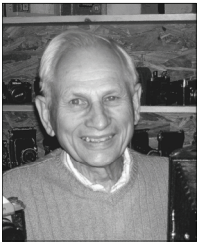


# snap shots

Volume 15 Number 9

May 2010

## The First Photograph Americal Center, Wakefield, MA—May 2, 2010



George Champine

PHSNE Board member George Champine will present a program at the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting depicting his surprising personal encounter with the world's first photograph. Taken by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce in France in the summer of 1826, the photograph changed the world forever.

Champine's chance encounter in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center in Austin, Texas motivated him to investigate the story of how the photograph traveled from France to Texas. He learned that the first photograph had been lost for 54 years and was found by accident, that the camera used (First Camera) still existed, and that the world's oldest surviving photo processing lab was in a museum exactly as it had existed in 1855.



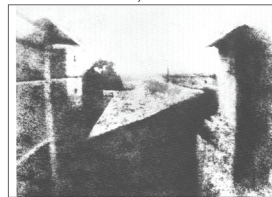
A previous PHSNE Journal *The First Camera* (January, 1995) carried several articles about the first photograph. Since those article appeared, a great deal of new information has come to light through additional historical research and the use of new technology. More than 350 new documents related to the work of Niépce have been found and studied in the last ten years. Although the major elements of the history remain the same, the new information has changed many of the details.

Two new museums have been established to locate, preserve, and display early photographic history. One is the 20 year old Niépce Museum in Chalon-sur-Saone France (150 miles southeast of Paris); the second, located in the nearby Niépce home in Saint-Loup de Varennes, is about 10 years old.

The presentation is based on an article in the 2009 Journal by Champine and another PHSNE member who brought personal experience to the article, since

he and wife had visited the Niépce House Museum in Saint-Loup de Varennes. They spent several hours there with a personal guide to get the complete story of the museum and its collection.

*Photo copyright Gernsheim Collection, Harry Ransom Humanity Research Center, U. of Texas, Austin*



*Niepce Heliograph  
A view from his window  
Taken 1826 (enhanced)*

The Niépce Museum in Chalon is a general photography museum which has an impressive set of objects that belonged to Niépce, Daguerre, and their camera maker Charles Chevalier. Included in the collection is a camera fabricated by Chevalier, a Parisian optician and believed to have been used by Niépce to take the first photograph.

The Niépce House Museum in Saint-Loup de Varennes focuses on Niépce's personal history. It has reconstructed many of Niépce's processes and inventions, and has a large collection of objects including the best lens known to be owned by Niépce, 81 mm in diameter and f/4. The museum also includes a reconstruction of the earliest-known photography laboratory, dating from 1840. Built and used by Joseph Fortune Petiot-Groffier, a prolific photographer who used Daguerreian technology starting in 1840, this remarkable collection of artifacts was sealed up by Petiot-Groffier's anxious family in 1855 for fear of being poisoned. It was unsealed and re-discovered in 2005, completely intact, and moved to the museum.



*The earliest photo lab*

The May 4<sup>th</sup> presentation pulls together the information in the 1995 Journal and integrates it with the new information discovered in the last 20 years.

## Annie Leibovitz Retains Control Of Her Portfolio



Annie Leibovitz  
Flickr.com/photos/35034363287  
CC 2.0 attribution license

You may have read that Annie Leibovitz was faced with the loss of the rights to her extensive portfolio resulting from a \$24 million debt to Art Capital Group of Manhattan. She recently reached an agreement with Colony Capital LL, a California based private investment firm, under which they will take on the loan

and help her market her images.

Colony Capital describes the relationship as a partnership in which they will support her ability to continue her artistic endeavors and work to enhance the value of her existing work. Activities could include traveling exhibits, books, and other projects.

Leibovitz commented to the *Financial Times* that, "We will be working on new projects and I will have the support and freedom necessary for nurturing my work and preserving my archive." It is believed that she holds over 100,000 images and about 1,000,000 negatives, many depicting the most noted celebrities of our times.

