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NHS-35

NHS-CON3 INFO INSIDE!

THE NIKON  JOURNAL



THIS ISSUE..

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PG. 10--SEEING "DOUBLE"!!
PG. 12--"PROTOTYPE" 35-85 ZOOM!!

ROBERT ROTOLONI
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RENZO TESAUORI

EDITORIAL

Since this is the last issue of The Journal before the Convention, most of this Editorial, by necessity, with be concerned with that event. However, I must devote some space to what I think is the remarkable content of NHS-35. With this issue we have three "firsts" for our Nikon Journal, two of which constitute the first time that their respective subjects have been covered in such detail, if at all (this is becoming a "habit" with us and I like it!!)

It starts off with an 8-page article on the exceedingly rare Nikon 120 Fisheye Sky Camera by world famous photographer, writer and renowned "commentator" on the photographic scene, Simon Nathan. Simon, in his own inimitable way, tells us more about this nearly unknown Nikon product than has ever been put down on paper before! He has culled information from sources as diverse as LIFE magazine staffers and Fuketa-san himself, to give us the real story about an item of which only "18" were ever sold! Truly the first comprehensive coverage of this rare piece, and a real "NHS" exclusive! Read all about it starting on page two!

Next we have, courtesy of Al Brody, photos of the first "verified" instance of two similar or identical Nikon products with the same serial number! Theoretically, this is not supposed to happen, yet turn to page 10 and you'll see that it actually did! After 21 years and over 10,000 numbers, one such pair has finally shown up! Are there more to be found??

Finally, on page 12 and running for 6 pages, is yet another "exclusive" for The Journal. For the first time "anywhere in the world" you will find detailed photos and information on what has to be the first nearly "mythical" item to come out of the Nikon reflex era. It was mentioned in some of the early literature, listed in at least one price sheet, and even pictured in an early Nikon F ad, yet until now none have ever been covered in such detail, even by Nikon! It is the 35-85 Auto-Nikkor Wide-Zoom! Member Jose Wu Chang has made photos of what can only be one of the 2 or 3 prototypes made! Remember what I once said about The Journal covering the Nikon F from a slightly different perspective than others?

So this issue of your Journal is full of some really rare items, and I hope that this influx of unique and interesting articles continues, as I am sure it will. Looking back our members have given us first look at some truly rare subjects from the Trifocal SP to the High Speed Fs, the Stereo, the black "1000", "Dummy" items and on and on! We have been "first" to cover these and many other items, and will continue to do so with your help. Keep it up!

Now I must devote the remainder of this page to NHS-Con3, scheduled for Saturday June 13, 1992 in Seattle, Washington. For those of you who have attended our previous meetings, some of the following information will be familiar, but events scheduled for Sunday are a little different this time. For those of you with plans on attending I will start with the basic Hotel information. Both the meeting and the Sunday trade fair will be held at the following location.

RADISSON HOTEL SEATTLE AIRPORT
 17001 PACIFIC HIGHWAY SOUTH
 SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98188
 1-206-244-6000..LOCAL
 1-206-246-6835..FAX
 1-800-333-3333..WORLDWIDE RESERVATIONS

The hotel is only 10 minutes from the airport and complimentary transportation is available!

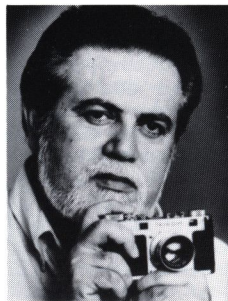
The hotel has reserved a block of 25-35 rooms for us at the rate of \$62.00 per night single or double occupancy, beginning on Friday and running to Monday. This should be adequate for everyone including those travelling large distances such as Europe. I would suggest that you call as soon as possible to make your reservations and be sure to mention that you are attending the convention of the Nikon Historical Society and our special room rate. I will arrive by at least noon on Friday and will be staying in the Governor's Suite, which will serve as our "command post" the entire weekend! Please feel free to come down to my room which should be sufficiently large enough to accommodate everyone, and will be a great place to meet and get to know each other. Those who attended our previous conventions know that my room was a "defacto" meeting spot, where everyone had a good time and really got to know each other! The conversation was great and all could relax and enjoy themselves.

The Convention room is reserved for Saturday from 9AM to 4PM. Please be prompt as we will try to start right at 9AM. The morning session will consist of our speakers. We will then break for lunch using the hotel facilities, and the afternoon session will be such things as a Show n' Tell (please, if possible, bring something to show and share with the members!), and a mini swap session just for us.

Plans for Saturday evening include getting together for dinner, again within the hotel, for those who wish to. We will talk to the management and try to get either our own room or a section of the restaurant so we can all sit together. It is strictly voluntary, but hopefully most will attend. Of course, following the dinner my room will again serve as a meeting place!

On Sunday we will sponsor our first camera collectors show and sale. It will be held in the hotel (once you get to the Radisson you really don't have to leave!) and open to the public from 10AM to 4PM. Dealers, and "NHSers", can get in at 7AM! Those of you wishing to purchase a selling table can use the application form ENCLOSED WITH THIS ISSUE to reserve your table(s)! Please do so as soon as possible as only 75 are available!! Please follow the instructions on the form and get your checks, payable to NHS, to show chairman Bill Adams. "NHSers" who are non-sellers will be admitted "FREE" of charge to the show!

There is no charge for attending NHS-Con3! I do not charge for this as all costs for the show and meeting rooms will be paid by the Society!! Your only costs for attending is travelling, room and meal charges (and show table costs if you so choose)! So please try to come and have a great weekend "with the boys"! Those who have not already informed me, PLEASE let me know if you plan to come! THIS IS IMPORTANT! I need a tentative count at least by June 1st, so if you think you can come PLEASE SEND ME A NOTE TELLING ME SO!
 SEE YOU IN SEATTLE!



ROBERT ROTOLONI
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Photo: Tony Hurst

SIMON SAYS...

DING DONG THE WITCH IS DEAD

**With an Assist by Masahiko Fuketa,
Bill Kraus & Aki Wakamai**

There is a rather rare Nikon camera item which has yet to be discussed in this dedicated Nikon Journal of the Nikon Historical Society. You may have heard of it under one of several different names. It uses 120 roll film. It cannot use 220 film because it wasn't even invented at the time this camera was introduced. Further, it has a yellow window with a sliding metal cover panel because the film must be positioned at #1. Some call it the "Cloud Camera" and others may call it the "Sky Camera". If you know it as the Cloud Camera it is likely that you are a senior Nikon historian, choosing this name to explain the purpose of the camera, and as a tribute to a predecessor camera, the Hill Cloud camera, a British item with a Hypergon-type lens that placed a circular image onto a flat sheet of film. If you call it the Sky Camera you are getting closer to Nikon's original intention for this camera, that is photographing the sky.

You may already know, as a student of "Nikonography", this 16.3mm/f8 Fisheye lens was the basis for Nikon's first 8mm/f8 Fisheye for the Nikon F. The scaled down version came with the same 3 f-stops..8, 11 & 16, and provided a 22.5mm circle on the revised Nikon (insider's heh-heh goes here) 24x36mm format. It was a spectacular look for early users and it carried the Nikon lens flag even higher up Mount Fuji with the statement "we've got everything."

Yup, it was fixed focus, of course, and at f8 the depth of field was from 8in to infinity. Now, when you talk about fisheye lenses you shouldn't mention resolution in the same breath. And if you do mention resolution you have to consider that you are trying to resolve onto a small 22.5mm circle. Shall we call this a stunt lens or special effects lens?

