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## Four Bachrachs

Bradford Bachrach

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### Recommended Citation

Bachrach, Bradford. "Four Bachrachs." *The Courier* 9.2 (1972): 14-36.

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Herba Trinitatis.  
Freyschamkraut.



*Viola flämica.*

From *Herbals of Five Centuries* by Claus Nissen, Zurich, Munich and Olten, 1958.  
Plate 20, by Leonhard Fuchs, published in Basle, Switzerland, 1545.  
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# THE COURIER

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

VOLUME IX, NUMBER 2

JANUARY, 1972

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## *Four Bachrachs*

by Bradford Bachrach

*The art collections in the George Arents Research Library are greatly enhanced by the Louis Fabian Bachrach Sr. Papers, the gift of the Bachrach family, documenting the career of a leader in the photographic arts. In addition to manuscripts of magazine articles, speeches and interviews, correspondence and subject files, the collection includes some 200 photographs made by Mr. Bachrach and members of his family: his father, David, and his sons, Louis Fabian, Jr. and Bradford Bachrach.*

*With the exception of a few early scenes of the Maryland-District of Columbia area, the photographs are examples of the fine portraiture for which the Bachrach name is famous. The portraits include American presidents, cabinet members, heads of state of other countries, university presidents, religious leaders, musicians, presidents of industrial organizations and people of prominence in many other fields.*

*All but two of the portraits reproduced here, which have been provided by Mr. Bradford Bachrach with his brief history of the family's development in photography and comments on the portraits, have been added to the Bachrach Collection at Syracuse.*

The Bachrach photographic dynasty, now in its 103rd year, was started in Baltimore, Maryland by David Bachrach, who was brought to this country from Rhineland, Germany by his parents at five years of age. He started his own photographic studio in 1868 and shortly thereafter, opened a studio in Washington. Until 1920, when he retired, he offered photographic service typical of the period, specializing in portraiture, with some theatrical and scenic work.

David Bachrach was distinguished principally for his writings in professional publications, puncturing claims to "secret" formulas of his peers for photographic processing; for his part in developing the process for the

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*Mr. Bachrach is President of Bachrach, Portrait Photographers since 1868, with headquarters in Watertown, Massachusetts.*



Bradford, Louis Fabian and Fabian Bachrach.

modern dot procedure used in photo engraving; and for his passionate letters to the editor of the *Baltimore Sun* on behalf of civil liberties and civic responsibility.

His elder son, Louis Fabian Bachrach, served an apprenticeship with David starting in 1900 and, after studying in New York, opened his own studio in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1909.

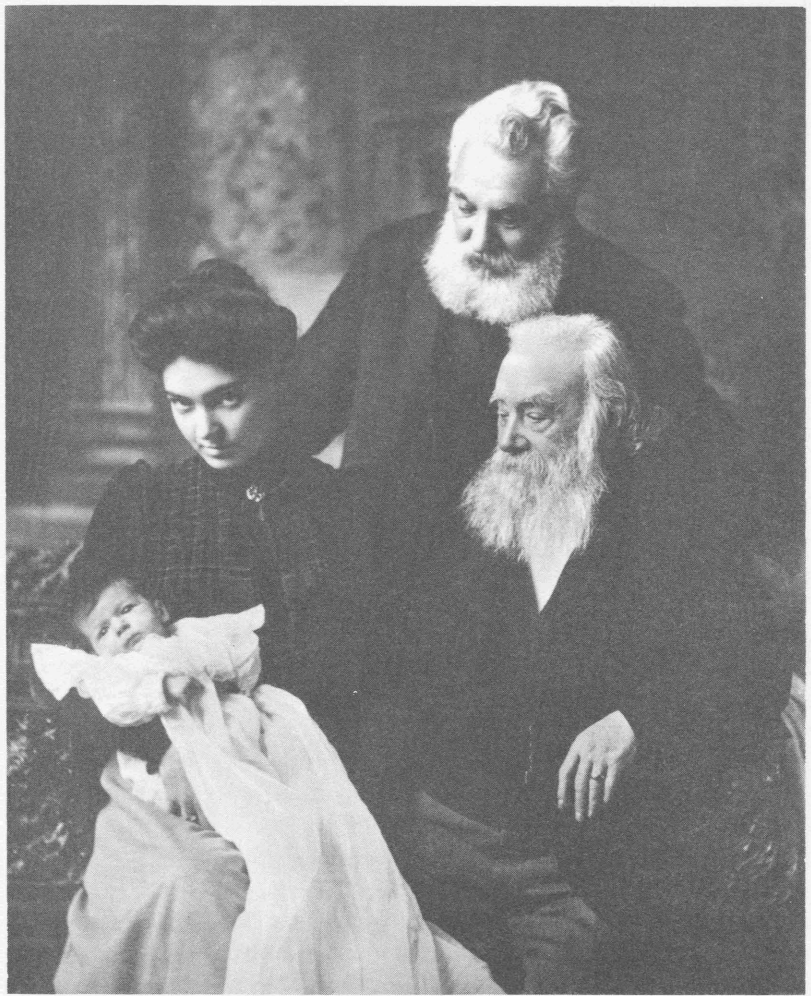
The younger son, Walter Keyser Bachrach, after studying with Louis in Worcester, worked with his father in Baltimore and Washington, and gradually assumed responsibility for the “southern” studios. He opened the Bachrach studio in Philadelphia in 1915, and the New York studio in 1917.

