

# snap

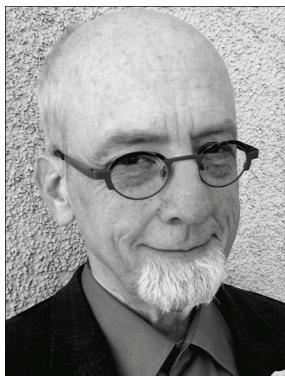


# shots

Volume 21 Number 3

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## Louis Blend's Career in Gloucester MA Featured in Philip Storey's Presentation



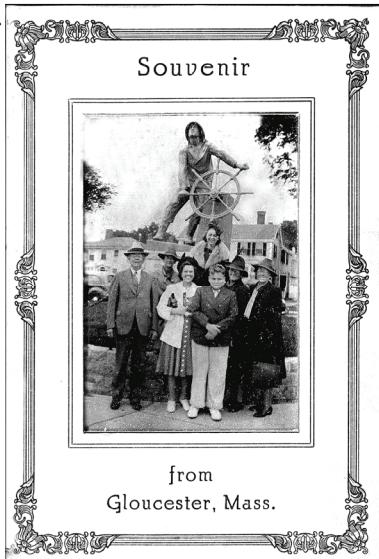
Levi Blinder (Russian name Americanized to Louis Blend) was a fixture on Stacy Boulevard in Gloucester, Massachusetts during tourist season from 1926 until he retired his camera in 1976. Fifty years is an astonishing amount of time to spend at such a profession. During that time he trained his lens on whoever would pay

him—a nickel in the 1920s, a little more in later years—for an “instant” souvenir photograph posed in front of the Fisherman’s Monument. Blend’s personal story intersects with Gloucester’s civic story in so many ways.

Like scores of Gloucester’s fishermen he was an immigrant. He was inextricably linked both to Stacy Boulevard and to the city’s most iconic statue. And he was an important player in Gloucester’s burgeoning tourist scene. His neglected story deserves to be told.

Philip Storey will fill in that narrative with a presentation on the life of the itinerant photographer and how he made his living in Gloucester. Some attention will be paid to the photographic processes he used, as well as the cultural life of Gloucester at the time.

Storey is a longtime PHSNE member. He has given presentations at PHSNE meetings, at the George Eastman House, and at the Cape Ann Museum.



## PHSNE Sponsors *Young Voices*, Juried Show for Student Work

The full title of the PHSNE-sponsored show to be held at the Landau Gallery of Belmont Hill School is *Young Voices/Old School Printing*. The images may have been recorded on film, with a digital camera, phone, or tablet, but the print must be created using historically significant printing processes. These would include platinum/palladium, cyanotype, gum bichromate, salt or albumen print, carbon print, anothotype, bromoil, wet plate collodian, van dyke or gravure, and others that are being rediscovered. Digital or traditional gelatin-silver prints will not be considered.

Entries are being accepted from high school and undergraduate college students—two prints per artist, no limit per school. Prizes include vintage camera equipment and gift certificates. The show runs from December 1, 2015 through January 6, 2016. Submission rules and other information are available in Upcoming Events at [facebook.com/PHSNE](http://facebook.com/PHSNE) and [phsne.org](http://phsne.org).

## Ferrania to Manufacture Analog Film

In today’s digital world, it is difficult to obtain analog film, but there is welcome news from Italy. “FILM Ferrania was officially formed in Ferrania, Italy on July 23, 2013 by co-founders Nicola Baldini and Marco Pagni with the aim to build a new factory from the leftover parts of the old one, originally founded in 1923. Through massive cooperation with the local government, FILM Ferrania currently has a facility, most of the necessary machinery and even a large stock of chemistry” ([filmferrania.it](http://filmferrania.it)).

In October 2014, Ferrania completed *100 More Years of Analog Film*, a kickstarter campaign that resulted in 5582 backers world-wide raising over \$320,000 to launch the new company.

Production will be restored for still and motion picture formats. The company’s goal is to “aim for nothing less than fundamentally changing the way you buy, use and process film today.”

