when newspapers were just beginning to reproduce photographs in half-tone. His chemical experiments to improve photography led to an explosion in his apartment that he survived to achieve a milestone in artificial light photography. Marx's career also included operating a notable kosher restaurant in New York. This article seeks to restore Marx's reputation by exploring his life, work, and intersections with others significant in the history of photography and spectator sports in the early years of photojournalism.*

Instantaneous Photography

Although photography began proliferating in the 1840s, it was not until the end of the 1850s that "instantaneous photography" began astonishing the public. Using cameras that could expose scenes in about half a second, photographers began creating and publishing stereo views in the form of glass positives and, more commonly, mounted albumen prints that depicted street

scenes with moving subjects, including people, carriages, and horses. With half-second exposures, shooting from afar, and a small negative, the camera could stop action if the subjects were in motion more or less toward or away from the camera, as was the case in urban scenes with the camera pointed up the street from an upper floor of a building.[1] Instantaneous views of thoroughfares in New York, London, and Paris ("Vues Instantanées") began permeating the marketplace in 1859 through the efforts of William England and other erstwhile photographers.[2]

In 1861, pundit Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. (1809–1894) enthused about this technological achievement, writing, "If a strange planet should happen to come within hail, and one of its philosophers were to ask us, as it passed, to hand him the most remarkable material product of human skill, we should offer him, without a moment's hesitation, a stereoscope containing an *instantaneous* double-view of some great thoroughfare, -- one of Mr. Anthony's views of Broadway, (No. 203,) for instance."[3]

What was not possible around this time, shortly before the onset of the US Civil War, was to freeze rapid lateral movement, such as at the finish of horse races. While there were stereo views of racehorses published in the 1870s, the horses all posed for their portraits.[4] For the same reason,

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[1] Exposure times needed to be longer with larger negatives and closer to subject distances because the bellows had to be extended to focus on nearby objects, resulting in a greater distance between the lens and the negative. The shortest exposure time was when the lens was focused on infinity and the aperture was wide open. Steve Simmons, *Using the View Camera. Revised Edition* (New York: Amphoto, 1992), 69–70.

[2] In 1859, the London Stereoscopic Company sent William England (1816–1896) from Great Britain to the United States and Canada to produce a series of stereo views, the first American stereo views to be published abroad. Among his outstanding works were instantaneous views taken in New York of Broadway, Wall Street, Barnum's American Museum of Curios, and other scenes captured from high vantage points. Ian Jeffrey, *An American Journey: The Photography of William England* (Munich et al.: Prestel, 1999), 18, 36–41.

[3] Oliver Wendell Holmes, "A Stereoscopic Trip Across the Atlantic" (1861) (Part 1) *The Atlantic Monthly* 8:45 (July 1861), 13-29. https://nearbycafe.com/photocriticism/members/archivetexts/photohistory/holmes/holmesatlantic1.html. Holmes coined the term stereograph to describe a pair of photographs that look 3-D when viewed with a stereoscope. The terms stereo view and stereograph are used interchangeably today. One of Edward Anthony's views of Broadway is reproduced in William C. Darrah, *The World of Stereographs* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Darrah, 1977), 23.

[4] Schreiber & Sons in Philadelphia published a stereo view series, "The Principal Race Horses of the Country," circa 1870–1874. Darrah, 166. Francis (Franz) George Schreiber, born in Prussia about 1804, became a daguerreotypist in 1844 and his numerous sons continued the family photography business into the twentieth century. Philadelphia Photographers List http://gary.saretzky.com/photohistory/philadelphiaphotographers.html.

popular views of Niagara and other waterfalls depicted water smoothed out by the relatively long exposures. Only in the 1880s, when the collodion wet plate process for making negatives was superseded by the much more light sensitive gelatin dry plate, did photographers like Ernest Marx begin taking advantage of the potential for more dramatic stop-action views.

Ernest Marx, Eadweard Muybridge, and David Carvalho: The Quest for Shorter Exposure Times

Ernest Marx became nationally renowned in the United States for his horse and sports photography by 1900 but has almost disappeared from the history of the medium. Marx is not mentioned in the popular textbooks on the history of photography by Hirsch, Marien, Newhall, and others.[5] Among the most widely read such authors, only Helmut and Alison Gernsheim included him, spelling his name as "Marks."[6] Marx even escaped the notice of George Gilbert who

[5] History of photography references that omit Ernest Marx include Cecil Beaton and Gail Buckland, *The Magic Image: The Genius of Photography From 1839 to the Present Day* (Boston: Little Brown, 1975; Michel F. Braive, *The Photograph: A Social History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1966); Keith F. Davis, *An American Century of Photography: From Dry-Plate to Digital. The Hallmark Photographic Collection. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged* (Kansas City, Missouri: Hallmark Cards, 1999); Michel Frizot, ed, *A New History of Photography* (Köln, Germany: Könemann, 1998); Nathalie Herschdorfer, *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Photography* (London, UK: 2015); Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A Social History of Photography. Second Edition* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009); Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History* (New York: Prentice Hall/Abrams, 2002); Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography.* Fifth Edition (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999); Turner Browne & Elaine Partnow, *Macmillan Biographical Encyclopedia of Photographic Artists & Innovators; Over 2000 Leaders in Photography from the 1800s to the Present* (New York: Macmillan, 1983); Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography. Revised Edition* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984, 1989; Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene: A Social History* (New York: Macmillan, 1938); Lynne Warren, ed. *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Photography* (New York: Routledge, 2005); and Lee D. Witkin and Barbara London, *The Photograph Collectors Guide* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1979).

[6] Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, *The History of Photography 1685–1914* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 436. The Gernsheims devote two sentences to Marx's photo-finish photography in 1888, citing *The Camera* (London, October 1, 1888) 105, and *Photography* (London, January 31, 1889), 137. The spelling "Marks" appeared in British sources that the Gernsheims used and occasionally in U.S. sources.

compiled and published 500 biographies of Jewish photographers in *The Illustrated Worldwide Who's Who of Jews in Photography* (1996), a 335-page encyclopedia.[7]

A few scholars have mentioned Marx as a pioneer in horse race photography. In 1972, Jerome P. O'Neill Jr. of Rochester, New York, wrote an unpublished report, "The History of Race Photo Finish Photography," that was reproduced in at least four copies.[8] O'Neill credited Marx for introducing photo-finish photography for horse races but did not address other aspects of his career. Historian of instantaneous photography Kris Belden-Adams also credited Marx in the same way but discussed him only briefly.[9] Similarly, Jonathan Finn, in his book on the photo-finish, gave Marx priority for having produced the first photo-finish photograph of a horse race but did not provide much more information about him.[10]

As discussed below, regarding horse race photo-finish work, Marx may have been preceded by others whose names are as yet unknown, but clearly he was a pioneer in the genre. This article explores the entire trajectory of Marx's fascinating career, including his equine photography as well as other accomplishments.

Marx is now much less well known than Eadweard Muybridge, who earned an international reputation for his photographs of horses by 1880, after becoming a leading landscape photographer

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[7] George Gilbert, *The Illustrated Worldwide Who's Who of Jews in Photography* (Riverdale, New York: Gilbert, 1996). While his Jewish background probably did not hinder or enhance his career, Marx was among the widely known Jewish photographers in the United States before 1900. Gilbert included photographers who, like Margaret Bourke-White, a Plainfield (New Jersey) High School graduate, were not practicing Jews but descended from them. Bourke-White's father grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family, while her mother was raised Catholic.

[8] Jerome P. O'Neill, Jr., "The History of Race Photo Finish Photography," Interim Report of the Photo Finish Research Project. Rochester, New York, August 1972. Copy #4 at Keeneland Library, Lexington, Kentucky. Keeneland Library Director Roda Ferraro kindly provided me with a pdf of this report.

[9] Kris Belden-Adams, *Photography, Temporality, and Modernity: Time Warped* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 91. This book is based on Belden-Adams' dissertation, *Modern Time: Photography and Temporality* (2010) for City University of New York Graduate Center, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5035&context=gc_etds.

[10] Jonathan Finn, *Beyond the Finish Line: Images, Evidence, and the History of the Photo-Finish* (Montreal, et al: McGill-Queen University Press, 2020). Finn's sources regarding Marx include O'Neill, who erroneously cited Copy #4 at Keeneland Library as dated August 1971 instead of August 1972.

in California and a household name in 1874 through being acquitted for the cold blooded murder of Harry Larkyns, his wife's lover.[11] Muybridge's reputation as an innovative photographer of instantaneous photographs has been well established in books, motion pictures, and even an opera, *The Photographer*, by Philip Glass in 1982. Etienne Marey, Ottomar Anschütz, and Thomas Eakins are others given credit in history of photography texts as early photographers of motion.[12] In the late 1870s and early 1880s, Muybridge produced numerous photos of horses moving down the track at Leland Stanford's Palo Alto horse farm, now the site of Stanford University. Stanford had hired Muybridge to prove that at some point in its gallop, all the horse's hooves are off the ground. Muybridge fulfilled his mission and went on a lecture tour of Europe to show his equine photos, animated with his motion picture invention, the phenakistoscope, which deeply impressed his audiences. Meanwhile, Stanford facilitated the publication of a book by his friend Dr. J.B.D. Stillman, *The Horse in Motion* (1882), which included Muybridge's photos without giving him any credit, causing a permanent rift between Stanford and the photographer. Muybridge returned to the United States and, at the University of Pennsylvania in 1885, completed a massive work of thousands of action photos, published as *Animal Locomotion* (1887), which included horses, other animals, and humans.

In 1903, Marx recalled Muybridge's efforts and pointed out that the early photographs he made for Stanford were silhouettes.[13] Since Muybridge only wanted to prove a point about the horse's movements, he had a white wall built along the track.[14] His very short exposures, which

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[11] Anita Ventura Mozley, et al., *Eadweard Muybridge: The Stanford Years, 1872–1882* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Museum of Art, 1972, revised edition, 1973); Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (New York: Viking, 2003); Philip Glass, *The Photographer: A Music Drama in Three Acts* (Sony Masterworks MK 37849, 1983).
[12] Newhall (1999), 117–125; Rosenblum (1989), 251–257.
[13] "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred With the Camera," *The Morning Telegraph*, May 17, 1903, 2.
[14] Described by Muybridge in U.S. Patent No. 212,865, Improvement in the Method and Apparatus for Photographing Objects in Motion, March 4, 1879, reissued December 6, 1881.

were made possible by an electric shutter, activated by trip wires, often just captured the silhouette of the horse.[15] But perhaps Marx had forgotten that by 1879 Muybridge's photos included more detail in running horses when the sun shown on the side of the horse facing the camera.[16]

Muybridge did understand the potential of photography for use in horse racing. In 1882, he proposed photo-finish photographs in an article Marx may have seen, but Muybridge is not known to have tried it himself.[17] Despite the prior work of Muybridge, Marx's fully detailed racing horse photos astounded his contemporaries, especially since he began these endeavors without the financial and logistical support of a major university or wealthy patron, although he did subsequently have contact with Leland Stanford. Marx later recalled that Stanford had hired him to photograph trotters and had been paid $500, equivalent to more than $17,000 in 2025.[18] Stanford must have been more than satisfied. He invited Marx to come to California to photograph his two famous horses, Electioneer and Norlaine, but just before he left New Jersey, according to Marx, he got a telegram that the horses had perished in a fire.[19] Actually, only Norlaine, the granddaughter of Electioneer and "considered the wonder of the age," died on April 18, 1888, a few days after the stable fire at Stanford's horse farm in Palo Alto.[20]

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[15] Anita Ventura Mozley, et al., *Eadweard Muybridge: The Stanford Years, 1872–1882* (Stanford, California: Department of Art, Stanford University, 1972); Phillip Prodger, *Time Stands Still: Muybridge and the Instantaneous Photography Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003). Belden-Adams, 91, suggested that Marx also used trip wires but Marx did not mention them and it is very unlikely that racetrack officials would permit trip wires to be used in an actual race.

[16] Rosenblum (1989), 250. Prodger, 114–131,150–153.

[17] Eadweard Muybridge, "A Dead Heat," *Nature* 26 (May 25, 1882), 81. In 1879, noting Muybridge's work for Stanford, the editor of the sporting newspaper, *The Spirit of the Times*, proposed photo-finishes for horse races. O'Neill, 4; "Progressive Photography," *The Spirit of the Times*, October 11, 1879, 252.

[18] "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred With the Camera," *The Morning Telegraph*, May 17, 1903, 2. This article states that Marx recalled Stanford's invitation was in 1889 but it must have been in spring 1888.

[19] Leland Stanford's papers at Stanford University do not contain correspondence with Marx or, as far as can be determined, Marx's photos of his trotters.

[20] "Death of Norlaine," *Kentucky Advocate*, May 4, 1888, 2; "The Greatest Sire; Palo Alto's Electioneer Declining," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 10, 1890, 3. Norlaine set a speed record that still stood at the time of her death. Electioneer, a stallion who did not race but became famous among aficionados for siring 158 trotters, gradually

Marx's interest in instantaneous photography dates back to at least 1880. That year he was named on a patent by its inventor, David Nunes Carvalho (1848–1925), the son of Solomon Carvalho (1815–1897), both an artist in oil and likely the first Jewish daguerreotypist in the United States.[21] David also had a successful and varied career in photography.[22] On June 16, 1879, he filed for U.S. Patent No. 225458 A, published March 16, 1880, assigned to himself and Ernest Marx, both of New York.[23] The patent described ways to shorten exposure times for collodion glass plate negatives.[24] The ideas came a little too late because in 1881 most photographers switched from wet plate collodion to the gelatin dry plate negatives that had begun to be

declined in health and expired at age 22 on December 3, 1890. "The Greatest Sire…" op cit.; Hamilton Busbey, *The Trotting and the Pacing Horse in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1904), 177. At his decease, Electioneer had about 500 living descendants.

[21]Solomon Carvalho served as Fremont's official photographer on his fifth expedition to explore the American West. E.K. Berman, et al., *Solomon Nunes Carvalho: Painter, Photographer and Prophet in Nineteenth Century America* (Jewish Historical Society of Maryland, Baltimore, 1989); "Camera and Locomotive: Two Tracks Across the Continent - Solomon Nunes Carvalho, Expedition Photographer," https://blogs.loc.gov/picturethis/2017/11/camera-and-locomotive-two-tracks-across-the-continent-solomon-nunes-carvalho-expedition-photographer/, last accessed March 30, 2025. A tintype of David Carvalho with guitar is reproduced in this publication. See also Dale Rosengarten, "The Art of Solomon Nunes Carvalho," Princeton University Art Museum, https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/story/art-and-life-solomon-nunes-carvalho. Last accessed January 28, 2025.

[22] Born in 1848 in Philadelphia, David Nunes Carvalho was listed with his family in the 1850 Baltimore Census. In the 1870s, probably 1872–1876, he was the manager of the New Jersey Stereoscopic Company (NJSC), based in Long Branch and Red Bank, Monmouth County, New Jersey, with an office in Philadelphia. The NJSC President was the prolific Red Bank portrait photographer Colwell Lane, who later moved to Brooklyn. The company produced about 200 stereographic views of Monmouth County and the Jersey Shore, and a few of Maracaibo, Venezuela. David accompanied his father to Martinique in 1872 and it is possible that he or his father Solomon made or acquired the Venezuelan negatives on that trip. He moved to New York and in 1877 opened a photography studio at 65 E. 127th Street, and he remained active there as a photographer until at least 1885 and then at several successive locations. See section on Red Bank in Gary D. Saretzky, "Nineteenth Century New Jersey Photographers, Revision of Illustrated Article in New Jersey History," Fall/Winter 2004, http://www.gary.saretzky.com/photohistory/resources/photo_in_nj_July_2021.pdf.

[23] The patent was resubmitted and reissued on November 9, 1880, as No. 234171. David Carvalho made two contributions to *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin* concerning the use of green paint to shorten exposure times in studios in 10:3 (March 1879), 79 and 10:1 (January 1879), 31.

[24] U.S. Patent No. 225458 A, on June 16, 1879, published March 16, 1880. This patent was resubmitted as R 9,384 and published September 21, 1880, also with one-half interest to Marx. A report of this invention, without details, appeared in *Photographic News* (United Kingdom), July 11, 1879, 336, referencing a communication, June 26, 1879, to civil engineer Herbert John Haddin from Carvalho and Marx. The details of the patent were summarized in *Patents for Inventions, Abridgements of Specifications Relating to Photography*, Great Britain Patent Office, Part IIIa, 1877–1883, 43. Carvalho received another U.S. patent on November 9, 1880, No. 234171, also assigned one-half to Marx. This second patent described a method of making positive images on any suitable support such as glass, metal or paper without the need for fixing. This second patent was summarized in *Method of Producing Photographic Images*, *Official Gazette of the U.S. Patent Office*, November 9, 1880, 1065. It was previously reported in the UK in *Commissioners of Patents Journal*, Great Britain Patent Office, October 22, 1880, part 1, 908.

manufactured in the late 1870s.[25] The collodion process, widely used from 1850 to 1880, required the photographer to coat the glass plate with collodion, a highly flammable transparent solution of pyroxylin in ether and alcohol, and then, after sensitization with a silver nitrate solution, expose it in the camera before it dried. The plate then had to be developed and fixed in chemistry while still damp. Since both the preparation and post-exposure processing had to be performed under darkroom conditions, outdoor photography in particular was challenging.[26] By contrast, gelatin dry plates were manufactured ready to use, could be developed at any time after exposure, and were ten times more sensitive to light, greatly reducing exposure times.[27] Hand-held cameras with shutters soon came on the market since tripods were no longer always necessary. These "detective cameras" were particularly well-suited for candid photographs but initially shutter speeds were still too long to stop fast motion. Marx recalled in the 1903 article cited above that when he first tried to photograph horse races, he was able to get the body of the horses but the legs were just a blur.

