



Victorian Era Women and a 140-Year-Old Brookline Children’s Photo Album

Sunday, November 6, 2022, 7:30 P.M. via Zoom

A Zoom link will be emailed to members in timely manner

Please note: Daylight Savings Time ends November 6 at 2:00 A.M.



In 2014, the Brookline Historical Society (BHS) was given a tiny photo album — 3” wide by 3.75” high — with postage stamp-sized photos of 48 Brookline and Boston children, most of them girls. Written inside the front cover was a name, Mamie

Williams, and a date, March 16, 1882. Who were these children? What was the connection between them? What became of them as adults? And why were the photos so small?

At the November PHSNE meeting, Kenn Liss, president of the Brookline Historical Society, will describe how research led to answers to these questions and to some fascinating stories about Brookline and Boston women in the Victorian era; the research also uncovered information about a particular type of 19th century photograph called the gem tintype.

Photographs from the album appear on the society’s website <https://tinyurl.com/mr38bwdn>. Online resources about tintype gem photographs include <https://tinyurl.com/26szkdj> (Smithsonian) and <http://www.phsc.ca/janice.html>.

Liss has been president of the BHS since 2009. He researches, writes, and gives presentations and walk-

ing tours covering many aspects of Brookline’s history. The retired librarian recently served as Head of Instruction at the Boston University Libraries from 2014-2021. He had previously served as a librarian at Boston College, the Harvard Business School, at a nonprofit organization, and a library software company. Liss has a blog about Brookline history at <https://brooklinehistory.blogspot.com>, and he contributes to the website of the town’s Historical Society (<https://brooklinehistoricalsociety.org>). Bliss can be reached at kenlissbrookline@gmail.com.



Gem tintype cameras, photo by Ken Liss



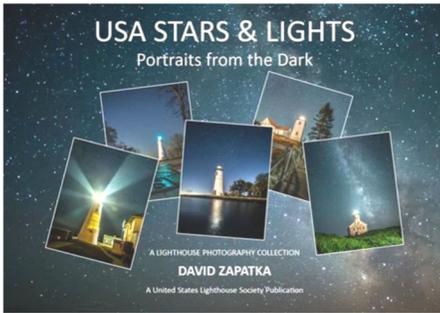
Coming Attractions

Simon Wing, perhaps the most important figure in the development of the gem tintype trade across the U.S. and overseas, will be the focus of PHSNE’s 2022 *New England Journal of Photographic History*.

Star Light, Star Bright

The United States Lighthouse Society recently announced the upcoming publication of a new coffee table book, *USA Stars & Lights: Portraits from the Dark*, offering the images of David Zapatka. The photographer previously published *Stars & Lights: Darkest of Dark Nights* on a similar theme in 2017.

With publication scheduled for December 2022, the book will serve as “an important and historically



significant photographic collection with many previously unpublished night lighthouse images from seventeen states. Utilizing high-end cameras, often

times arriving in darkness by boat, and occasionally using a special 20-foot tripod, David's trained eye and specialized lighting bring to life more than 160 lighthouses like never before” (<https://stars-lights.myshopify.com/>). Advance copies of the book may be ordered online.

A PBS News Hour report (July 23, 2022) featuring an interview with Zapatka can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvS69LaRG90>.

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>.

snap shots, edited by Beverly Regelman, is published monthly, September through June, by the Photographic Historical Society of New England, Inc., 47 Calvary St., Waltham MA 02453. It is available at <https://snapshots.phsne.org> within a few days of mailing. Articles and exhibition/book reviews are always welcome. Send to 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 PHSNE.

Life Magazine and the Power of Photography On Display at the MFA



Margaret Bourke-White
Flame Burner Ann Zarik
artmuseum.princeton.edu

A major ticketed exhibit opened on October 9th at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. It is scheduled to run until January 16, 2023.

“*Life* magazine—published weekly from 1936 to 1972—was both wildly popular and visually revolutionary, with photographs arranged in groundbreaking dramatic layouts known as photo essays. This exhibition takes a closer look at the creation and impact

of the carefully selected images found in the pages of *Life*—and the precisely crafted narratives told through these pictures—in order to reveal how the magazine shaped conversations about war, race, technology, national identity, and more in the 20th-century United States” <https://tinyurl.com/msc77hc5>.