In 1925 Louis Fabian Bachrach took over the entire organization from his brother Walter. At that time, it included 31 studios in New England and the middle Atlantic states.

In the 1929 to 1933 period, many of the smaller Bachrach studios were closed, and in the 1940s, sons Bradford and Fabian Bachrach began to assume responsibility for the separate studios for men and women in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Washington.

Louis Bachrach’s principal contribution to photography was his devotion to high standards of portraiture and the merchandising thereof, and his ability to inspire his associates to work within these standards.

Although the three generations of Bachrachs have projected themselves through literally hundreds of cameramen who have worked for them over the years, each of the photographs reproduced here was made by one of the Bachrachs, personally.



### **Alexander Graham Bell – A Four-Generation Group**

In January of 1902, Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, came to David Bachrach's studio in Washington with his daughter, Mrs. Gilbert Grosvenor (Elsie May Bell), his father, Alexander Melville Bell, and his two-month-old grandson, Melville Bell Grosvenor. Mr. Grosvenor, who was for many years President of the National Geographic Society, is now Editor-in-Chief of the *National Geographic Magazine* and Chairman of the Board of the Society. The photograph was first publicly reproduced in the *National Geographic* in July 1965.

Photographed by daylight on a wet plate, by David Bachrach.



### **The Bradford Head**

In 1912, when his son Bradford was two years of age, Louis Fabian Bachrach photographed him in a pensive mood. Reproductions of this photograph were widely publicized as an example of Bachrach child portraiture of that period.

The original photograph was made on a half-cabinet plate, in Louis Bachrach's daylight studio in Worcester.

### **Eleanor Roosevelt**

In 1934, following the reproduction of an outstanding portrait of Queen Elizabeth by British photographer Cecil Beaton, Louis Fabian Bachrach wrote to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt suggesting that *her* position called for a first-rate portrait, not unlike the Beaton portrait of the Queen, for release to her many admirers. The letter suggested that Mrs. Roosevelt had tended to shun photographers, and that the making of a good portrait might take something over an hour of her busy time. When her reply came, agreeing that such a session was probably necessary, Louis Fabian Bachrach and Bradford Bachrach went to the White House. On their arrival with a tremendous amount of lighting equipment, Chief Usher Hoover commented that the size of Bachrach's entourage reminded him of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, then the dominant motion picture organization.

The success of the portrait depended on trying to capture Mrs. Roosevelt's animation, and emphasizing her fine physique. Of the forty odd exposures made with incandescent light, on slow orthochromatic film, only about ten were photographically of first quality; the one reproduced was Mrs. Roosevelt's favorite for a number of years.







