

Ernst Leitz, Leica Microsystems, Leica camera – History in brief



Present view of factory buildings used by Leica Microsystems and the municipal building (Rathaus). Company headquarters of Leica Camera AG are located in the Leitz Park in Wetzlar. (Picture: Peter Jörg Albrecht)

1869

The company Ernst Leitz (1843-1920) is the successor of the „Optical Institute“ founded by Carl Kellner in Wetzlar in 1849.

1920

His son Ernst Leitz II (1871-1956) took over the sole leadership of the company. In 1924 he made the decision to produce the “apparatus” developed by his employee Oskar Barnack, the Leica camera in series.

Until 1956

The three sons of Ernst Leitz II enter the company, one after another and take over the leadership.

1972 until 1974

The family-run company of Ernst Leitz ended with the sale of the holding of the Leitz family to the Swiss optic manufacturer Wild.

1986 until 1988

The photo section became independent and Leitz Camera AG moved to Solms.

1986 until 1990

Reorganization of the remaining manufacturing sections Microscopy and Precision measurement techniques to Wild Leitz GmbH.

1990

Founding of the world wide Leica concern and renaming the company to Leica Microscopy and Systems GmbH.

1997

Wetzlar is the largest site and headquarters of the international Technology Group “Leica Microsystems”. Part of the US American Danaher concern.

2007

The investor company ACM, with Andreas Kaufmann at the top, acquired 96,5% of the shares of Leica Camera AG Solms.

2011

Finance investor Blackstone acquires 44% of Leica shares.

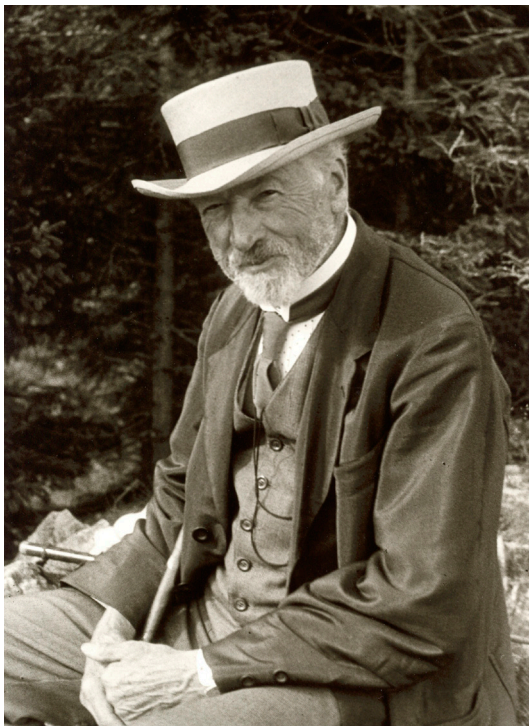
2014

Leica Camera AG moves to Wetzlar in the Leitz Park.

The Leica Microsystems still has its headquarters in Wetzlar.



Leitz factory around 1900



Ernst Leitz I – Company founder

Literature and pictures:

BECK, Rolf (1999): Die Leitz-Werke in Wetzlar. Erfurt

Leica Camera AG

KÜHN-LEITZ, Knut (2009): Max Berek – Schöpfer der ersten Leica Objektive, Pionier der Mikroskopie. Wetzlar