In his patent, Carvalho described two methods for shortening exposures. The first was to paint the walls of the studio an "orange pea-green" color. That technique was not going to help Marx for outdoor work but the second method certainly could have. Carvalho claimed that exposure times would be significantly shortened by coating the glass plate with violet-colored

[25] At the Photographer Association of America (PAA) convention in the summer of 1880, professional photographers brought samples of dry plate negatives. The convention appointed a committee to report on the quality of three different brands. Positive reports began to be received in January 1881. In December 1880, E. & H.T. Anthony & Co. began marketing George Eastman's dry plates that were introduced too late for the PAA study. By the summer of 1881, the use of gelatin dry plates had become widespread. William Welling, *Photography in America: the Formative Years, 1839–1900: A Documentary History* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1978), 271.

[26] A few photographers used the dry collodion process, which required very long exposure times and thus was mostly suitable for landscapes. With this technique, the plates could be prepared in advance and developed at a later date. After the widespread adoption of gelatin dry plate negatives, photographers continued to use collodion to make tintypes until the early 1900s.

[27] Professional portrait photographers in the 1880s using gelatin dry plates often mentioned that they used the "instantaneous process" on the backs of their mounted cabinet cards and in newspaper ads, since the exposures had been shortened significantly.

collodion. Presumably this extra coating could be used with either collodion or gelatin negatives, although Carvalho specified collodion since he applied for the patent in 1879, before the new negatives became widely accepted. It is not likely that Carvalho's technique was much used, as gelatin dry plates were sufficiently sensitive for most purposes.[28] In the 1880s, Carvalho continued to patent photography inventions.[29] He also became a handwriting and ink expert.[30]

Ernest Marx's Family Background and His Move to Plainfield

While it is not known how Carvalho and Marx met, it is quite possible that they first became acquainted at the New York restaurant, Felix' Dining Saloon, also known as The Felix and "the kosher Delmonico's," founded in 1857 by Ernest's father, Felix Marx.[31] At the time, Delmonico's

[28] In January 2025, via emails to author, experienced photo conservators Barbara Lemmen and Rachel Wetzel, as well as Mark Osterman, formerly co-editor of the *Collodion Journal*, all stated that they had not seen an example or heard of any photographer who used the violet coating. Wetzel mentioned that in the 1890s, Frederic Ives used colored coatings for his Kromskop color photographic plates.

[29] Carvalho soon obtained additional patents: No. 237246, a focusing frame using celluloid; No. 237247, a photo background using celluloid; and No. 237248, a printing frame using celluloid. Celluloid then was a new material and efforts to apply it to photography led to the invention of flexible photographic film by Rev. Hannibal Goodwin (1822–1900) of Newark. Goodwin filed for his patent in 1887 but it was not awarded until 1898. Long litigation ensued beginning in 1902 over the conflict with the Eastman/Reichenbach patent issued December 10, 1889. Goodwin died Dec. 31, 1900, from injuries received the previous summer in a streetcar accident. The final opinion on the lawsuit was favorable to Goodwin's patent, rendered by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on March 10, 1914, and George Eastman paid $5 million to the owners of the patent (ANSCO Co. and Goodwin heirs) and other companies paid about $300,000. Goodwin's widow Rebecca died a few months after receiving her share. In addition to his invention of roll film, Goodwin also held 16 other patents and is credited for making significant improvements to the half-tone process for reproducing photographs.

[30] David Nunes Carvalho, who in the 1870s served as manager of the New Jersey Stereoscopic View Company based in Long Branch, New Jersey, was regularly mentioned in the *New York Times* and other newspapers as testifying in various court cases involving forgery from 1881 to 1899, and perhaps later. His career as a handwriting and ink expert is detailed in his daughter Claire Carvalho's biography, *Crime in Ink* (1929), which includes his work in support of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer whose treason conviction for what turned out to be forged documents rocked France from 1894 to 1906, when he was exonerated. At the time Carvalho analyzed the Dreyfus documents in the 1890s, he was living in Bayswater on the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens.

[31]"Imported a Cook from Kiev," *The Sun* (New York City), January 19, 1893, 7; "The 'Kosher Delmonico," A Restaurant That Has Continued on Its Own Lines Nearly Fifty Years," *The Sun*, October 4, 1903, 20. According to the latter source, Felix Marx, a "French caterer and cook," operated it until 1897, when he retired. This is not entirely true since Ernest Marx purchased the restaurant from his father on June 12, 1890, but as discussed in this article, Felix resumed ownership in 1893. After its sale in 1897 by Felix, the restaurant continued as before under its new owners, with one meal at a fixed price served from 1:30am to 3:30pm. There was no menu but the food changed daily.

was a famous fine dining steak and lobster restaurant facing Madison Square that was not patronized by observant Jews because of their dietary restrictions. For Jewish diners, Felix Marx, who had experience in France as a kosher butcher, chef, and caterer, created a popular spot, opposite City Hall Park, that was recently described by journalist Scott D. Seligman as "serving kosher haute cuisine to an elite clientele."[32] Felix was born in either Alsace or more likely Lorraine in northeastern France, on September 26, 1825.[33] By that time, most of the Jews in the region had moved to cities and towns, where they tended to be religious and speak Yiddish.

Ernest was born on July 14, 1852, in Vagney in the Vosges district of France, about 35 miles south of Lorraine.[34] With his wife Julia Lisette (née Loeb) and children, including Ernest, Felix emigrated on the ship, *Washington Nelson*, to the United States in 1858 and in 1872 was naturalized in New York City, living there before moving to Plainfield, New Jersey, in 1887, where Ernest and his family had already settled.[35] The 1860 US Census for New York listed Ernest's siblings as Ernestine, 6, born in France, and Henry, 4, born in Switzerland, where the family apparently sojourned before sailing to America. Ernest's youngest sibling, Jacob, was born in New York in 1861.

In his passport application in 1873, Ernest described himself as five foot nine inches, with a small mouth, round chin, black hair, and a "Grecian" nose, i.e. straight from bridge to tip.[36] This

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[32] Scott D. Seligman, "In the 1800s, New York's Jewish elite dined at 'The Kosher Delmonico,'" *Jerusalem Post*, April 17, 2024. https://www.jpost.com/food-recipes/article-797506, last accessed March 31, 2025.
[33] Felix Marx, naturalization, September 20, 1872, born Lorraine, September 26, 1825, restaurant keeper, residence 21 Hudson Street, New York. Passport application, April 22, 1874, born Alsace. Felix is described as 5 1/2 feet tall, fair complexion, dark brown hair, and brown eyes. Passport application, June 14, 1890, born Lorraine. ancestry.com.
[34] Ernest Marx, passport application, August 19, 1873, born Vagney Vosges, July 14, 1852. Passport application, June 14, 1890, birthplace Lorraine. Naturalization, born France, profession jeweler, August 7, 1873. ancestry.com.
[35] Felix Marx, naturalization, Common Pleas Court, New York City, September 20, 1872. Ancestry.com. Felix at that time lived at 21 Hudson Street and his occupation was restaurant keeper. His witness was Nathan Solomon. The 1887 date for the move to Plainfield is derived from his wife Julia's death certificate, January 11, 1890, which states that she lived in New Jersey for two years and nine months. New Jersey State Archives. Born in Alsace, Julia's parents were Isaac and Gertrude Loeb.
[36] Ernest Marx, passport application, August 19, 1873. ancestry.com.

description is helpful as no photographs of Ernest have been located, although there are several caricatures of him photographing horses in the 1903 article, showing that he sported a small mustache.[37] At the time of his naturalization in 1873, Ernest lived with his parents at 21 Hudson Street in New York and recorded his profession as a jeweler.[38]

By 1880, as per the U.S. Census for Manhattan, Ernest had become an artist, living with his parents. Another later reference described him at this time as a portrait painter who had depicted prominent horsemen in oil.[39] Ernest's wife Elizabeth Ruth (née Collins) is also listed in this census record; they had married in 1879.[40] Ernest and Elizabeth, who was born on July 4, 1861, in New York, would have four children. Gertrude W. (1880–1951) was the first, born in Manhattan.[41] She was followed by Leon, born in New York in February 1882.[42] Next came Henry Charles (1888–

[37] "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred With the Camera," *The Morning Telegraph*, May 17, 1903, 2.
[38] Naturalization, Common Pleas Court, New York City, August 7, 1873. His witness was Otto Horowitz. ancestry.com.
[39]" Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred with the Camera," *Morning Telegraph*, May 17, 1903, 2. This source asserts that Marx began photographing horses in 1880. Presumably, these were horses standing for portraits.
[40] Marriage, first for both: October 5, 1879, to Elizabeth Ruth Collins in Manhattan, Cert. 6048. Marx, artist, 321 2nd Ave., 28 years old, born Vosges, France, son of Felix Marx and Julia Lizette [sic] Loeb, to Elizabeth Ruth Collins, 19, same address, born New York, daughter of Jerome Collins and Elizabeth (sic, should be Josephine) Collins. Ernest and Elizabeth were married by a Reverend, whose name is illegible in the marriage record. Marx also previously married Elizabeth Collins in Hoboken, June 14, 1879. That marriage record gave Marx's birthplace as Paris, France; profession painter; first marriage, 27 years old, lives at 321 2nd Ave., New York, father Felix, mother [Lisette?]. It records Elizabeth, 19, born New York City, parents Jerome and Josephine née [Bohonoz?], born New York City. Marriage record, New Jersey State Archives. Jerome, 50, was listed as a carpenter born in Ireland in the 1870 U.S. Census, New York City, living with wife Josephine, 47, born in New York, and four children born in New York, including Marx's future wife, listed as "Libby," 10. Note: FamilySearch gives an erroneous marriage date for Ernest Marx and Elizabeth Collins of June 24, 1878, in Hoboken.
[41] Gertrude W. Marx was born on June 12, 1880. At age 10, she was awarded three medals for arithmetic, writing, and deportment in Miss Butler's private school in Plainfield. *Plainfield Evening News*, December 17, 1890, 1. On September 13, 1906, Gertrude married Orrin T. Burke (1872–1946) in Barton, Wentworth, Ontario, Canada. On July 10, 1910, she married Owen Brice Wright, a naturalized citizen, in Marshall, Iowa. By 1920, she and her husband lived in Queens, New York, with her mother and younger sister Julie. According to the 1940 U.S. Census in Detroit, Michigan, Gertrude lived with her husband Owen, her mother, and her brother Henry, who was listed as single. They had lived in the same house since 1935. In the 1950 U.S. Census in Los Angeles, California, Gertrude lived with her mother Elizabeth; both were listed as widows. Gertrude died in Los Angeles on July 5, 1951. FamilySearch.
[42] 1900 U.S. Census, Passaic City, Passaic County, New Jersey. This census record shows that Leon Marx, 18, clerk, was living with his brother Henry, 12, in school, at 39 Carlton Place with his uncle Benjamin Collins, 34, born in New York, coal broker, Benjamin's wife Lillie E. [née Smith], 31, born in New York, and Benjamin and Lillie's son Ralph, 3. Also living with the family was a servant, Eliza Hoffman, 45, born in Massachusetts. I was not able to

1969), born in Plainfield.[43] The fourth and last was Julie Lizzette (1891–?), born in Plainfield.[44] Unfortunately, by 1900, Ernest and Elizabeth were separated.[45]

The growth of Ernest and Elizabeth's daughter Gertrude and son Leon may have led them to move from Ernest's parents' New York apartment to their own home in Plainfield, an easy commute by train to the metropolis. Marx was first listed in the Plainfield city directory in 1886, one of four photographers in the town, which was growing rapidly in population.[46] According to the U.S. Census, the population expanded from 8,125 in 1880 to 15,369 in 1900.

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locate any other records about Leon. In the 1905 New York State Census in Manhattan, Benjamin and Lillie Collins were listed with their own two children in Manhattan, without the Marx brothers. The 1905 New York State Census in Brooklyn listed an Elizabeth Marx, 44, washerwoman, living with a daughter, Lillian, 16, clerk, dry goods, but although this Elizabeth's age is about correct, this was not Elizabeth Collins Marx since she did not have a daughter Lillian.

[43] Henry Charles Marx was born on March 21, 1888. As noted above, in 1900, he lived with his uncle, aunt, and brother Leon in Passaic City. On September 26, 1919, he married Jennie Theo Hamp (1893–1961) in Flushing, Genesee, Michigan. Henry wrote in his 1917 draft registration that he worked as a traveling salesman for the Homer Furnace Co. in Homer, Michigan. In the 1940 U.S. Census for Detroit, Michigan, Henry, 49, was listed as single, working as a salesman for building supplies, and living with his sister, Gertrude, her husband Owen Wright, and his mother Elizabeth. He registered for the draft in Detroit at age 54 in 1942, at which time he worked for the Great Lakes Home Improvement Company. That record states that he was 5 feet, 4 inches tall, 142 pounds, and wore eyeglasses. Henry died in Fresno, California, on January 30, 1969. FamilySearch.

[44] The fact that Ernest and Elizabeth Marx had four children is derived from their daughter Julie's birth record: Julie Lizzette Marx, February 24, 1892, 246 East Front St., Plainfield, daughter of Ernest Marx, born France, restaurant keeper (he had recently bought his father's business in New York) and Elizabeth Collins (a.k.a. Elizabeth Ruth Collins); *fourth child of this marriage, all living*. Birth Record, New Jersey State Archives. Julie was named after grandmother Julia Lisette Marx, who died January 11, 1890, in Plainfield. 1895 New Jersey State Census: Julie, under 5 years old, living in North Plainfield, Somerset County, without family members (probably in Children's Home for orphans and destitute children, in the opinion of Bette Epstein, New Jersey State Archives). 1900 Census: "Julia" living in the Hiram Deats Memorial Home for Children in Bridgewater, Somerset Co., New Jersey. 1920 Census, Queens: Julie, 27, single, dressmaker, lives with her mother Elizabeth Marx, 49 [sic], widow, born New York, parents New York, in household headed by her brother-in-law Owen Wright, 39, born Canada, parents Canada, emigrated 1900, naturalized, salesman, dry goods, and his wife Gertrude (Julie's sister), 35, born New York, father France, mother New York. (According to her marriage certificate and 1861 birth recorded on her death certificate, Elizabeth Collins was 19 at her wedding to Marx in 1879, so she would have been about 60 in 1920, not 49.) On December 15, 1920, Julie married Ellis Abraham Traphagen (1892–1975) in Marion, Ohio. They had a daughter, Gertrude Elizabeth (1922–2000), who married Alban Victor Cook (1919–1990) in Detroit on June 21, 1939. The Cooks had a son, Robert Albin Cook (1950–2000). Julie's husband Ellis Traphagen became a realtor in Columbus, Ohio. At his death, he was survived by a widow named Irene, so it is likely that Julie predeceased him or they divorced. FamilySearch; *Newark* (Ohio) *Advocate*, July 29, 1975, 19.

[45] In the 1900 U.S. Census, Marx, 51, was listed as a photographer living alone as a lodger in Brooklyn.

[46] Edward F. Turner and George B. Loser, *Directory of the City of Plainfield and North Plainfield, N.J. for the Years 1886–1887* (Yonkers, New York; Turner & Loser, 1886), 207. The four studios were Ernest Marx, E. Front corner Netherwood Ave.; Fisher & Monfort, 15 E. Front; Francis C. Langhorne, 5 E. Front; and Guillermo Thorn, 6 E. Front.

Before coming to Plainfield, in addition to portrait painting, Marx participated in sports.[47] That he enjoyed velocipede racing in his younger years is clear. In 1903, he claimed, "I was always a lover of the horse and outdoor sports…I was at one time champion velocipedist of the country. I won sixty-four races, and beat such good ones as Messenger, Crook, Burroughs, Otis, Pickering and others…."[48]

From 1884 to 1886, Marx was listed in the New York city directory as an artist working at 75 E. 61st Street, without a home address.[49] After moving to Plainfield, he did photography on his own account there and in the New York metropolitan area. No record has been found that he worked for one of the two well established Plainfield photography studios of Francis C. Langhorne (1844–1916) or Guillermo Thorn (1836–1920).[50]

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[47] It is very unlikely that the subject of this article was the Ernest Marx of New York City, described as a chief stockholder in the People's Telephone Company of New York, which became involved in extensive litigation with Bell Telephone, as reported in "The Telephone War," *Boston Globe*, April 17, 1881, 4, and many other newspapers. In 1883, that Marx with two others incorporated the People's Telephone and Telegraph Company of New England, with capital stock of $5 million. *Lewiston (Maine) Journal,* May 30, 1883, 1. It is also implausible that the photographer was the Ernest Marx of New York City, assignee of Ella N. Gaillard's patent for "Combined needle and cord and mode of uniting the same," U.S. Patent No. 362,374, May 3, 1887.

[48] "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred With the Camera," *The Morning Telegraph* (New York), May 17, 1903, 2. Representing Harlem Turn Verein, the German-American athletic club, Marx may have been the Ernest Marx who competed in the running high jump and running broad jump in 1884 in Brooklyn. *Ninth Annual Meeting for the Amateur Championships of America, Under the Auspices of the National Association of Amateur Athletes of America and The League of American Wheelmen, on the Grounds of the Williamsburgh Athletic Club, Brooklyn, N.Y., Saturday, September 27, 1884*, 39, 41. HathiTrust. Of the velocipede racers bested by Marx, Thomas R. Pickering (1831–1895) is best known as the inventor of the velocipede in 1868. National Inventors Hall of Fame, https://www.invent.org/inductees/thomas-r-pickering. Burroughs is mentioned in "Velocipede Notes," *Scientific American*, April 24,1869. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/velocipede-notes-1869-04-24/.

[49] No photographer with this address is listed in H.A. Curtin, *The Business Directory of New York City and Newark City, N.J. 1886* (New York: American Reporter, 1886). Internet Archive.

