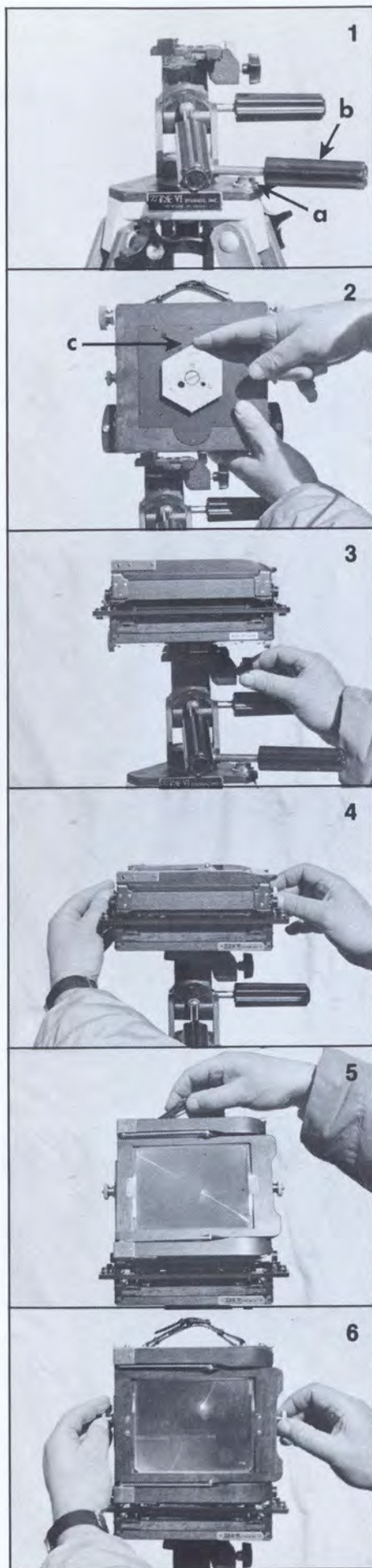




ZONE VI field camera



1. First, set up the tripod. The tripod **top** must be level. If it is not, even if the tripod **head** is level, the camera will tilt off level when it is panned so that every slight alteration of lateral camera positioning will have to be corrected. Center the bubble in the level (a) on top of the tripod; if your tripod does not have a built-in level, get a "line level" at a hardware store. If using the Zone VI tripod head, make sure that the longest handle (b) is in the lowest position because the short handle will not clear the bubble level. One tripod leg should point at the center of the subject area. From the photographer's position, the tripod should appear as in Figure 1.

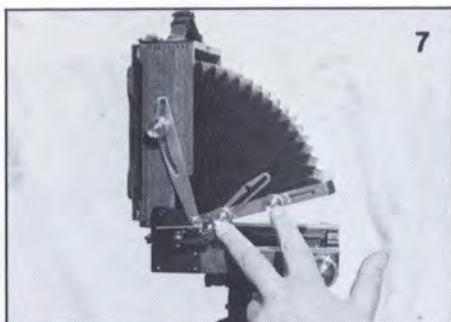
2. Attach the camera plate to the center hole in the camera base. The notation "lens" (c) should be placed with the arrow pointing at the leather strap. Figure 2.

3. Place the camera on the tripod, leather strap away from you, and tighten the small knob at right. Figure 3.

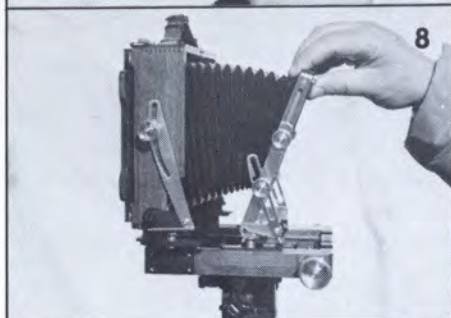
4. Loosen the two large knobs at the sides. Figure 4.

5. Grasp the leather handle and raise the camera back until it clicks into vertical. It will require a tug to start it because the camera is held closed by a magnet. Figure 5.

