

snap shots

Volume 15 Number 4

December 2009

Photography of Children in America before the Civil War Lauren Hewes explores the relationship between the painted portrait tradition and the new medium of photography, c. 1840-1860

PHSNE meeting, December 6, 2009



Unidentified girl. Sixth plate daguerreotype, attr. to Samuel Root (d. 1889). Stamped on gold liner: "S. Root, 363 Broadway. N.Y." Courtesy American Antiquarian Society.

During the 1840's and 1850's, thousands of daguerreotypists operated in major cities and across the American countryside. By the year 1860, the census recorded 3,154 photographers at work in this country, about the same number of people who were employed in the lumber and in the pottery industries.

Art historians have written much about the advantages offered by photography for portraiture (it was faster and it was cheaper), and how this led to the decline of the painted portrait before the Civil War. Little has been said, however, about the influence that the painted portrait tradition had on the new medium of photography.

Portrait photography in this early period depended on the perception of accuracy and on the strictures of props and poses that had been developed over the previous decades by por-



Portrait of Pat Grant with a drum; albumen carte-de-visite, c. 1855, Black & Case, Boston. Courtesy American Antiquarian Society

trait painters. These traditions were ingrained in the visual memories of those sitting before the camera and, to a certain extent, were expected in the results of a photographic session. Photographs of children from before the Civil War show this reliance on tradition very well, but they also reveal the particular challenges that the new medium held for artists and their youngest clients.

The December 6th PHSNE presentation will feature Lauren Hewes who will share and discuss photographic images of children from the beginning of photography up to about 1860. She will attempt to rebuild the conversation that was happening between sitters and photographic portrait makers at that time.

Lauren B. Hewes is the Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Graphic Arts at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. She specializes in nineteenth-century American prints and photography and has recently completed on-line, illustrated inventories of the Society's daguerreotype, ambrotype and tintype collections. She is the author of American Portraits at the American Antiquarian Society (2004) as well as numerous articles on lithographs, engravings and etchings produced in the United States before 1900.



Flora I. Guild with a china doll. Tintype, photographer unknown, 2 3/4" x 3 1/4". Courtesy American Antiquarian Society.

Photo Contest through January 31, 2010 Lowell National Historical Park

Submit up to three photos taken in 2009 in Lowell National Historical Park, Lowell, MA that capture the "essence" of Lowell and/or celebrate Lowell's heritage. Photos will be judged on originality, artistic composition, photographic technique, and technical execution. Digital enhancement is acceptable as long as the images are not changed significantly.

Photos must be in jpeg format, minimum of 3 megapixels (1600 x 1200), maximum 3.2 mb. E-mail photos and entry form to Lowell_photo@nps.gov. The entry form, along with additional information, can be found on the park's website at nps.gov/lowell/photosmultimedia/photocontest.htm. If the image has recognizable people, a release must be submitted for each person by fax or mail.

Various prizes will be awarded including National Park passes. Winning photos will be displayed in a Park exhibit in the spring and featured on the park's website.

"Entrants retain ownership and copyright of their images and are not restricted in their future use."

In Memoriam: Francis Burbank

2009 saw the passing of PHSNE member Francis Burbank, 78, of Old Lyme, Conn. Burbank was a reporter for the Norwich (Conn.) Bulletin and a media specialist at Central Connecticut State. After retirement, he put out a photography newsletter-magazine, *the Archetypal Photographer*.

PHSNE Membership

PHSNE membership is \$15 for students, \$35 for individuals, \$40 for a family, and \$45 for foreign membership. Please send checks in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar-denominated international money orders for dues payments.

Current members can read their renewal date from the mailing label on snap shots. For example, "Dec 2010" means your membership expires in December of 2010. Please check your label before sending in your dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to Joe Walters Jr, PHSNE Membership Chair, P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465 (phone: 617-694-5594; email: membership@phsne.org, or use the Web form at phsne.org/contacts).

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Polaroid Expires ... and, Impossibly, Integral Instant Film to be Revived



The last packs of Polaroid Film produced by the Polaroid Corporation passed their Use By dates on October 9th, 2009. To mark this event, the Atlas Gallery of London is holding an exhibition from October 9th to November 28, 2009 featuring Polaroid photos by Ansel Adams, Walker Evans, Phillippe Halsman, Barbara Kasten, Andy Warhol and many others. See their Web site, atlasgallery.com, for exhibition information and samples of the images.