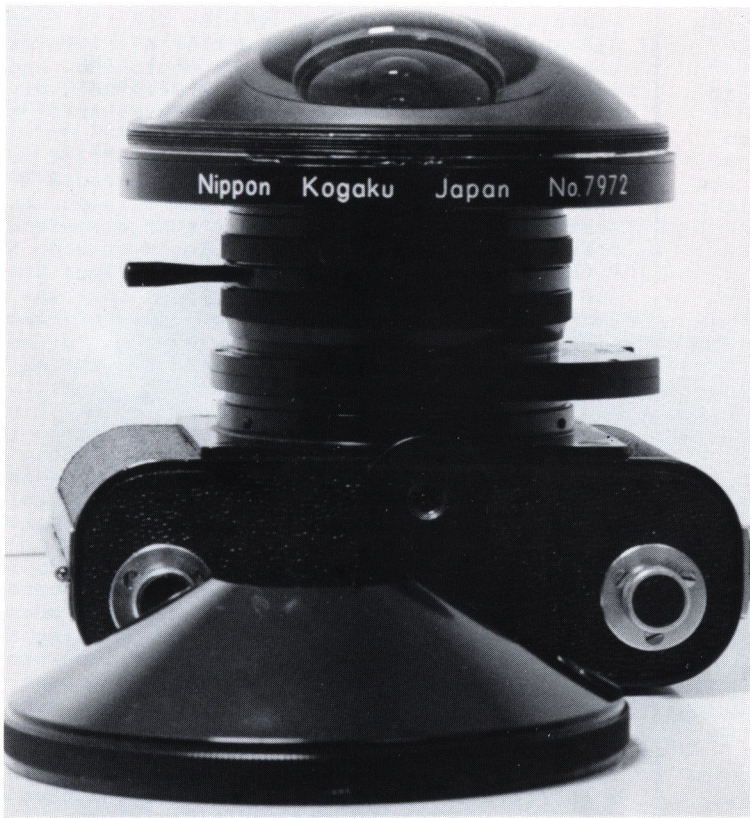
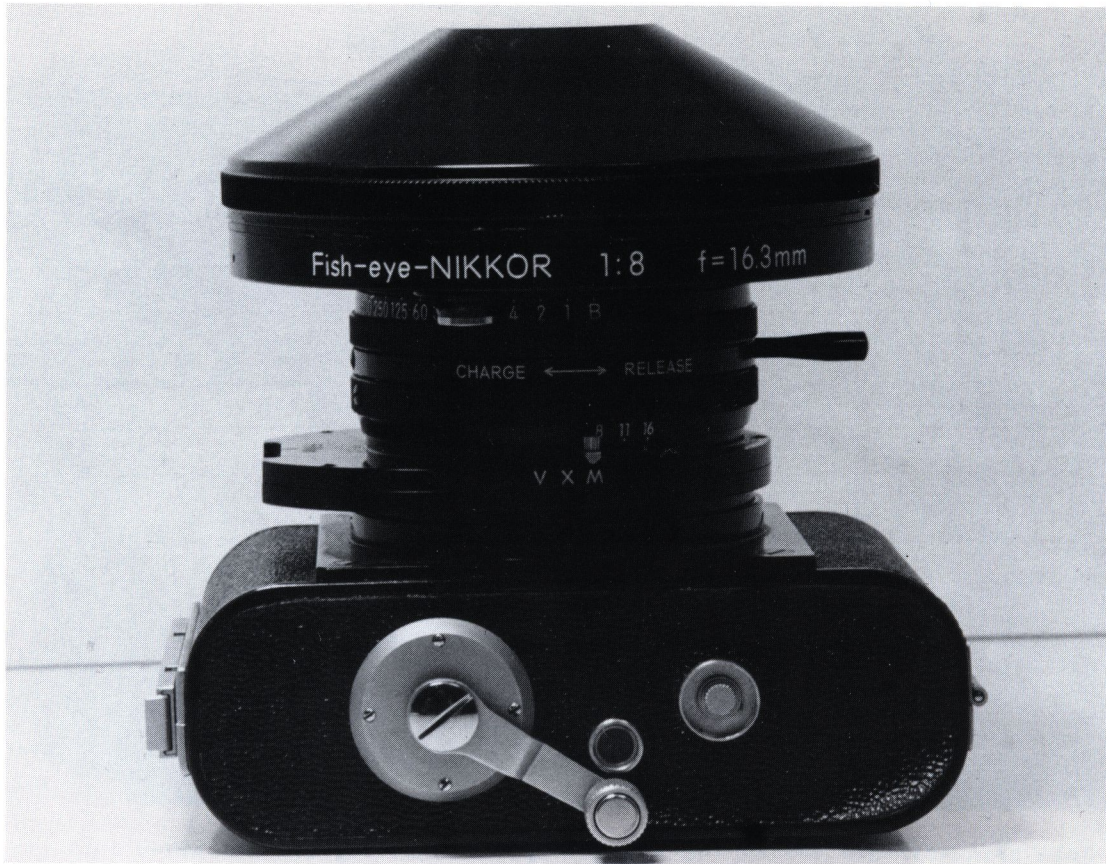
Nikon's inventor of what was later called "NPS", for "Nikon Professional Services", Len Silverman, made dang sure that A.P., U.P.I., National Geographic, and LIFE, not to overlook the writers on the camera magazines who could tell the world all about it early on, had a turn on the single example of this lens available in New York. That single example was the 16.3mm/f8.0 lens on the 120 film body. The loaner fisheye release refers to the 8mm version because the press photographers could add it to their Nikon F outfits. There were several of the 8mm lenses circulating, but not enough to go around. Did Nikon N.Y. expect to sell a whole lot of fisheye lenses or did they mainly want to call attention to Nikon SLRs? No matter what your answer is, there is still room for counterpoint. Nonetheless, Len Silverman's astute placement of these lenses with photographic leaders caused a rash of fisheye photos to be published, bringing attention to Nikon and the something different idea. Fisheye photography never really got a start until you could add it to your 35mm SLR.

You know, of course, that Nikon continued in fisheye in a big way. You know that Canon, Pentax and Olympus, and eventually Zeiss, jumped on the bandwagon with answer-fisheye lenses. Even Sigma recognized that there was an aftermarket before it was covered by the camera makers themselves. OK, so it was the so-called Cloud/Sky camera with the 50mm circle on 120 rollfilm that put Nikon in the fisheye business. Most students of Nikon know little about this unique camera. Narrow-minded Nikon historians (?) seem to think that the range-finders are IT, and that's all there is. To Simon that's comparable to keeping a family photo album about your second child only.

As told to Rotoloni and Nathan on 6/91 visit in Japan with Fuketa/Fukuoka, the original design for the 120 fisheye camera was to photograph the sky allright, BUT AT NIGHT! Yes, at night! Seems that the first intended use was to record lightning at night for the power company. Lightning has an affinity for electrical transformers!

For you technical fans, the 16.3mm Nikkor was fixed focus with 5 elements/4 groups in a Seiko SLV #0 1-1/500sec shutter, M&X contacts, and self timer. These shutter specs apply to the "17" production cameras sold, and the "13" that were "eliminated"! The single prototype used a different shutter. It is likely that the prototype was the one purchased by LIFE magazine, making the total world population of this camera sold to be only "18". Both the July 1957 Pop Photo and the August 1957 Nikon USA "Merchandiser" publications establish that the prototype had a shutter with a lesser range of 1/2-1/200sec. Simon says that there was another major difference in the optical performance in the post-prototype lenses. The original had 3 filters for the sky work. These were upgraded for the production lenses. This is obliquely confirmed in a 1990 Nikon House ad as translated...However, lenses in those days were not designed using computers, so there is still a problem with chromatic aberration. But the early experiences helped the problem to be solved later with the 8mm Fisheye-Nikkor put on sale in 1962."

Bill Sumits, identified elsewhere in our text, recalled that Ralph Morse, an inventive creative LIFE staffer, said that the sharpest results came via the orange filter. A bit of information needs to be included in this somewhat personal treatise on the Nikon Sky/Cloud camera. It has been written and published in the technically vague Shutterbug magazine by a wannabee Nikon historian that there were only 30 of these cameras made. Simon says that this is sloppy reporting, but no matter it was given with a good heart. Nathan and Rotoloni asked Fuketa and Fukuoka about this project and were shown the production records. Yes, the number 30 is correct. However, the fact is that 30 were ORDERED, but only 18 were SOLD, including the prototype! So big deal, is Simon quibbling

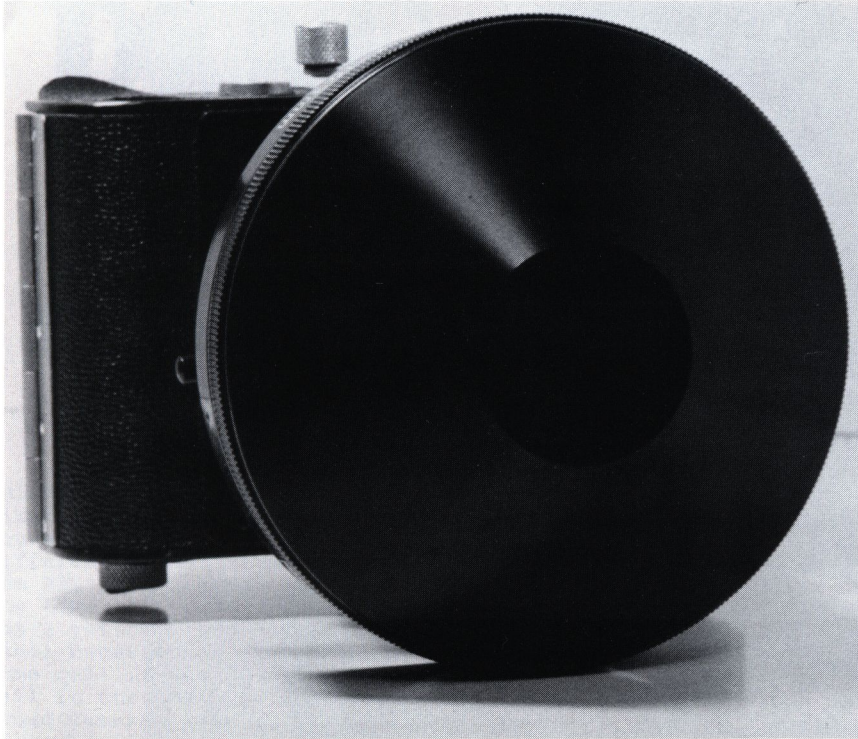


All Photos by Simon Nathan

Lenscap in place, you are looking at a rare bird, the Nikon 120 filmed Sky Camera. Actually you might consider this the top of camera in that the tripod socket is on the opposite side. Since it makes a 50mm circle on 2-1/4 x 2-1/4 film, there really is no top or bottom picturewise. Winding arm and counter window are the main features. A depress button is visible, it's purpose is to set the film counter once film is advanced to #1 via the window on back of camera. Lower photo shows the other side of the mountain. Lens is the granddaddy of Nikons evolution into a series of fisheye optics.