## Courts Consider Two Significant (and Interesting!) Copyright Issues

### Serious Monkey Business

Taking a selfie is a common everyday occurrence, except when the photographer is a monkey. Naruto, a six year old macaque monkey living on the Indonesian island Sulawesi, pressed a camera button after British nature photographer David Slater set a camera on a tripod.

So who took the picture? And, more important, who owns the copyright. The animal rights group PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) claims that the monkey took the picture and filed suit in September 2015 to have the proceeds go to benefit Naruto. Claiming full responsibility for the setup and results, Slater maintains he holds the copyright.

According to Wikipedia, “Slater's claim of copyright . . . was disputed by several scholars and organizations, based on an understanding that copyright was held by the creator, and that a non-human creator (not being a legal person) could not hold copyright. In December 2014, the United States Copyright Office stated that works created by a non-human are not subject to U.S. copyright.”



*Self Portrait Photograph*  
wikimedia.org

### PHSNE Membership

*New members are invited to join for half the rates for the first year.* Regular PHSNE membership (U.S. and Canada) is \$20 for students, \$40 for individuals and institutions, and \$45 for a family; foreign membership is \$50. 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 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)).

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### Maier Photos Continue to be Contested

At the February 2015 PHSNE meeting, presenter Karin Rosenthal spoke about Vivian Maier's “remarkable street photography [that] took the world by storm in 2010.” The *snap shots* write-up about the meeting made note of the fact that there were issues about the production and sale of these photographs. That turns out to be a gross understatement.

The controversy over copyrights to Maier's images has received considerable publicity recently. 10,000 undeveloped negatives were found in a locker on which Maier had defaulted ([upshout.com/vivian-maier](http://upshout.com/vivian-maier)), the contents of which were purchased in 2007 by John Maloof. The contents of storage lockers usually belong to the storage company in cases of default, but it's not clear whether that would include copyrights.

What must now be sorted out is who has rights to the images: Maloof, who purchased the lot at auction; cousins in France (who hadn't heard of her before) who have been identified as the nearest living relatives—and, if so, which one; or the owner of the locker that hadn't been paid for. Furthermore, Maloof was not the only one who purchased images from the liquidators (there were five lockers in default), so there could be several other claims.

A *Los Angeles Times* article (July 13, 2015) notes that “Copyright doesn't automatically transfer with the sale of a physical object. One can own a negative or a print, while not controlling the rights for sale and reproduction.” The courts must determine her legal heirs (she left no will) and, at the same time, what copyrights Maier had when she died, and ultimately, who currently possesses them.

Sadly, the controversy may prevent her work from being displayed, depriving the public of an opportunity to see her striking images. Maloof co-directed a documentary that was nominated for an academy award. For more information, and to view a trailer, visit [findingvivianmaier.com](http://findingvivianmaier.com).



*Self Portrait, New York City, c. 1950s*  
Licensed under Fair Use via Wikipedia

## MFA Exhibit Features Vernacular Photos

Wikipedia defines vernacular photography as “the creation of photographs, usually by amateur or unknown photographers . . . who take everyday life and common things as subjects.” About 300 such photographs are on display in the exhibit *Unfinished Stories: Snapshots From the Peter J. Cohen Collection* at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

*Boston Globe* reviewer Mark Feeney notes that “The title is apt. With an art photograph, form trumps content, ever and always. With vernacular photography—snapshots and candids and commercial portraits and the like —content is king. It’s who and what, when and where that count, not how” ([tinyurl.com/nwrmld](http://tinyurl.com/nwrmld)).

The photos were selected from the approximately 1000 images Cohen donated to the museum. The full collection contains about 50,000 mostly personal photos that were “lost, discarded, or disowned” before being rescued by Cohen.

Quoting Cohen in the *Boston Globe*, Eryn Carlson wrote, “Some people find them charming, and others find them a sort of relic . . . , but these are things that everyone can relate to. Everyone’s parents or grandparents had photo albums” ([tinyurl.com/p3f6tcf](http://tinyurl.com/p3f6tcf)).

Sections of the exhibit include Studio Portraits, Children, People at Play, and African American Experience as well as humorous groupings in Hula Madness and Feet First. The categories are quite arbitrary, and many images could fit in multiple sections.