### 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. An application is available at [phsne.org/membership](http://phsne.org/membership).

Members should check the expiration date on the *snap shots* mailing label before sending in 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 (Call: 617-826-9294; email: [membership@phsne.org](mailto:membership@phsne.org); or use the Web form at [phsne.org/contacts](http://phsne.org/contacts)).

*snap shots*, edited by Beverly Regelman, is published by the Photographic Historical Society of New England, Inc., P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465-0189. Articles and exhibition/book reviews are always welcome. Send to [snapshots@phsne.org](mailto:snapshots@phsne.org). Authors retain copyright to their original articles; however upon written application to the *snap shots* editor, PHSNE may grant non-profit societies with similar aims and interests a one-time right to reproduce a *snap shots* article as long as the author and source are credited and a complimentary copy of the publication is sent to the PHSNE mailbox.

### Help Wanted:

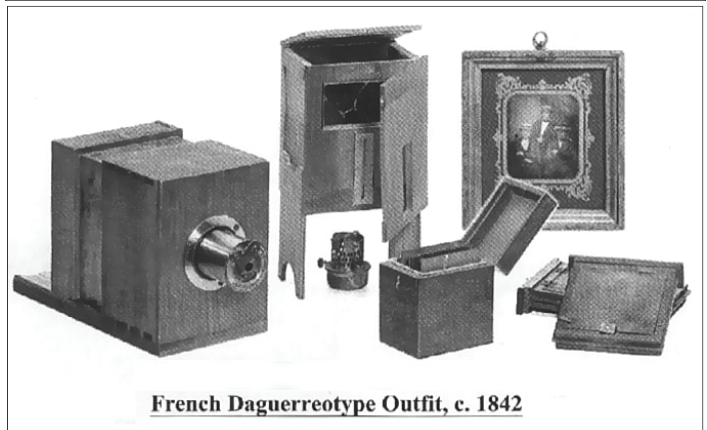
#### PHSNE Marketing Coordinator

Do you have interest or experience in Public Relations? Did you always want to try your hand at Marketing? PHSNE is looking for a volunteer who has both the interest and the computer skills to inform the public about PHSNE's activities. Duties include developing and maintaining multiple databases, sending e-mails to established lists prior to all PHSNE functions and meetings. There will be interaction with all of PHSNE's various committees and Board members. A complete list of duties will be sent to people who express an interest in this position. Estimated time needed is about two to five hours a week on average. Please contact PHSNE President John Wojtowicz at [president@phsne.org](mailto:president@phsne.org) or John Dockery at [photographica@phsne.org](mailto:photographica@phsne.org).

#### Online Sales Coordinator

**(This is a commission- paid independent contractor position)**

PHSNE is looking for a person interested in posting cameras and related photography items that have been deacquired by PHSNE for sale on eBay as well as other auction websites. The PHSNE Ebay Online Sales Coordinator will receive 25 % of the revenue generated by the PHSNE online auction sales and be reimbursed for postage expenses. This is an independent contractor position and the person accepted will receive an IRS 1099 Form. A complete list of duties will be sent to the people who express an interest in this position. Please contact PHSNE President JohnWojotwicz at [president@phsne.org](mailto:president@phsne.org) or e-mail John Dockery at [photographica@phsne.org](mailto:photographica@phsne.org).



French Daguerreotype Outfit, c. 1842

This outfit was sold in 2009 for \$32,000 by Auction Team Breker of Cologne, Germany.

# PHSNE Members Star-struck at March Meeting



7 telescopes on one mount

depth look at the 25 inch telescope housed in the Clay Center Observatory. Those unable to attend may enjoy this review of a fascinating program.