[50] Before his move from New York to Plainfield, "Frank" Langhorne was a member of the Jolly Corks fraternal order, which changed its name to the Elks. He had a photography gallery in Plainfield from 1878 to 1905. In part, obituary, *Oakland Tribune*, December 28, 1916, 7. After working as an art teacher in New York, Guillermo Thorn began his photographic career in the 1850s as an itinerant daguerreotypist in Norfolk, Virginia, and then had a gallery in Plainfield from 1864 to 1910. Frank J. Esposito & Donald Lokuta, "Picturesque Plainfield and Other New Jersey Treasures," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 19, 1993, B6; Frank J. Esposito and Donald Lokuta, *Victorian New Jersey: Photographs by Guillermo Thorn from the Kean University Collection* (Union, New Jersey: Kean University Press, 2005).



Ernest Marx, Plainfield, New Jersey, unidentified man, cabinet card, circa 1887. Author's digital collection. Cabinet cards with Marx's imprint are uncommon.

Marx's Photographic Career After His Move to Plainfield

The year 1886 likely was transitional in Marx's career. The *Plainfield Evening News* reported that he hosted an elaborate Thanksgiving party at his home on East Front Street at Netherwood Avenue, describing him as "the well known artist." "In a spacious room, gay with flags, a table, brilliant with flowers and cut glass, and laden with good cheer, was surrounded by a merry party of friends, covers being laid for twenty-five." Many toasts were offered and "Marx was prophesied success in that special line of art upon which he has lately entered."[51] Unfortunately for us, the "special line" was not specified but, given his subsequent career, likely it involved photography. In 1887, he sent samples of his photographs, mostly portraits, landscapes, and genre scenes, to the *Photographic Times and American Photographer*, which praised him for displaying "taste and artistic abilities in all branches of his work."[52] Note that he did not submit photos of racing horses, a subject that he actively pursued the following year.

[51] *Plainfield Evening News*, November 27, 1886, 1. One of those present was a "Miss Marx," possible Ernest's sister Ernestine. None of the other named guests in this article is known to have been a photographer. Note that Ernest Marx was living in Plainfield before his father moved there the following year.

[52] *Photographic Times and American Photographer* 17:280 (1887), 48. The journal did not reproduce the photographs sent in by Marx.

Only one photograph from Plainfield with Marx's own imprint has come to my attention over many years of researching nineteenth century New Jersey photographers: a portrait on a cabinet card, the most common format for portraits in that era, mounted on cardboard about 4 1/4 by 6 1/2 inches. It depicts a brightly illuminated middle-aged man with a mustache and beard sitting in front of a plain background. The photo is mounted on a very dark green card with gilt beveled edges and beneath the photo is a gilt imprint reading, "Ernest Marx, Plainfield, N.J." with a French motto, "Toujours Plus Haut" (Ever Higher), in small letters under an image of a curious object that has not been identified. The portrait probably dates from about 1886 to 1888.

In June 1888, *The Photographic Times and American Photographer* described him as "the well known animal photographer." This article stated that Marx had returned to Plainfield from several weeks at the Sheepshead Bay Race Track in Brooklyn photographing thoroughbred horses in motion.[53] Marx's cabinet card photos of thoroughbred racing were characterized as "faultlessly sharp." Some of the horses captured had all four feet off the ground, an achievement made possible by a shutter, constructed by the photographer, that exposed Cramer gelatin dry plate negatives at 1/4000 of a second.[54] The journal's editor concluded, "We don't remember to have ever seen instantaneous pictures of horses which were equal to these, excepting, perhaps, some of those made by Herr O. Anschütz, of Germany."[55]

Marx later recalled that, after two failed attempts, his first successful photograph of a running horse, taken in training, was of The Bard (1883–1907), owned by railroad executive

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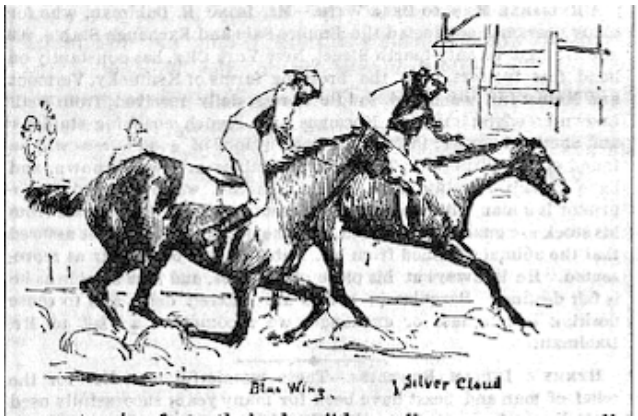
[53] *Photographic Times and American Photographer* (18:352), June 15, 1888, 288.

[54] Other sources describe the speed as 4/1000 at this time. In 1903, Marx reportedly said his camera took photos at 3/1000. These statements by Marx may have been misconstrued by the reporters.

[55] Ottomar Anschütz (1846–1907) was an inventor, photographer, and pioneer in instantaneous photographs. He photographed flying storks in 1884, later captured fired cannonballs in the air with his patented high speed shutter, and made the first motion pictures in Germany. Louis Walton Sipley, *Photography's Great Inventors* (Philadelphia: American Museum of Photography, 1965), 92–93. Rosenblum (1989), reproduces the stork series, 257, Plate 300.

Alexander J. Cassatt (1839–1906).[56] The Bard, a very popular racehorse, won the Preakness at the Pimlico Race Track in Baltimore in 1886. Marx did not mention when or where he took the photographs but probably they were made at a racetrack or at Cassatt's 600-acre Chesterbrook Farm in Berwyn, Pennsylvania.

It is possible that Marx began horse race photography before spring 1888, when he photographed trotters for Leland Stanford. Two such uncredited photographs were made in 1886. On June 26, 1886, E.A. Buck, the editor of the horse racing journal, *The Spirit of the Times*, called for the use of photography to eliminate "dead heats," i.e. ties called by judges.[57] In Buck's view, a true tie in a horse race was impossible and photography could be used to determine the winner. He suggested that vertical wires replace the finish posts at the end of horse races to facilitate the use of photographs. The article was illustrated with two drawings based on uncredited "instantaneous photographs," taken at races on May 29, 1886, at Latonia, Ohio. In one, Tyrant is seen cantering alone to victory. In the other, Silver Cloud is galloping a half-length ahead of Blue Wing at the finish line. The positions of both Tyrant's and Blue Wing's legs look decidedly odd and Buck commented, "Yet these pictures are



Blue Wing and Silver Cloud, Merchants' Stakes, Latonia, Ohio, May 29, 1886, drawing based on photograph, *Spirit of the Times*, June 26, 1886, 702, reproduced from *Graphic News* [sic].

[56] "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred," *The Morning Telegraph* (New York), May 17, 1903, 2.
[57] *The Spirit of the Times: The American Gentleman's Newspaper* (New York), 702. Belden-Adams, 91, credits John C. Hemment as the artist who made the sketches but there is no indication of either the photographer or the sketch artist in the article. The author expresses his appreciation to Kelly Coffman at the Keeneland Library for making a copy of this article available.

positively accurate—in fact, their horrible ugliness surpasses all human invention, and thus proves their truth…."[58] The many horse photographs published by Muybridge in *Animal Locomotion* in 1887 include matches for the leg positions found in the depictions of both Tyrant and Blue Wing.[59] Because the photographs were converted to drawings, their original quality cannot be determined. Possibly, they were silhouettes that the artist filled in with detail.

According to John Hervey's history of racing in the United States, instantaneous photos were taken in early September 1886 at The $10,000 Charter Oak Stake at the Hartford, Connecticut, Grand Circuit trotting meet.[60] No copy or reproduction of them has been located. It is possible that they were taken by Marx but a record that he attended has not been found. A third example of an early horse race photo, sold at auction in 2022, showing the finish of a harness race, was taken in 1887 at the Washington Park Club in Chicago. This photo was taken from a position opposite the judges stand just after the winner's head crossed the wire. Two other horses with sulkies are in the frame. The horses are in sharper focus than the people on either side of the track, suggesting that the photographer was panning when pressing the shutter.[61]

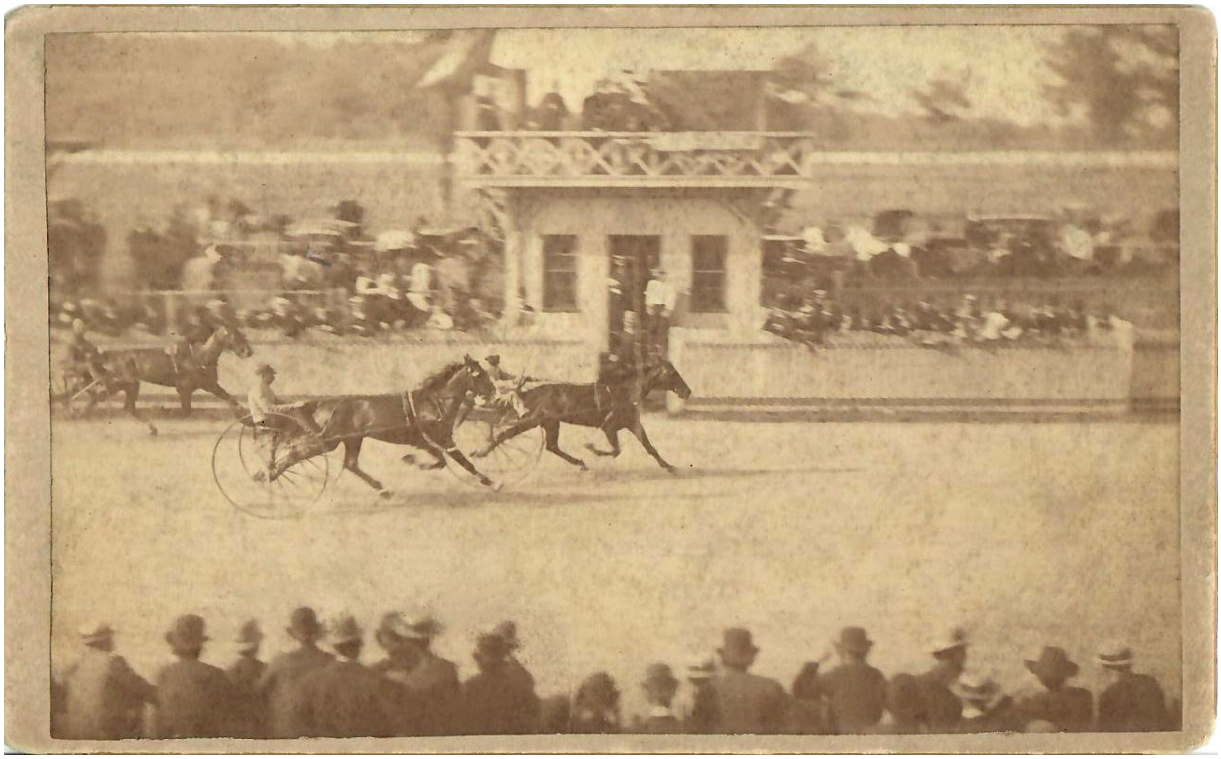
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[58] Ibid. Buck wrote that these drawings had recently appeared in the *Graphic News*, but no periodical with that title is listed in resources examined. Possibly he had meant the *Daily Graphic*, a New York paper. The only likely issue I could locate of the *Daily Graphic*, June 1, 1886, was at Rubenstein Library, Duke University, where Kate Collins kindly checked it but did not find any pictures of horses.

[59] Eadweard Muybridge, *Animals in Motion* (New York: Dover, 1957), plate 61 (Annie G. cantering), plate 67 (Daisy galloping). Similar galloping positions are seen in plates 69 and 72.

[60] John Hervey, *Racing in America, 1922–1936* (New York: The Jockey Club, 1937), 208. Hervey thought these were the first photo finish photos of horse races but the ones in Ohio were made earlier. The stakes race was won by a nose by Oliver K. "Talk of the Turf," *Philadelphia Times*, September 5, 1886, 11; "Oliver K. Wins the Big Race," *Boston Globe*, September 3, 1886, 3. These newspapers and others found about the race did not mention the photograph. Note: Hervey's book was preceded by W.S. Vosburgh, *Racing in America, 1866–1921* (New York: The Jockey Club, 1922), which does not mention Marx or photos of horse races.

[61] A cabinet card of this uncredited photo was sold at the Daguerreian Society auction, February 2022. The back of the photo, which depicts three horses, is inscribed with the place and date.



Harness race finish, Washington Park Club, Chicago, 1887. Cabinet card. Photographer unknown. Sold at Daguerreian Society auction, February 2022.

By the summer 1888, Marx certainly was making many high-quality stop-action photographs in the New York area. On July 27, the *Photographic Times and American Photographer* published "Photography for Judging Races," in which it states that Marx had been making "numerous instantaneous photographic experiments at the spring meeting of the Coney Island Jockey Club." Curiously, the newspaper claimed that Marx denied his previous statement two days earlier that he had photographed the finish in the Thistle Stakes, "as the weather that day was unfavorable for his work," but explained that he had been engaged to capture the finishes at the fall meeting of the Brooklyn Jockey Club. The article noted that if one horse was far in the lead

and the second place was likely to be close, the camera would be used to determine the second and third place horses.[62]

Later that summer in Brooklyn, Marx photographed thoroughbreds at the Brooklyn Jockey Club's Gravesend Race Track, which had opened in 1886. The *Brooklyn Standard Union* reported that a tall, thin man in a blue suit, photographer Ernest Marx of Plainfield, set up his camera to test the decisions of the judges. Marx's apparatus featured two cameras mounted one above the other on a tripod. With the one on top, he followed the action with the intention of catching the horses as they crossed the finish line by pressing a rubber bulb to trip the shutter of the lower camera. In the third race, the horses Kingston and Yum Yum approached the finish in a dead heat. In his excitement, he pulled the string that controlled the shutter a fraction too soon and only captured Kingston on the outside as the two horses dashed by a few yards from the line. The judges called it a tie. This article noted that on the following day, the chief judge would operate the camera.[63]

Marx improved his camera by September of that year, 1888. In the *Photographic Times and American Photographer* on September 14, he described a camera mounted on a pivot and fitted with a viewfinder. As the operator followed the horses, the camera moved until it was facing the finish line and the shutter was tripped automatically by a trip string.[64] Although Marx' success at capturing horse race finishes led to his being hired in the fall of 1888 by the Brooklyn Jockey Club, he was not retained for long as "judges at several tracks appeared to resent what they regarded as a questioning of their capability to decide fairly."[65]

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[62] *Photographic Times and American Photographer* 18:358 (July 27, 1888), 359. Without mentioning Marx, the *New York Press* on July 13, 1888, stated, "The Coney Island Jockey Club has decided to utilize instantaneous photography in determining close finishes." O'Neill, 6.

[63] "Track and Stable," *Brooklyn Standard Union*, August 30, 1888, 3. This race photo also was discussed in the *New York Press*, August 30 and 31, 1888, cited by O'Neill, 9.

[64] O'Neill, 7–8.

[65] "Some Scenes at the Races," *Brooklyn Daily Times*, May 25, 1889, 3.

Marx's experiments likely marked the first use of photography to verify the winner in thoroughbred horse races in the New York metropolitan area. But to guarantee success, he needed to employ a very fast shutter. Although as noted above, he first used a shutter of his own design, his faster model had likely had been constructed for him by the Prosch Manufacturing Company of New York under the leadership of Cyrus Prosch (1848–1929).[66] In the 1880s, Prosch was awarded two patents for rapid shutters, and he mentioned Marx in a submission to *The Philadelphia Photographer* in December 1888 in which he described Marx's use of a Prosch rapid shutter with Cramer gelatin dry plate negatives.[67] Whether this was a new shutter used by Marx or the same one he had been using earlier is unknown. Quite possibly, it was custom-made by Prosch according to Marx's special requirements. In 1892, Prosch advertised his top-of-the-line "Special Athlete" shutter with a top speed of 1/600 of a second, significantly slower than what Marx reportedly used.[68] Cyrus Prosch commented that the challenge in such very high speed photography was to bring out the detail during development of the negative.[69] Marx created and published his own developer for this purpose so other photographers could use it. His formula for "The Marx Developer" appeared in *The Photographers' Book of Practical Formulae* in 1888.[70]

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[66] Cyrus Prosch's father, George Prosch, is credited with constructing the first daguerreotype camera in the United States for Samuel F.B. Morse in 1839 and claimed to have made the first daguerreotype in America before Morse picked up his purchase. George's sister Charlotte Prosch was the first woman photographer in New Jersey, with a gallery in Newark. Gary D. Saretzky, "New Jersey's First Female Daguerreotypist: Charlotte Prosch and Her Family," *The Daguerreian Annual 2023* (Cecil, PA: Daguerreian Society, 2023), 82-98.

[67] C. [Cyrus] Prosch, "As to Shutters and Diaphragms," *Philadelphia Photographer* 25:336 (December 15, 1888), 763.

[68] Finn, 56–57. The Special Athlete was one of four shutters Prosch advertised in the 1892 *American Annual of Photography*. The others were the Triplex Stereoscopic, Triplex Detective, and Athlete.

[69] Cyrus Prosch, "As to Shutters and Diaphragms," *The Philadelphia Photographer* 25:336 (December 15, 1888), 763.

[70] W.D. Holmes, compiler, *The Photographers' Book of Practical Formulae* (New York, PH.B. & E.P. Griswold, 1888), 55. Marx's formula was a pyro developer with sodium sulfite. There have been many different pyro developers and they are still in use for film. For a discussion of pyro developers, see Photo.net discussion in 2006 at https://www.photo.net/forums/topic/204054-what-is-pyro-developer/, last accessed March 13, 2025. Marx was mentioned posthumously as having used glycin, a developing agent derived from glycine, for his horse photography negatives in Henry F. Reuss, "The Rational Application of Caustic Soda to Developers," *American Annual of Photography and Photographic Times Almanac*, Volume 20 (New York: Styles & Cash, 1906), 4.

