

# snap shots

Volume 20 Number 10

June 2015

## Mark Elson Presents Civil War Reenactors at PHSNE Meeting

**\*\*\*Note change of day, time, and venue\*\*\***

**Saturday, June 6, 2015, 1:00 P.M., EP Levine**

**219 Bear Hill Road, Waltham MA 02451**

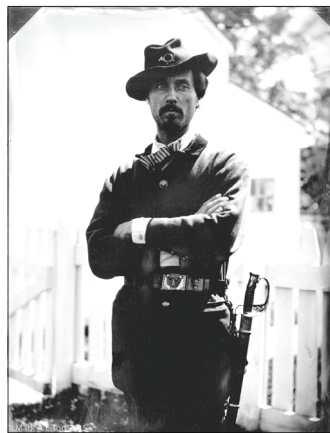


Mark Elson at the Drum Barracks Civil War Museum, Los Angeles; Photograph by Britain Nelms

participate in reenactments. *Battlefields of Honor: American Civil War Reenactors* is a documentary essay book on the men and women who feel an intense, often personal connection to a monumental period in America's past.

Mark Elson's expressive images, done in wet plate photographic techniques, evoke the look and style of the nineteenth-century and capture the painstaking detail that goes into such reenactments. His lifelong fascination with the Civil War led to his interest in wet plate collodion photography, which ultimately resulted in the book.

Mark's presentation to PHSNE on June 6<sup>th</sup> will include photos from the book, as well as his contemporary work done in the American West. Like many Civil War photographers who migrated west to document the country's expansion, Mark, too was attracted to the beauty, grandeur and pioneer spirit. Using silver-based film keeps him in touch with photography's 19<sup>th</sup> century roots and timeless look.



A Union captain poses in front of the headquarters of Union General Meade at Gettysburg Military Park in Pennsylvania., Wet plate photograph Copyright Mark Elson

Some 150 years on, interest in the American Civil War (1861-1865) is at an all-time high, especially among the thousands of people in the United States and Europe who

A Boston-based photographer who specializes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century process wet plate collodion photography, Mark attended the College for Creative Studies in Detroit and the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. He has been a lifelong student of the American Civil War. *Battlefields of Honor* (Merrell Publishers) was inspired by the photography of Civil War-era photographers Mathew Brady, Timothy O'Sullivan and Alexander Gardner, among others. Mark learned the wet plate process, had equipment built and found period lenses. He fell in love with this demanding and beautiful process, with its rich tones, great detail and timeless look. You can view Mark's work at [markelsonpictures.com](http://markelsonpictures.com).



Reenactors from the 37th Virginia portray seasoned Confederates from 1864 at the Battle of Spotsylvania in Virginia. From a color 35mm negative, © Mark Elson

In his contemporary work, Mark finds what most people overlook. A fleeting moment becomes a small-scale drama, a vignette that takes on deeper meaning as that moment is isolated and elevated. He uses the camera to strip away the veneer to see the beauty in the everyday, telling stories of misfits, dreamers, romantics and the forgotten.

At the PHSNE presentation, Mark will have on display wet plate collodion equipment including a camera, lens, and field dark box, and he will do a "dry" demonstration of the wet plate process.

**Driving directions to EP Levine can be found at [eplevine.com](http://eplevine.com).**

## End of Season Wrap-up

We've come to the end of another successful round of PHSNE programs and events. PHSNE takes a break for the summer months. The next issue of *snap shots* will be the September, 2015 issue.

None of the activities could take place without a dedicated corps of volunteers. Thanks to John Dockery for his tireless efforts on behalf of *Photographica*; Jay Goldman for arranging speakers; PHSNE auction manager Lew Regelman and his crew of warehouse volunteers, especially the "regulars" Mihai Chebac, Allan Goodrich, Dick Koolish, Joel Moses, Whitey Morange, and Joe Walters; perennial auctioneer Marti Jones; Ron Polito and Joe Walters for proofreading *snap shots*; Carl Jones, Jim Luedke, and Whitey Morange for work on the *Journal* Committee; David DeJean for monthly email newsletter; and Joe Walters for website management.