### **Prime Minister Nehru**

In the early Kennedy years, the Chief of Protocol of the State Department arranged with Fabian and Bradford Bachrach to photograph a number of the visiting heads of state who came to this country to stay either at Blair House or the White House, and later at the Waldorf Towers in New York. As a result of this arrangement, a number of important foreign visitors came before the Bachrach camera.

Among the many photographs made personally by Fabian Bachrach was a portrait of Nehru, done early one morning at the Waldorf Towers before Mr. Nehru addressed the United Nations General Assembly.

Fabian caught the Prime Minister in a pensive mood. The original photograph was done on Ektachrome, and Mr. Nehru's copy, in the form of a large dye transfer print, was given to his daughter. Later, when she visited New York, the State department arranged for Mr. Bachrach to hang a duplicate picture of Mr. Nehru, which she found in her hotel room on her arrival.



### Harold Ross

Louis Bachrach always admired Harold Ross for the single-minded way in which he brought the *New Yorker* magazine to its first-rank prominence. In the spring of 1948 Mr. Bachrach photographed Harold Ross at the New York Bachrach studio.

Although he was noted for having a short temper, Mr. Ross gave Mr. Bachrach all the time and cooperation needed for his sitting. This photograph received relatively little favorable comment at the time it was made, but it remained the photograph by which Mr. Ross was principally known. Ross wrote of it, "That picture project was Mrs. Ross', not mine, and I wanted no part of it. . . . She later reported to me that I was scowling in every one of them, and she would have none of them. . . . I cannot be held responsible for looking disagreeable in these days of stress and turmoil. . . ."

