

The Myth of the overworked cyanide fixer causing Yellow Stains and possibly worse on your images It goes like this: *If you overwork your Potassium Cyanide Fixer you will get yellow stains, or as some refer to it, a yellowing of the image. It might take a couple of days for it to happen, or it might take a few years. Some even go so far as to warn of cracking, peeling, and darkening down of the image due to a buildup of Silver Cyanide.*

EEgads!! This is another one of those hair raising, frightening myths some gaggle of self-described “wet-plate experts” have hung around the necks of unsuspecting beginners for way too long. After using Potassium Cyanide for nearly forty years as my principal fixer and in all my workshops for decades, I have never seen any sign of yellow stains or overall yellowing and (can you hear me laughing) darkening, cracking or peeling. I often use my KCN fixer long and hard, and so do my students. None have ever reported back to me about any yellowing, etc. issues. We like to get the most out of our cyanide fixer. It’s an extremely hard chemical to procure and can be pretty pricy. The great mullahs of WP would have everyone dumping their cy fixer, half way through a picture making session, needlessly! The only reason you would decommission your working 1.2% KCN fixer is it’s getting weak from lots of use and thus is taking an annoying extra-long time to fix an image. Use your Potassium Cyanide fixer, long and hard, with all due respect and safety, but stop worrying about yellowing and any self-destruction of the image, on-down-the-line nonsense! It just isn’t going to happen.