Other articles about Marx strongly imply that he had been perfecting his horse race technique for several years and that he had spent a great deal of time at the track. By 1889, he was developing a national reputation for this specialty. The *Kansas City Star* on January 3, 1889, published a lengthy article, copied from the *Boston Herald*, with quotations from an interview. Marx explained his camera and demonstrated his rapid shutter, which was so fast that the reporter could not see it open and close. Marx mentioned that for race finishes, he exposed a Cramer No. 50 gelatin dry plate (glass) negative, developed it in a makeshift darkroom and less than three minutes later brought the result to the judges. To prove his point about the value of his photographs, he showed the reporter several silver bromide prints depicting very close finishes at the Saratoga track, asserting that a true dead heat was virtually impossible and predicted that within two years, all the tracks would be using photography for this purpose. Marx disclosed that he would soon begin employing an electrically controlled shutter that would provide even better results. He also showed the reporter photographic prints of horses jumping over a wall in a steeplechase race at Saratoga. The reporter seemed convinced of photography's value for these purposes although he noted that the public would have a hard time getting used to the surprising positions of a running horse's legs captured by photography because they were accustomed to seeing how horses had been shown in paintings, in what was known as "the flying gallop," with all four legs extended.[71] A subsequent article describing Marx's method stated that his shutter was tripped by "an electric button."[72]

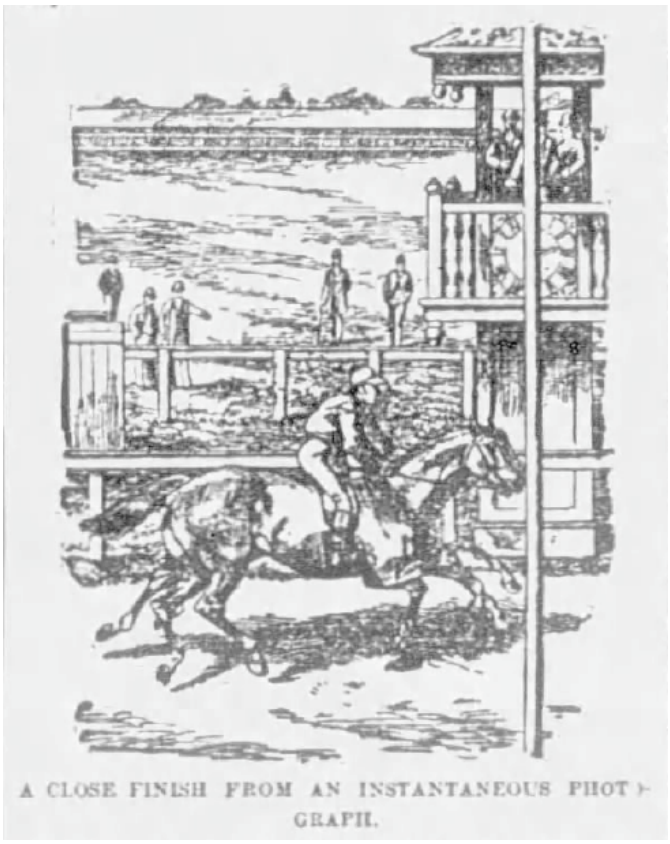
In April 1889, the *Jamestown* (New York) *Evening Journal* reported that Marx had supplied the paper with thirty-two printed pictures of horses during races "taken by the use of

[71] "New Use of Photography; the Effect of Instantaneous Pictures as a Means of Judging Horse Races," *Kansas City Star*, January 3, 1889, 2. The prolific French painter of horses, Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891) was astounded by Eadweard Muybridge's photographs that Leland Stanford showed him when he visited that artist's studio.
[72] *Plainfield Evening News*, April 27, 1889, 1, drawing on a previous article in the *New York Dramatic News*.

electricity."[73] Marx's Aristotype prints were made by the American Aristotype Company of Jamestown.[74] Aristotypes had significant advantages over the albumen prints that had dominated the market since the 1850s. In particular, its collodion emulsion provided bright white highlights, and the prints did not fade or yellow. Its main drawback was that the surface was fragile and easily abraded.[75]

Also in April 1889, Marx stated that he would send his thirty-two Aristotypes to the Exposition Universelle (also known as the Paris Exposition), held from May 6 to October 26, 1889.[76] This world's fair is remembered today primarily for the Eiffel Tower built for the extravaganza. Among the more than 60,000 exhibitors were American photographers, and Marx was recognized with a bronze medal, the only one from New Jersey honored with a prize.[77] Marx later claimed that he got the recognition for instantaneous photographs of horses and pneumatic

[73] "Horses in Rapid Motion," *Jamestown* (New York), *Evening Journal*, April 10, 1889, page unavailable.
[74] The American Aristotype Company was one of several major American producers of collodion paper, which had been introduced in 1884 in Germany. It was taken over by the Eastman Kodak Company in 1899. "The Battle of the Aristotype Companies," Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, https://graphicarts.princeton.edu/2021/07/22/the-battle-of-the-aristotytpe-companies/, last accessed June 1, 2025. For the American Aristotype Company's products, see *Aristo Manual, Revised Edition* (Jamestown, New York: American Aristotype Company, n.d.), copy in author's collection.
[75] Unlike albumen (egg white) paper, which had to be sensitized in a silver nitrate solution and dried before printing, collodion photographic paper came ready to use and had a baryta (barium hydroxide) layer under the emulsion that provided the white highlights, improving contrast. For albumen paper sensitization, see James F. Reilly, *The Albumen & Salted Paper Book* (Rochester, New York: Light Impressions, 1980), 40.
[76] *Plainfield Evening News*, April 27, 1889, 1.
[77] "Awards to American Exhibitors in Photography at the Paris Exposition," *American Amateur Photographer* 1 (1889), 188. Among the seventeen individual prize winners, aside from several organizations including the Eastman Dry Plate and Film Company (later Eastman Kodak), the photographers best known today were George Barker, Niagara Falls, gold medal; Fitz W. Guerin, St. Louis, silver medal; Simon L. Stein, Milwaukee, silver medal; and Isaiah West Tabor, San Francisco, silver medal, who was incorrectly listed as "H. Taber" in this source.



"A Close Finish From an Instantaneous Photograph," graphic from a photo by Ernest Marx. "Some Scenes at the Races," *Brooklyn Daily Times*, May 25, 1889, 3.

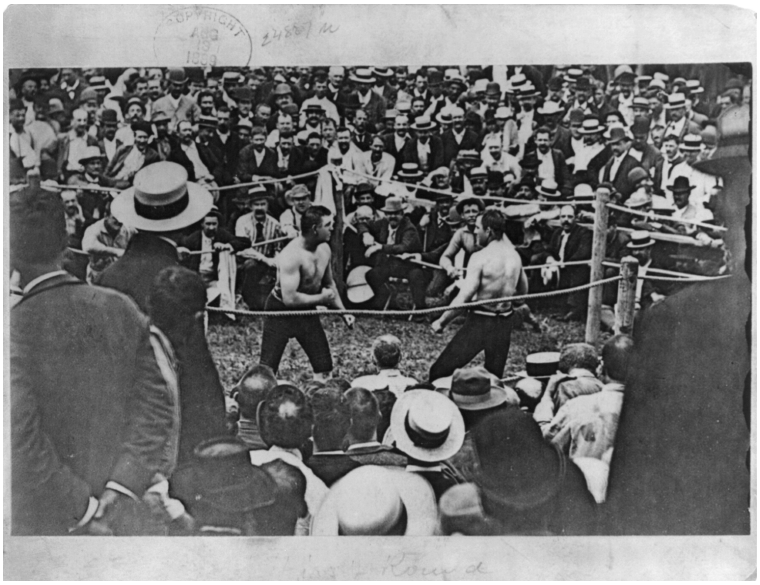
gun cartridges in flight "through the intercession of Secretary of State James G. Blaine and his private secretary, A. Eddy, President of the Washington Camera Club." In 1888, Marx had photographed large shells shot from the pneumatic Zalinski dynamite gun, and his photographs were of much interest to the War Department.[78]

Favorable press coverage in 1889 enhanced Marx's renown. In May 1889, a graphic reproduction of a close finish based on one of his photographs was published in at least two newspapers, a decade before more realistic half-tone photographs became commonplace in the press.[79] The image showed two horses at the finish line, one about an inch ahead of the other with its nose touching the invisible line behind the pole. As it happened, the judges' decision was contrary to the truth told by the photograph. The message was clear: photographs were more reliable than opinions.

[78] "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred With the Camera," *The Morning Telegraph* (New York), May 17, 1903, 2. Marx also received a "special diploma enabling him to have his name inscribed in the 'livre d'or,' the golden book of France." In photographing gun cartridges in flight, Marx preceded the well-known electronic flash photographs of speeding bullets by Harold E. Edgerton (1903–1990). Introduced in the 1880s, the Zalinski gun fired shells using compressed air. The U.S. Navy shelled Havana with these guns during the Spanish-American War.

[79] "Some Scenes at the Races," *Brooklyn Daily Times*, May 25, 1889, page 3; "Notable Turfites," *Philadelphia Times*, May 26, 1889, 16. The latter piece quoted a judge at Monmouth Park, "We don't want any pictures. If I am too old or incompetent to judge a finish, kick me out…."

Marx continued to be mentioned when photo-finish photography was discussed in print media. On July 26, 1890, newspapers reported that at horse races he was exposing his shutter automatically with electricity.[80] But after 1890, although he did more equine photographs, including both horse portraits and action shots of running horses, Marx does not seem to have continued doing many photo finishes for judging of horse races, leaving that field open for John C. Hemment (born 1862) to become a well-known specialist in this genre for more than a decade.[81] Nevertheless, Marx continued to be considered the pre-eminent equine photographer and he later photographed horse races for newspapers.[82]



John L. Sullivan vs. Jake Kilrain, 1st round, Richburg, Mississippi, July 8, 1889 by Ernest Marx. Library of Congress.

Marx's reputation for stopping action prompted his hiring by the backers of the boxer John L. Sullivan (1858–1918), the "Boston Strong Boy," to photograph his $20,000 prize match with Jake Kilrain (1859–1937) on July 8, 1889, in Richburg, Mississippi.[83] Marx likely traveled on one of at least four special trains filled with New

[80] "Photographic Progress; Some of the Wonders of the Instantaneous Method," *Daily Alta California* 83:20 (July 1890), 9, reproduced from *New York Tribune*.

[81] According to O'Neill, *The Spirit of the Times*, July 12, 1890, "published a double-page spread of 26 photo finishes from the Sheepshead Bay meeting" in the form of artist's sketches based on John C. Hemment's photos. The Sheepshead Bay track was operated by the Coney Island Jockey Club, which hired Hemment in 1890 to take photo finishes daily. Hemment worked for New York area racetracks into the 1900s. In other work, Hemment was hired by the United States government to photograph the Spanish-American War and World War I. Hervey, 280; O'Neill, 9; Finn, 38–56.

[82] In 1896, Marx photographed the officials on their elevated perch near the finish line at the Aqueduct racetrack. *Brooklyn Citizen,* October 18, 1896, 13, which includes a graphic based on his photo. See page 56.

[83] *Paterson Daily Guardian*, July 5, 1889, 1; *Plainfield Evening News*, July 5, 1889, 1.

York sportsmen.[84] Hopefully, the photographer brought a large quantity of negatives because the bare-knuckled bout, won by Sullivan, lasted seventy-five rounds in the brutal 104 degrees heat and extended for well over two hours. Three and possibly four of Marx's historic photos of this famous event are at the Library of Congress. While there had been posed photos of boxers for decades, camera coverage by Marx and at least one other photographer of the Sullivan-Kilrain match was likely the first of a real championship bout.[85]



Ernest Marx, Sullivan-Kilrain bout, "Maltese Cross," Richburg, Mississippi, July 8, 1889. Library of Congress #2002706359. A Maltese cross in boxing is a specific three-punch combination consisting of a jab, hook, and a rear-hand cross.

[84] "New Yorkers Off for the Fray," *The Evening World*, July 1, 1889, 1. On the way back, Marx rode a train bound for New York filled with Kilrain supporters and it stopped in Plainfield to let him off. "Pugilists in Plainfield," *Courier-News* (Bridgewater), July 12, 1889, 1; *Paterson Daily Press*, undated clipping in author's files. Marx is mentioned as living on East Front Street in 1889.

[85] "Sullivan-Kilrain Fight," Mississippi Encyclopedia, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/sullivan-kilrain-fight/#:~:text=The, last accessed March 20, 2025. This website reproduces one photograph from the Library of Congress but does not credit the photographer. The Library of Congress credits this photo to Marx with a question mark. Three others at the Library of Congress are copyrighted by Marx. Photographer Thomas Pye of New Orleans also copyrighted photos of the bout, taken farther from the ropes than Marx. Seven Pye photos, including two depicting construction of the ring, are at the Library of Congress. One is reproduced in Christopher Klein, "The Rumble at Richburg," The Strong Boy Blog, July 8, 2014. http://johnlsullivan.blogspot.com/2014/07/the-rumble-at-richburg.html. Pye's photos of the boxers are blurry compared to Marx's. Six stereographs of the bout, published by George Barker of Niagara Falls, are at the Library of Congress but whether he took the photographs has not been confirmed. For an example, see https://www.loc.gov/item/92516223/.

Ernest Marx's Reputation Enhanced by W.I. Lincoln Adams

Perhaps the most influential writer to feature Marx around this time was Washington Irving Lincoln Adams (1865–1946), especially in his two-part article, "Instantaneous Photography," in the sporting magazine, *Outing*, in December 1889 and January 1890. W.I. Lincoln Adams was the son of Washington Irving Adams (1832–1896).[86] Both became leading figures in photographic manufacturing and publishing. In 1868, W.I. Lincoln Adams moved with his parents from New York to Montclair, New Jersey, and remained a lifelong resident there. Like his father, he was an enthusiastic amateur photographer. He joined his dad at Scovill Manufacturing Co. after graduation from Montclair High School in 1883 and soon became editor of the *Photographic Times* and the *American Annual of Photography*. After his father's death, Adams took over management of Scovill & Adams, manufacturers of cameras and other photographic equipment, and became publisher of the *Photographic Times*.[87] In addition to his writing on photography in

[86] Washington Irving Adams was born to a distinguished family that included Samuel Adams, John Adams, and John Quincy Adams. In 1858, he joined Scovill Manufacturing Co., based in Waterbury, Connecticut with an office in New York. Adams rose through the ranks and was given responsibility for Scovill's photographic division in New York in 1872. It became one of the largest suppliers of photographic materials, along with E. & H.T. Anthony & Co. He also became president of Samuel Peck & Co. and merged it with Scovill's subsidiary, the American Optical Company, which under Adams 'direction, introduced a line of amateur cameras and other equipment beginning in 1876, along with its studio cameras. In 1878, he was appointed a director of Scovill and became general agent in charge of all photographic businesses, with responsibility for marketing, sales, and publishing *The Photographic Times*, which he had founded in 1871. On January 3, 1889, the Scovill & Adams Co. was incorporated with Adams as president. This firm continued the photographic side of Scovill's business and in the early 1900s merged with E. & H.T. Anthony and became ANSCO in 1907. In 1876, Adams, as vice president of the Centennial Photographic Co., and Edward L. Wilson were in charge of the photographic hall at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Adams also was chairman of the executive committee of the National Photographic Association, which became the Photographic Association of America in 1879. He helped organized the Society of Amateur Photographers in 1884 and was an enthusiastic amateur photographer. William and Estelle Marder, "Pioneers of Photography: Washington Irving Adams (1832–1896)," 1991, copy at Montclair Public Library; William and Estelle Marder, Anthony, *The Man, The Company, The Cameras* (Cherry Valley, Arkansas: PineRidge Publishing, 1982), 268.

[87] Adams also was founder and president of the Montclair Trust Co.; president of the Montclair Theater Guild; president of local, state, and national societies of the Sons of the American Revolution; and commissioner in the Montclair municipal government. Moreover, he served as president and director of various New York banks and business firms, especially in the printing field. Even all these activities were not enough to keep Adams occupied, for he enlisted at the age of 51 during World War I. After officer training, he was commissioned as a Major and given the responsibility for procurement and shipping of equipment from New York Harbor. "They Lived in Montclair" series: W.I. and W.I. Lincoln Adams," July 17, 1963, Montclair Public Library; Henry Whitemore, *History of Montclair Township* (NY: Suburban, 1894), 224-225; Marder & Marder, 286.

magazines, Adams authored a number of books, some illustrated with his own photographs.[88] As a photographer, together with Charles Ehrmann, associate editor of the *Photographic Times*, he broke new ground with an indoor flash photograph of a journalists' banquet at Delmonico's in 1888.[89] Clearly, Adams was widely read and the prominent role he gave to Marx in *Outing* marked a significant milestone for the action photographer. Even before this article, Adams spread the fame of Marx through coverage of his activities in the *Photographic Times* that was reprinted in newspapers across the country.[90] As historian Jonathan Finn concluded, "More than any other individual figure of the time, Adams identified and advocated for the specific benefits of the camera for use in sport."[91]

In his "Instantaneous Photography" article in *Outing*, Adams highlighted Marx's advanced skills. Describing him as a "young photographer of Plainfield, N.J.," he stated that Marx "has been successful in determining the winner in close or 'dead heats' of racing contests. According to his photographs, there is no such thing as a 'dead' heat—one contestant must always be at least an infinitesimal distance ahead of the others; and by his camera, stationed immediately under the wire and automatically exposed by electricity at the right moment, the actual winner may always be

[88] Books by Adams included *Amateur Photography, A Practical Guide for the Beginner* (1893); *Sunlight and Shadow* (1897); In *Nature's Image* (1893); *Woodland and Meadow: Out of Door Papers Written on a New Hampshire Farm* (1901); *Wildwood and Meadow* (1901); *Photographing in Old England, With Some Snapshots of Scotland and Wales* (1910); *The Photographic Instructor: For the Professional and Amateur, Being the Comprehensive Series of Practical Lessons Issued to the Students of the Chautauqua School . . .* (1888); *Carolyn: A Completed Life. Memorial of Carolyn Styles Adams* prepared by W.I. Lincoln Adams and Grace Wilson Adams (1910); *In the Dawn, and Other Verses* (1905); *Six Songs / Words* by W.I. Lincoln Adams, music by Bertha F. Gordon (1914), as well as other editions of some of these titles.
[89] Welling, 318.
[90] For example, "No More Dead Heats," *Omaha Daily Bee*, September 28, 1888, 5.
[91] Finn, 35–36.

known."[92] Adams supported his point with a photograph by Marx of the horse *Britannic*, running with three hooves off the ground.[93]



Fred Butterfield "Exercising" Brittanic by Ernest Marx, from W.I. Adams, "Instantaneous Photography," *Outing*, January 1890, 294.