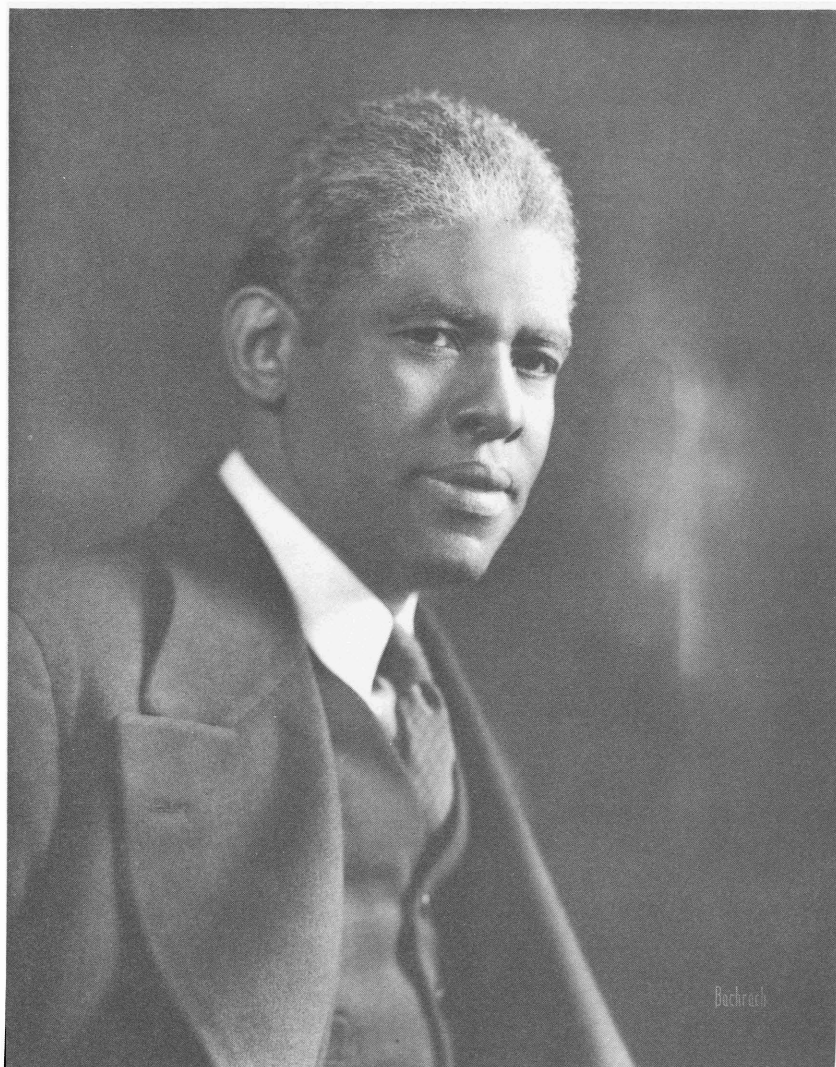
### Queen Frederika

Following the display at the office of the Chief of Protocol in Washington of numerous portraits of heads of state made by the Bachrachs, Bradford Bachrach was asked to photograph the dowager Queen Frederika of Greece, when she was visiting New York with her daughter in 1964.

The appointment was at the Waldorf Towers in New York at 6:30 in the evening, prior to the Queen's departure for dinner with the Henry Luces. Bradford Bachrach, assisted by Edmund Jaskulski, waited for well over one and a half hours for the Queen and her daughter to finish dressing for dinner, and was pleasantly surprised to learn that the Queen was willing to be late for *her* appointment in order to give him enough time to do his series of portraits in color.

The Queen herself was extremely graceful and gracious. The original photograph was made on Ektachrome, and the reproduction is from a dye transfer print.







### **Roland Hayes**

This first (1926) Hayes portrait made by Louis Bachrach resulted from the correspondence which Louis Bachrach's wife had had for some time with Mr. Hayes, the prominent Boston tenor. Herself a musician, Mrs. Bachrach had long been an admirer of Mr. Hayes' artistry, and had told him so on many occasions.

The portrait was made with incandescent light, at the Bachrach studio in Boston, on orthochromatic film.

## **John Fitzgerald Kennedy**

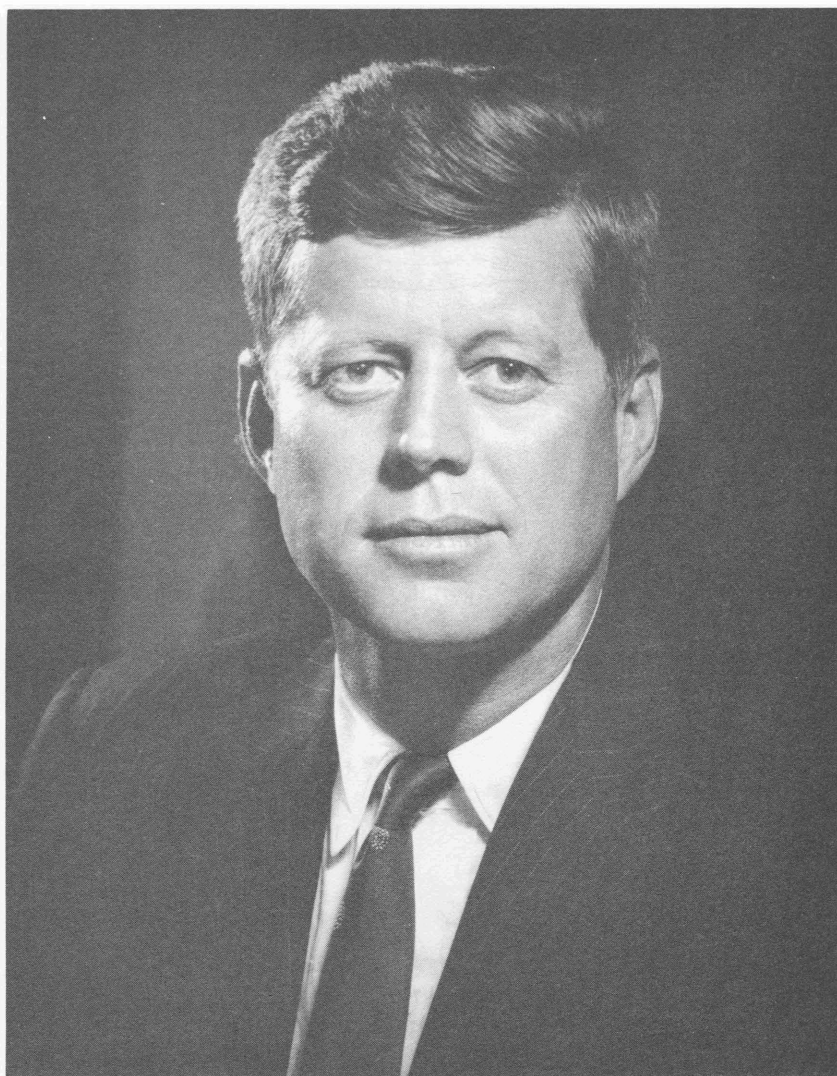
When it was clear in 1960 that Senator John Kennedy was likely to become a nominee for the presidency, Fabian Bachrach personally arranged, through Senator Kennedy's secretary, to do a portrait of him in his office.