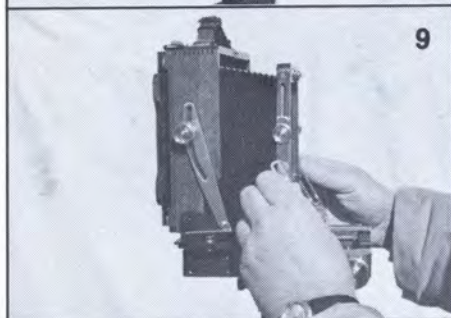
6. Tighten the two large knobs gently; very little force is necessary. Figure 6.



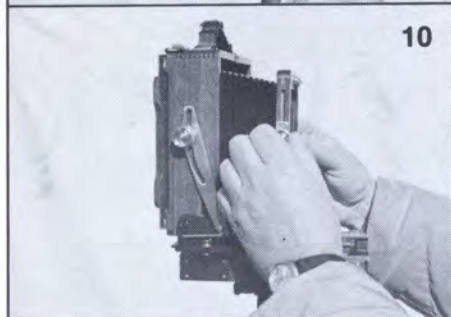
7. Loosen the two knobs on both sides of the lens standard (4 knobs). Figure 7.



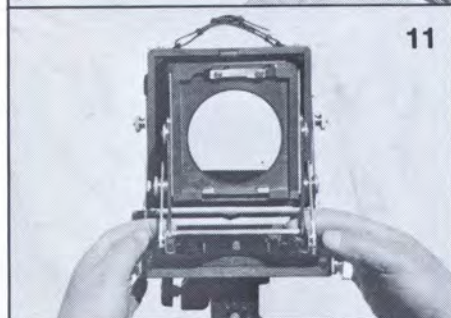
8. Raise the lens standard to vertical. It will click into place. Figure 8.



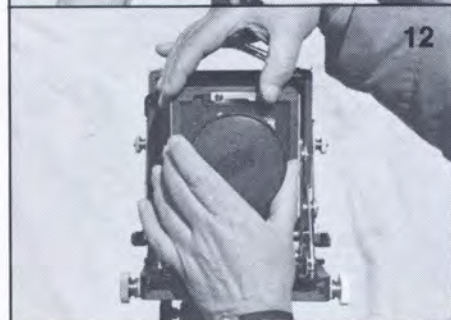
9. Tighten the lower knobs. Figure 9.



10. Tighten the upper knobs. Figure 10.



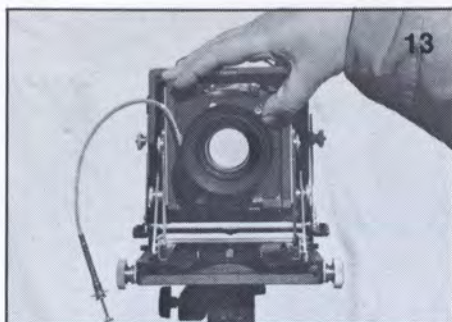
11. Slide the whole front forward as far as it will go and tighten the levers. The illustration shows the thumbs tightening the levers. Figure 11.



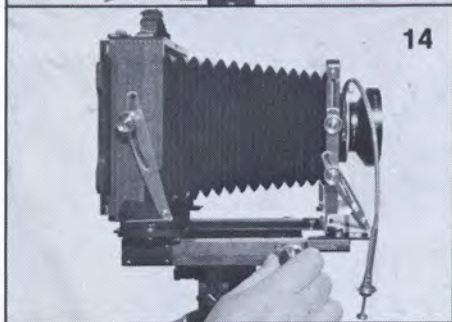
12. Insert the lens under the clip at the bottom; then slide the retaining clip across the top to lock the lensboard in place. Figure 12.

The camera is now set up. Sounds complicated but after a little practice, all twelve steps can be completed in under a minute.

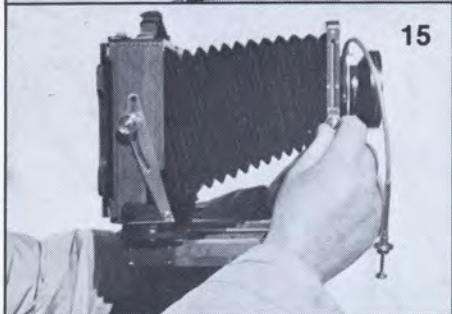
Level the camera left to right and front to back with the two spirit levels on the tripod head or use a line level.