We are a society of collectors, but most would be daunted by the task of collecting large antique telescopes, some of which weigh up to 10,000 pounds and require a flatbed truck for transport. John W. Briggs, the host and speaker for the program and a collector of these large instruments, discussed the telescopes used to create the images for *A Photographic Atlas of Selected Regions of the Milky Way*, a two-book set by Edward Emerson Barnard, Professor of Practical Astronomy in the University of Chicago and Astronomer at the Yerkes Observatory from 1895 to 1923. The photographs in the *Atlas* were taken at the Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton in San Jose, CA between 1889 and 1895. The preface notes that publishing the work in two volumes permitted readers to view simultaneously the photographs, descriptions, charts, and tables.

This historical set of books is in such demand that it took Briggs twenty years to locate a copy. Copies are still very hard to find; Amazon.com will permit you to place your name on a wait list. Images in the book are currently being compared with modern im-

PHSNE members who attended the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Dexter School in Brookline, MA were treated to an in-



Guest speaker John W. Briggs



A captivated audience



Photo by Dick Koolish

Clay Observatory

ages of the same areas of the Milky Way to detect shifts of stars within star clusters and other changes. Briggs's presentation included a detailed look at the seven research-grade telescopes clustered on one computerized mount at the Clay Center Observatory. According to the Center's website, [clayobservatory.org/facility/telescopes](http://clayobservatory.org/facility/telescopes), the mount was made by DFM Engineering in 2002 and "sits atop a five-story-high pier that is independent of the building." The high resolution mirrors were custom made in the same year by Brashear LP of Pittsburgh. Superb optics and a good local setting enables this telescope to produce images that are sharper than those of telescopes several times larger.

Other interesting aspects of the tour and talk were a large collection of signed photographs by astronauts who communicated with the ham radio club at the Dexter School and a number of modern and antique telescopes on display throughout the building.

To view videos of this program, go to [phsne.org](http://phsne.org). Several websites for local astronomy groups are listed on page 6 of the *snap shots Extra* insert.



Capt. Daniel C. Burbank  
USCG, NASA Astronaut



Photo by Dick Koolish



Telescopes on display

Information contributed by Lew Regelman, Dick Koolish, Ron Polito, and John Wojtowicz  
Photos by Lew Regelman unless otherwise noted

**In Memoriam:**

**Louis Fabian Bachrach, Jr.**

Louis Fabian Bachrach, Jr., known for his formal wedding photos and portraits of prominent businessmen and politicians, died on February 26, 2010 at the age of 92. His portrait of John F. Kennedy, taken shortly after the election, became the president's official photograph.

Photography was part of the family's "DNA." He learned from his father and passed his knowledge on to his two sons. The family ran a successful studio for decades in Boston's Copley Square.

Bachrach was born in the Newton-Wellesley Hospital and died there, after living in Newton all his life. His career in photography lasted almost 60 years.

**The Third Dimension: Rhode Island in 3-D Rhode Island Historical Society**

The Rhode Island Historical Society will celebrate the art of stereoview photography at a special fund-raising event on Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010. *The Third Dimension: Rhode Island in 3-D* will present the history of Rhode Island from the black and white of the 1890s to the brilliant color of the 1950s in eye-popping 3-D to kick-off a fund-raising campaign to support their Graphics Inventory Project aimed at cataloging all of the audio-visual materials in their collections. Tickets are \$75 which includes a cocktail reception prior to the show. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Karen Eberhart, Special Collections Curator, 401-273-8107 x20 or email [keberhart@rihs.org](mailto:keberhart@rihs.org).



*Family on the porch, Newport, 1880's. Sal Lopes Collection, R. I. Historical Society*

of the audio-visual materials in their collections. Tickets are \$75 which includes a cocktail reception prior to the show. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Karen Eberhart, Special Collections Curator, 401-273-8107 x20 or email [keberhart@rihs.org](mailto:keberhart@rihs.org).

