

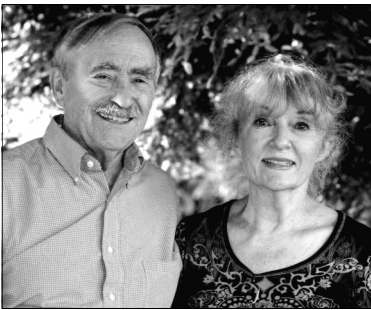


Presenters Peter and Barbara Schultz Offer History of the Sliding Box-in-Box Camera

Sunday, October 14, 2018, 1:30 P.M.

Woman's Club Workshop, 72 Columbus St., Newton Highlands MA

(Note Date Change: Meeting moved to 2nd Sunday because of Columbus Day weekend)



The chamfered rosewood daguerreotype camera (primarily from New York manufacturers) is a uniquely American design that disappeared in the late -1850's, replaced by the more flexible

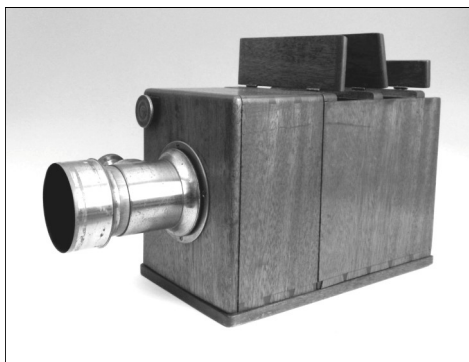
Lewis bellows cameras. Yet very little has been documented about the sliding box-in-box camera (especially the "Boston Box") typically found throughout New England.

While Plumbe sold a box-in-box design in Boston in 1842, two other examples dominated the market later. Identified by a maker label, John Roberts made a full line of sizes. A second mystery maker also made a full line but with subtle differences in construction (rounded corners, different brass, and wood grain). We now have evidence that this "other" example came from a cabinet maker located only a block away from the John Roberts shop. The early Boston photographer A. S. Southworth engaged both cabinetmakers: John Roberts, for cameras sold through his studio in the 1840's; the other maker, for his patent designs.

At the October 14th PHSNE meeting, presenters Peter and Barbara Schultz will reconstruct the history

of the Roberts family and their cameras from the 1840's into the 1860's, identify the competing maker (s), locate their shops, place their designs in historical context, and trace US-made box-in-box design into the wet-plate era. The presentation is based on original research gleaned from the Eastman House, various libraries throughout Northeast, contemporary literature, and surviving examples. Our goal is to illustrate how collected objects can be used to inform photographic history and expose a more complete picture about the birth and the behind-the-scenes makers of early US cameras.

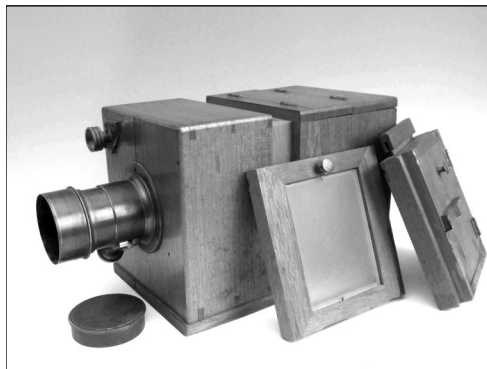
PHSNE member Pete Schultz is a Professor Emeritus at Brown University in the Department of Earth, Environmental, and Planetary Sciences with a BA from Carleton College (MN) and PhD from the University of Texas at Austin. He has been involved in NASA research (including missions such as *Magellan*, *Deep Impact*, *EPOXI*, *Stardust-NExT*, and *LCROSS*) for 50 years with over 200 publications and a book about the Moon.



The Unnamed Boston Box

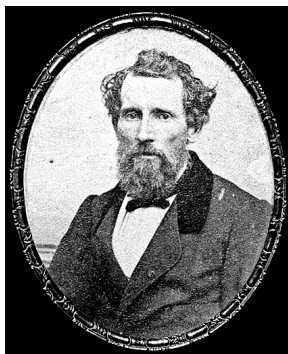
His wife and co-presenter, Barbara Schultz, is a graphic designer with

background in print making and photography (Minneapolis College of Fine Art and Design). They both are interested in photographic history with emphasis on the evolution of hardware and how it relates to design and technology.



Roberts Box

Earliest Color Photograph: Breakthrough or Hoax?



Levi Hill

<https://tinyurl.com/yadjo2at>

It is believed that the first color photograph was taken by James Clerk Maxwell of Scotland in 1871. Commercialization of color photography followed the introduction of the Autochrome Lumiere in 1903 (patented in 1907) by the Lumiere Brothers of France. However, Levi Hill, a Baptist minister in upstate New York claimed to have produced the first color photograph in 1851, ten years earlier than Maxwell's and more than a half century before the Autochrome Lumiere appeared.

