

Identifying Your Bolex.... Ancient Models

A Really Really Ancient Bolex camera! This is the very rare 16mm Model A from 1926-1927:



A Really Ancient Bolex camera! This is the rare 16mm Model B from around 1928:



An ancient Bolex model H-16. This might be the first H model from the 1930s. **No frame counters**, and no means of attaching one. Nobody remembers now what the “H” in the model number stands for:

Single perf or double perf?

Beginning with serial 76471, the Bolex H-16 cameras would accept either single perforated (one edge) or double perforated (both edges) film. Prior to this, the cameras required double perf. The older cameras could be factory converted to “sound sprockets” or else this could be done by a repairman using a file.

Bolex didn't have to throw away any left over double sided 16mm sprockets, they could use them up in the H-8 8mm cameras, where they engage every second perforation pair, which is more than adequate. 8mm film has exactly twice as many holes per foot as 16mm.

Early H-16 16mm camera with **external frame counter**, possibly from the 1940s. The later ones have a built-in pair of frame counters. Note the non-reflex viewfinder mounted on top of the camera, instead of on the door! The large amount of parallax guarantees cutting off people's heads on closeups:



Cam-driven claw or register claw? Bolex H-8 and H-16 cameras up through serial number 100400 all have a cam-driven pulldown claw and a wider film channel for the old type high shrinkage rawstock, and will give a somewhat **unsteady image** with today's film; higher numbers than 100401 have the present-day Registration Claw movement for a **rock-steady screen image**.

The old cam-driven claw has a longer exposure time, 1/45 second at 24FPS however. The Register Claw has a slower pulldown, so the exposure time per frame is more like 1/60 second at 24 FPS.

We think the H model without frame counter will accept the now discontinued TCS TXM-26B crystal motor. We have been told the external frame counter is removable, so this model might also take the motor. We very much doubt if the antiques at the top will take any motor.

More information [here](#).

Photos of newer models [here](#).

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