[92] *Outing* 15:3 (December 1890), 221. The photograph on the same page of a man riding a bicycle down the steps of the Capitol is by an unidentified photographer according to *Photographic Times* 20:433 (January 3, 1890),11. This source credits two of the photographers illustrating Adams' article: J.R. Stanton, for "Firing a Shell," and W.T. Wintringham, for "Leap Frog" and "Returning a [tennis] Ball." It seems likely that Adams himself took some photos in the article not credited to Marx.

[93] *Outing* 15:4 (January 1890), 294. Although Adams, in his credit to Marx, stated on page 295 that all four feet were off the ground, the photo shows that one of the hind feet was touching the track. The article also includes a photo of a cow that is likely by Marx, given Adams' comment, "Mr. Marx's instantaneous photographs of poultry and cattle are more pleasing as pictures."

Adams then quoted Marx's response to the question, "How do you get your fine photos of cattle and poultry?" Marx replied regarding the latter, "By lying flat on the ground and awaiting my chance…You see, it is necessary to remain still long enough for the fowls to become accustomed to your nearness before they will assume their regular and natural occupations…I sometimes wait half an hour with my hand on the shutter, ready to release it when the opportunity presents itself. The best instantaneous photographs are not made by chance at all, but by patience and skill."[94] In addition to horses, cattle, and poultry, according to Adams, Marx had photographed "dogs in all positions."[95] Note that Adams was not interested solely in photo-finishes of horse races. His article addressed the broader applications of instantaneous photography that also interested Marx.

Marx continued his camera work and although events in 1890 impacted his subsequent photographic career, he later did more photos of galloping horses for newspapers, as discussed below.

Ernest Marx in the 1890s: Significant Changes in His Career and Personal Life

The pivotal year of 1890 marked tragedies in Marx's family and led to changes in his career. His mother, Julia (Julie) Lisette Marx died of heart failure at age 61 in Plainfield on January 11, and was buried in Cypress Hills Cemetery, Brooklyn.[96] While her death was not completely unexpected, as she had long been suffering with heart problems, it nevertheless must have

[94] *Outing*, 15:4, (January 1890), 296.
[95] "Photographic Progress; Some of the Wonders of the Instantaneous Method," *Daily Alta California 83:20 (*July 26, 1890), 9 (from *New York Tribune*). In February 1890, after the publication of the second part of Adams 'article in January, Marx exhibited his photographs at a First Baptist church social in Plainfield. *Plainfield Evening News*, February 14, 1890, 1. Lemuel W. Serrell also showed his photographs at this event.
[96] New Jersey Death Record: Julia Lisette Marx, born in France, daughter of Isaac and Gertrude Loeb, died of heart failure after suffering from heart problems for twenty-five years, age 61, at 242 Front St., Plainfield, January 11, 1890, and was buried in Cypress Hills Cemetery, Brooklyn.

significantly impacted her family. In March, a group of local Jews founded a congregation in Plainfield and Ernest Marx was elected Secretary.[97] The synagogue was initially named after Ernest's mother, although it was subsequently renamed.[98] The first religious service was held in the home of Ernest's father Felix Marx.[99] In addition to holding services, one of the objects of the new organization was to obtain kosher meat for the members. As a kosher restaurant owner, Felix would have had suitable connections.[100]

By 1890, Marx had become a member of the Plainfield Camera Club, which Charles Henry Davis had founded in the fall of 1887.[101] In January, the club held a group exhibition at the local Y.M.C.A. that included Marx's photos.[102] Among the about 500 framed photographs in the show, Marx displayed his "instantaneous studies of animal life, representing chickens, dogs, cows, calves, blooded and racing horses, in every imaginable position."[103] In early April 1890, Marx attended a meeting of the Plainfield Camera Club and took a flash picture, the earliest reference found to him using this technique.[104] As shall be seen, Marx gained fame for his use of flash a few years later.

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[97] *Jersey City News*, March 8, 1890, 2.
[98] In December 1891, after meeting in a home on East Front Street, the congregation began planning for a new synagogue. At that time, the congregation had taken the name Beth Tefillah Isba Yendel, also found as Beth Tiflia Isha Yentel. After a torah dedication, Felix Marx hosted a banquet at his "Chateau Vosges," during which Ernest Marx presented Alfred A. Marcus, who had contracted a Jerusalem scribe for the torah, with a "handsomely engrossed and framed set of resolutions." "Plainfield's New Synagogue," *Evening Post* (New York), December 15, 1891, 3; "Dedicated a Sefer Torah," *Courier-News* (Plainfield), December 14, 1891, 1; "Jewish Holiday," *Courier-News*, August 12, 1902, 4.
[99] "$1,000 for the Jewish Synagogue; Bequest of Felix Marx - Contest Delays Settlement," *Courier-News* (Bridgewater), February 2, 1904, 4.
[100] *Plainfield Evening News*, March 3, 1890, 1.
[101] Gary D. Saretzky, "Charles Henry Davis: Photographer of Plainfield, New York, and Hoboken," *New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal,* Summer 2025. The Plainfield Camera Club was one of the first camera clubs in New Jersey, preceded by The Camerads, which began meeting at Rutgers University in New Brunswick in 1886 under the leadership of Professor Peter T. Austen, the uncle of photographer Alice Austen of Staten Island.
[102] *Courier-News* (Bridgewater), January 22, 1890, 1.
[103] "Camera Club Exhibit; An Interesting Display at the Y.M.C.A. Rooms," *Courier-News* (Bridgewater), January 31, 1890, 1.
[104] *Plainfield Evening News* (Plainfield), April 8, 1890, 1.

A few days later on April 11, 1890, another tragedy struck the Marx family. Felix Marx had a young coachman named Frederick Mayer, described as an heir to a large estate in Germany and a "well-bred, well educated young man, who turned his back on the luxuries of his foreign home for an active life in America."[105] After becoming ill and despondent and writing seventeen pathetic letters, he shot himself in the head in his bedroom in the Marx home.

Perhaps saddened by the deaths of his wife and coachman in 1890, Felix Marx sold The Felix, his restaurant at 79 Mercer Street, New York, to Ernest and went on a long trip to France. About two years later, Felix sold his beautiful house, "Chateau Vosges," on the corner of East Front Street and Netherwood Avenue in Plainfield and it burned down shortly thereafter.[106]

Ernest Marx's decision to become a restauranteur in 1890 likely stemmed from both respect for his father and desire to better support his family. While he did not give up photography, it is likely that the restaurant took up much of his time for the next few years.

Other than the two deaths, the decade of the 1890s seemed to get off to a good start for Marx. He moved from East Front Street, where "Virginia Villa" was painted on the front of the upper story, to another home on Leland Avenue.[107] In 1891 and early 1892, he entertained local residents with demonstrations of his Edison record player, which could be heard at what was then an impressive distance of thirty feet, at local venues: the Y.M.C.A, Warren Union Mission chapel, Epworth League, Washingtonville Chapel, and Hebrew congregation at its place of worship. Regarding the last, the local paper reported, "Mr. Marx's supply of comical sayings,

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[105] "He Became a Coachman and a Suicide," *New-York Tribune*, April 12, 1890,1.
[106] "Felix Marx Dies in New York City," *Plainfield Evening News*, September 23, 1903, 1; "The 'Kosher Delmonico," A Restaurant That Has Continued on Its Own Lines Nearly Fifty Years," *The Sun*, October 4, 1903, 20. Felix Marx later lived in Staten Island.
[107] "Virginia Villa" is described as a compliment to Mrs. Ernest Marx in "Mr. and Mrs. Frost Awakened by the Smoke From Their Burning House," *Courier-News* (Bridgewater), February 4, 1898, 1. The Frosts lived at the house formerly occupied by Ernest Marx and his family. According to this article, Marx sold the house "within a year past" to David Eastman. Apparently, Marx rented it after moving in about 1890.

intermingled with songs and recitations, seemed inexhaustible…Mr. Marx is the possessor of the only phonograph in the city, but he is not at all covetous and being of a generous disposition he is willing to entertain his friends any evening (Saturday excepted) free of charge."[108]

But running the kosher restaurant was challenging, as seen by two incidents in 1893 widely covered in the press. In January 1893, Marx was sued for $1,200 by Yuddel Manneker for the balance due on a one-year contract, after he was fired with just seven weeks employment. Manneker was a Polish maneker, a kosher butcher descended from a long line of manekers. The job of the maneker is to remove from the meat of an animal the fat and blood forbidden according to Jewish dietary laws.[109] Marx hired him soon after his arrival from Kiev and advertised the fact, which substantially increased his sales at The Felix, where the table d'hôte was fifty cents. Manneker was also a rabbi and Talmudist and admired for his erudition. However, it seems that Manneker's salary of $40 per week was too burdensome for Marx and moreover, he would not work on Saturday when the restaurant was open. One of Ernest's brothers, either Henry or Jacob, commented, "I work on Saturday myself. Is he any better than I am?" Ernest questioned Manneker's competence, stating that he was like a young woman who knew Latin and Greek but could not tell a chicken from a turkey.[110] The case was likely settled out of court as the resolution was not reported in the newspapers that covered the lawsuit's onset.

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[108] *Courier-News* (Bridgewater), March 26, 1891, 1. Other Marx phonograph demonstrations reported in *Courier-News* (Bridgewater), April 8, 1891, 1, April 9, 1891, 1; and December 31, 1891, 1; *Plainfield Evening News*, April 20, 1891, 1; April 30, 1891, 1; June 24, 1891, 1; June 29, 1891, 1; and January 15, 1892, 3. In 1891, Marx's horse race photos were praised in *American Magazine* but it is possible that it was referring to photos made in earlier years. *American Magazine* 31 (1891), 28.

[109] The term maneker comes from a root meaning to pick out or pull out. The maneker must be skilled in pulling out forbidden veins and skeins of fat. Rabbi Samuel Fox, "The Role of 'Menaker' in Preparing Kosher Meat," *The Sentinel*, December 20, 1956, Israel National Archives, web.

[110] "A 'Maneker' Sues for Wages Due Under Contract," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 20, 1893, 5; "Discharged the 'Manneker,' Now He Sues Restaurant Keeper Marks, Who Hired Him to Make Meats Kosher," *New York Daily Herald*, January 19, 1893, 9; "Imported a Cook from Kiev; He Was a Talmudist and a Rabbi, Too, but The Felix Didn't Keep Him," *The Sun* (New York), January 19, 1893, 7, referencing Marks instead of Marx.

The second incident regarding the restaurant occurred later in 1893, by which time The Felix had moved to 193 Mercer Street and Ernest had relocated his residence from Plainfield to Manhattan. Ernest had purchased the business for $10,000 on credit and his father lent him an additional $2,000 on February 14, 1892. Apparently, Ernest had difficulty paying off the $12,000 and in July 1893, he "confessed judgment for $14,040 in favor of his father, equivalent to about $500,000 in 2025."[111] The Sheriff took possession and the restaurant ownership reverted back to Felix Marx, who sold it four years later in 1897.[112]

Ernest may have continued in a support role at the restaurant, but photography became his principal occupation. In January 1894, he was in Brooklyn as "Professor Ernest Marx" at a fraternal organization, the Atalanta Lodge of the Order of Touti. After several storytellers and musicians entertained the gathering, Marx "took a flash light photograph of the brothers and their guests," which was going to be printed in quantity and distributed as souvenirs of the occasion.[113] Flash photography at that time was a dangerous procedure, involving igniting magnesium powder in a pan. The powder was ignited by a spark, usually created by a cocking mechanism and a trigger, but at least some of the time, Marx used an electric battery in his flash work.[114]

Marx also was engaged in finding a better glaze for photographs. He was experimenting in February 1894, when a large explosion occurred after midnight in his third floor apartment at 200 W. 98th Street in New York. On Marx's worktable in the dining room were bottles of acids,

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[111] *New York Times*, July 16, 1893, 7; *The Sun* (New York), July 16, 1893, 2; *The World* (New York), July 16, 1893, 7.
[112] "The 'Kosher Delmonico," A Restaurant That Has Continued on Its Own Lines Nearly Fifty Years," *The Sun*, October 4, 1903, 20. New York city directories list Ernest in 1893 as "eating house" at 193 Mercer in 1893, with home, 210 W. 4th, while in 1895, Felix has the eating house, while living at 207 E. 29th, and Ernest is no longer listed. *Trow's New York City Directory*, New York Public Library Digital Collections.
[113] "Atalanta Lodge Entertains," *The Brooklyn Citizen*, January 7, 1894, 6.
[114] *From Flambeau to Futuramic: The History of Flash Photography* (Denver, Colorado: Highland Division of Minneapolis-Honeywell, 1959), 5.

alcohol, potassium chloride, and a lamp.[115] The press, which described Marx as a photographer, reported the cause as "exploding chemicals."[116] Two windows were blown out of Marx's apartment. The building shook and frightened residents ran out into the streets.[117] Mrs. Marx's screams brought Dr. Charles A. Knowlton, the physician who lived in the tenement, where he found Marx's face black and burned, and some of his clothing torn away. Fortunately, his eyes were not injured. The local fire company, after hearing the explosion from a block away, soon arrived but since there was no fire, they had nothing to do. Marx refused to be taken to the hospital when he had been bandaged, "and stayed home to be alternately nursed and lectured by his shocked wife."[118]

None of the five articles found about this event mentioned the Marxes' four children, the youngest of whom, Julie, was approaching her second birthday. In the 1895 New Jersey Census, Julie was living apart from her parents and siblings.[119] She was still in foster care in 1900 and at that time, the two boys were staying with Elizabeth's brother and his wife and child in Passaic City.[120] By 1900, U.S. Census reports that, Marx was living as a lodger in Brooklyn without his family.[121] Precisely when Ernest and Elizabeth separated is undetermined but it is possible that

[115] *The Evening World* (New York), February 14, 1894, 5. This account states that Marx had been working on the better glaze for twenty years, which seems doubtful. See also "Inventor Marks' Woes; When He Thought He Had Discovered a Great Secret There was a Disastrous Explosion," *New York Herald*, February 15, 1894, 4.
[116] "Explosion of Chemicals; A Photographer Injured While Experimenting—Fright in a Tenement," *The Evening Post* (New York), February 14, 1894, 12.
[117] "Blows Up At His Experiments," *The World* (New York), February 15, 1894, 9.
[118] "Ernest Marx Badly Hurt," *Plainfield Courier*, February 14, 1894, 1, referenced as Marks. This source gives the time of the explosion as 1:00 a.m. but other sources give the time as 12:30 a.m. It states the doctor as "Kennedy," rather than Charles A. Knowlton mentioned in *The Evening World*, op cit.
[119] See biographical summary for Julie above.
[120] See biographical summaries for Leon and Henry above.
[121] Marx, 51, photographer, lodger, 360 Degraw Street in the Carroll Gardens section of Brooklyn, with Patrick J. Gannon, 35, his wife Nellie, 29, and Nellie's mother Mary Mullaly, 58. 1900 U.S. Census, Brooklyn Ward 10, Kings, New York. According to his obituary cited below, Marx moved in about 1900 to 269 Smith Street, Brooklyn, his last residence.

Elizabeth left him after the explosion or had a nervous breakdown as a result of it.[122] Although what led to the family's breakup has not been found, it is plausible that the explosion may have triggered it.