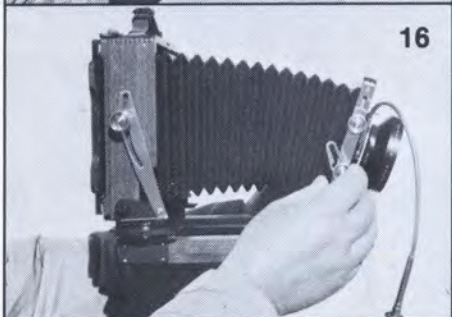
13. Open the lens by setting the aperture to its maximum opening, usually $f/8$ or $f/5.6$, and open the shutter by pushing up on the triangular black lever under thumb in Figure 13.



14. Focus until the image is sharp on the groundglass. Use the large knob as shown. On the opposite side of the camera there is a similar knob which locks the focusing mechanism; you must loosen that knob in order to focus. Tighten it after you have focused. Figure 14.



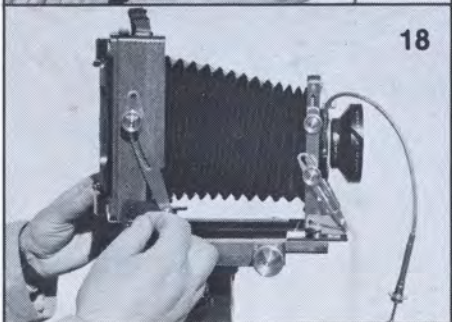
15. To raise the front, release the upper knobs on the front standard and slide the lens assembly up. Figure 15.



16. To tilt the lens forward, loosen the lower knobs on the front standard. You must also pull the brass supports towards you to release them from the notches that position the lens at vertical. Figure 16.



17. To swing the lens, first release the levers under the lens. Figure 17.

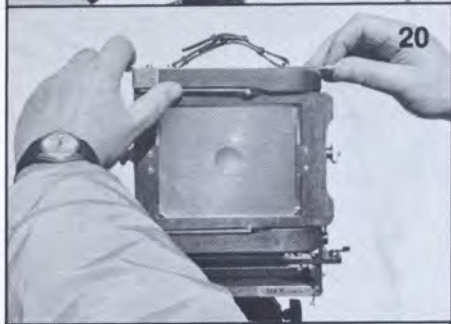


18. To swing the back, first release the levers at the sides. Figure 18.



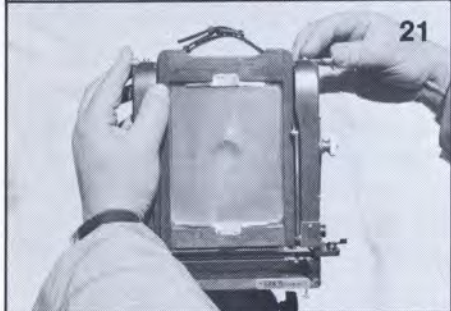
19

19. To tilt the back to the rear (I know of no picture-taking situation where you would tilt it forward), loosen the large knobs and pull the brass standards towards you to release them from the notches that position the back at vertical. Figure 19.



20

20. To change from a horizontal to a vertical format, release the two clips at the top of the camera. Hold the camera back so it doesn't fall off. Figure 20.



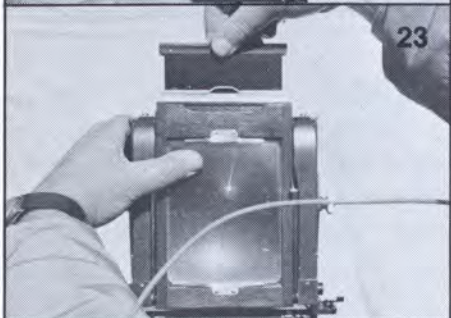
21

21. Replace the back, making sure to set it into the two clips at the bottom before attempting to close the clips at the top. Figure 21.