Pressing business at the Capitol kept the Senator away from his office well past the 3:00 p.m. appointment time; when he finally arrived at 7:00 p.m., it was only through the intervention of his secretary that the photographs were made at all. The elapsed time given Mr. Bachrach was about eight minutes, from start to finish of the sitting, and he made pictures in both color and black and white.

Senator Kennedy was naturally graceful, but the success of the portrait depended on Fabian Bachrach recognizing the best angle from which to work, and confining his short session to concentration on a few simple fundamentals.

When the pressure and care of the President's office began to show in Mr. Kennedy's face, the Fabian Bachrach portrait, made a few months earlier, came to be accepted as the official Kennedy photograph and its reproduction was widely pirated.

This reproduction is from a dye transfer portrait, made from an Ektachrome.





### **Billie Burke**

In 1962, retired actress Billie Burke (in private life, Mrs. Florenz Ziegfeld) arranged for a portrait to be taken for her grandchildren.

It happened that on the warm spring day when Mrs. Ziegfeld came to the Bachrach studio in New York, she was forced to climb to the fourth floor because the elevator that day had broken down. Gracious and patient throughout, Mrs. Ziegfeld presented to the camera the charm which had made her famous since her early days in the theatre. She was then in her middle seventies.

She was photographed by incandescent light, on fast panchromatic film, by Bradford Bachrach and Ralph Shacklee.

### **Henry Cabot Lodge**

Having obtained the nomination for candidate for Vice President in 1960, Henry Cabot Lodge came to the Bachrach studio in New York at the urging of his campaign advisers. Mr. Lodge clearly indicated that he was in no mood for sitting for photographs; that he had plenty of photographs in his scrap books; that he was extremely fatigued from having been up late in the night, as United States Ambassador to the United Nations, arguing about Soviet electronic espionage with the Soviet Ambassador; and that he had managed to cut himself shaving that morning. Nevertheless, his press advisers had prevailed upon him to sit for a new photograph.

Because Fabian was unavailable in New York that day, Bradford Bachrach, assisted by Raymond Bustanoby, made the photographs. The portrait chosen was made on Ektachrome, with strobe lights, and was reproduced in color as a poster for the campaign.







### **Calvin Coolidge**

In 1924 Louis Bachrach went to the White House to photograph President Coolidge, assisted by Louis' regular Washington cameraman. Mr. Bachrach worked with the daylight available from the windows in the President's office.

Mr. Coolidge gave all the time needed. When Louis Bachrach asked him, "How much time do you have, Mr. President?" the President wordlessly showed him the presidential appointment book for that day. It was completely blank, except for the notation that Bachrach was to photograph him.

After thirty minutes of silence, Coolidge, feeling some urge for conversation, asked bleakly, "How's business?" Bachrach answered, "Fine," and the conversation ended.



### **Robert Frost**

Fabian Bachrach made the last professional portrait of poet Robert Frost, some six months prior to Mr. Frost's death.

Fabian found Mr. Frost extremely pleasant and easy to work with. It was clear that time was beginning to leave its mark on Mr. Frost's strength and vitality, but the poet seemed to enjoy the experience, and later wrote glowingly in praise of the results.

The original photograph was made on Ektachrome. The reproduction is from a dye transfer print.