By 1895, Marx was employed as a photographer for *Harper's Weekly,* which had begun publishing half-tone photographs instead of just graphic reproductions.[123] Marx also became a member of the James J. Millard Club at 335 Hoyt Street in Brooklyn, a social club, where the library was decorated with his flash photographs.[124]

Marx's crowning achievement in flash photography occurred on March 25, 1895, when he photographed the entire audience of more than 3,500 people at the Metropolitan Opera House during an intermission of the popular opera *Siegfried* by Richard Wagner. Marx arranged his equipment when the curtain was down. The curtain was raised and he had one minute to take the picture before the second act began. Using a mammoth 18 x 22 inch camera placed twenty feet behind the footlights, Marx illuminated the theater with 35 synchronized flash charges, comprised of magnesium and other substances that he kept confidential, suspended on a thirty-foot iron frame, in the center of which the camera was positioned. The lighting, set off with current from an electric battery controlled by his assistant, was intensified by white cards behind the flashes. In the photo, the face of the conductor in the foreground was overexposed as a result of being so close to the

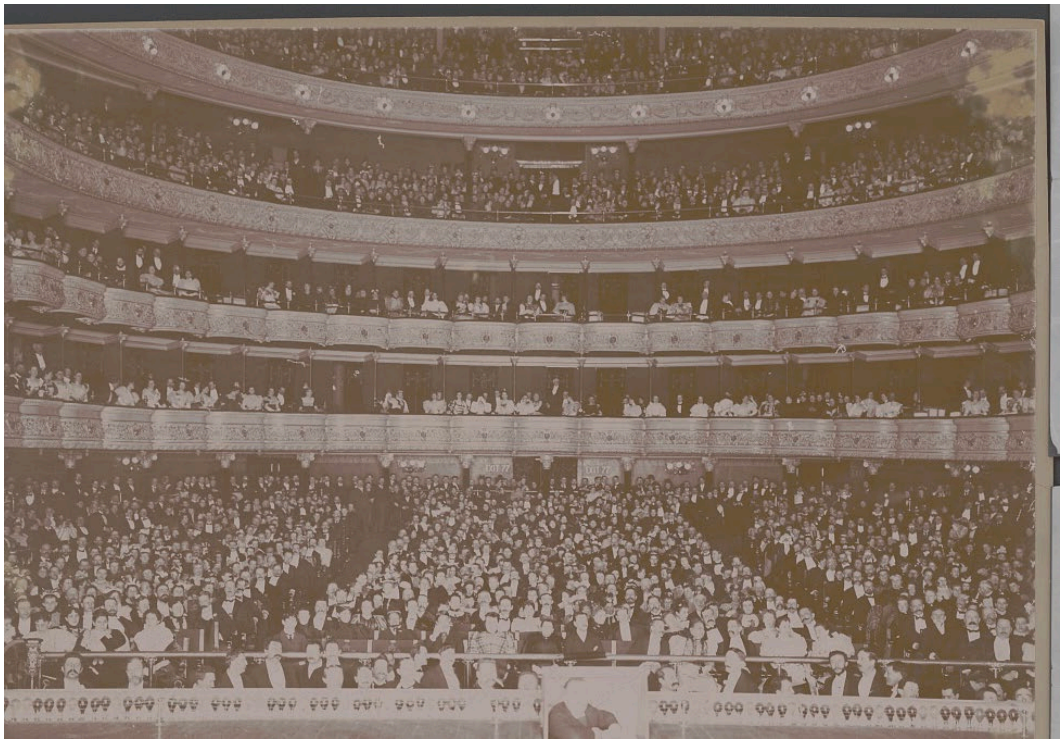
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[122] After 1880, Elizabeth Collins Marx was not found definitely in census records by this researcher until 1920, when she was listed as a widow living with her daughters Gertrude and Julie, and Gertrude's husband Owen Wright in Queens, New York. In the 1940 U.S. Census, Elizabeth was residing with Owen and Gertrude in Detroit, Michigan, along with her son Henry C. Marx, salesman, building supplies. The 1950 U.S. Census recorded Elizabeth, 88, and Gertrude, 69, widows, in Los Angeles, where Elizabeth died on November 5, 1950. California Death Index.

[123] "A Neighborhood Club," *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 29, 1895, 11. The *Brooklyn Eagle* is sometimes found as the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.

[124] Ibid. The Millard club also had a reading room and game room, a cafe and billiard room in the basement, and a garden. In 1896, an Ernest Marx, possibly the photographer, was a trustee of the Bug Club at 63 St. Marks Place, Brooklyn. "Brooklyn Clubs," *Brooklyn Eagle*, September 12, 1896, 10. According to New York City directories, this Marx also lived at 63 St. Marks Place, Brooklyn, from 1895 to 1898.

flash but the audience was captured in detail. *Harper's Weekly* published the unprecedented photograph in a double-page spread on April 8 and the accomplishment was covered by other print media.[125]

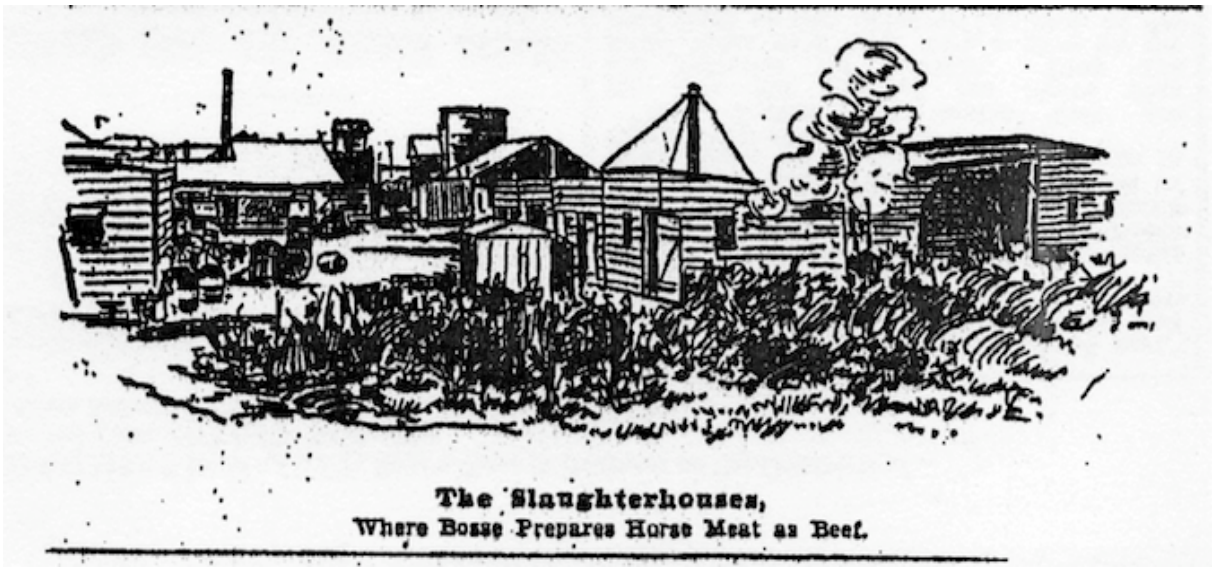


Ernest Marx, Metropolitan Opera House, "The Largest Flashlight Photograph Ever Made," *Harper's Weekly*, April 6, 1895. During an intermission, Marx captured the attendees at a performance of Wagner's *Siegfried*, attended by more than 3,500 people. The illustration above is from an uncropped print of the photo that appeared cropped in *Harper's Weekly.* Library of Congress, # 2004678715.

[125] "A New Advance in Photography," *Harper's Weekly,* April 6, 1895. Marx used an American Optical Co. camera with a Zeiss lens. He estimated the flash duration as 1/45 of a second. *Photographic Times* 26:5 (May 1, 1895), 302. Other reports of the event, some preceding *Harper's Weekly,* were published in the *New York Times*, April 3, 1895, 9; *Boston Evening Transcript*, April 4, 1895, 5; *Courier-News* (Bridgewater), April 2, 1895, 4; and *Photographic Times* 26:5 (May 1, 1895), 301–302.



Ready for the Slaughter.
Specimens of the Animals Killed in Bosse's Slaughterhouse.



The Slaughterhouses,
Where Bosse Prepares Horse Meat as Beef.

Ernest Marx, "Ready for the Slaughter" and "The Slaughterhouse," illustrations based on photographs in "Horsemeat in Market," *New York Times*, January 20, 1896, 9, Marx's exposé of a horse butcher in Brooklyn who was selling meat from diseased horses for human consumption.

Less than a year after this triumph, Marx exposed a dreadful horse meat business in Brooklyn, recounted in a widely reprinted long article on January 20, 1896, in the *New York Times*.[126] Marx, who described himself as "a lover of the horse," was appalled at what he found on what a decade later would be called a muckraking expedition.[127] He spent five mornings touring the Rockaway Avenue facilities of a Belgian horse butcher, Henry Bosse, by posing as the Boston agent of a French syndicate that supposedly wanted to buy his entire product. Described as "the special photographer for *Harper's*," Marx "inspected the entire plant," and took a dozen photographs, two of which were reproduced as drawings to accompany the text. One depicted two broken down horses and the other was a long view of the slaughterhouses.

Bosse, whose English was imperfect, was delighted to converse in French with Marx and apparently explained his disgusting and illegal practices without reserve, as did one of Bosse's employees, who explained with a grin that horse organs were being used in "nearly all the Coney Island Frankfurters." Marx found that Bosse was butchering about 300 horses and mules per week, many of which were diseased and dying. Some had collapsed on the street and were picked up by Bosse's wagons during the night before they could be retrieved by the Board of Health. Marx reported that Bosse kept living horses alive for as long as 36 hours without food or water before killing them and that his men often mutilated the animals before dispatching them with a knife or hammer. Virtually all the carcasses were marketed. Skins went to a firm for tanning and shoe manufacture. The hindquarters were sold to a Newark firm for smoking and sale as "chipped beef." Some of the better meat went to butchers to sell as "horsesteaks." Bosse boiled hoofs to

[126] "Horsemeat in Market," *New York Times*, January 20, 1896, 9, reprinted, for example, in *Commercial Appeal* (Memphis, Tennessee), February 9, 1896, 20.
[127] "Lover of the horse" from "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred with the Camera," *Morning Telegraph*, May 17, 1903, 2.

manufacture glue and the foul odors generated numerous complaints from his neighbors, who were kept away by "twenty fierce dogs, who are fed on nothing but blood and raw horse meat."

One of Marx's statements in this article provided biographical information about him not found elsewhere: "In France, from which I come, I have often eaten horse meat, but there, as you know, the horses are especially fattened for the purpose, and only fat and strictly healthy horses are killed for eating."[128] Horse meat of any kind is forbidden for religious Jews to eat, so since his father was involved in the kosher food business, it is unlikely that Ernest would have tasted it at home before or after emigrating in 1858. In August 1873, at the age of 21, he became a naturalized U.S. citizen and applied for a passport.[129] He used it on a trip to France, where at the time eating horse meat was commonplace.[130] If Ernest was not observing Jewish dietary laws in the 1870s, that may help explain why he married a Christian, Elizabeth Ruth Collins, in 1879.

[128]" Horsemeat in Market," op cit.
[129] U.S. Passport Applications, Ancestry.com. Marx was naturalized on August 7, 1873, and applied for his passport a week later. After obtaining his passport, Marx went to France and stayed there for some time before returning. "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred With the Camera," *The Morning Telegraph* (New York), May 17. 1903, 2.
[130] Consuming horse meat in France continued until recently. Henry Samuel, "'I get treated like an assassin': Inside Paris's last remaining horse butcher," *The Telegraph* (UK), December 28, 2023, web, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/12/28/last-horse-butcher-in-paris-on-its-last-legs/. Many horses and other animals not usually eaten were consumed during the Prussian siege of Paris in 1870. Anne Ewbank, "During an 1870 Siege, Trapped Parisians Dined on Rat, Cat, and Elephant," *Gastro Obscura*, April 10, 2017, https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/paris-siege-eating-zoo-animals.



Ernest Marx, A Young Lion, "Barnum's in Town," *Leslie's Weekly*, April 15, 1897, 248.

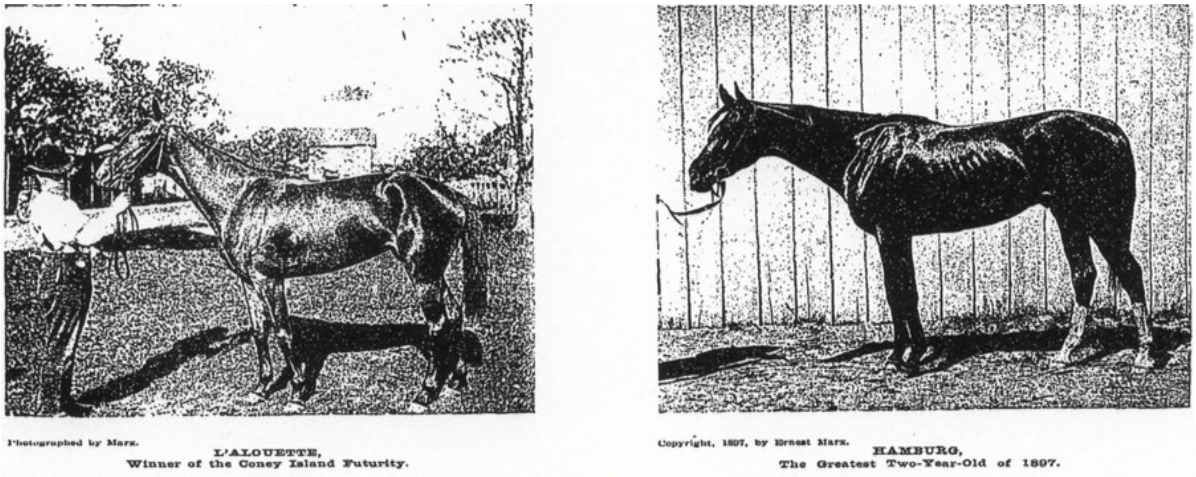
In the latter 1890s, Marx continued to photograph animals for print media. In spring 1897, he used "a singularly effective electro-photographic process" to take flash pictures of a Bengal tiger and a young lion behind bars at Barnum's circus at its headquarters in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The photos were reproduced with an article about Barnum's in *Leslie's Weekly,* without an explanation of the process, which likely was the same as he had used at the Metropolitan Opera House on a smaller scale.[131]

In the last years of the decade, Marx's photographs featured racehorses, boxers, and a football hero. In November 1897, his portraits of the four Greatest Horses of the Year, L'Alouette, Hamburg, Ornament, and Ben Holladay, appeared in the *New York Times*.[132]

In late December, Marx set off for the Blue Grass region of Kentucky to photograph more thoroughbreds. Covering this trip, a Cincinnati newspaper described him as "the famous photographer of race horses of Brooklyn, N.Y., who has taken many of the greatest horses and

[131] "Barnum's in Town," *Leslie's Weekly*, April 15, 1897, 248.
[132] *New York Times*, November 14, 1897, Section Illustrated, 10. Marx was a good friend of thoroughbred racehorse owner and trainer Charles Tillinghast Patterson (1869–1918), who owned Ornament, the 1897 American Horse of the Year. Marx suggested the name for one of Patterson's horses. *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), June 13, 1898, 6. In 1901, William C. Whitney purchased Hamburg for the astounding price of $60,000, equivalent to about $2.5 million in 2025. A head and neck photo of Hamburg by Marx accompanied the article, "Whitney Tells Why He Paid $60,000 for Horse," *Evening World* (New York), January 31, 1901, 8.

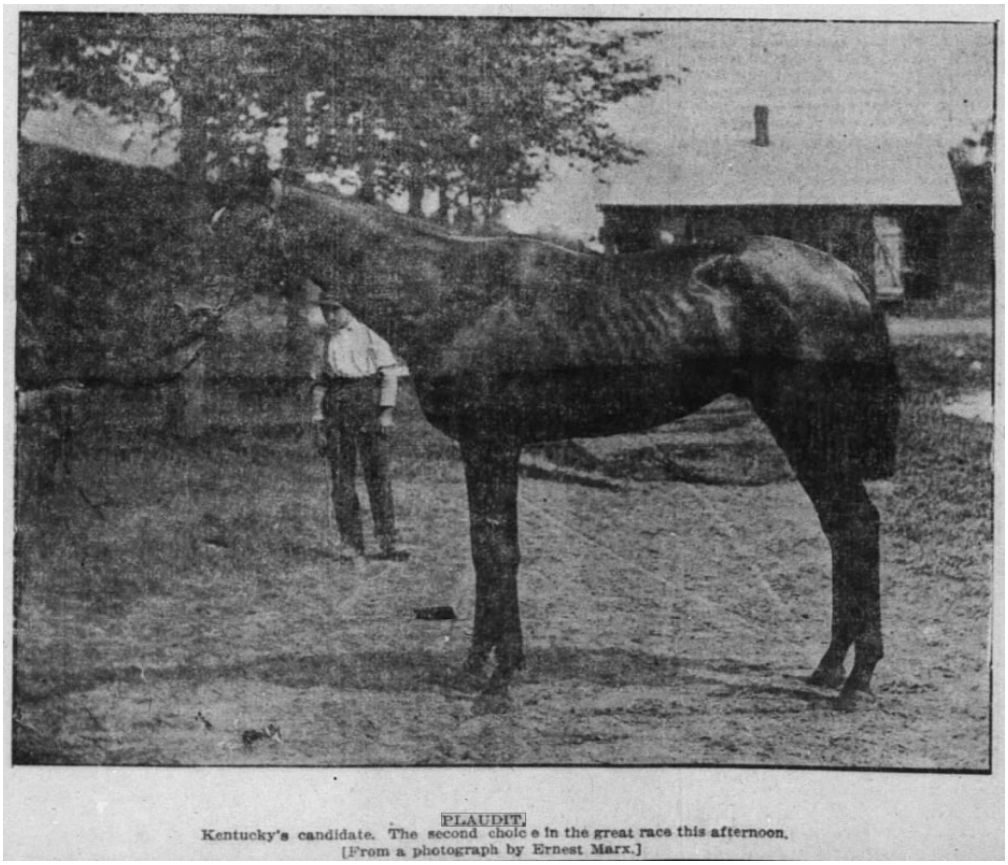
jockeys on the metropolitan tracks….”[133] One product of this journey, Marx’s photo of Plaudit, who won the Kentucky Derby on May 4, 1898, appeared in the Louisville *Courier-Journal* on the morning of the race.[134] Subsequently, the same newspaper referred to Marx as “Col. Ernest Marx, the animal photographer,” honoring him with a Kentucky colonelcy.[135] In September 1898, the *Courier-Journal* published a graphic based on another Marx photograph of Martimas, the winner of the Kentucky Futurity, with his trainer and jockey. The accompanying text described Marx as having “the reputation of being the best photographer of horses in the country.[136]



Ernest Marx, above, Allouette and Hamburg; below, Ornament and Ben Holladay. “Greatest Horses of the Year,” *New York Times*, November 14, 1897, Section Illustrated, 10.

