The first photo, of houses in the alley, taken out the window of Joseph Niepce's workshop.

Then, in 1827, after ten years of trying to figure it out, scientist Joseph Niepce discovered that if he coated the paper with photoreactive chemicals, he could save the image, and the first formal photo was created. It took 8 hours to cause enough light reaction to save the image.

Between 1827 and 1975, most photos were taken using the same principles as the camera obscura.

You can build your own camera obscura with materials from around the house. We have no way of saving the images because we don't have modern film or any special photoreactive chemicals, but you can still see what got people so excited for hundreds of years. Go back in time and experience the start of modern photography for yourself! What upside down image will you see through a camera obscura?

Make a Camera Obscura

- Cut your paper tube in two pieces, 1/3 and 2/3 long.
- Carefully, with the help of an adult, poke a small hole in a square of foil. The square of foil should be big enough to completely cover the end of the paper tube.
- Tape the foil over one end of the short