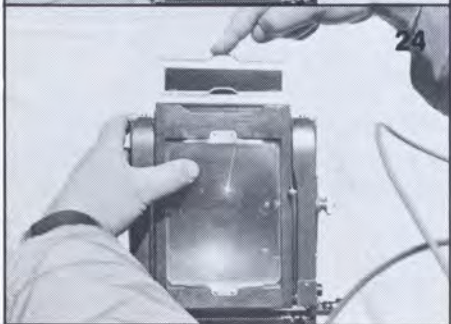
22

22. A film holder is inserted by pulling the camera back towards you against the pressure of the spring. Before inserting the film holder it is a good idea to close and cock the shutter and set the aperture and shutter speed. Push the holder all the way in, then give it a light tug to make sure it has clicked into place behind the ridge of the light trap. Figure 22.



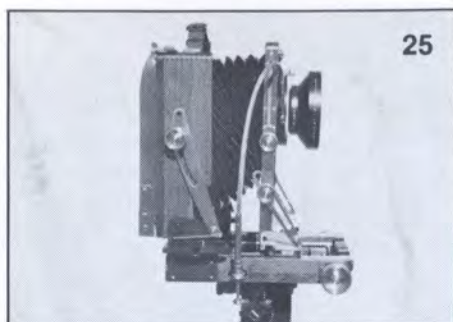
23

23. To make an exposure, withdraw the slide from the side of the holder **facing the lens**. If you withdraw the rear slide by mistake, you will expose the film through the groundglass. As you pull the slide, it is a good idea to squeeze the groundglass and the cameraback together to avoid the possibility of springing the back open a crack and allowing a streak of light to enter. Figure 23.



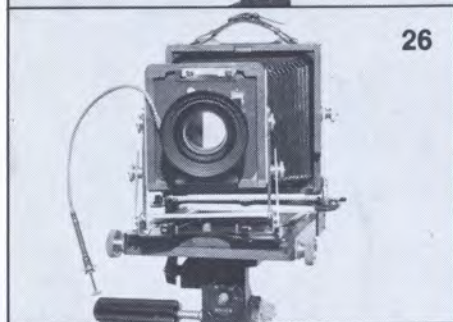
24

24. When loading fresh film, make sure you have the silver sides of the slides at the outside of the holders, indicating unexposed film. After making the exposure, make sure you replace the slide with the black side out, indicating exposed film. Squeeze cameraback as before. Figure 24.



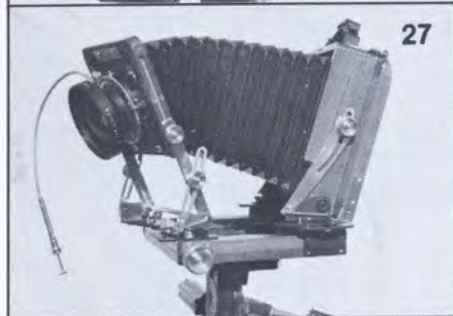
25

25. The configuration of the camera here shows a short focus lens (120 mm) and an extreme raised lens position. The flexibility of the bellows permits extreme positions without a bag bellows which is usually needed with monorail cameras. Figure 25.



26

26. To offset the lens to the side (sliding front), the camera is turned away from the center of the image area and the front and back are then swung parallel to the subject. (In books about view cameras this configuration is always illustrated with a picture of a mirror, taken, apparently, with the camera right in front of the mirror but, as though by magic, the camera does not appear. No other use has yet been found for this configuration.) The position is so extreme here that looking through the lens at the back you can see the side of the camera. Figure 26.



27

27. This position: extreme raised lens, aggressive forward tilt, excessive front and rear swings, and violent back tilt is used only in advertisements of view cameras. No photograph could possibly be made with this pretzel configuration. Figure 27.



28

28. The lens can be swung at an angle to the back after releasing the two levers under the lens. This position is seldom used. Figure 28.



29

29. To close the camera, remove the lens, loosen the four knobs at the lens standard and the levers at the focusing track and press the front standard all the way into the camera back. The standard will flop forward into the base. Figure 29.



30

30. Loosen the large back tilt knobs. Pull the brass supports towards the rear to release them from the notches. Close the camera. The magnet will hold it closed. Figure 30.