Not all is lost for those who used Polaroid integral instant film. Fuji still makes peel-a-part pack and 4x5 instant film, but these do not work in cameras using integral film. The Impossible Project team purchased the Polaroid production facilities in Enschede, Netherlands, with the goal of re-introducing integral film for Polaroid cameras. This will not be a duplication of Polaroid film, rather new products which can be used in Polaroid cameras. Yes, that was products! They hope to introduce a new B&W film in early 2010 and new color films in late 2010.

"Impossible" certainly seems the right moniker for this team. They have determined that 7 major technical challenges must be solved to produce the new film and have solved 5 of the 7 challenges so far.

The current Polaroid licensee, The Summit Global Group, is cooperating with them and has announced they will relaunch some vintage Polaroid camera models to use the new films. For more information see their web site: The-Impossible-Project.com.

-Joe Walters

Current Exhibits:

In the Jewish Neighborhoods, 1946-1976

DeCordova Exhibit Features Jules Adams Photos

Arcade Gallery, Photo Study Space, Phyllis and Jerome Lyle Rappaport Media Space, through January 3, 2010

This exhibition will include approximately forty photographs by world-renowned photographer, Jules Aarons (1921-2008). Selected from the Permanent Collection portfolio *In the Jewish Neighborhoods, 1946-1976*, the images in this exhibition highlight the photographer's career-long interest in documenting Jewish life in the Bronx, NY, Boston's North End and West End neighborhoods, Israel, and Paris. This exhibition is organized by Koch Curatorial Fellow Nina Gara Bozicnik. DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA. More information is available at decordova.org.

Kodachrome Basin State Park Goes Digital?

While touring the National Parks in Utah, I could not pass up the chance to visit Kodachrome Basin State Park. The name was suggested by *National Geographic* because changing daylight patterns caused the unusual rock formations to take on different hues throughout the day. Eastman Kodak readily agreed to the state's request to use the name of its iconic film.

With my last two rolls of Kodachrome film in hand, and two Kodak processing mailers, I posed in front of the entrance sign. I then



Photo by Beverly Regelman

drove down a long dirt road into the park, paid the \$6.00 entrance fee, and entered a large campground. The park features hiking trails, monolithic spires, sand pipes up to 170 feet high, and plants and animals suited to its semi-desert conditions.

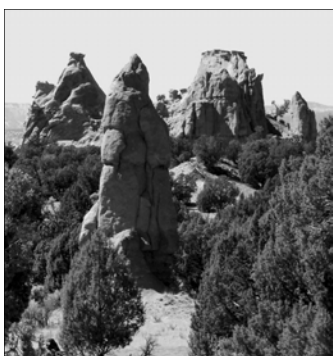


Photo by Lew Regelman

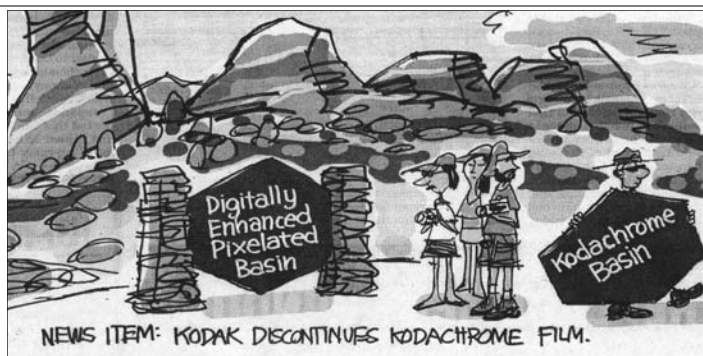
When word got out that Kodachrome film was being discontinued, *The Salt Lake Tribune* ran the cartoon accompanying this article.

The park's gift shop offers a variety of items carrying the Kodachrome Park logo including T shirts, patches, pins, mugs, and more. They take credit card orders over the phone (435-679-8562).