An avid collector, Cohen still spends many hours every week searching for more photographs, as he has for the past 25 years or so. He relishes the stories he can imagine behind each photograph, and will acquire photographs that are torn, stained, or show wear, appreciating the fact that these photos were enjoyed and cherished.

Most of the photos are in black and white. The show runs through February 21, 2016. Visit [mfa.org](http://mfa.org) for additional information.



Unidentified photographer, Untitled (Amsterdam), about 1950s

## Universal Cameras

Founded in 1932 and located in New York City, the Universal Camera Company produced some unusual cameras for about two decades. Most of their models were very inexpensive, including the small Bakelite Model A which sold for 39 cents when introduced in 1932 and the art deco Univex AF-2, released in 1936, which sold for \$1.50 (more than a million were sold by 1937).

In the late 1930s, Universal tried to escape the “cheap camera” label and produced the Mercury series, designed to compete with the expensive Leica and Contax cameras; at \$25 it was quite a bargain. It featured the world’s first hot shoe to shoot synchronized flash pictures. With a rotary shutter that formed a “hump” along the back of the camera, it was a strange looking piece of equipment. This shutter was more accurate than that of the Leica or Contax according to Harvard Observatory tests. The Mercury CC took half-frame pictures, and shutter speeds were 1/20th to 1/1000th of a second plus B & T. The back has a complicated exposure calculator which required two-and-a-half pages of explanation in the instruction manual.

Another art deco camera, the Iris Standard Candid Camera, introduced in 1938, had a fixed-focus collapsible lens. A black crinkled enamel finish coated the zinc body. Other features included a chrome lens barrel and a satin chrome panel around the lens mount.

Universal’s Iris and another model, the Zenith, used film manufactured by the Gevaert Company in Belgium. When war broke out in Europe, the film was no longer available. Many cameras, especially Zeniths, were tossed, and the Zeniths are now rare finds for collectors.

Eventually, Universal was unable to compete with other manufacturers, and the company went out of business in 1964. An interesting and well-illustrated chronicle of the company’s history is available in a book by Cynthia A. Repinski titled *The Univex Story: Universal Camera Corporation*. Detailed information about Universal cameras is available at [tinyurl.com/pzy337g](http://tinyurl.com/pzy337g).



Univex AF-2



Univex Mercury Model CC

~Story and photos by Lew Regelman

## Another Casualty of the Digital Age



and held at E.P. Levine in Waltham MA. The venue was well known and often used by many of the members in attendance who were stunned and disappointed by the September announcement that the firm was going out of business, closing its doors on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In their letter to customers, owners Jay Callum and Michael Bard noted that, "This is done with much sadness, as EP Levine, in one iteration or another, has been a fixture in the Boston and New England photographic community since 1959." They were affected by the financial crisis of 2008, and "with that event, an unstoppable series of changes to the photographic industry was set in motion. Brick and mortar locations with qualified, knowledgeable staff and a reputation for providing top notch service and advice, ironically became the hardest hit... Value and service became secondary to price."

Area PHSNE members have lost a valuable resource.



At the June PHSNE meeting, Mark Elson presented a program about civil war re-enactors, hosted by

### PHSNE Meetings

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

### Upcoming meetings:

**December 7**—Holiday party and show and tell  
**January 10** - Members' Auction

### Driving directions to Woman's Club Workshop:

From I-95/Rt-128 exit 20 take Rt-9 East toward Brookline/Boston. Turn left at Woodward St, right onto Lincoln St, and left onto Columbus St. WCW will be to your right. The WCW is about 1.4 miles inside 128.

Coming west on Rt-9 from Boston, turn right on Walnut St then left on to Lincoln St, then right onto Columbus St. The WCW (#72) will be to your right.

Limited time parking rules do not apply on Sundays. Park on Columbus or Lincoln. There is a public parking lot on the other side of Lincoln opposite the Church.

### Public transportation:

MBTA, Newton Highland Station on the Green Line (Riverside Branch). Exit via Walnut Street exit. Go down Lincoln St (directly across Walnut) and turn right on to Columbus St.

### 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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Philip Story Discusses Russian Immigrant Louis Blenda  
Woman's Club Workshop  
Next Meeting: November 1, 2015, 1:30 P.M.  
Photographic Historical Society of New England