CAMERA MOVEMENTS

One or the other (never both together) of the following movements cover 90% of my picture taking requirements:

Rising Front (Fig. 25) — If what I am photographing is higher than I am (trees, a building) I level the camera fore and aft so that the vertical lines of the building, etc. are vertical (parallel) on the groundglass and I raise the front to frame the desired area. As you can see in Figure 25, the lens is displaced from the center of the film in this position and it therefore must have excess covering power. Both lenses shown here can cover even an 8x10 negative from corner to corner so extreme movements can be utilized.

Tilt Back (Fig. 19) — This allows you to focus sharply on something in the foreground and on something in the background simultaneously. The secret in getting this and all other camera movements correct is in one simple sentence: **FOCUS ON THE FAR**. Assuming a landscape, "far" would be the horizon. Next, release the back tilt knobs and, as you tilt the back towards you with one hand, focus forward slowly with the other. Don't overdo it. A little goes a long way; a 1/16 of an inch is "a little." It is impossible to get everything razor sharp with the lens wide open unless you are focusing on something absolutely flat like a table top. To get everything sharp, close the aperture slowly as you watch the image on the groundglass. Then close down one extra stop for good measure. The tilting of the camera back causes objects in the foreground to loom large. In the case of a very close object and a wide angle lens, this is quite noticeable and can be used to great dramatic effect. Should you wish

to avoid that effect but still want to focus sharp from near to far, just tilt the lens forward. The same rule applies: **FOCUS ON THE FAR**, but this time, as you tilt the lens forward, focus back until all is sharp. This is much more difficult to describe than it is to perform because you can clearly see the effects of all movements on the groundglass. For focusing with ease and precision, get a pair of magnifying eyeglasses that produce sharp images at an eye-to-object distance of 4 or 5 inches (see your oculist). I wear mine on a string around my neck. The small loupes sold for focusing are abominable.

Swing Movements (Fig. 28) — This figure shows the camera with both front and back swung and, though it hardly shows in the photograph, that camera position is so extreme that I can imagine no photographic situation that would employ it. The swing movements have the same effect as the tilt movements except that they rotate around a vertical axis rather than a horizontal axis. They would be of help if you wanted, for example, to focus sharply on a wall three feet from your left shoulder. Aim the lens slightly toward the wall, **FOCUSING ON THE FAR**, and, as you swing, focus back until the image is sharp from near to far on the groundglass. Again, this is more difficult to describe than it is to do. Try it. If you use the swing back rather than swinging the lens, it dramatizes the converging perspective of the wall. (See P. 14 of **The Fine Print**.) If a wall was at your left shoulder, you would swing the right side of the back towards you. The right side of the lens, however, swings towards the wall. The Lens Looks; the Back Backs away.

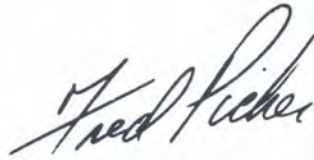
POSTSCRIPTS

Most often, the camera movements described on the previous page are unnecessary in order to focus, especially with the shorter lenses, because by stopping down you can see on the groundglass that everything becomes sharp. The usual problem is in overdoing the movements. Remember: A little goes a long way. Keep it simple.

Do not be influenced by manufacturers' tilt and swing specs because every view camera (including ours) has the capability for movements far in excess of those needed for any photographic requirement and far beyond the ability of any lens to cover. To make sure you are covering the negative when using extreme movements, look through the open lens from the front — set it to taking aperture — and if you can see all four corners of the groundglass clearly, you are OK.

The Zone VI Field Camera is a superb instrument, simple in design, straightforward in construction, and beautiful in appearance. It will serve you faithfully for the rest of your photographic life without maintenance or attention.

If, after you have worked with it, you have any questions, drop me a line.



SUGGESTED READING:

Ansel Adams, "The Camera" \$16.50.

Fred Picker, "The Fine Print" \$14.95.

Leslie Stroebe, "View Camera Technique" \$24.95.

CAMERA SPECIFICATIONS:

Weight — 3¼ lbs.

Folded Size — 3½x7¼x8½ inches.

Construction — Cherry Wood and Solid Brass.

A ground glass fitted with an image-brightening fresnel lens is included with this camera (the Model II). Owners of the Model I may purchase a fresnel lens to fit their camera. Send \$35.00 please.