Michelle Delaney, curator of the National Museum of American History's photographic history collection, is trying to answer the question of whether Hill made this breakthrough or, as most photohistorians believe, perpetuated a hoax.

In a letter to the *Daguerreian Journal*, Hill claimed to have 45 images "all of which present the several colors, true to a tint, and with a degree of brilliancy

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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 at [phsne.org/join/](https://www.phsne.org/join/), renew at [phsne.org/renew/](https://www.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, 47 Calvary St., Waltham MA 02453. (Call: 617-826-9294; email: membership-chair@phsne.org; or use the Web form at [phsne.org/application](https://www.phsne.org/application).

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A Blind Photographer?

Blind people often astound us with the things they can do, but it's particularly difficult to imagine how a sightless person can function as a photographer. While known primarily for his extraordinary musical talents, blind pianist Henry Butler (1948—2018) once remarked, "I wanted to see why the sighted world was so interested in looking at images on a piece of paper or a piece of canvas (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/04/obituaries/henry-butler-dead.html>).

A native of New Orleans, Butler's photographs of the city included scenes from Mardi Gras and post-Katrina devastation (including the remains of his treasured piano). Many were displayed in a traveling exhibition, *Sight Unseen: International Photography by Blind Artists*.

A BBC obituary by Roland Hughes (July 8, 2018) quoted Butler as saying, "I started because I wanted to become a participant in the visual arts field, and affect the consciousness of sighted people," he wrote in 2005.



Henry Butler, Big ol' Kiss, 2005
Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New Orleans

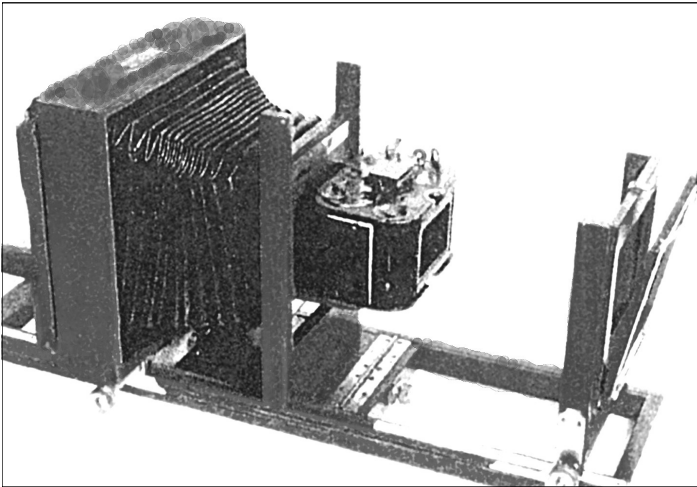
"After going to exhibits, hearing people describe photos and paintings, I felt kind of empty - I wasn't getting all that I could get.

The best thing, I decided, was to try to become at least an artist who was doing something in one of the visual arts" (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44723987>). His method of setting up the photo was clever. Friends would describe a scene, and he listened to voices to get a sense of the height of the subjects.

Other blind people have taken to photography. In November, 2010, HBO2 aired *Dark Light: The Art of Blind Photographers*. Butler was one of the artists featured. The 31 minute documentary can be viewed at <https://www.hbo.com/documentaries/dark-light-the-art-of-blind-photographers>.

Unusual Feature of 0 Graphic Sparks Interest at PHSNE Meeting

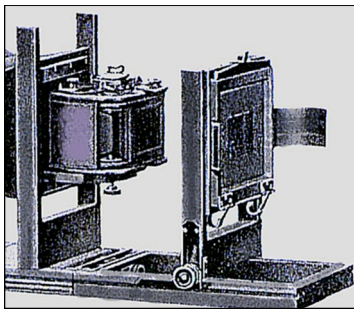
In the June 2018 *snap shots*, PHSNE member Richard Berbiar wrote about the Century 0 Graphic Camera. A few weeks later, Jim Chasse, brought his 0 Graphic to a PHSNE meeting and demonstrated that the camera was a key part of an enlarger.



No. 0 Graphic Enlarging Camera

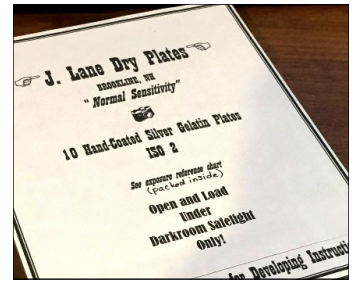
In an article that appeared in *Graflex Historical Quarterly* in 2001, Chasse wrote “It was first shown in the Graflex catalog of 1910, one year after the No. 0 camera was introduced, and the enlarger was made only for the No. 0 camera. It continued to be listed in catalogs through 1918.”

