

## Kodak Ciné-Kodak Tripod 1933-1935



This is a Kodak Ciné-Kodak Tripod. It is believed this model was introduced by Kodak in 1933 in connection with the introduction of their first professional 16-mm motion picture camera, the Ciné-Kodak Special. The tripod is quite sturdy, yet modest in weight (6½ lbs) and bulk.

It is equipped with a pan-tilt head, steerable with a rather long "tiller". Both the pan and tilt motions are provided with ingenious differential-thread clamping systems allowing fine control of the friction of the motion. The tilt motion is capable of going to the "straight down" position (or in fact, by reversing the placement of the camera, to the "straight up" position).

The legs are of aluminum, in two sections, telescoping. The telescoping is locked or unlocked by rotating the lower section. The lock system is not the simple "eccentric cam" system found in many tripods with cylindrical telescoping legs, but rather a screw-operated expanding internal collet scheme. The rated working height ranges from 2'-9½" to 4'-10".

The upper leg sections are octagonal and are covered with imitation leather, consistent with the covering of many of the Ciné-Kodak cameras. The lower leg sections are round and have a glossy black finish (perhaps aluminum anodizing, described by Kodak as "alumilite").

The legs terminate in conical tips for a grip on carpet or in earth. The cones are fairly large and have a fairly large included angle, so they can be used on bare earth without the hazard of too easily pushing into the earth. Rubber tip covers, for use on smooth floors, were apparently originally provided, but this specimen does not have them.

There is no "spider" to equalize and limit the spreading of the legs (consistent with professional tripod practice). But to avoid the possibility that if the leg tips were to slip on, say, a smooth floor, the tripod would "splat" onto the floor, there is an arrangement of short chains connected to a center ring that limits the degree to which the tripod legs can splay.

Both pan and tilt clamps are operated with "butterfly" handles. Both halves can be put to one side to give a thick "lever" handle, or the two halves can be spread to give, in effect, a giant wing nut.

With the camera mounted “normally” on the camera plate, the camera can be pointed upward to an angle of 25° and downward to “straight down”. For this mounting situation, the tiller can be inserted into two places in the “near” end of the camera plate. The two positions put the tiller at different vertical angles (one “horizontal” with respect to the camera plate, the other about 25° downward) to accommodate different operational situations.

With the camera mounted “reversed” on the camera plate, the camera can be pointed downward to an angle of 25° and upward to “straight up” (although the latter requires the tiller to be dismantled). For this situation, the tiller can be inserted into one place in the “opposite” end of the camera plate.

There is no rubber pad on the top of the camera plate. A retractable “fence” on one side of the camera plate provides for maintaining the alignment of the camera (usable only when the camera is mounted “right side to”). It seems mostly intended for the Ciné-Kodak Special series of cameras; we have not yet determined for which other camera models this is workable.

When a Ciné-Kodak Special is mounted on the tripod (either way to), the magazine can be removed and replaced without removing the camera proper.

In a later design (we do not know the year of the change but it was probably 1939), the “butterfly” lever for the pan lock (located below the head, between the tripod legs) was replaced with a large knob, probably much easier to manipulate in this location. The hub of this knob has, on the bottom, a threaded hole into which one could screw the tip of the tiller. This provides a handy place to store the tiller during storage of the tripod, or in special operational situations when the tiller is not used.

The camera plate has a captive 1/4"-20 screw for retaining the camera. It has a “wing” handle. (In the later design this was replaced by a molded knob.)

A tripod truck (“dolly”) was available for use with this tripod from 1936.

### **Original cost**

From 1933 through at least 1940, the price of the Ciné-Kodak tripod was \$32.50. In 1949, the price was \$60.00.

### **This specimen**

This specimen is a Kodak Ciné-Kodak Tripod, probably made between 1933 and 1935. It was acquired in November of 2017 from eBay seller “2029esales” in Albuquerque, N.M.

It has the older “butterfly” lever for the pan motion friction control. It is missing its camera alignment “fence” and its rubber tip covers (which in any case would certainly have ossified by this time).