Black stick, projecting from the shutter, is shutter cocking and release lever. Filter wheel is left in top photo and right in the lower photo. It carries three filters. Read all about it!

Simon Nathan.



ANOTHER "NHS" EXCLUSIVE!

Nikon's elusive, and hardly known, Sky Camera, using 120 film, is saying howdy from the pages of the NHS Journal for the first time. Thirty were ordered built by the factory plus one, different, prototype. A total of eighteen cameras were sold, including said prototype. Balance were destroyed for tax purposes (see story and weep). This particular camera was factory modified to have UV filter in place of V52. Camera still carries the V52 marking. Note masking tape reminder in the subsequent photo.

Simon Nathan.

over the differences between the numbers 30 & 31? Naw, the key words are "ordered" and "sold" which put a completely different census on the world population of the Nikon 120 fisheye. You see, in Japan the camera companies pay taxes on their unsold inventories, and they calculate that taxwise their inventories could eat them alive. If you have Nikon products that are not selling in the numbers intended, the way for a tax break is simply to eliminate the item itself! Voila! You smash up the goods and have it photographed and hold the shots for 5 years and you no longer pay taxes on what you cannot find a market for in the first place. Yup, the taxman is present and signs the deal. Makes sense, but it is extremely painful for a Nikon aficionado to hear this. What would you call it, a murder, or just slaughter?

Serial number trackers do not know the location or existence of the 18 sold cameras. The NHS knows of 6 cameras, and one of them rests in the JCII Museum in Tokyo. They are rarely ever on the market. When mentioned to some Nikon freaks who don't want to admit never having heard of it, the reply is "oh yes, that's the NASA camera." Of course it is not!

In the early days of Nikon collecting, the rangefinder cameras seemed to get the most attention. Perhaps this is because Nikon brought the word "quality" into the discussion of Japanese cameras. Keep in mind that the Nikon was on sale quite a while before master merchandiser Joseph Ehrenreich (Penn Camera, W32nd St, N.Y.) entered the scene in 1953. Nikon did have a sales agent working alone to minor avail. He was but a single peddler and it's difficult for a solo swimmer to make serious waves in an ocean of camera types.

LIFE purchased one of the 120 fisheyes from Ehrenreich, the accommodation sale price being \$3000 late-50's dollars! The pricing then was simply a matter of a starting point and if you will accept the term "trial balloon" we can all pretty

much agree on what was happening. LIFE took a photo in the U.S. Senate, certainly a new and different view, and the circular photo was off and running AGAIN! Nothing special happened for EPOI or Nikon from this 120 camera, but soon after (5 years) a scaled down 8mm version for the Nikon F did appear. Bill Sumits said that he first saw the item at a Washington, D.C. photo show and he immediately signed a purchase order. Delivery was slightly delayed because UPI and A.P. still had promised turns to use the camera.

Now some more personal Simon stuff. I truly coveted such a piece of Nikon gear because I felt that the 22.5mm circle of the 8mm version was just too small to be much more than a special effect. Further, if you had a loose or worn Nikon F the lens mount was sloppy and sometimes the circle would be off-center. Simon felt that the larger 50mm circle offered a better slice of film on which to perform optical gee-wizardry. Further, the 120 camera had a separate cocking action for the shutter making multiple exposures easy. Simon says that if you are going to use a special purpose lens for special effects then maximize its advantages. Multiple exposures could be done on the "F", but with awkward difficulty. Besides there is no gain because of the smaller circle! But hey, don't think for one minute that Nikon has built a camera body for 120 film just to make 30 cameras for a market that may not exist. So where does Nikon come up with a 120 body onto which our find-the-lightning lens can be mounted? Easy to answer. The company had been making a 120 X-ray body (yes, 120 rolls of X-ray film were available in Japan post-war). The lens mount was a bayonet and the body carried a sliding metal protective shield should the lens be removed mid-roll. Does this mean that there were interchangeable lenses? Simon doesn't know. Simon remembers a 10"/f4.5 in a non-focusing mount, and that's it! But knowledge of any additional lenses is for future historians. Minus the bayonet mount and

