Photographic Documentation: A Personal Development and Refinement of a Photographic Approach in Making Visual Documentary Statements

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Recommended Citation
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June 6, 1972
"The photographer's punctillo is his recognition of the now - to see it so clearly that he looks through it to the past and senses the future. This is a big order and demands wisdom as well as understanding of one's time. Thus the photographer is the contemporary being par excellence; through his eyes the now becomes the past."

Berenice Abbott, 1964
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evolution of photographing Four Corners grew out of many experiences, especially in the past two years. The opportunity of working as staff photographer with the Democrat and Chronicle for the summer of 1970; the trip to Boston to view Minor White's exhibition "be-ing without clothes", and photographing the funeral of Cardinal Cushing the next day; the trip to Rio de Janeiro; the meeting of my wife; my second trip to Rio; the stillness of the summer of 1971 - all contributed to my way of seeing and handling the camera to render personal statements of what I saw and felt. My guidance in these last two years has been overseen by many, but I am especially thankful to my three thesis advisors.

I am a synthesis of my environment and of the people around me.

I am that much better a photographer because of the guidance of Mr. Charles A. Arnold, Jr. His patience as an educator, his words of wisdom and ideas, his style of probing, and exciting me to experiment with different things is now and always will be of tremendous value.
to me as a photographer and potential educator. Charlie's way with words and how to use them along with photographs has been quite an education for me.

Much pondering was always done after conferring with Mr. David Robertson. In my two years of knowing Dave, his help as an instructor and friend has been quite useful in helping me to analyze the significance of art and photography and the nature of the photographic print. The quality of light that MAKES A GOOD PHOTOGRAPH. His views on teaching and the nature of educating students in photography have been timely and relevant in my growth as a photographer.

Because I will be essentially earning a living as a photo-journalist, I asked Mr. Michael Geissinger to assist me in the final months of my thesis development. Mike's suggestions and discussions on how or when one limits oneself when shooting an assignment; or his objective comments on the Four Corners development were appreciated. Especially in helping me decide on the editing of the material from the Kennedy Space Center that was to have been in the thesis.
DEDICATION

I am, perhaps, nothing more than a maturing romantic.
With the complexities of today's modern existences,
I am very much influenced by those around me
with whom I have a human rapport.
I am a student, now and forever.

I marvel at the beauty of Rio de Janeiro
at any time of the day.
I grow misty eyed
when I see a rocket take off into space.
Pride when I saw the American Flag in China and Russia,
or when I see the President talk before Congress.
Scared when there is death.
Confused when there is war.
Often overcome with emotion when I see pictures or
hear words of John Fitzgerald and Robert Kennedy.

I am an entity influenced by the times,
I must be able to feel, touch, smell the existence
I am a part of;
without it I grow unhappy, I brood.

I envision the moment I can photograph the beauty,
serenity, and peace of space...

This small work,
To: My loving wife Maria Judite, and my beloved parents:
Joe & Jane, and my sisters: Nancy and Connie.
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"Still photography as an Art form is at a low ebb. "Artist Photographers" are complacent, too impressed with past performance to search, experiment, probe; and most important to question.

The vitality, excitement and joyous involvement in the uninhibited hardwork of creating things visual requires -- evaluation and reevaluating of each days standards -- a good healthy questioning of accepted values, stylistic devices and outmoded idiologies. There is a healthy revolution in the other Art forms."

Charles A. Arnold, Jr., 1966
XEROGRAPHY: as a Fine Art
To photographically document over a period of six months how I see individuals interacting in the environment of the Four Corners area of Rochester, New York, and using the same photographic approach, document the activities of individuals involved directly or indirectly with the launching of an Apollo spacecraft from the Kennedy Space Center.
INTRODUCTION

Over the past eight months I have been photographing the people and environment of the business district of Rochester, New York. This 20th century conglomerate of cement, steel and people is known as Four Corners and is located at the intersection of State and Main Street. I walked and photographed this area at different times of the day, most types of weather, as much as twice a week over the past eight months. My feeling and visual understanding of this area grew with each visit. Each visit resulted in a number of photographic images employing several approaches that would, when edited and exhibited, communicate my experiences in a visual and documentary manner.

