

# Calotype

Through this lesson we learned about photography history, different techniques and the inventors of the techniques. I choose to do a little bit more research on the Calotype, invented by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1835.

## **William Henry Fox Talbot**

Talbot was a British scientist, chemist, inventor and photographic pioneer. He was born February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1800. And grew up an only child. Later in life he would go on to study at Cambridge University, where he would publish several academic articles in the fields of, Mathematics, astrology and physic



Talbot liked to paint, but he was frustrated with his own lack of an imagination so in 1833 he started experimenting with mechanical and chemical side to photography. On his quest to find the possibility of creating more accurate images. And In 1834 he produced his first “photogenic drawing”.

Talbot's wife, Constance, whom he married in 1832 also helped and participated in the development of images. This will make her the first female photographer.

His experiments Resulted in the three primary elements of photography, Developing, fixing and printing.

## Calotype



The word calotype itself means Beautiful impression; it is also known as the talbotype. (After talbot himself). This technique turned out to be an early photographic process, where paper coated in silver chloride was used to develop images. Talbot had discovered that by using this method, he would bring the development time down from an hour to 1-3 minutes.

This is also counted as the first negative-positive process. The way this worked was that they would expose the coated paper to the lights from a camera obscura, which resulted in the light areas of the paper turning dark, forming an image. Furthermore, the calotype would turn out to be an improvement of the daguerreotype, which was developed by the French inventor L.-J.-M. Daguerre.

The idea of the calotype process was to create an image directly onto paper, after putting it through the camera. Which made the method very attractive to other people. But because Daguerre had published his work first, Talbot got little to no financial aid, to help with his discoveries. Which made buying a license to use the calotype awfully expensive.

Talbot published his discoveries in 1835. Later, he would also publish the book Pencil of nature, in six instalments between 1844-1846. This is the first book documenting

photographic illustrations. It also documents the beginning of photography through the studies of art, objects and architecture.

### **Photography today**

Did Calotype have any effect for photography as we see it today? Yes, it had. The Calotype laid the basis for images printed on paper. The negative-positive process allowed for more than one photo to be taken at the time, this was also the first non-electric method, which used to dominate photography.

The discovery of shorter development time also allowed for people to be photographed. In the form of portraits. Which turned the focus away from photographing objects, architecture etc. All these steps have been important for the development of photography and how it works today.