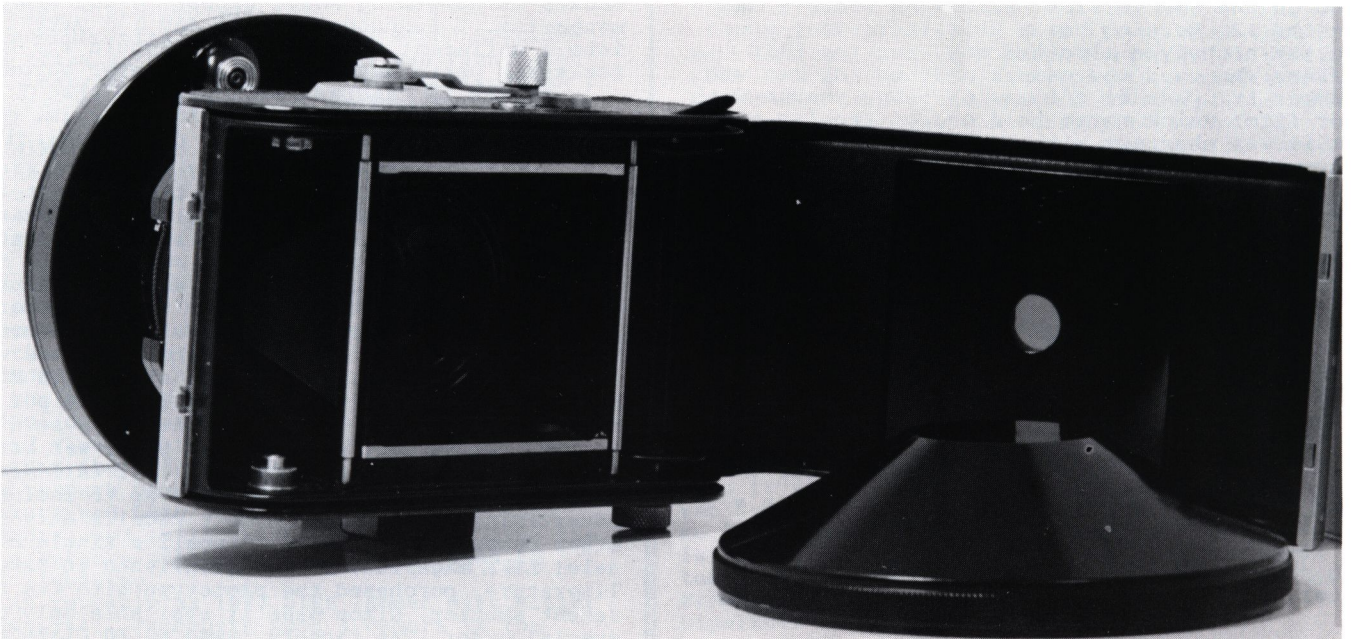


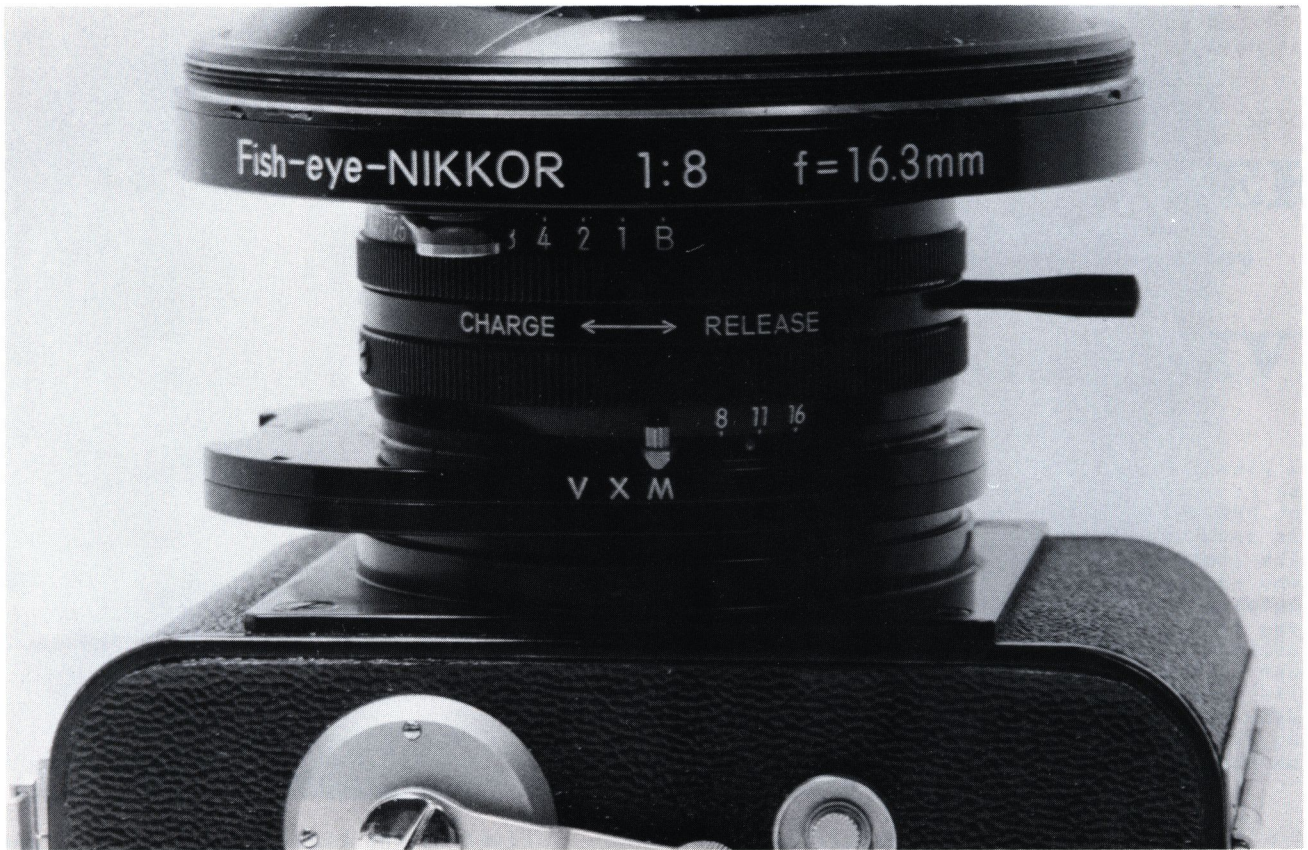
Masking tape shows the Y52 filter on the Simon Nathan camera is clear. The logo on the sliding door panel of the film window, top photo, refutes the Dec. '89 Shutterbug mention "Though the lens carries the usual Nippon Kogaku nomenclature and markings, the body of this rarest of Nikons does not bear the manufacturers name at all." Nuff said?

Were this a color photo you could see the yellow color of the film window. Trust me. Film transport arm is atop. A luxuriously large 50mm circle fisheye image arrives at the film plane. Who could ask for anything more?

Eight of the eighteen sold went to the Meteorological Observation Agency in Tokyo. They distributed seven of this group to 7 other Japanese weather stations. It was the first year of the launching of the weather satellite and this'd be a new technique for simultaneous observation. Previous technique was to aim a normal camera into a convex, spherical mirror. Objection was that the camera became part of the data recorded. Along came Nikon's expensive Sky Camera.

Simon Nathan.





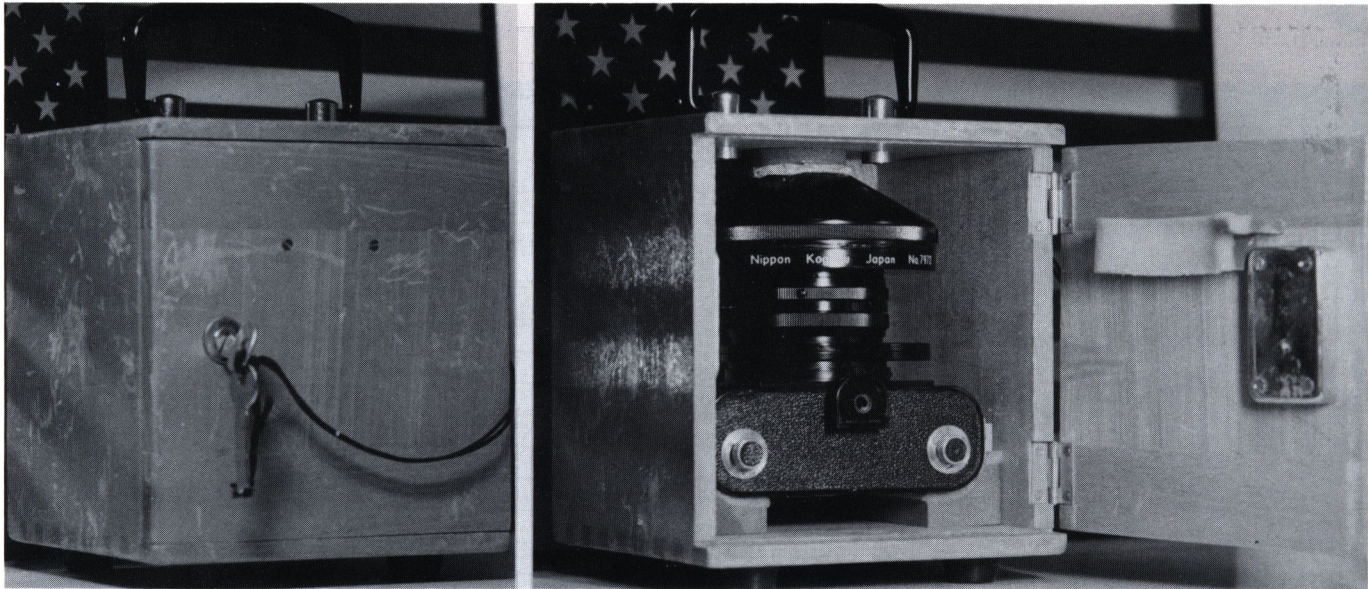
the sliding shield, this became the Sky/Cloud camera. The film advance was from left field and after you opened the sliding cover over the yellow window to position #1, the film metering was in the manner of the Auto Rollei, but 2 strokes and you lived with it. The camera case was a fitted wooden box with a metal handle and hinged side door that locked with a key on a string tethered to the handle. The production models had an internal filter wheel with 3 colored filters, which were vital when photographing the sky. Shutterbug-type writers sluff off these 3 colors & sometimes confuse it with the 5 colors, plus UV, found on the 8mm version. Sometimes writers say that the 120 version had a UV filter. They guess that the prototype also had one. Yet the LIFE staffers who used the camera and the lab men who remember it, pass it off as not being usable with color film! Ralph Morse told one of the lab men that it was sharpest with an orange filter. The 3 colors were orange(O57), yellow(Y52) & red(R60)!

About 1966 Simon was in Japan and was asking about this camera. All inquiries were answered & one question was asked, "Do you want to buy one?" Sure, Simon wanted to buy one but Simon said that it would be of little practical use to him with those 3 colored filters. Could they change one of them to UV so he could use it with color film? Easy, said the cooperative Nikon company, which filter do you want to replace? The Y52 was removed and a UV installed in its place. Note on photos of the back of my camera a piece of masking tape. This was a reminder for Simon that the Y52 setting was actually "clear"! As a photographer I now owned a piece of gear with which I could deliver a different look. Somewhere in a back issue of Pop Photo (the magazine or one of the so-called Color Annuals), you can find one such photo made with color film through the UV filter.

The intention of this camera was to capitalize on its larger image circle and multiple exposure capability, and that is what I did. This fisheye look on a larger format made me very happy. Admittedly I liked to show art directors something different and by the late '70's I owned a 30mm/f4 Fisheye-Nikkor for the Bronica EC. That lens is another story for a future issue of the NHS Journal. This meant that the 16.3mm Fisheye was going to be retired. What brings me to sharing this information is that for years I'd simply taken it for granted. The reason that I also own one of the X-ray bodies was for use as a backup if something would happen to the transport mechanism. I figured that one day I'd make it into a different kind of camera should the need for spare parts never happen. It never happened!

Of the 18 cameras sold only one that I know of is able to use color transparency film, mine. This means that all the frames of 50mm circles on 120 film scattered throughout my files are, in effect, collectors items. Sadly they are not indexed, as I never considered the camera special, only the end result. This might be insight into the mind of a photographer.

Through diligent research (alright, a phone call) we have still another name for our camera. At Ehrenreich it's called the "Full Sky Camera". Who says? Joseph C. Abbott remembers it this way. Joe worked at Penn Camera & came along with Ehrenreich for the marketing organization that put Nikon on the map. He remembers that they sold one to LIFE for \$3,000, and that the price was based on their costs. Abbott explained that this meant that there was not the usual mark-up to include advertising and service. Abbott recalls only 3-4 other cameras, but couldn't recall a single other sale! LIFE magazine, it is established in Nikon literature, purchased the prototype with its different shutter. Nikon made it available only on special order. The factory, awed by Ed Clark's photo in LIFE, planned a production run of 30 cameras. Shutterbug was right on the number that



....Photo at left on page 6....

Simply a closer photo for drooling purposes. Metal plate, shown, permanently attaches lens to former x-ray camera body, also Nikon made. Interesting thing is that many Nikon buyers from Japan simply don't know about this camera and when asked if they'd be interested reply "no." This is called saving face. The strobe synch came with the shutter. Simon doubts that Nikon had this application in mind, but if it wasn't there five of the eighteen owners would be asking "why didn't they?"
Simon Nathan.