Thanks to the PHSNE Board for supporting all the above—and more: President Whitey Morange, Vice-President John Wojtowicz, Secretary Allan Goodrich, Acting Treasurer John Dockery, and Board Members Jay Goldman, new member Joel Moses, Lew Regelman, Ruth Thomasian who stepped down in December after many years of service, Henry Weisenberger, Larry Woods and ex-officio board member Joe Walters (Membership Chair). It is impossible to list everyone who contributed time and energy throughout the year, but all efforts to support PHSNE are greatly appreciated.

## PHSNE Membership

*New members are invited to join for half the rates for the first year.* Regular PHSNE membership is \$20 for students, \$35 for individuals and institutions, \$40 for a family, and \$45 for foreign membership. Join or renew online at [phsne.org/join](http://phsne.org/join) or [phsne.org/renew](http://phsne.org/renew), or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order. Members should check the expiration date on the *snap shots* mailing label before sending in dues.

Send payment, 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)).

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## Recap of Capa Controversy

"*The Falling Soldier* (full title: *Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death, Cerro Muriano, September 5, 1936*) is a photograph by Robert Capa, claimed to have been taken on September 5, 1936 . . . The *Falling Soldier* appears to capture a Republican soldier



Original title *Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death, Cerro Muriano, September 5, 1936*, [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)

at the very moment of death. The soldier is shown collapsing backward after being fatally shot in head, with his rifle slipping out of his right hand. The pictured soldier is dressed in civilian clothing,

but is wearing a leather cartridge belt ([wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Falling\\_Soldier](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Falling_Soldier)).” Once acclaimed as a photojournalism masterpiece, serious doubts about its authenticity arose in the mid 1970’s and persist to this day.

## MFA Show Features Japanese Disasters

On March 11, 2011, a severe earthquake hit Japan, followed by a tsunami. *In the Wake: Japanese Photographers Respond to 3/11* documents the devastation

that caused 18,000 deaths and displaced 400,000 people. One section of the nearly 100 images is devoted to the ensuing meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear plant.



Miyagi Prefecture from North East Earthquake Disaster Tsunami 2011  
© Kozo Miyoshi

Reviewer Mark Feeney reports that, “The work takes numerous forms, ranging from video to daguerreotype, abstraction to traditional straight photography” (*Boston Globe*, April 10, 2015). He adds, “*In the Wake*” is a show of impressive scope and variety, ambition and power.

The show runs through July 12th. Go to [mfa.org](http://mfa.org) for more information and a preview of the show.



## Update on *Photographica 83*

The 83<sup>rd</sup> *Photographica* Show took place on April 11-12, 2015. I dedicated this show to the memory of my good friend and longtime *Photographica* volunteer Gibson V. "Bud" Midgley. The show and auction were a complete success. I look forward to *Photographica 84* which will take place on October 17-18, 2015.

Over 400 people attended the show on the first really good weekend in New England for about eight months. Many were either newcomers or had not been to *Photographica* in a long time. We also had an unusually large number of current PHSNE members attend this event.

The interest in traditional film-based photography is increasing and word seems to be getting out that *Photographica* is the place to be if you want to buy film gear inexpensively and you want to learn how to use it. One third of the dealer tables for the next show are already sold out. This continues to bode well for the future.



*Auction items*

are still some great collections to be sorted, researched, fixed, and cataloged this summer to be auctioned at the fall show.

There are a great many people for me to thank for making this event run as smoothly as it does, PHSNE members and a few non-members as well. Special thanks go out to Walter Freisendorf, Allan Goodrich, Neil Gordon, Richard Hartman, Judy Shaw Harvey, Rudd Hoff, Marti Jones, Jim McDonough, Bruce Midgley, Whitey Morange, Joel Moses, Lew Regelman, Jordan Rich, Ernie Stonebraker, Sherryl Stonebraker, Bobbi Tepper, Dick Welch, Larry Woods, Daniel Zirinsky, and a long list of other people who, while I may have omitted their names, does not mean I have forgotten them or their efforts.