Kodachrome Basin logo on cap

After shooting those precious last rolls of Kodachrome, I sent the film for processing using old Kodak mailers. The dates had expired, but outdated mailers have always been honored in the past. Much to my surprise, most of my film was returned with a notice that said "Kodak will no longer honor any expired KODAK Pre-paid Processing Mailers." They noted that they will continue to accept *unexpired*



Salt Lake Tribune

KODAK Processing Mailers for Kodachrome and Ektachrome Films through December 31, 2009. After that date, Kodak will no longer honor prepaid processing mailers of any kind. Additional information is available at Kodak.com/help; search "mailers" to be directed to FAQs. Dwayne's Photo still processes both films but requires payment in advance—about \$10 for a 36 exposure roll (details at dwaynesphoto.com).

- Lew Regelman

Update: Photographica 72 and Auction

Highlights of the recent successful show and auction:

- 65 dealer tables
- 600 people attended the 2 day show
- 6 educational discovery tables were manned by members
- Dollar table popular; over 100 inexpensive cameras sold or given away
- 168 items offered for sale at auction; 103 sold
- Highest price camera sold at auction—\$700.

Thanks to those who worked over a six month period cleaning, repairing, and checking all cameras and other items: Bud Midgely, Joe Walters, Dick Koolish, Dan Jones, and Ralph Johnston. Members and dealers stepped in to help set up and run the auction. Special thanks to Barbara Tepper, Jim Chasse, Joe Walters, Bud Midgely, Bruce Midgely, Cindy Berry, Allan Goodrich, Dan Jones, Adrian Levesque, Ruth Thomasian, Patricia Zacks, Fred Sherfy, and Ernie and Sherryl Stonebreaker. Kudos to auctioneer Marti Jones who did a splendid job.

"The quality of the dealer merchandise is getting better, and sales figures reflect that. 30 tables have already been sold for next year's show." - John Dockery, show manager

We are organizing items for the February 2010 Members Auction. We hope to see you there; please volunteer if you can help.

-Lew Regelman, auction manager

"The auction was executed with precision and promptness. The audience was populated by serious buyers."

- George Champine, PHSNE webmaster

Check out *Point Click Shoot* Exhibition

PHSNE members who attended the November 1st meeting got an early look at a very interesting exhibit that runs through January 3, 2010. Titled *Point Click Shoot: Snapshots Celebrating Life*, the show features a juried exhibit of over 200 images as well as a display of nearly fifty of the more important cameras used to take the snapshots, starting with the earliest Kodak. The cameras belong to PHSNE members and are on loan to the museum for the duration of the exhibit.



Photo by Lew Regelman

Every image in the show is described and credit given in a booklet handed out to visitors. Some of the snapshots were taken by well known photographers; most were taken by amateurs. The PHSNE members who toured the exhibit gave it a "thumbs up." Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg, MA. For more information, go to fitchburgartmuseum.org, or phone 978-345-4207.

Update: Camera Re-covering Site

Bud Midgley's article "Better than Botox," in the October 2009 issue of *snap shots*, mentions Morgan Sparks as a supplier of camera leather re-covering kits. Mr. Sparks' web site is cameraleather.com. It is worth visiting just for the great images of classic cameras in their new leather.

PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. at Waltham High School, preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE board at 11:00 a.m.

January 3—Three member presentations: stereo, filmstrips, lantern slides

February 7—Members Auction

Directions

Waltham High School is at 617 Lexington St., Waltham, MA. The high school is at the top of the hill, behind other school buildings.

From I-95 (Route 128) Northbound: Take Exit 27 and follow Totten Pond Rd. 1.2 miles east until it dead-ends into Lexington St. Turn left and go .5 miles north. Turn right into the school complex.

From I-95 (Route 128) Southbound: Take Exit 28, Trapelo Rd., east 1.3 miles to Lexington St. Turn right and go south .8 miles to school complex on the left.

From Boston/Cambridge: Take Rte. 2 west to Exit 54B, then Lexington St. south 1.7 miles to school complex on the left.

From Lincoln and West: Take Route 2 east to Exit 53, Concord Ave. Go east 1 mile, then right onto Lexington St. and 1.3 miles south to school complex on the left.

PHSNE Online

PHSNE's Web site is online at phsne.org. George Champine is the Webmaster.

Join the PHSNE Forum online discussion: sign up and log in at phsne.org/forum, moderated by Joe Walters. For an archive of back issues of *snap shots* and meeting presentations, visit phsne.org/archive.

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PHSNE
P.O. Box 650189
West Newton, MA 02465-0189

Photographic Historical Society of New England
Next Meeting:
Waltham High School, 1:30 P.M.

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