Scratches on the wooden carrying case for the Nikon Sky Camera are bonafide testimony that owner Simon Nathan really travelled with this gear and used it. But for the grace of God it might not be here now. Baggage handlers from the bankrupt and defunct Eastern Airlines might have had this a couple years back. Nathan was flying from Huntsville, Alabama to Sacramento California via San Francisco. He decided at the last minute that the Nikon Sky Camera had little application at a Dixieland Jamboree and left it behind. Other Nikon items were removed from the suitcase, a black Haliburton, forced open, lost in the Eastern system for several days. What you're seeing is how the camera was carried. Simon Nathan.

was ordered. Eighteen cameras were sold, the balance destroyed for tax purposes. The latter event unique in Japanese accounting.

The prototype was packaged in a double, exterior latched, fitted metal box. The production cameras came in a vertical wood box, lacquered, light in color, with a black metal handle on top. You may note in the photos that Simon's box is multi-scratched from travel. The camera is nested, pointing upward. This data is based on the memory banks of several ex-LIFE lab managers, alive and retired.

Another claim from the 1957 Nikon Merchandiser tells us "The Fisheye lens was first used on an instrument called an "aural spectrograph", built for the International Geophysical Year. Go figure!

Nikon decided that if it hadn't sold more than 18 of these doozies in 10-12 years that it wasn't going to happen. Financially, the idea was a loser. Likely, this is the reason it is so difficult to get details. There aren't a lot of Nikon folks taking full credit. In other words, "it's nobody's baby." Admit it though, they did try! Abbott recalls that the 8mm/f8 for the "F" did come from this exercise. He also remembers that the f2.8 220 degree version had early use on the underside of helicopters in Vietnam! Seems that the pilots couldn't see through the upper level of dust around the cockpit, so this lens relayed visual data to a cockpit TV screen! He says that the sales effort on the 120 Fisheye was never through camera stores or regular channels. He maintained that it was to photograph cloud movements, and so it was if you keep in mind the Fuketa/Fukuoka statement that it was used to track lightning.

As recently as 1992 LIFE labman Mike Miller (since 1964), remembers such a camera in the

equipment pool and that it wasn't any good for color. He knows that they no longer have it and that its case was hammertone gray metal and did carry the Nikon name. Retired LIFE lab manager Herb Orth recalled early in 1992 that this piece was seldom used. Another retired LIFE lab manager George Karas, said that he did not remember it and suggested that I call Marty Forscher who knew every piece of photographic gear that LIFE ever owned. Well, Forscher supplied the following quote, with full permission to use it. "I never heard of it!"

Herb Orth recalled that it was also used by Neil Leifer, Al Fenn & Ralph Morse. Ed Feingersh also used it early on, at least to photograph a 5th avenue parade and write a review of the 120 Fisheye for Popular Photography magazine. Al Schneider of LIFE recalls the pistol grip (needed to keep the user out of the picture) and says, "They threw all that stuff away years ago", breaking the hearts of all concerned NHSers!!

In 1992 Ralph Morse doesn't remember it. Bill Sumits, who was both a LIFE photographer and lab manager, in that sequence, recalls he spotted it at a photo show in D.C. and bought it on the spot, but delivery was delayed so UPI could get a chance to use it. This certainly documents why the camera is so little known. Nikon factory retirees simply say, yes we did once have such a camera. Bill Sumits recalls that Ralph Morse told him it was sharpest through the orange filter. Ralph Morse seems to remember it but not that he used it a lot. Sumits says that Morse was the one who used it the most and Marty Forscher says that he "never heard of it", and Simon Nathan says it is less practical without a clear filter. Stay tuned for Chapter II with additional information Simon hopes to flush out of the historical pipeline!



Self-portrait, vintage 1967. Simon Nathan is shown in his darkroom, neg processing area. This is probably the single use of the camera's self-timer. The strobe synch never got a trial. Mostly color film was exposed in this camera and many of the applications were for the audio visual industry where they like different pictures, really different. Before Nathan's full frame Nikon 16mm f3.5 fisheye was swiped in the Eastern Airlines heist, he used to shoot a lot of pictures that were also different. Theft of this lens put a curse on Eastern and of course you know the rest of the story. Lorenzo No!!! Simon Nathan.

The following table lists the 6 Nikon Sky Cameras that are known to the N.H.S. at this time!

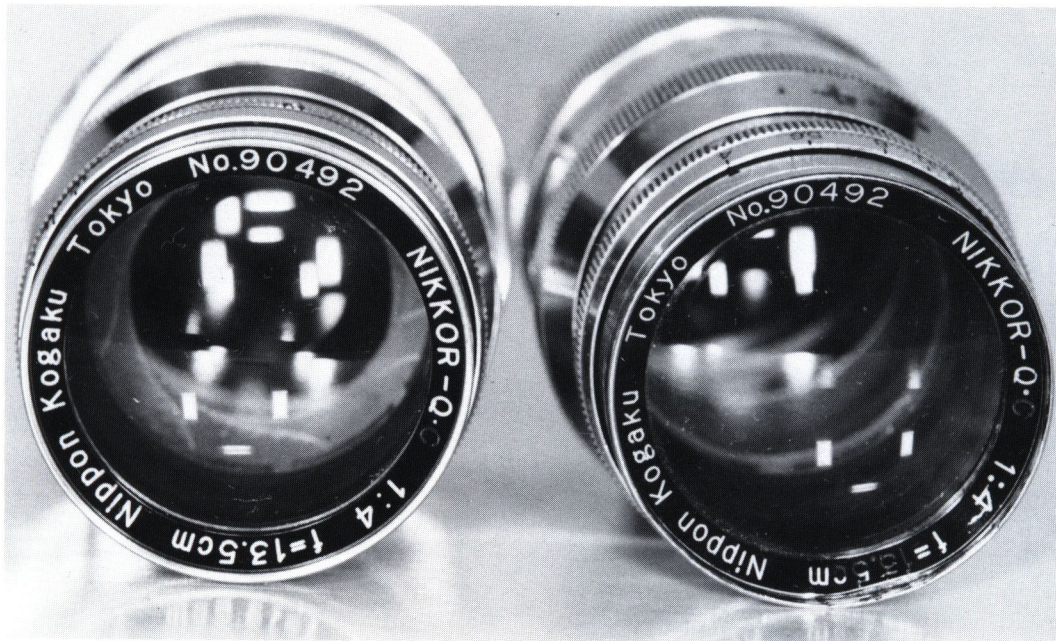
 ****VERIFIED NIKON CLOUD/SKY/FULL SKY CAMERAS****

LENS #	BODY #
7918	22786
7951	22521 (JCII)
7962	-
7965	- (EASTMAN)
7967	22656
7972	22743 (NATHAN)

SEEING DOUBLE! SEEING DOUBLE!

by Alan Brody

90492 x 2?

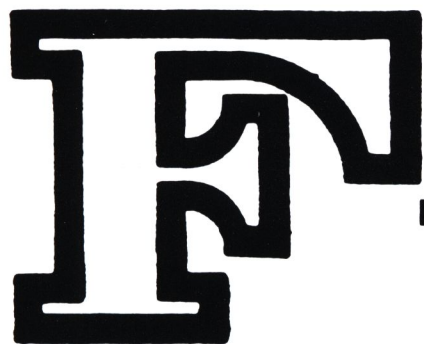


With over 10,000 individual entries in my serial number database, it's apparent to me that Nippon Kogaku did a commendable job of insuring that few duplicate serial numbers exist (although there are a few cases where serial number types overlap between two different products). When you consider that each lens and accessory was given a more or less unique serial number block, the prevention of overlaps and duplications becomes quite difficult, but they did manage it about 99% of the time. I have been told by some Japanese collectors that those lenses marked with a ":" after the serial number indicate a duplicate serial number (similar to Leitz's practice of using and "*"), but I have yet to record both a lens with the ":" and another like numbered example without it. One thing I have always looked for while compiling my database (which is now a 20 year project!), was the possibility of two examples of the same item with an identical serial number! Would it not be possible, since most of these numbers were engraved individually one at a time, for a worker to inadvertently use the same number twice, and for both items to

successfully pass inspection and make their way to the market? To be honest I have always assumed that it could happen, and have continued to search for such a happening. Well, after 20 years of going blind typing in all these numbers it has finally happened! On these pages is my first "verified" case of two like items with identical serial numbers...and they both belong to the same person! When "NHS" member Alan Brody called me a year or so back to give me the number of a 135/f4 he had just acquired, I duly recorded it as such. Then when he called to tell me he had just found another one, this time in Leica screw mount, with the same number, I said..Al, you have to get some pictures to me now! Well, he went one better and shipped both lenses to me so I could photograph them for this issue! Here on these pages are two 135mm/f4 Nikkors acquired about a year apart and on two different continents, with the very same serial number!! And neither has the ":" marking! Now what are the odds?? Thanks Al for giving me a chance to see them and congratulations. My next thought is....does anyone know of other similar examples?? If you do let us know!