The MFA exhibit contains more than 180 objects—photographs, contact sheets, assignments, memos, and trial layouts. Viewers can gain an overview of the entire process that turned an image into a story. “This focus departs from the historic fascination with the singular photographic genius and instead celebrates the collaborative efforts behind many now-iconic images and stories. Particular attention is given to the women staff members of *Life*, whose roles remained forgotten or overshadowed by the traditional emphasis on men at the magazine.”

The list of famous photographers who worked for *Life* and whose work appears in the exhibit includes Margaret Bourke-White (her induction in the New Jersey Hall of Fame was reported in last month’s *snap shots*) and Yousuf Karsh whose iconic photo of Winston Churchill is the focus of a story in this issue (see p. 4).

Tickets to the exhibit are for timed entry. Various courses, lectures, and events will take place in conjunction with the exhibit. Information is available at the website cited above.

Tenax II: A WW II Era Camera By Zeiss Ikon

The Tenax name dates back to 1907. It appeared on folding plate cameras manufactured by the C. P. Goerz company in Berlin. It's easy to be confused by the chronology of the Tenax cameras since “the advanced 1938 model is known as mark II, or just Tenax II, while the simpler [but later] 1939 model is known as Tenax I” (http://camera-wiki.org/wiki/Tenax_II). The history of the Tenax name and production is complicated due to trademark disputes, company mergers, and timing (WW II).



Tenax II, commons.wikimedia.org

While many lenses could be used with the Tenax II, its standard lens was a 40mm 1:2.8 with a Compur Rapid OS leaf shutter ranging from 1-1/400 sec and B. The square format accommodated 48 images on a length of film that ordinarily held 36. The entire “system is similar to that on the Super Ikonta, the Super Nettel and the Nettax, and it shows to what extreme [Zeiss] went to evade the Leica patents.”

“The coupled rangefinder image is visible in the viewfinder. It employs two counter rotating sandwiched wedge-shaped prisms, placed in front of the rangefinder window. They are an integral part of the interchangeable lens, and therefore directly geared to the focusing mechanism in the lens barrel.”

Depending on your point of view, the Tenax II was a “belated answer to the Robot spring camera” (*Classic Camera*, August 1997), “NOT Zeiss' answer to the Robot cameras of 1934” (<https://tinyurl.com/3hyua5ud>) or “certainly inspired by the Robot camera” (camera-wiki link). The Robot was manufactured by Otto Berning; information about it can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robot_camera.

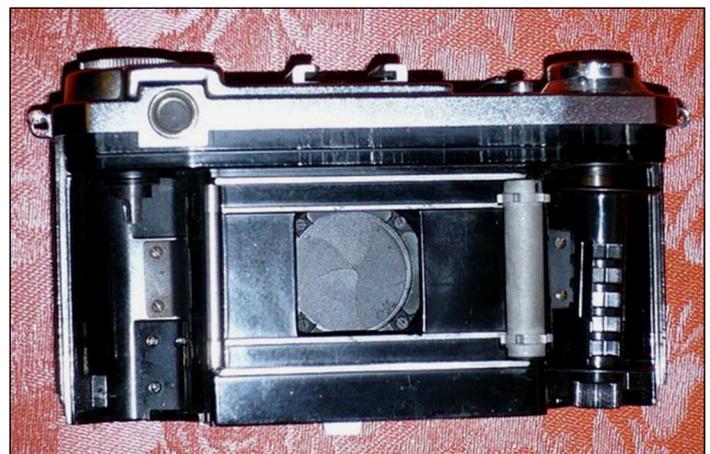
Production of the Tenax II ended during WW II, although various models of the Tenax I were produced by Zeiss Ikon and later in East Germany into the 1950s. The Robot line had a longer production run and was more commercially successful.

“The Zeiss-Ikon Tenax [II] of 1936-1941 was to be the director of camera design Hubert Nerwin's masterpiece, combining high quality, precision and finish in a fast-operating and easily-handled, compact 35mm camera. Its images are in the rare 24mm X 24mm format” (<https://tinyurl.com/3hyua5ud>).