~John Dockery, *Photographica* show manager



*Dollar Table Activity*

## Generous Donations Enhance Auction

Special thanks to three generous donors whose contributions added many quality items to the April auction.

Bruce Midgley, son of the late (Gibson) Bud Midgley to whom *Photographica 83* was dedicated (see article at left), donated his father's collection to PHSNE. Many items were sold in April and the rest will be auctioned at future dates.

Two long-time PHSNE members, Dick Welch and Myron Seiden, contributed large portions of their collections to this and future auctions.

Many auction or dollar table items come from the collections of members. Some are donations, but often the auction warehouse team works with surviving spouses or children of PHSNE members to help them sell items. Sorting through collections and preparing items for sale are part of the service PHSNE offers to the community.



*Dick Koolish Prepares Lens for Auction*

## Everything Old is New Again — Introducing LOMO Instant Film Camera

Polaroid may have gone out of business, but that doesn't mean that instant film cameras are a thing of the past. The Lomography Society recently introduced the Lomo'Instant Boston Edition Package, an instant film camera with a built-in wide-angle lens that is compatible with Fujifilm Instax Mini film.



The camera comes with fisheye, portrait, and closeup lens attachments and a Lomo'Instant Splitter that allows for multiple exposures. Its many features allow for infinite long exposures;

color flash gels in red, blue, purple, and yellow; and unlimited multiple exposures. The camera comes in bold colors and is a convenient easy-to-carry size. Visit [microsites.lomography.com/lomo-instant-camera](http://microsites.lomography.com/lomo-instant-camera) for additional information.

## Rolleiflex Factory Liquidated Another Casualty of the Digital Age

Proventura, a German auction house, launched a bankruptcy auction in April, selling the equipment used to test and manufacture Rollei cameras as well as a large number of Rollei cameras and accessories. The inventory consisted of 1,100 lots.

Michael Zhang posted a notice of the auction on March 13th ([petapixel.com/2015/03/13/rolleiflex-factory-to-be-liquidated-at-auction-heres-a-look-inside](http://petapixel.com/2015/03/13/rolleiflex-factory-to-be-liquidated-at-auction-heres-a-look-inside)). He wrote, "The auction gives us an unprecedented glimpse into the tools and spaces that were once used to make cameras with the iconic Rollei brand." Zhang's posting includes a number of photographs selected from more than 1,000 that appear on the auction site.

According to Zhang, "The Rolleiflex brand itself could survive long after this factory is gone. Just like with Polaroid, the trademark could change hands and soon find itself on new cameras, both officially produced or licensed out to third party manufacturers. If you have deep pockets, maybe you can purchase this entire factory later this year and reboot the camera line yourself."



## PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE Board at 11:00 a.m. The June meeting will be a special Saturday field trip to EP Levine in Waltham. **For driving directions visit [eplevine.com](http://eplevine.com) and click on "Directions."**

## Upcoming meetings:

After the June meeting, the next meeting will be in September. Tentative date: September 20<sup>th</sup>. Details will appear in the September issue of *snap shots*.

## PHSNE Online

PHSNE's Web site is online at [phsne.org](http://phsne.org). See [facebook.com/phsne](https://facebook.com/phsne) and the president's blog at [phsne.org/presidentsblog](http://phsne.org/presidentsblog) for items of PHSNE interest. Comments are welcome, so join the discussion of photo history. Visit [phsne.org/archive](http://phsne.org/archive) for PHSNE history and *snapshots* issues. Scheduling changes due to weather conditions or other factors will be posted on this website.

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Photographic Historical Society of New England  
Next Meeting: SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2015, 1:00 P.M.  
EP Levine, 219 Bear Hill Rd., Waltham MA  
NOTE CHANGE OF DAY, TIME, VENUE!



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