Pictured on these two pages are a pair of very interesting 135mm/f4.0 Nikkors! Interesting in that they constitute the first "verified" set of like items with identical serial numbers so far reported to the N.H.S.! Both lenses are numbered "90492" and neither possesses the ":" that is usually thought to designate duplicate serial numbers. A close examination of these optics suggest that their engraving "styles" are just slightly different, with the bayonet mount lens appearing to be a little later vintage, but not by much. The optical heads share the same features such as the triangular index for the f-stops, front groove and identical diaphragm rings. Obviously they are in different mounts, but when making the telephotos, Nippon Kogaku simply used the same optical heads and just screwed them into different mounts. It is quite possible that these two lenses were not made at the exact same time, but their features suggest that they were close contemporaries, which might explain the identical numbers. If they were made at slightly different times, and if by some fluke records of used numbers were not accurate, or simply not referred to, something like this could happen. Not being made at the exact same time might also account for these two lenses passing inspection and getting out of the factory with identical numbers! If anyone is aware of other similar cases, please let us know.





“PROTOTYPE” 35-85 Wide-Zoom by Jose Wu Chang

In some of the earliest literature produced for the new Nikon F Automatic Reflex, there is mention of a lens that was quite unique as well as exciting to consider. The earliest books on the Nikon F, such as Tydings Guide and the last version of Wright's Manual with the "F" supplement, also mention it. The August 1959 and 1960 price lists do not show it but it does appear in the October 1961 edition along with its stock number (LN276) and price (\$399.50!). As far as I can tell it was gone from the listings at least by January 1963 and replaced with the much more familiar 43-86mm/f3.5 Nikkor. A vague photo does appear in Braczko's "Das Nikon Handbuch", but what is interesting is that it is also present in one of Nikon's most often used ads from the very early Nikon F years. It is the same ad that was reproduced on the back cover of NHS-21....look at the extreme left edge of the third roll of lenses and accessories....and you will see the elusive, and nearly mythical, 3.5cm-8.5cm/f2.8 Auto Nikkor Wide-Zoom!!

Ever since I first became aware of Nikon back in 1960, I can remember the few references made to this lens (listed herein) but I can also remember how it never seemed to materialize and how quickly the 43-86/f3.5 came on the scene as Nikon's only wide to short tele zoom. I can also remember trying to figure out what that lens in the third roll of the ad from NHS-21 was, since its shape and size did not correspond to anything in the Nikon catalog. After a while I assumed it had to be the at first seldom, but then never, mentioned, 35-85/f2.8 Zoom! My own personal conclusion? It was a prototype that just didn't make it and was replaced by the less ambitious 43-86 type, probably because of production problems that couldn't be overcome at a reasonable cost. One must remember how difficult it was to produce a quality zoom optic 30 years ago! But Nikon wanted a wide zoom, so the less than sterling 43-86 was given life, and the 35-85 died! So much for this prototype Bob..you'll never see one! Over 30 years later I now know that in this game we call camera collecting one must never assume anything! For here in our Nikon Journal, alive and well, is the 35-85/f2.8 Auto Nikkor Wide Zoom!!

But is this a prototype? And how many were actually made? If it was listed in the 1961 price sheet wasn't it a normal production item? If so then why is this the first example I have heard of in 30 years? There is some evidence available to support the theory that this lens is one of the prototypes of an item that did not go into actual production.

First is it's serial number.. #352803..If Nikon was still following its old practice of using the type of lens to come up with a starting number (and it was!), then the first 4 digits are for 35mm/f2.8 and the last 2 digits are the production number, in this case "#3"! Since Nikon invariably uses "01" for the initial number then this would be the third lens made! But this alone doesn't qualify it as a prototype. What does is information from the factory that suggests that only "2" such lenses were made and that there numbers were "most probably" 352801 and 352802! However, it is also said that one example was destroyed for tax reasons (remember the Stereo Nikkor and the taxman!?) in the very late 60s, and that the other was "missing" as early as 1961! The information is vague in that it says only two were made, yet only #352801 is a certainty, with the second one assumed to have been #352802. Yet here we have #352803!! Could this be the missing one? Could a third one have been made? Could this be the one that would have had to be shipped to Ehrenreich in New York for evaluation (and for use in that ad!)? Is this the same one that would have been shown at Photokina in 1960? And to such writers as Tydings so it could be written up in the early literature? Well, could it?? Of course it could!!! And now for one more piece of evidence we have a "Memo" from Nippon Kogaku that was found with this very lens! It reads as follows (exactly!)...

Memo From NIPPON KOGAKU, K.K.

CAUTION!

Auto-Nikkor Wide-zoom

Don't rotate the aperture ring of the lens with its index dot beyond the maximum (F2.8) or minimum (F16) F-number limit, for fear of bringing the preset ring in disorder. This sample of the lens has not yet been provided with stoppers.

Never touch the spiral spring plate found inside the bayonet end of the lens.

Interesting, isn't it? Doesn't sound like the kind of note you would include with a production item! More along the lines of a warning to anyone who was going to handle this obviously pre-production piece! Now take a look at the photos that its new owner, Jose Wu Chang, has supplied the Society for our benefit!



The nearly "mythical" 35-85 Auto-Nikkor Wide Zoom in normal and extended positions, mounted on an early Nikon F body. The extended position corresponds to the 35mm setting, and the index can be seen at about 2 o'clock. Note that this lens does have the meter coupling prong and focuses down to

about 3 feet. In these photos the lens shade has not been mounted, yet notice how large this lens is, especially compared to the 43-86/f3.5 which actually replaced it, and what we are used to seeing today.

Jose Wu Chang.





These two illustrations give you an even better idea of the massive size of this lens, now shown with the proper screw-in shade attached! It is mounted on Nikon F #6400233, which is of the proper vintage for this lens. The focusing ring is towards the very front of the lens with the zooming ring at the rear. When zooming to the 35mm setting, the lens increases in length by a



minimum of one inch, exposing the rather massive highly polished chrome inner barrel. Note that both the f-stops and the focal length index are slightly offset to the left in these photos, which corresponds to the 2 o'clock position on the camera mount. It is also obvious from these photos that the front rotates during focusing and is not a parallel design. Jose Wu Chang



A view of the underside showing the serial number "352803"! This lens has the traditional scalloped zooming ring of the early reflex era, and a screw-in type shade with proper markings. Also note the "Pats. Pend." engraving, which is usually found only during the early reflex era.



In this rear view both the offset diaphragm scale and focal length index can be seen. All of the f-stop numbers are of one color, white, and not multi-colored as are most reflex Nikkors since this lens does not possess a color-coded depth of field scale. Note the unusual grouping of the screws on the rear flange. Jose Wu Chang

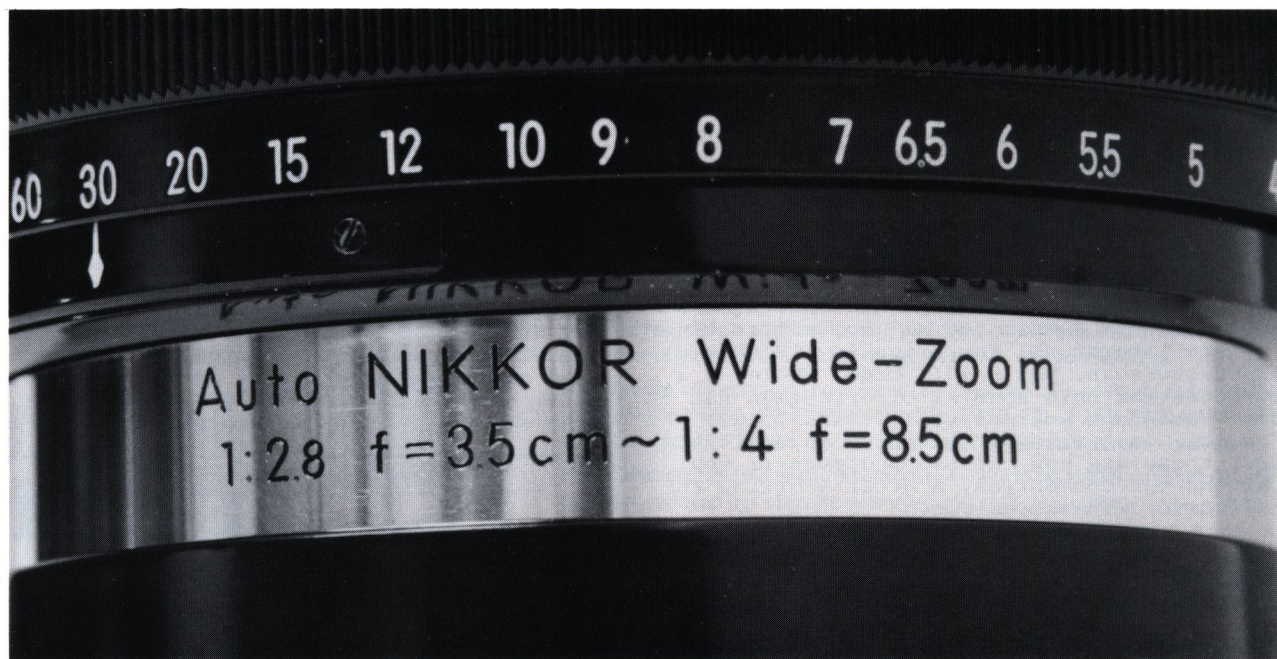


It is interesting that this lens still came mated with its original shade, caps and case! The large satin chrome front cap fits over the mounted shade for easy storage. What cannot be shown in this B & W reproduction is the fact that the rear