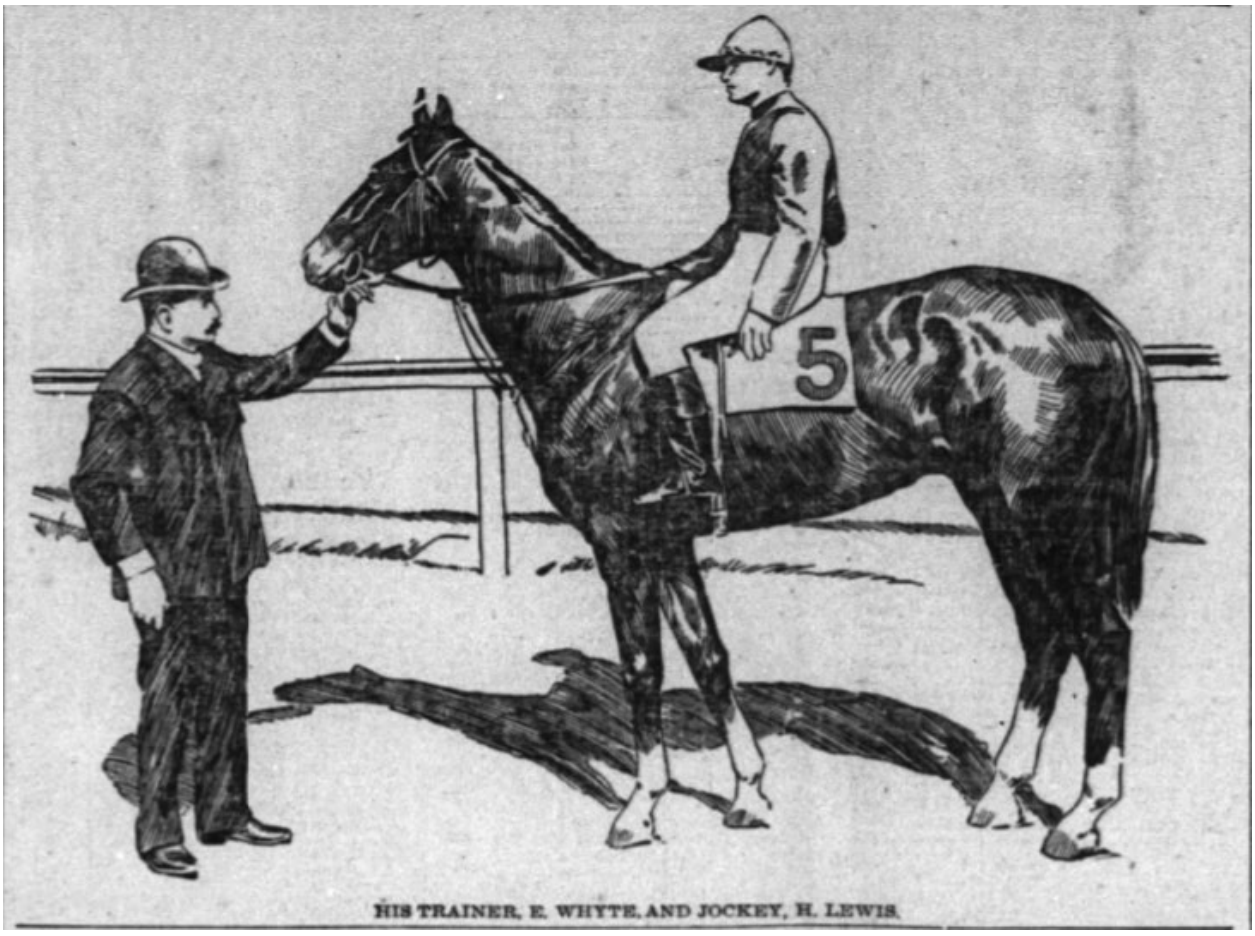


[133] *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 31, 1897, 3.
[134] *Courier-Journal* (Louisville), May 4, 1898, 6.
[135] *Courier-Journal*, June 13, 1898, 6. It is not clear from this article whether Marx was already a Kentucky Colonel or the newspaper had decided to bestow this honor upon him.
[136] “Martimas, The Futurity Winner,” *Courier-Journal*, September 11, 1898, 26.



PLAUDIT.
Kentucky's candidate. The second choice in the great race this afternoon.
[From a photograph by Ernest Marx.]

Ernest Marx, Plaudit, racehorse scheduled to compete in the Kentucky Derby, *Courier-Journal* (Louisville), May 4, 1898, 6.



Ernest Marx, Martimas, the Futurity Winner, with trainer E. Whytte and jockey H. Lewis, *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), September 11, 1898, 26. Graphic based on photograph by Ernest Marx.

In fall 1899, the New York newspaper, *The World,* carried a graphic of two Yale football players, Snetjer and Olcott, taken during "secret" practice, based on a photo by Marx, to accompany a story about the upcoming game against Princeton that afternoon.[137] After the game, *The World* ran a story on November 25, 1899, featuring a graphic based on a photograph by Marx showing Princeton University football star Arthur Poe (1879–1951) kicking a football.[138] Poe, one of six brothers known for their football prowess, was the hero in the Tigers' victory over Yale, having "begged [a] chance to kick," and succeeded with a drop-kick field goal that won the game 11-10.[139] After its first appearance, Marx's stop-action shot was reproduced elsewhere around the country.[140]



YALE AND PRINCETON MEET TO-DAY IN THE LAST GREAT GAME OF THE YEAR.

Old Eli the Favorite, but the Struggle Will Probably Be a Very Hard One —Both Teams Are Ready to Fight a Desperate Battle.

BY CHARLES CHADWICK.

Princeton and Yale meet to-day at New Haven for the final big game of the season. While the betting favors Yale, the actual chances do not. There is some talk of history repeating itself by a score of 6–0 in favor of the Blue, following the 6–0 score last Saturday, but '97 is not the only season which may happen again.

The followers of football will remember Harvard's highly rated team of '91, which Yale defeated after having experienced what was at that time considered a disastrous preliminary season. Yale had all along looked to the last game as the hardest one of the year, but a few days later Princeton defeated Yale.

As far as physical condition goes the two teams are, on paper, about evenly matched. The advantage ought to be with Yale because her men have been tried out in a championship game. Princeton's men, while they have been carefully trained for to-day, are more of an unknown quantity. There is this possibility: Princeton's team may not be able to stand the pace set by Yale and the result may be a victory for Yale by a large score. This is only a possibility, however, and, barring any actual knowledge of Princeton's inability to last, it is safe to say that the two teams will be pretty equally matched.

The game promises to be a hard-fought one. Yale has proved herself to possess rare qualities as a fighting team and no matter what odds may turn up against her she will not waver, while Princeton teams have always had the reputation for playing hard up to the last call of time.

Princeton's offense, less brilliant than was Harvard's, will undoubtedly be steadier. What it gains in the middle of the field it will gain near the goal line. At punting McBride will outclass Wheeler, but Wheeler this year has not had his punts run back the way the Yale captain has. For this reason I look to see Princeton's kicking game make a stronger showing against Yale than Harvard's did.

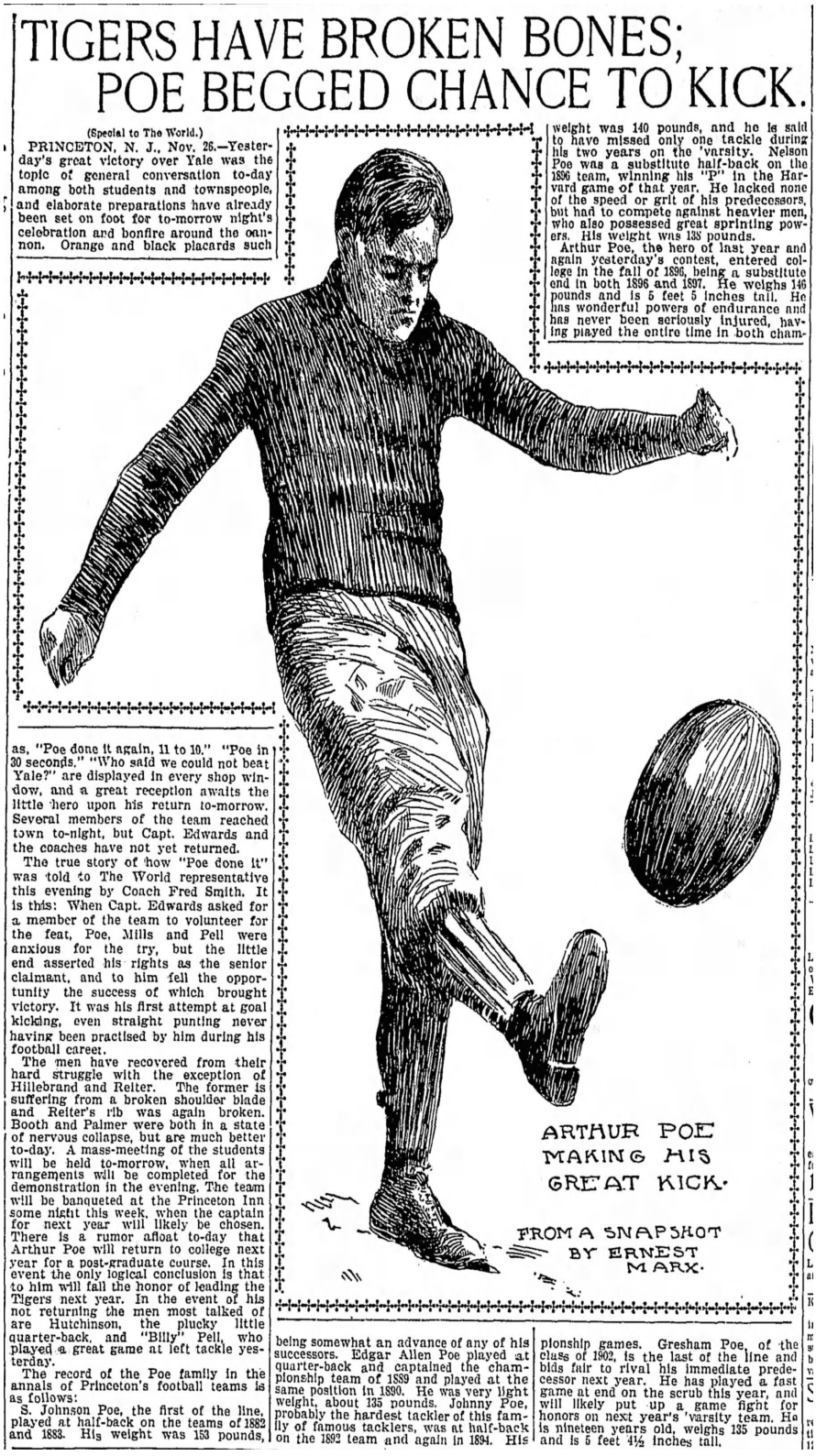
Yale's offense will find a weak spot in Naegle's centre, where Mills plays left guard. McBride's terrific plunges ought to make a greater impression on the Tigers' line than they did on Harvard's clever forwards.

Snetjer, right end. Olcott, right guard.

(Sketches taken by a World photographer during Yale's secret practice.)

Ernest Marx, Yale football players Sultjer and Olcott, at a secret practice, drawing by Mortimer from Marx's photograph. *The World*, November 25, 1899, 5.

[137] Charles Chadwick, "Yale and Princeton Meet To-Day in the Last Great Game of the Year," *The World* (New York), November 25, 1899, 5.
[138] "Tigers Have Broken Bones; Poe Begged Chance to Kick," *The World* (New York), November 27, 1899, 8.
[139] "Art Poe," Hall of Fame, National Football Foundation, https://footballfoundation.org/honors/hall-of-fame/art-poe/2096. Last accessed May 6, 2025.
[140] For example, *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 10, 1899, 14.



TIGERS HAVE BROKEN BONES; POE BEGGED CHANCE TO KICK.

(Special to The World.)

PRINCETON, N. J., Nov. 26.—Yesterday's great victory over Yale was the topic of general conversation to-day among both students and townspeople, and elaborate preparations have already been set on foot for to-morrow night's celebration and bonfire around the cannon. Orange and black placards such as, "Poe done it again, 11 to 10," "Poe in 30 seconds," "Who said we could not beat Yale?" are displayed in every shop window, and a great reception awaits the little hero upon his return to-morrow. Several members of the team reached town to-night, but Capt. Edwards and the coaches have not yet returned.

The true story of how "Poe done it" was told to The World representative this evening by Coach Fred Smith. It is this: When Capt. Edwards asked for a member of the team to volunteer for the feat, Poe, Mills and Pell were anxious for the try, but the little end asserted his rights as the senior claimant, and to him fell the opportunity the success of which brought victory. It was his first attempt at goal kicking, even straight punting never having been practised by him during his football career.

The men have recovered from their hard struggle with the exception of Hillebrand and Reiter. The former is suffering from a broken shoulder blade and Reiter's rib was again broken. Booth and Palmer were both in a state of nervous collapse, but are much better to-day. A mass-meeting of the students will be held to-morrow, when all arrangements will be completed for the demonstration in the evening. The team will be banqueted at the Princeton Inn some night this week, when the captain for next year will likely be chosen. There is a rumor afloat to-day that Arthur Poe will return to college next year for a post-graduate course. In this event the only logical conclusion is that to him will fall the honor of leading the Tigers next year. In the event of his not returning the men most talked of are Hutchinson, the plucky little quarter-back, and "Billy" Pell, who played a great game at left tackle yesterday.

The record of the Poe family in the annals of Princeton's football teams is as follows:

S. Johnson Poe, the first of the line, played at half-back on the teams of 1882 and 1883. His weight was 153 pounds, being somewhat an advance of any of his successors. Edgar Allen Poe played at quarter-back and captained the championship team of 1889 and played at the same position in 1890. He was very light weight, about 135 pounds. Johnny Poe, probably the hardest tackler of this family of famous tacklers, was at half-back on the 1892 team and again in 1894. His weight was 140 pounds, and he is said to have missed only one tackle during his two years on the 'varsity. Nelson Poe was a substitute half-back on the 1896 team, winning his "P" in the Harvard game of that year. He lacked none of the speed or grit of his predecessors, but had to compete against heavier men, who also possessed great sprinting powers. His weight was 138 pounds.

Arthur Poe, the hero of last year and again yesterday's contest, entered college in the fall of 1896, being a substitute end in both 1896 and 1897. He weighs 146 pounds and is 5 feet 5 inches tall. He has wonderful powers of endurance and has never been seriously injured, having played the entire time in both championship games. Gresham Poe, of the class of 1902, is the last of the line and bids fair to rival his immediate predecessor next year. He has played a fast game at end on the scrub this year, and will likely put up a game fight for honors on next year's 'varsity team. He is nineteen years old, weighs 135 pounds and is 5 feet 4½ inches tall.

ARTHUR POE MAKING HIS GREAT KICK.

FROM A SNAPSHOT BY ERNEST MARX.

Arthur Poe of the Princeton University football team making a game-winning kick, from a snapshot by Ernest Marx. *The World* (New York), November 27, 1899, 8. The use of Marx's photography as the basis for these detailed sports illustrations reflects the era's burgeoning reliance on high-speed "snapshot" technology to document historic athletic feats for the daily press.

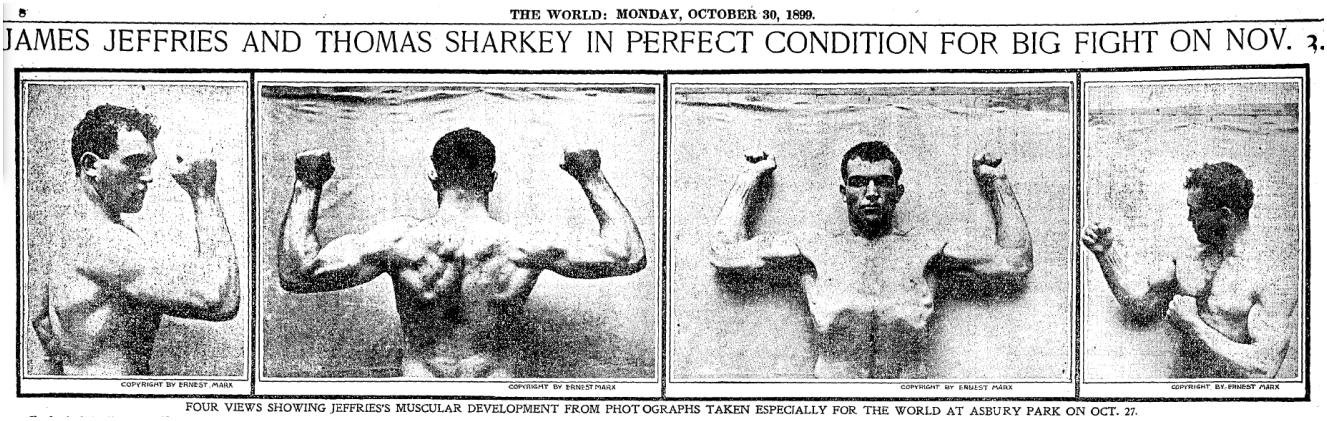
Boxing was another of Marx's photojournalistic subjects for *The World* that year. Marx worked on assignment in advance of the championship bout on November 3, when James L. Jeffries successfully defended his world heavyweight title against Tom Sharkey at the Coney Island Athletic Club. While it is not known if Marx photographed the event, which was recorded in motion pictures, he did take shots of both fighters during their training.[141] In October, an unnamed reporter for *The World* met Marx in Staten Island, "loaded down with photographs of Starkey." Some included views of the five-foot eight 1/2 inch Irishman sparring with six-foot four African American Bob Armstrong, to prepare for his match with the six-foot two inch Jeffries. Marx also showed his friend a shot of Starkey punching a bag, taken at 1/4000 of a second. Also impressive to the reporter was a photograph of Sharkey's muscular back, which he wrote looked "like a topographical map [of] a hilly or mountainous country."[142] Marx's photo of Sharkey sparring with Armstrong appeared in *The World* on October 5.[143] Marx also traveled to Asbury Park, where Jeffries trained. Four Marx photos of Jeffries showing off his muscles appeared in *The*

[141] The American Mutoscope and Biographical Company filmed the entire fight. Two stills from the film were published in *The World*, November 11, 1899, 3. That film is lost but an unauthorized short film shot by a spectator from a camera hidden in a cigar box survived and can be seen on YouTube.