**PHSNE Meetings**

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. at the Americal Center, Wakefield, MA, preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE board at 11:00 a.m. The Wakefield station of the Haverhill rail line is within 1/2 mile of the Center, and a bus line stops in front of the building. Details are available at [mbta.com](http://mbta.com).

**Upcoming meetings:**

**June 6**—Field trip to New Bedford. We will be carpooling.

**Directions to Americal Center, Wakefield**

I-95 to exit 39, North Ave. toward Reading/Wakefield. Turn right at North Ave; then turn left at Main St. Destination is on the left: 467 Main St., Wakefield, MA 01880.

Parking available next door at the school, behind the building, and on Main St.

**PHSNE Online**

PHSNE's Web site is at [phsne.org](http://phsne.org). George Champine is the Webmaster.

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

Address Service Requested  
FIRST CLASS MAIL

Photographic Historical Society of New England  
Next Meeting: May 2, 2010  
Americal Center, 1:30 P.M.

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



*phsne.org*  
**snap shots**

*PHSNE Extra*

# PHSNE to the Rescue



As the rains poured down throughout New England on March 15<sup>th</sup>, the City of Waltham, MA made national news with the flooding of the Moody Street Dam. At the spillover, the raging waters of the Charles River resembled a mini Niagara Falls.



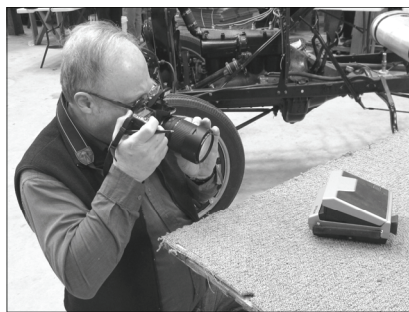
*What a mess!*

Seeking its level, water poured into the basement of the Charles River Museum of Industry which sits on the river's bank. Stored in the basement was the museum's collection of Polaroid cameras, extensive since Waltham was home to Polaroid's world headquarters for so many years. Hearing this news from Dick Koolish, long-time volunteer at the museum, fellow PHSNE members Joe Walters, Ron Polito, and Lew Regelman joined him at the museum to try to rescue what they could. The quartet assessed and photographed the damage for insurance purposes; most items were a total loss. They packaged every camera to be taken to another facility

where they were to be dried. They agreed to provide some good quality Polaroid cameras from the PHSNE warehouse to replace some of the damaged ones. There were about 80



*Ron Polito, Dick Koolish, and Joe Walters examine each camera*



*Dick Koolish documents damage*

*Photo by Joe Walters*

damaged cameras, and PHSNE was able to replace about 20.

The Charles River Museum of Industry is located in the old Boston Manufac-

turing Company textile mill. Built in 1814, it is on the National Register of Historic Places.



Although the exterior walls of the brick building were not affected by the flooding,

there was considerable damage to many of the machines and artifacts in the Museum as well as to carpets and interior walls. As this article goes to press, the museum is still closed; however, Dan Yaeger, the museum's executive director, told a *Boston Globe* reporter that "We're fully planning on being back and being back as soon as we can."



*Bud Midgley finds some replacement cameras at the PHSNE warehouse*

*~Story by Beverly Regelman;*

*Photos by Lew Regelman (unless otherwise noted)*

## Sotheby's to Auction Images From Polaroid Collection

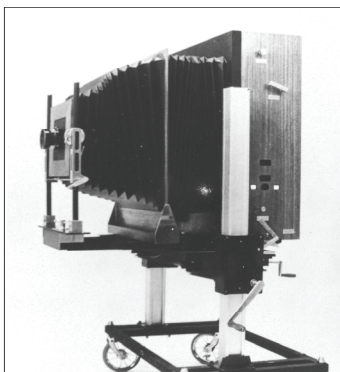
According to its website, "On June 21 and 22, Sotheby's will offer at auction over 1,200 works from the Polaroid Collection of Photography, from classic pictures by Ansel Adams to cutting-edge contemporary works by Chuck Close and Lucas Samaras." Though normally thought of as a tool for amateurs and hobbyists, many of the most celebrated photographers experimented with the artistic possibilities of Polaroid technology.