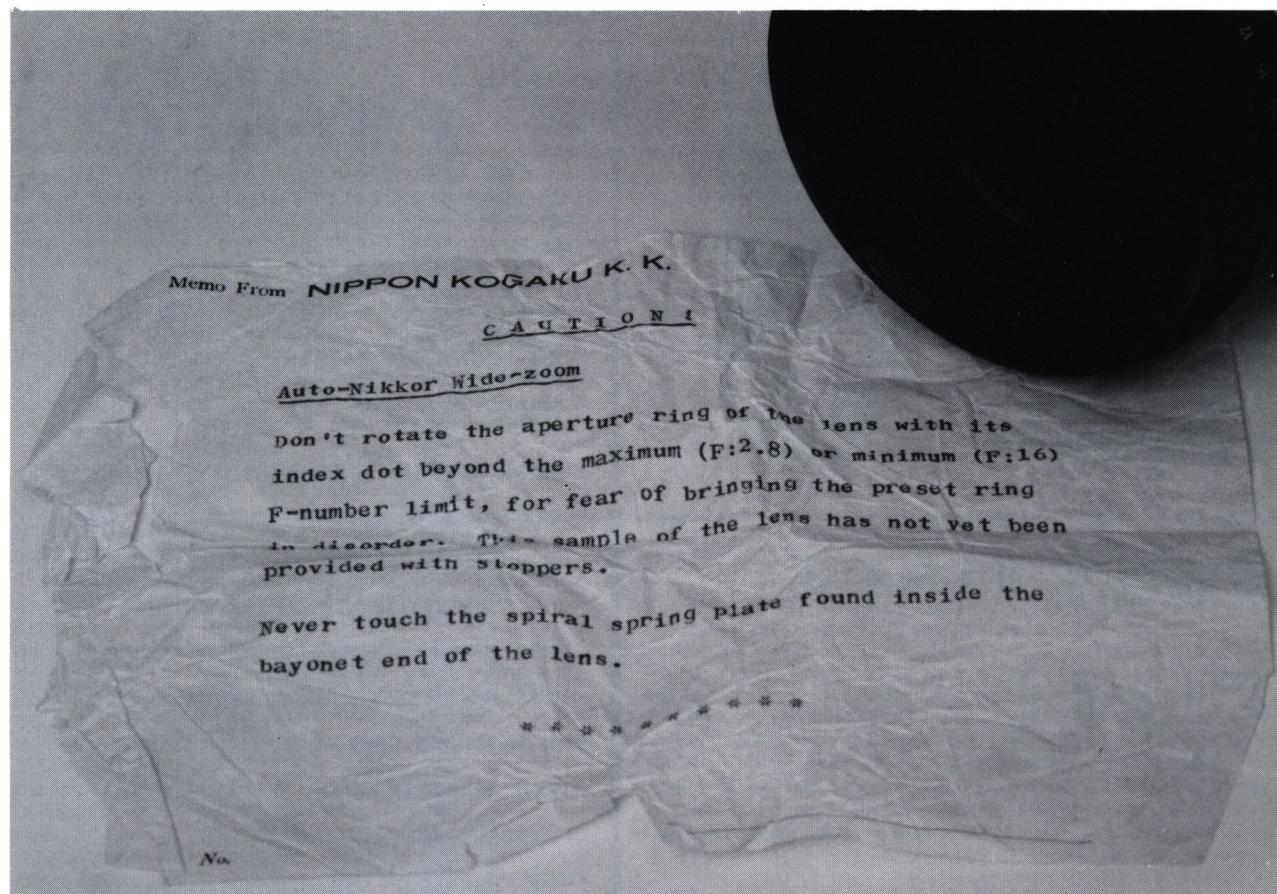
plastic Nikon F cap is "green" and not black! It has been suggested that the green cap designates a prototype lens, but more research needs to be done to verify this. However, has anyone ever seen a green rear cap?

Jose Wu Chang





Below is a photo of the original "tissue" that came with this lens. It is amazing that it has survived this long, as it was simply stuffed into the case with the lens. I have included it in the copy of this article exactly as it is worded on the original. The fact that "this sample of the lens has not yet been provided with stoppers" points to it being a prototype, or at the very least, a pre-production model! Jose Wu Chang



SPECIAL OFFER!

Simon Nathan has made the Society an offer "we can't refuse"! In an effort to raise funds to help offset some of the costs for the upcoming NHS-Con3, he has donated a limited number of brand new, uncirculated, copies of one of his famous "Fawcett" books, #392. It is titled "Good Photography's 35mm Handbook", and has a cut-away of the Nikon S2 on its cover. Inside are articles on the SP motor drive, the Micro-Nikkor, the f1.1 Nikkor, the SP and its Periscope Attachment, and Dr. Nagoaka! It is a must for all collectors of Nikon RF era literature! The price is \$10.00 U.S. and \$12.00 overseas, postpaid!! Order NOW!! As a special bonus for this special offer, Simon has agreed to autograph your copy(s) at NHS-Con3!! That's right, just bring it with you to Seattle! Remember, these are new copies, and even if you can't attend the Convention, a great addition to your collection. Thanks, Simon.

35mm HANDBOOK

By Simon Nathan

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Nikon • Aires
Praktina • Edixa
Minolta • Asahi
And many others



Which film? Which developer?

Lenses for stage candids

Report on Russian 35s

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Sequence, Available light, Strobe, Close-ups,
Color films, Press and industrial 35mm

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BOOK
HOW-TO BOOK

NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for the next issue of THE NIKON JOURNAL will be May 21, 1992. The reason for the slightly earlier date is that I need to have as much of NHS-36 finished before the Convention as possible in order to get it to the printer as quickly as possible following NHS-Con3. Please get all ads and articles to me by that date. Thank you!

NIKON JOURNAL MARCH 31, 1992

In Memoriam

I regret to have to inform the Society of the recent death of Mr. Jun Miki. You will remember Peter Lownds' interview with Miki-san in NHS-27 (3/90) in which the story was told of how, as a young photographer, Jun Miki had taken the fateful shot of David Douglas Duncan which prompted "DDD" to visit the factory that could produce such a sharp optic. That factory was Nippon Kogaku, and Duncan left shortly thereafter to shoot the Korean War with a complete set of Nikkor lenses. Jun Miki remained an avid user of Nikon throughout his professional career and had maintained close ties with Nippon Kogaku. He will be missed by his friends as well as anyone who's serious about recording life with a camera!

PLEASE NOTE

In response to the article in NHS-33 on the "Nikkor F", member Craig Siegel has discovered an item that I only speculated on at that time. If you remember I mentioned that F36 motors with the "Nikkor" name were known, and that it seemed logical to assume that the F250 large capacity motor was also so marked, although I had not, up to that time, heard of one. Craig recently wrote me to report he had just acquired such a motor! So now we know that "Nikkor" versions of the F250 do exist. Thanks, Craig, for sharing this information with us!

For yet another example of member feedback in the Journal, see Wolfgang Kuster's "Letter to the Editor", which also deals with additional information about the "Nikkor F" article.

"NHS" PRODUCTS

No room this issue for any illustrations, but there is still a good selection of Nikon and "NHS" Products. The special "Nikon History" posters have sold well, but some still remain. Those who have purchased this poster have written to tell me how impressed they are with it, and some have even had it professionally framed! In addition to the poster (and the special offer on this page) the following items are available at this time. All proceeds from the sale of these products go to offset the cost of producing the Journal, and helps to maintain our current dues.

ALL PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE!

HISTORY OF NIKON CAMERAS POSTER...	\$20.00 US
	\$25.00 OVERSEAS
NIKON PLASTIC THERMAL MUG.....	\$5.00 US
	\$9.00 OVERSEAS
"NHS" LAPEL PIN.....	\$5.00 US
	\$6.00 OVERSEAS
"NHS" TIE CLASP/CUFF LINK SETS....	\$15.00 US
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NIKON SP REPAIR MANUAL REPRINT....	\$10.00 US
	\$13.00 OVERSEAS
NIKON MOTOR DRIVE MANUAL REPRINT..	\$17.00 US
	\$20.00 OVERSEAS
THE JAPANESE CAMERA/J. BAIRD.....	\$23.00 US
	\$28.00 OVERSEAS
NIKON RANGEFINDER/R. ROTOLONI.....	\$25.00 US
	\$35.00 OVERSEAS
OFFICIAL NIKON CALCULATORS.....	\$5.00 US
	\$6.00 OVERSEAS
"NHS" T-SHIRTS (MED. ONLY).....	\$10.00 US
	\$12.00 OVERSEAS
NIKON COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE-BOXED..	\$150.00 US
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LETTERS..

From Bill Kraus...