[142] "Sharkey's Back Like a Map," *Buffalo News*, October 12, 1899, 4. This article was not illustrated. Starkey had been in training at New Dorp, Staten Island, while Jeffries prepared in Asbury Park. "They Prepare Silently," *The World* (New York), October 6, 1899, 10.

[143] "Sailor Sharkey Working Hard for His Fight With Jeffries," *The World* (New York), October 5, 1899, 8. This Marx photo appears to be heavily retouched for publication. Another Marx photo of Sharkey, driving a sulky, is at the Library of Congress (LOC) in in the Sharkey folder in the *New York World Telegram & Sun* archives. Whether this photo was published has not been confirmed but it might have appeared when he died in 1953, as there is a reference to "dead" on the verso. Kate Phillips of LOC deserves kudos for locating this Marx photo, reproduced on page 55 of this article.

World on October 30.[144] On the day of the fight, *The World* featured a long article with four head shots by Marx of Jeffries, Sharkey, Armstrong, and Jeffries' trainer Tommy Ryan.[145]

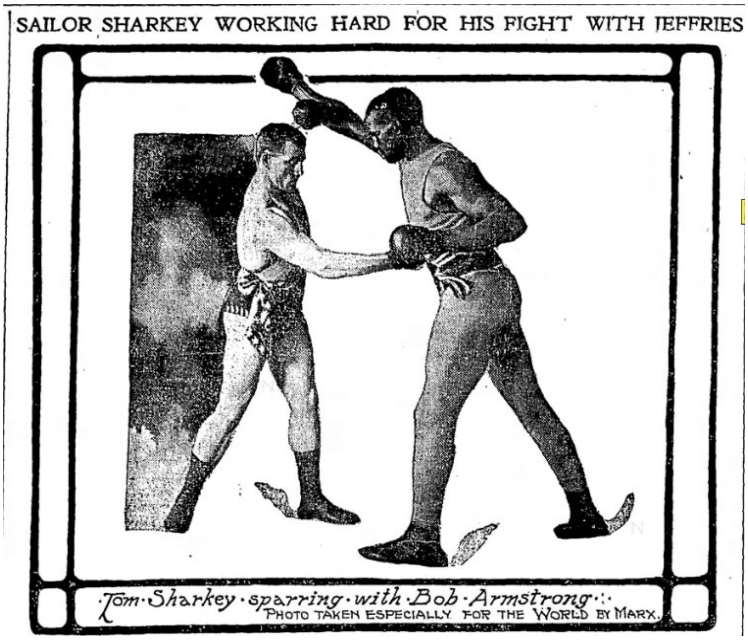

THE WORLD: MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1899.

JAMES JEFFRIES AND THOMAS SHARKEY IN PERFECT CONDITION FOR BIG FIGHT ON NOV. 3.

COPYRIGHT BY ERNEST MARX

FOUR VIEWS SHOWING JEFFRIES'S MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN ESPECIALLY FOR THE WORLD AT ASBURY PARK ON OCT. 27.

Ernest Marx, James Jeffries before boxing match with Thomas Sharkey, *The World* (New York), October 30, 1899, 8. These "four views" captured just days before the Jeffries-Sharkey fight demonstrate the increasing use of specialized athletic photography to build public anticipation and analyze the physical "condition" of professional athletes in the late 19th-century press.


SAILOR SHARKEY WORKING HARD FOR HIS FIGHT WITH JEFFRIES

Tom Sharkey sparring with Bob Armstrong.

PHOTO TAKEN ESPECIALLY FOR THE WORLD BY MARX.

Ernest Marx, Tom Sharkey on left sparring with Bob Armstrong to prepare for bout with the taller James Jeffries, *The World* (New York), October 5, 1899, 8.

[144] "James Jeffries and Thomas Sharkey in Perfect Condition for the Big Fight on Nov. 3," *The World* (New York), October 30, 1899, 8.
[145] *The World* (New York), November 3, 1899, 14.

The tall boxer Bob Armstrong appeared again in Marx's three photos of Bob Fitzimmons, preparing for his bout with Gus Ruhlin in 1900, again published in *The World*. In one, Armstrong is holding a horse while Fitzsimmons is preparing to shoe it, while a group of five trainers pose nearby. In the others, Fitzimmons is shaping a shoe and heating a piece of iron with Armstrong and others in the background.[146]



Ernest Marx, "Jeffries and Sharkey Will Fight Tonight," with Tom Sharkey, Tommy Davis, James Jeffries, and Bob Armstrong. *The World*, November 3, 1899, 14. Jeffries won the bout to retain his world heavyweight title.

[146] "Bob Fitzsimmons and Gus Ruhlin Are Ready to Fight; The Ex-Champion Spends Part of His Training Time Shoeing Horses and Bricklaying," *The World* (New York), August 6, 1890, 8.

Marx in the Early 1900s: His Last Years

Marx's continuing photographic work around racetracks led to his fine portrait of the boy jockey Gordon Wilkerson, published in half-tone in the *Brooklyn Eagle* in 1901, accompanying an article about Wilkerson's near fatal accident at the Brighton Beach course. Wilkerson was riding Merriment, who went down rounding a turn and the jockey fell over his head and temporarily lay lifeless on the track. Merriment got up and finished the race without him. Fortunately, Wilkerson was not seriously injured. In the portrait, the confident lad looks at the camera with his hands on his hips.[147]


(Photo by Marx.)

JOCKEY GORDON WILKERSON.
Who Was Injured Again Yesterday at Brighton Beach.

Ernest Marx, Jockey Gordon Wilkerson, *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 27, 1901, 7. Wilkerson had recently survived a bad fall at the Brighton Beach racetrack.

On September 30, 1901, *The Evening World* (New York) published one of Marx's finest photographs of a racehorse in motion, depicting William C. Whitney's two-year-old Nasturtium racing at full speed, ridden by a stable boy named Reddy. All four of the horse's legs are well off

[147] "Jockey Wilkerson Is Hurt Again; Midget Rider Figures in Another Tumble, but Escapes With a Few Bruises," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 27, 1901, 7. Marx's photographs of other jockeys was reported in the *Washington Post*, March 24, 1903, 8.



Ernest Marx, Nasturtium ridden by Reddy, an exercise boy. *The World*, September 30, 1901, 6. Nasturtium (1899–1916) was considered the best two-year old colt in 1901. William C. Whitney bought the stallion that year for $50,000. Marx's ability to freeze such high-velocity motion—evidenced by the horse being entirely airborne—was a hallmark of his technical skill and a significant draw for major metropolitan dailies covering the turf.

the ground, gathered under him, in this stop-action photograph. The article stated that Marx had been doing a series of horses in motion for the newspaper and that "for more than a decade has been recognized as the best photographer of horses in this country."[148] In addition to the *Evening World*, Marx also supplied images to *The Morning Telegraph*, which in 1903 explained, "His pictures of horses are always in *The Morning Telegraph*. It is hardly necessary to state that they are always good. Their keynote is action."[149]

While most of Marx's known photographs of people were of men, his portrait of Miss Genevieve Hecker (1883–1960) holding a golf club was published in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, on the occasion of

[148] "Nasturtium at Full Speed As the Camera Caught Him," *The Evening World* (New York), September 30, 1901, 6.
[149] "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred With the Camera," *The Morning Telegraph* (New York), May 17, 1903, 2.

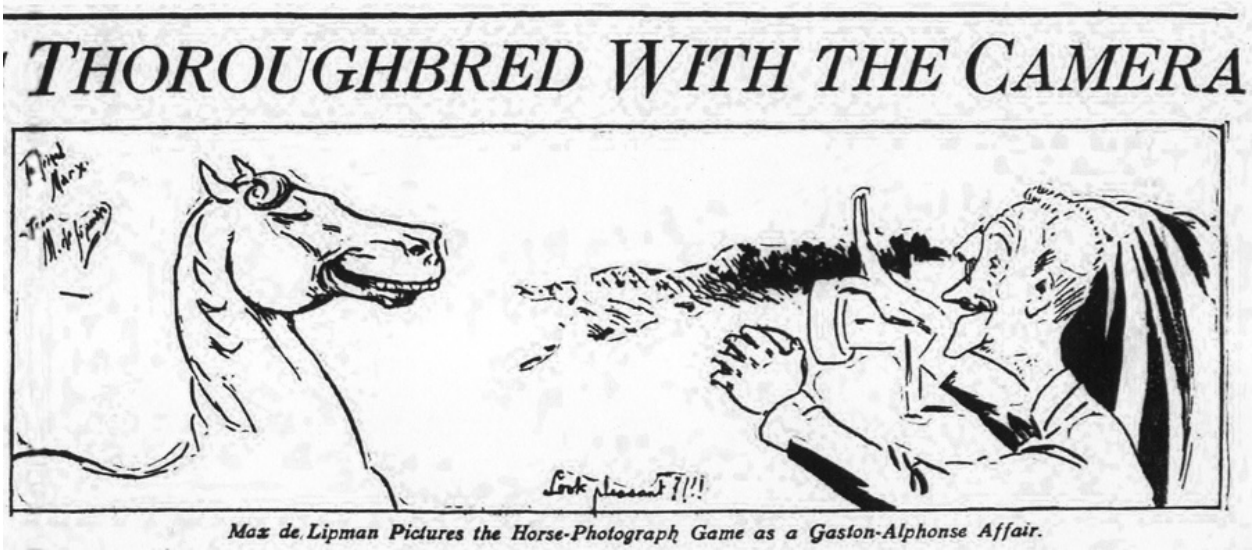
her marriage to Wall Street investor Charles Tabor Stout (1872–1948) on April 21, 1903.[150] At the



Ernest Marx, Mrs. Charles Tabor Stout, née Genevieve Hecker, champion golfer, *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 2, 1903. Marx took this photo in 1901, as indicated by the copyright date at lower right.

time, Hecker was the two-time amateur women's champion golfer of the United States. Marx used a wide aperture on his lens to throw the rather busy background with architectural elements out of focus to reduce distraction from the figure. Hecker held the golf club down at arm's length with both hands, creating a solid triangle with her head and creating an impression of power and composure.

[150] "Cupid Conquers Fair Miss Hecker; Champion Woman Golfer of America Weds Mr. Charles Tabor Stout," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 22, 1903, 13. Hecker won the U.S. Women National Championship in 1901 and 1902 and New York City's Metropolitan Golf Championship for women in 1900, 1901, 1905, and 1906. In 1904, she published *Golf for Women*, the first book on the subject. A cutout graphic of Marx's portrait of Hecker appeared in the *Cincinnati Enquirer,* May 3, 1903, 19, without credit. In 1921, Stout wrote a book opposing Prohibition. "Says Prohibition Will Not Endure," *Nashville Banner*, October 23, 1921, 22.



Caricature of Ernest Marx by Max de Lipman, *Morning Telegraph*, May 17, 1903, 2. Max de Lipman has included a personal inscription in the upper left corner: "To Friend Marx."

What was probably Marx's last interview appeared in *The Morning Telegraph* on May 17, 1903, along with five amusing cartoons of him at work.[151] "You all know Marx," wrote the reporter. "Perhaps you may not know him personally. Certainly, you are acquainted with him through the medium of his work. He is the Photographer to the Equine Smart Set. His pictures of horses are seen always in *The Morning Telegraph.* . . . Mr. Marx is the first man who ever took the first perfect photograph of a horse in high action, in detail."[152] Writing that Marx had been active in this field since 1880, when he began painting portraits of horsemen, the reporter commented,

[151] "Catching the Nervous Thoroughbred With the Camera," *The Morning Telegraph*, May 17, 1903, 2. Some of the cartoons were created by Max De Lipman (1863–1911), who trained at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. While this article is an excellent source on Marx and his photography of horses, the reporter wrote that Marx stated that his first photo-finishes of horse races were done in 1889, instead of 1888, as documented in other sources.
[152] Ibid. I did not find photographs credited to Marx in the earlier issues of *The Morning Telegraph*, which did publish an uncredited photograph of a horse race on May 29, 1903, page 3.

"Every horseman knows him, and he is allowed many privileges which others are denied." The reporter made clear that Marx was still photographing the finishes of horse races, when he wrote: "Perhaps you have seen, on a big racing day at the track, a slight, lithe man, thin face, gray hair and mustache, down near the judges' stand. He has his camera in readiness. At the psychological moment, when the horses flash past the finish, Mr. Marx touches the button."[153]



He Has His Troubles, According to Artist Smith.

Caricature of Ernest Marx by Dan Smith, *Morning Telegraph*, May 17, 1903, 2. The labeled camera case emphasizes Marx's identity as a well-known figure in the New York sporting press.

In response to the reporter's query on how he achieves his results, Marx responded that he has trained his eye through long practice. "When I first started in, take for instance, a race with six horses coming down the stretch. Then I could see only a jumble of twenty-four legs. Now, with my educated eye, I can see each leg of the twenty-four stand out by itself."[154] For horse races, his practiced skill had developed to the point that he no longer needed to use the double-decker camera he had invented years ago but a single camera he designed with a shutter, that operated at 1/3000

[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.

of a second. With this camera, he had photographed a Delaware & Lackawanna train speeding at 60 miles per hour.[155]

When asked how he gets horses to stand still for portraits, Marx, who must have been a horse-whisperer, said, half-jokingly, "I hypnotize them. At least, that's what the horsemen say to me. I never have any trouble with horses. They all seem to like me and, joke or no joke, they all apparently know what I expect of them. Why, believe it or not, they pose for me."[156] Marx gave a recent example of a "fractious" filly that he was told would give him a lot of trouble. He went into the paddock, stood still, and after a time, the horse came up to him and put her nose over his shoulder. "She stood perfectly still for me when I got ready to take her picture."[157]

Marx recalled that he formerly bet on horse races, but "found out that I couldn't play the races and do my work properly. I concluded I would…stick to photography. I discovered there was more in it—for me."[158]

Just a few months later, on July 27, Marx died in Brooklyn of a cerebral embolism, according to his death certificate.[159] An obituary in the *Brooklyn Eagle* attributed the cause to "softening of the brain" (encephalomalacia), which can be caused by a trauma or an infection. No accident was mentioned. The *Eagle* described him as "the greatest living photographer of race horses [who] had established a national reputation in this line of work….it often seemed to his friends as if he exercised a more than human control over the animals he photographed. He supplied all the New York dailies as well as many of the magazines with thoroughbred and sporting photographs. He also did a great deal of private work for owners and associations. Mr. Marx was

[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] State of New York Certificate and Record of Death No, 13020, July 27, 1903. The death certificate stated that Marx, 51, had lived in the U.S. for 45 years, and his residence was 269 Smith Street, Brooklyn.

eccentric in his ways, but a thorough disciple of his art. He was a well known figure at the Metropolitan race tracks, and a host of his friends will mourn his untimely demise."[160] Marx was interred at Salem Fields Cemetery, affiliated with Congregation Emanu-El, in Brooklyn.[161]

Ernest's father Felix Marx, living in New York, probably attended his son's funeral but died suddenly three months later in September.[162] At the time of his death, Felix was described as nearly a millionaire. On hearing the news several hours later, Felix's best friend, David Metzgar, with whom he had emigrated from France, dropped dead.[163] The last notable incident in this sad year for the Marx family was that Ernest's widow Elizabeth contested Felix's unconditional bequest of $1,000 to the synagogue he helped found in Plainfield, but she eventually withdrew her protest.[164]

Conclusion

Ernest Marx has been mentioned previously by a few scholars in connection with his stop-action photographs of horse races beginning in 1888 but he had already become a well-known photographer of animals by that time after working as a jeweler and portrait painter. While Marx probably was preceded in horse race finish photography by a few other photographers, he likely was the first to do so in the New York metropolitan area. Marx was credited with perfecting this type of photograph and became prolific in this specialty from 1888 to 1890. Subsequently, except

[160] "Ernest Marx Dead; Well Known Photographer of Race Horses Dies of Softening of the Brain," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 28, 1903, 13.
[161] Find-A-Grave. Memorial ID 192141246. Salem Fields, adjoining other cemeteries off Jamaica Avenue in Brooklyn, was established in 1851.
[162] Felix Marx died on September 21, 1903. "Felix Marx Dies in New York City," *Plainfield Evening News*, September 23, 1903, 1; *New York Times*, July 16, 1893, 7; *Plainfield Courier-News*, September 23, 1903, 1. Felix Marx was survived by his daughter, Mrs. Ernestine Hyams, and a sister, Mrs. Margaret Loeb, both of New York.
[163] "Felix Marx Dies in New York City," *Plainfield Evening News*, September 23, 1903, 1.
[164] "$1,000 for the Jewish Synagogue; Bequest of Felix Marx - Contest Delays Settlement," *Courier-News* (Bridgewater), February 2, 1904, 4.

for a brief period when he operated the New York kosher restaurant founded by his father, he continued to be active as a photographer until his death in 1903, eight days after his 51st birthday. A horse lover, Marx was considered the preeminent equine photographer of his day but he also garnered public attention for his other work, including but not limited to his photographs of other animals, sports celebrities, cannon shells in flight, and his innovative flash photograph of the entire audience at the Metropolitan Opera House, an unprecedented technical achievement. Marx was described as a regular supplier of sports-related photographs to New York print media, but it is likely that many of them were published without credit, and few original prints by him have so far been located. Hopefully, more of his photographs will be found in the future to secure his reputation as a pioneering sports photographer whose career blossomed when he lived in Plainfield, New Jersey.



Ernest Marx, boxer Tom Sharkey driving a sulky, 1899? *New York World. Telegram & Sun* collection, Library of Congress, Sharkey biographical folder. Other photos by Marx of Sharkey in 1899 depict him shoeing a horse, perhaps the one he is driving here.



GROUP OF OFFICIALS IN STEWARDS' STAND AT AQUEDUCT, by Marx, Racetrack Photographer.

Graphic reproduction photograph by Ernest Marx, Group of Officials in Steward's Stand at Aqueduct Racetrack, *Brooklyn Citizens,* October 16, 1890, 13.

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