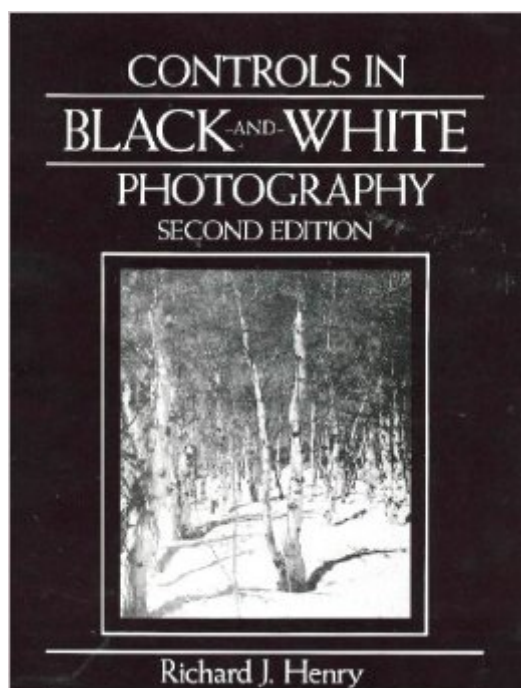


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# Controls In Black-And-White Photography



## Synopsis

Richard Henry, *Controls in Black and White Photography* (1983, 1986) -- After a career as a much published researcher in clinical chemistry, Dr. Henry turned to photography. He was appalled by the lack of scientific rigor in popular books and articles written by non-scientific photographers. "They frequently make statements of fact which are totally unsubstantiated and sometimes utterly absurd." So he equipped his laboratory with sophisticated testing equipment and set about checking much that is commonly "known" about photography. "Nearly all the experimental work performed for this book was done with step wedges, etc. -- not pictures. In most instances, but not all, a picture actually gets in the way of accurate measurements that need to be made regarding the performance of film and paper." Following good scientific practice, Dr Henry mentions assertions of others, cites references, describes his experiments so others can replicate them, and reports conclusions. This is a refreshing contrast to the approach of writers who imply that because they are excellent photographers, readers should believe their unsupported opinions. Among the findings that contradict popular myths are: 1. The maximum black a paper can make does not depend on its silver content. 2. There is no difference in print values produced by condenser and cold light enlargers if negatives for the latter are developed longer to make print contrast the same. 3. Prolonged print development in Dektol does not increase contrast; it only makes a print darker. 4. Dissolved solids, such as silver salts, do not sink to the bottom of a print washer. 5. Amidol does not produce darker blacks than Dektol 1+1. This book is extremely valuable for anyone who is seriously interested in making black-and-white photographs -- especially from small negatives. It is a special joy for already well-informed photographers to find so much new information.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mr. Henry is first & foremost a scientist, and it shows. Just to give you an idea, the book starts off with a glossary of terms, and in "pH" (which for me would have been sufficient to call a level of alkalinity or acidity of a substance) is described as follows: "symbol of the negative logarithm of the effective hydrogen-ion concentration or hydrogen-ion activity in gram equivalents per liter. a scale of acidity, usually 0 to 14, acidity increasing as you go down the scale. Below pH 7 the solution is increasingly acid, and above 7 the solution is increasingly alkaline. pH 7 being "neutral". Most developers are alkaline; stop baths and fixatives are acidic." The book is reassuring and disconcerting all at the same time. Mr. Henry often brings up the big guns of the Zone System and frequently disagrees with their unscientific way of pushing myths through their teaching, on other occasions he agrees. Adams, Vestal and Picker are the names most frequently mentioned. The book is nothing but graphs, math and tests. Has no photographs except for the cover. But author drives his points home with substantial experimental data and comprehensive list of references. He is obviously a quality scientist who needs a hard proof to call it proven. I call this "reassuring AND disconcerting", because while it shows how one can determine proper processing, it also kills a lot of well advertised myths. At first, book seems difficult and un-fun. But, if you manage to get through the first few pages and actually read it cover to cover, it changes into a relatively nice read with lots of bits from Zone System "gurus" and his take on it.

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