Looking ahead to NHS-Con3 in Seattle, I am planning to prepare a talk on the early Nikon literature. Categories may include Nippon Kogaku literature, instruction books, advertisements, trade publications, magazine articles and books. I would like to hear from our members as to their interest in the subject, and, in particular, from those who may be able to contribute to the subject. Bill Kraus, 1439 Drum Hill, Martinsville, NJ 08836. 908-469-2305 evenings or FAX me at 215-587-7575. Thanks!

From Mike Symons...

Bob, I'd like to make a request in connection with the upcoming NHS-Con3 in June. You surely recall that an interesting segment of the past two Conventions was the "Show n' Tell" portion. Members should be encouraged to bring, and show, an interesting item from their collection, and give all of us a little history lesson as well! It doesn't have to be an excessively rare item, but something unusual that most members might not have seen before. This generates a lot of interest in addition to encouraging member participation. Also, may I request another "silent" auction. That is sure to generate interest!

From Joseph Curcio...

Thank you for the Nikon History poster...it is gorgeous...I had it professionally framed. My only disappointment was that it wasn't made for the U.S., ie, it depicts foreign versions such as F-301, F-501, F-801, etc. I would have liked the U.S. version, but I suppose that was impossible. Thank you just the same!

From Roger Swan...

I enjoyed the "Fuketa Tapes" article in NHS-34 except that it left me wanting to know much more! Regarding the High-speed Nikon F mirror lock control. Surely it is not useless. The F2H has the stop-down function reversed. Pressing the button opens up the lens diaphragm which is otherwise always at the working aperture. Your illustration of the throat of the F shows that the lens is normally at full aperture and would stop down with each exposure. Operating the mirror lock control would stop the lens down and thereby save wear and tear during extensive use!

From Wolfgang Kuster...

Taking another look at the September issue of the Journal and the article on the German Nikkor F, your conclusion was that four versions of this camera should exist...straight prism chrome and black & Photomic F in chrome and black. However, I think your conclusion is incorrect. There exist also "Nikkor" versions of the Photomic T, the Tn and the FTn! To illustrate this I direct you to Peter Braczko's books, where these additional versions are shown! Therefore, taking into account both black and chrome cameras, there would actually be at least ten (10) different Nikkor F models available to the collector, and not just four! (I am happy to see how closely some members read The Journal! And I stand corrected! The Editor.)

CLASSIFIED

WANTED...Looking ahead to NHS-Con3 this June in Seattle, I am planning to prepare a talk on the early Nikon literature. Categories may include Nippon Kogaku literature, instruction books, advertisements, trade publications, magazine articles and books. I would like to hear from our members as to their interests in the subject, and, in particular, from those who may be able to contribute to the project. Bill Kraus, 1439 Drum Hill, Martinsville, NJ 08836. 908-469-2305 Eve. or FAX me at 215-587-7575. THANKS!

FOR SALE...Nikon rangefinder bodies & lenses for sale, as well as other collectible cameras. Please send SASE to; Bruce Hansen, Box 89437, Honolulu, HI 96830-9437. Foreign buyers welcome too.

FOR SALE...Have copies of Peter Braczkowski's Nikon book signed by the author with dedication! DM.111 PPD. anywhere in the world! Peter Lownds, W. de Zwijgerstraat 24, 3043 VD, Rotterdam, Holland. 31-10-415-9136.

FOR SALE...In response to a great many requests I have put together a selling list for Nikon RF & F gear. Most of the items are mine plus some pieces that are on consignment from others. The list is updated as necessary and available to anyone who wishes to receive it. Once requested you will receive updates automatically as they are issued. Robert Rotoloni, PO box 3213, Munster, IN 46321 USA. FAX #708-868-2352

WANTED...Collector seeks rangefinder items: Nikon bodies, lenses & accessories. Nikkors in screw mount. Canon bodies & lenses in particular the 19mm, 25mm, 50mm/0.95, 200mm & Mirror Box. All types of Leica copies. Nikkors for F like Fisheye OP, 55mm UV, 55mm PS Micro, 400-600-800-1200mm lens heads & mount. Per Kullenberg, Ollingvej 11, 6933 Kibaek, Denmark. Tel-45-971-91393.

WANTED..Type #7 Black Variframe w/cs, must be EX+ or better; early push-on chrome shade for original 3.5cm/3.5 Nikkor; Model "S" Copy Stand, complete in wood case; S36 Motordrive 10v voltmeter. I have trading stock such as a boxed/cased Nikon "S" outfit, w/IB, EX. Also some duplicate Nikon RF & SLR literature, some small accessories, and cases, etc. Mike H. Symons, 3844 Merriman Drive, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V8P 2S9. Tel. 604-477-1867 after 6PM Pacific time.

FOR SALE...Nikon SP chrome, mint, \$2500 or best offer; Reflex Housing, early Type II, complete, mint, \$3500; Nikkor 250mm/f4 lens, mint, w/box, \$2250; Nikon F2T, EX+, \$2000; Nikkor 300mm/f2.8 "Manual" lens w/hood, G+, \$3500; 65mm Varioflex II Tilt-Shift lens, F mount, w/cs, mint, \$950. Trade for 15mm/f8 Hologon lens in Leica M mount. Al Satterwhite..Tel. 804-332-1818.

The following guarantee cards are available FREE to owners of the equipment!..SP#6200140, 35/f3.5 #430412, 50/1.4 #s317953, 318485, 318493, 326085, 319505 SM, 135/3.5 #261239, meter #950139, Zoom finders #324405, 327467, 327593, S2 #6147962, S2 #6147207 w/359434. If you have an item call/write Les Seeligson, 1101 Birk, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Tel..313-747-9292.

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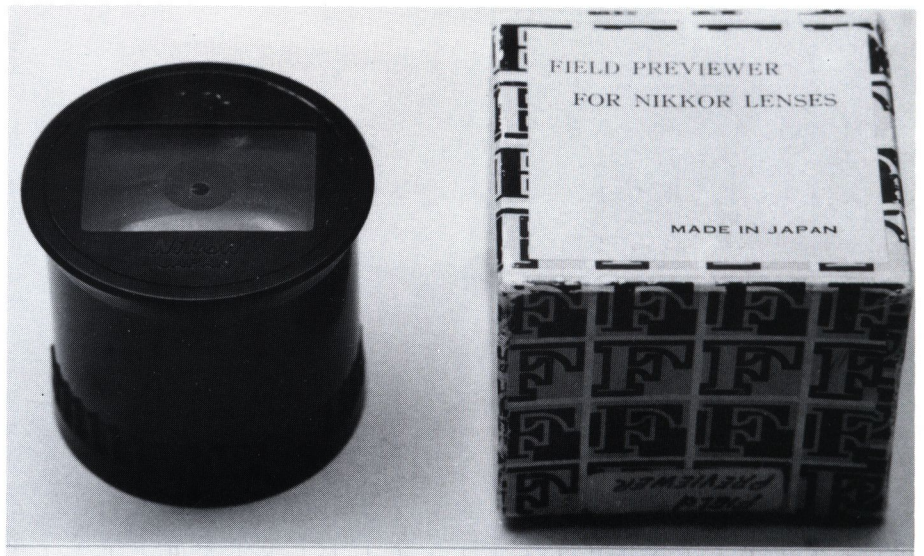
6140841	6144574	6157571
6170964	6202552	6202580

odds 'n ends

THIS "ODDS N' ENDS" PAGE WILL BE RESERVED IN ALL FUTURE ISSUES OF "THE NIKON JOURNAL" AS A SHOWCASE FOR THE RARE, THE UNUSUAL & OFFBEAT, OR JUST THE OUT OF THE ORDINARY! IF YOU FEEL

THAT YOU POSSESS AN ITEM THAT FULFILLS THESE CRITERIA, PLEASE SEND ME AT LEAST TWO OR MORE VARIED VIEWS OF YOUR ODDITY ALONG WITH ANY INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE OF INTEREST. THANKS!

THE FIELD PREVIEWER?



Our "Odds n' Ends" feature item this issue is a rather strange piece from the reflex era. Called the "FIELD PREVIEWER FOR NIKKOR LENSES", its consists of a black tube with the Nikon F bayonet mount on one end, and a TYPE A focusing screen mounted on the other. Similar in concept to those little attachments that were sold in the 1980s to convert telephoto lenses from various manufacturers into field telescopes, the Nikon version probably pre-dates them by at least a decade (I still can't accurately date this item, as my collection of reflex price sheets, going back to the first edition, do not list it! Can someone date it for us?).

Its purpose, design and execution are quite simple and straight forward. It simply positions the standard Nikon F "A" screen the proper distance to allow the user to mount any reflex Nikkor, and look through as one would if it were mounted on the camera. Its utility with telephoto lenses is obvious...any Nikkor up to the 1200mm/f11 can be converted into a high power, and high quality, telescope or spotting scope. With wideangles it could be used to determine coverage and optical effects going right down to the Fisheye Nikkors!

But...how many people actually had a use for such an item? For how long was it made, and does it go back to the very early era (when many of the more interesting and esoteric Nikon reflex accessories were made), or is it from a slightly later period? Which price lists does it appear in and how much did it sell for?

Any answers????...Any questions????



Created For The 'NHS' by TONY HURST