

## **Noise Ninja Pro**

**\$79.95;** [www.picturecode.com/index.htm](http://www.picturecode.com/index.htm)

Noise Ninja is available as both a Photoshop plug-in and a standalone application for Macs and PCs. It's something of a standard in the field, especially among digital photographers, because it's very good at creating noise profiles for equipment such as digital cameras and scanners. That isn't particularly of interest to restorers like us. The reason I'm recommending it is that it does a good job of noise reduction "out of the box." The help manual for the program includes a 30-second guide to using it, and that guide is actually sufficient in many cases. The 5-minute guide will probably tell you more than you need to know, and hardly any of you will ever read the whole manual.

I do recommend that you read the manual's sections on how to manually profile a photograph and use the Brush tool. You'll be making heavy use of both of these features. They're not at all difficult to use, but reading those instructions will teach you how to use them most effectively.

NoiseNinja runs very quickly. I would be my favorite program save for the fact that it doesn't give me all the controls I need over how the noise reduction is applied. For instance, it lacks controls to let me readily fine-tune noise reduction as a function of tone or spatial frequency. It works very well in conjunction with masks, though.

I mostly use Noise Ninja in the beautification phase, where I need to make the restoration look prettier and cleaner overall. I rarely use it at the default strength; it's too good at what it does. The results come out so clean and grainless that they look artificial. Real film-based photographs have a bit of "tooth" to them, and Noise Ninja doesn't think twice about wiping that out. Dial it down a couple of notches.