The camera is designed for speed, and camera-wiki notes that “both winding and focusing the camera, as well as setting the exposure, is exemplary quick and easy. . . . The shutter-release is just next to the top of the wind-lever in its rest position, enabling fast switching the finger back and forth.”

The first appearance of the Tenax II was at the Leipzig fair in 1938. Marketing was directed towards wealthy clients, particularly women photographing family activities. The cost of the camera was just over \$200, a significant sum at the time it was introduced and, according to an inflation calculator, equal to just under \$4,000 today. Professional photographers were more likely to use Leica or Contax cameras which had accessories that made them more versatile. An estimate of the number sold during the limited run of the Tenax II is under 9,000.

Zeiss Ikon imprinted “official” model numbers on its cameras. *McKeowan's* lists the Tenax II as 580/27. There is some confusion over the specific dates of manufacture. Most sources indicate a three-year run from 1938—1940, but manufacturing began in 1937 and at least one source indicates that about 2000 were sold in 1937.



Zeiss Ikon shutter, commons.wikimedia.org;

Famous Photo Stolen From Hotel

In August, the Fairmont Chateau Laurier, a Canadian hotel, realized that its iconic Yousuf Karsh photo of Winston Churchill had been stolen and replaced with a fake.



Roaring Lion, Yousuf Karsh

Dubbed *The Royal Lion*, the iconic photo is one of the most familiar and reproduced images, even appearing on a five pound note. When it was taken, an impatient Churchill told Karsh he would sit for only one photo. But Churchill was smoking one of his ubiquitous cigars, and Karsh couldn't get the photograph he wanted. Eventually, he approached Churchill, "said, 'Forgive me sir,' and plucked the cigar out of his hands. 'By the time I got back to my camera, he looked so belligerent he could have devoured me. . . . It was at that instant that I took the photograph'" (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/churchill-portrait-stolen-from-canadian-hotel-180980644/>).

The theft was discovered when a hotel employee noticed that the frame was different than those around it. An expert recognized immediately that the signature was a fake. The hotel has requested photographs that guests may have taken of the portrait, hoping to find clues about exactly when it was taken. Based on security camera footage, they estimate that the theft took place about eight months before it was noticed.

Few prints were made from the negatives, all by Karsh himself. One signed print sold for more than \$60,000 in 2020. Library and Archives Canada now holds his negatives, and no copies are printed.

Karsh had his first exhibition at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier. He lived there for over 20 years and also had a studio at the hotel.

PHSNE Meetings

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

Upcoming meetings:
December 4—TBA

Connect to PHSNE Online and by email:

PHSNE's Web site is online at <https://phsne.org>. See <https://www.facebook.com/PHSNE/> for items of PHSNE interest. Comments are welcome, so join the discussion of photo history. Visit <https://snapshots.phsne.org> for *snap shots* issues since 2005.

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

For information on all available PHSNE publications, see <https://phsne.magcloud.com>.

Long-Time PHSNE Members: Can You Fill In The Gaps?

PHSNE is trying to create an archive containing all issues of *snap shots* going back to the inception of its newsletter. Not surprisingly, there are some major gaps. If you're a long-time member with a tendency to "save" things, perhaps you can help. Please notify us at snapshots@phsne.org if you have any of the following issues and are willing to donate them to PHSNE or loan them for scanning:

November 1975, April 2005, and June 2005.

Full years are missing from 1982 to 1995 and 1996 until September.

Latino Community Photos

Writing in the *Boston Globe* about the Latino community, Omar Veta comments, "I started to see parts of the city coming to life. It was a visual diary of Christmas pageants, Puerto Rican festivals, and community outreach programs — including a successful grassroots effort to help save a Puerto Rican South End community from gentrification" (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/09/15/opinion/rarely-seen-snapshots-latino-boston/>). The site contains rarely-seen photographs.

History of Photography Program at Waltham Senior Center

PHSNE member Jeff Seideman is presenting *The History of Photography* at the Waltham Senior Center located at 488 Main St. on Tuesday, November 15th, at 1:00. There's no charge for attending, but those interested are asked to register at 781-899-7228 to make sure there's sufficient space.