



**PHSNE Member Vlaimir Khazan to Present Program on the Gelveta and Sport
Sunday, October 1, 2023, 7:30 P.M. via Zoom
Link to be emailed to members in late September**



The Gelveta, which later became the Sport, was designed and built by Soviet photography and cinematography enthusiast A. O. Gelgar in the 1930s. It derived its name

from the first three letters of Gelgar's name followed by the abbreviation of the manufacturer's name, Military Electric Technical Academy (note: Military begins with "v" in Russian). "It is the earliest known production 35mm SLR camera ever to be built, but fewer than 320 examples were made" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sport_camera).

"The actual launch date of the 'Sport' is somewhat uncertain, however it was in series production by 1936 and must undoubtedly be one of the two earliest generally available SLR cameras using the 35mm film format, the other being the German Ihagee Kine Exakta, launched in 1936."



Closeup of Industar 10 lens

The engraved name "Cnopm" above the lens represents the name of the camera in Cyrillic. The camera has a brief history because manufacturing ceased when Germany invaded the U.S.S.R. during WW II. Almost 20,000 were produced prior to the siege of Leningrad in 1941, but production was not resumed after the war.

At the October 1st meeting, PHSNE member Vladimir



Khazan will talk about the invention and manufacturing of the camera and provide biographical background information about Gelgar. He will explain how the camera "made its way to the customers."

Khazan, the Russian-born photography enthusiast has had a varied career as engineer, medical professional, and professor. He earned a Master's degree in mechanical manufacturing engineering from Riga Polytechnic Institute and worked at the "gigantic" VEF plant in Riga, Latvia. He worked as an engineer in the U.S. until 2003, a cardiovascular sonographer until 2007, a professor until 2020 when



COVID hit, and he recently returned to a position as a mechanical engineer. His passion for photography began when

he was twelve years old and continues to this day.

See <http://www.sovietcams.com/index474e.html> for more information about the sport camera.

An Impressive Stereo Viewer With An Interesting Provenance



The device pictured here was acquired from the Jack Naylor collection. After he passed, much of his collection was turned over to an Austrian auction house. The device was bulky and broken, and the auctioneer wouldn't ship it to Europe with the rest of the collection. It was slated to be thrown out.

PHSNE member Lew Regelman was present at the time, and he rescued it from the dumpster. He took

it home, repaired it, and has enjoyed it as part of his own collection since then.

An article in the 1995 PHSNE *Journal*, titled *New Stereo Viewer* described it as follows:



“This 60 inch high stereo card viewer in the Naylor collection is a hands-on device that visitors enjoy. It holds 20 stereographs on a rotating drum actuated by moving the knob back and forth. The white button on front must be

pushed and held to turn on the interior light. The steps [not shown in photo]? For the kiddies of course. The viewer was designed and built by Arthur F. March, Jr. of New Hampshire.”

The photo attached to the 1995 *Journal* article shows small wooden steps under the device, obviously intended to let children step up to the viewer. The steps were lost before Regelman came into possession of the device.

PHSNE Membership

New members are invited to join for half the rates for the first year. Regular PHSNE membership (U.S. and Canada) is \$30 for students, \$50 for individuals and institutions, and \$55 for a family; foreign membership is \$60. Join or renew online at <https://phsne.org/join> or <https://phsne.org/renew>, or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order. Please check the expiration date on the *snap shots* mailing label before sending in dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to PHSNE Membership Chair, 47 Calvary St., Waltham MA 02453, email membership-chair@phsne.org, or use the Web form at <https://phsne.org/application>.

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Rotating drum as seen from the top of the viewer

~Photos by Kazz Regelman

A Treasure Hidden in Your Vest Pocket: the Gray-Stirn Vest Pocket Camera

Most commonly known as the Stirn Vest Pocket Camera, it can occasionally appear as Gray's Vest Camera or under other names. Describing it as "a rigid, disc-like camera, to be worn in conjunction with a specially-constructed false vest," *A Century of Cameras* (by PHSNE member Eaton S. Lothrop, Jr., Morgan & Morgan, 1973) offers this history:



Stirn Camera, 1888, image by Rick Soloway

It was invented by Robert D. Gray of New York, patented in 1886, and manufactured by Western Electric Co. of New York. It produced "6 exposures, 1 5/8 in. diameter, on a 5 1/2 in. diameter dry plate." The fake half-vest (front only) was short-lived. The shutter release and knob "protruded through an opening in the upper front section of the vest," with the knob resembling a button. By May of 1886, the camera could be worn under a regular vest. The camera was thinner, and more of it was easily concealed. The original octagonal plate had morphed into a circular shape.

Months later, manufacturing rights were purchased by C. P. Stirn (of Stirn & Lyons in NYC). Improvements were made, a German patent obtained, and production of the Stirn Vest Pocket Camera began. As a result of the changes made by Stirn, "the back was hinged at the bottom and had a knob at the top

for fastening it shut. From this point on the camera was called 'C.P. Stirn's Patent Concealed Vest Camera,'" Stirn vest cameras were produced through 1892.

"The round brass body with the exposure dial (with or without clock hand) and the funnel type lens barrel gave it an unique appearance. Two main types were made, one for making four 6cm wide round exposures on a round film plate with a diameter of 17cm, the other with smaller lens funnel, for making six 4cm wide round exposures on a round plate with a diameter of 14cm. This camera type fits not only in a vest pocket, it can be hidden in it so that the narrow lens opening looks through the vest pocket's buttonhole. Thus the camera got its popular type name 'buttonhole camera', but also a detective camera, spy camera, and last not least vest pocket camera" (https://camerapedia.fandom.com/wiki/Stirn_Concealed_Vest_Camera).

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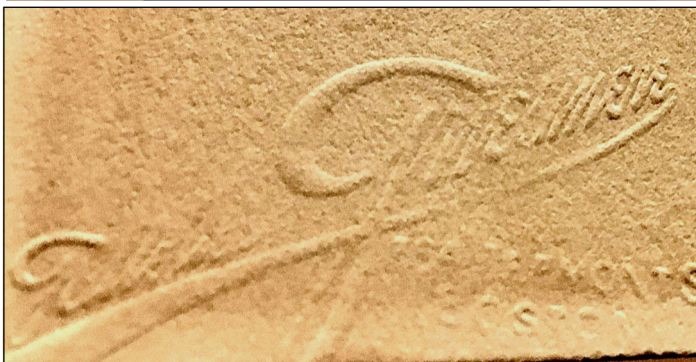
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Can You Help This Reader?

A reader sent a request to *snap shots* for help identifying a family member in an old photo found at his grandmother's house. "I'm trying to identify the family member within the photo by dating when it was taken and possibly even the photography studio by trying to decipher the embossed words on the corner of the photo."

Any information would be greatly appreciated. Please send to snapshots@phsne.org, and it will be passed along to the person who inquired.



It seems clear from the embossed information that the studio was located in Boston, possibly on Tremont St. The rest is difficult to decipher.

PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held online on the first Sunday of each month, September to June.

Upcoming meetings:

November 5—TBD

December 3—PHSNE President John Felix, *50 Years of PHSNE*

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Correction



Gem tintage cameras, photo by Rob Niederman

This photograph appeared in the November 2022 *snap shots* with incorrect attribution. The photograph was taken by Rob Niederman who has the camera in his collection (see <http://antiquewoodcameras.com>). You can read more about the camera at [Early Multiple Lens Wood & Brass Field Cameras](#) | [Collectors Weekly](#).