Chasse went on to say, “The negative to be enlarged is placed in the carrier, while the No. 0 Graphic is placed in position with the back removed and the lens shade elevated; the camera is then pointed toward the light, and the image is focused on the ground glass. The holder, containing a sheet of paper, is then placed in position, the slide drawn and the exposure made. The camera is furnished with mats for making 3A (3.25 x 5.5) enlargements only, although a negative 4 x 5 and smaller may be enlarged to any size up to 6.5 x 8.5.” Chasse concludes, “This fine piece of woodworking was originally priced at \$24.00 and was only \$27.00 in 1918. Because the total number of No. 0 cameras made was relatively modest, and this enlarger was sold only for that camera, I believe it is quite rare.”



Some Photographers Continue to Use Dry Plate Process

During the Civil War era, photographers had to bring darkroom equipment on photo shoots since the wet plate process required the glass plates to be coated with a viscous light-sensitive emulsion, exposed, and developed before the plate became fully dry. In the 1870's the much more convenient dry plate process became available, allowing plates to be prepared well before exposure, and creating an industry around their manufacture.



According to Wikipedia, “Dry plate, also known as gelatin process, is an improved type of photographic plate. It was invented by Dr. Richard L. Maddox in 1871, and by 1879 it was so well introduced that the first dry plate factory had been established.” The process was phased out when Kodak’s celluloid film made glass plates obsolete.

Clearly, there are more convenient processes available today, but there are always hobbyists and enthusiasts willing to put forth the extra effort to use historic methods. Jason Lane, creator of J. Lane Dry Plates, is one of them. Lane states, “My goal for this venture is to resurrect dry plate photography as a viable media option for the photographic community” (<https://www.pictoriographica.com/>).

Lane purchases glass in 12” x 12” sheets and cuts them to size, the most often requested size is 4” x 5”. Results are often shared on the facebook site *Dry Plate Photographers*.

Breakthrough or Hoax?

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never seen in the richest Daguerreotype” (<https://tinyurl.com/yadjo2at>).

Crediting Hill, the editor named the invention a “Hillotype.” Hill kept delaying a promised public display and was unable to patent his process. He published *A Treatise on Heliography* in 1839, but by then, “most of his peers ‘had thoroughly dismissed Hill’s work as fakery.’” By the time he died, he himself “referred to Hillotypes as a failed experiment.”

Experts from the George Eastman House and Getty Conservation Institute have analyzed the 62 Hillotypes held by the Smithsonian. While they acknowledge that some had been hand-colored, “what they found largely vindicated the inventive clergyman.”



Hillotype, <https://tinyurl.com/yadjo2at>

Delaney is trying to locate more Hillotypes as part of her research for a book she is writing about early American photography. She poses the question, “How would someone not trained in chemistry learn to do this stuff?” For more information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/yadjo2at>. The site includes a video on the history of color photography.

PHSNE Meetings

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

Upcoming meetings:

November 4—Michael Hintlian, Photojournalist

December 2—Holiday party, Members’ Auction, and Annual Meeting

Driving directions to Woman’s Club Workshop, 72 Columbus St., Newton Highlands MA:

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:

See <https://mbta.com/>

Connect to PHSNE Online and by email:

PHSNE’s Web site is online at <http://phsne.org>. See <https://www.facebook.com/PHSNE/> for items of PHSNE interest. Comments are welcome, so join the discussion of photo history. Visit <http://phsne.org/member-services/archives/> for PHSNE history and *snapshots* issues. Scheduling changes due to weather conditions or other factors will be posted on this website.

Stay connected to PHSNE via our emails: a *snap shots* e-copy, and *Photographa* show announcements. Sign up at <http://phsne.org/emails>

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

ransomfellowships@utexas.edu Information/application for postdoctoral fellowship at Ransom Center in Austin, Texas. Deadline Nov. 15, 2018. Ransom Center collection described at <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/collections/photography/> - over 5 million prints and negatives.

<https://emulsive.org/> Site offers review articles on film and film cameras. Among other things they are doing a series of articles on “Every single film Stock still made today.”

<https://www.dpreview.com/news/3631124733/the-chroma-is-a-lightweight-affordable-easy-to-use-5x4-field-camera> A UK photographer and custom-built camera maker has launched a Kickstarter campaign to help fund a new 5x4-inch field camera that he intends to be lightweight, easy-to-use, unique, affordable and upgradable... as well as a bit funky. To that end, the Chroma will be made from brightly colored sheets of acrylic, laser-cut for accuracy.