The collection is being broken up and sold under orders from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Minnesota. Proceeds are expected to be in the 7 to 12 million dollar range and will go to creditors of the bankrupt company. Some photographers have expressed concern over the dismantling of the collection.

Denise Bethel, director of Sotheby's Photographs Department, stated that "This will be the first time in the history of our market that we have offered a collection based upon a technology, rather than an artist or a theme."

The complete Polaroid collection consists of approximately 16,000 images. Of the 1,200 to be sold in June, 400 are photographs by Ansel Adams. Some of these do not use Polaroid technology but landed in the collection because of the close friendship between Adams and Land. Many of the works to be sold were acquired through the Artist Support Program in which Polaroid provided cameras and film to photographers who, in turn, gave the company some of the photographs taken.

The "Library Collection," a very select collection within the collection, includes work by Dorothea Lange, Edward Weston, and Margaret Bourke-White. Chuck Close and William Wegman are among the photographers who used Polaroid's oversized 20 x 24 inch camera. (The late Peter Bass, one of the developers of the 20 x 24 inch camera, spoke about the camera's history and its use in the Artist Support program in his presentation at PHSNE's September, 2009 meeting.)



Polaroid 20 x 24 inch camera

Polaroid Corporation

### *Links to Local Astronomy Societies*

As noted in the page 3 article, we are providing several links to local astronomy societies. PHSNE does not endorse the contents, products, or services provided by the site owners of these links.

- The Astronomical Society of Southern New England meets on second Saturday nights in Rehoboth, MA: [assne.org](http://assne.org),
- U Mass Dartmouth Observatory, South Dartmouth, MA has telescopes out in the field that are owned and operated by ASSNE members; the big telescope inside the dome belongs to the university. Events are on Saturday nights. For more information contact Professor Al Hirshfeld at [ahirshfeld@umassd.edu](mailto:ahirshfeld@umassd.edu)
- Ladd Observatory, Providence, RI is open on clear Tuesday nights; information at [brown.edu/Departments/Physics/Ladd/](http://brown.edu/Departments/Physics/Ladd/)
- Skyscrapers, one of the oldest groups in New England, owns its own observatory; information at [theskyscrapers.org](http://theskyscrapers.org)
- Science related activities at the Dexter Southfield School in Brookline, MA are listed at [dexter-southfield.org/podium/default.aspx?t=119785](http://dexter-southfield.org/podium/default.aspx?t=119785)
- Several PHSNE members claim that ATMOB is the best amateur astronomy group in the world. They do some amazing projects, and the monthly meetings are interesting: [atmob.org](http://atmob.org)

### *Another Interesting Link —*

Lauren Hewes, speaker at the December 6th PHSNE meeting, provided the following link to the AAS blog (American Antiquarian Society) which celebrates the Kodak No. 1: [pastispresent.org](http://pastispresent.org)

*Request from an anonymous PHSNE member:*

### ***PHSNE Considering Complete Series Of Eastman Kodak Co. Catalogs***

One of our PHSNE members has a nearly complete series of EKC catalogs from 1888 to 1940, and he can probably get the remaining few. He is considering the possibility of scanning all the material full size as PDFs to make it available to collectors at cost or at a very nominal fee (about \$10) on CDs.

This effort would be dedicated to the memory of PHSNE life member Eaton Lothrop who did something similar when he helped edit the last volume of Photographic Advertising From A to Z.

This is a substantial amount of work (around 3,600 pages). Before embarking on such a task, we need to have an idea of how many people might be interested and how to identify them. If you would like a complete set of EKC catalogs on a CD, please indicate that via e-mail to [snapshots@phsne.org](mailto:snapshots@phsne.org).