Fascinated by the form and design of people and the background or setting they were in, I termed the scene or setting a stage. There are many stages in Four Corners. The visual use of my shadow grew out of my desire to be a part of the stage encounters, as well as projecting my presence on situations where mostly everyone seemed to be indifferent to me and their stage environment.
The photographs in my thesis exhibit, and the slides in the back of this volume, illustrate a few of my encounters, both individually and sequentially.

The sequences evolved from my approach of locating a stage, then photographing in the same exact spot when I felt a certain harmony with my subject. I did not realize the success of the images as sequences until I was editing the pictures with my advisors. The more I began to play around with combinations of images of a particular sequence, the more I began to realize that these were, perhaps, one of the more successful results from my thesis involvement.
"In photography, documentary is the term used to describe a specific attitude which sees, in the creative production and use of photographs, a language of giving a fuller understanding of man as a social animal. By examining closely, by isolating and relating his subjects, the documentary photographer penetrates the surface appearances and reveals the world about us."

Arthur Siegel, 1951
Over the past two years I have pondered about what photographic-documentation is, what its applications are, its value as an expressive art-form and its value in the realm of photo-journalism. My images, I believe, are a synthesis of these feelings.

To do justice to my study, I first studied the history and development of photography from its beginnings. I then studied the works of the master photo-documentarians from the later part of the 19th century and observed remarkable beauty and simplicity in their images of record. Arthur Siegel pointed out in an article in American Photography in 1951 that documentation can be broken down into three phases of evolution.

"As we look through the major documentary works of the past 50 years, we find that each one, in order to fulfill this aim, has approached the problem through the analysis of a specific time period, a specific place or a specific aspect of human life. We find photographic works which have concentrated on a period in time: a day, year, a decade. Other works have concerned themselves mainly with the place: a dwelling, a state, a nation."
The first period is marked from the invention of photography in 1835 to about 1885. In this period the photographer tried to record the face of the world in an objective way. He traveled to all parts of the world to make images of cultures at their present point in time. The establishment marveled at the pictures, often purchased portfolio sets or hired photographers to visit foreign lands to make the pictures for them.

The second period was from 1885 to about 1918. It was in this period of time that the great movements in photography came about, especially the Photo-secession. As Siegel points out, the photographers concerned themselves with the superimposition of the photographers's personality over the subject matter in terms of stylistic mannerisms. Individuals like Hine, Steichen, Stieglitz, Coburn, White, Strand, and Atget photographed in dramatic styles utilizing one's own personal approach.
"The personality of the "photographic artist" manifested itself by destroying the machine-made image by controlled handwork and the misguided copying of certain Victorian painters' vision. This ultimately led to the stereotyped seeing of the present-day pictorialist, whose work is usually devoid of any personal meaning."

The third period ranges from 1918 to the present. This period is marked by the influences of the culture or environment on the respective photographer as well as his own personal style and approach. Since WWII the range, dynamics and growth of visual documentation has been remarkable. As our ever growing free enterprise systems of goods, services and schools produces products, the state of a culture and/or environment is also changing. The works of Smith, Davidson, Capa, Winogrand, Freedlander, Fried, Michaels, Plowden and Bresson to name a few, are photographers with a sensitivity to their environment that when manifested in film, communicates to the observer a sea of information and visual metaphores.
Thus, at this point in my life, my sense of documentation is affected by all that has happened in the past. I respond to photographs made by those artists I have mentioned above. Each of those photographers' approach have helped me find my own style.

Four Corners evolved out of my experience in photographing the people in the city environment of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during 1970-71. The difference of the culture from that of mine, the novelty of a different way of life appealed to me. My images began to reflect this. Each trip to Rio was better than the one before. My understanding of the people also grew with each trip. So did my images.

Four Corners appealed to me as an explorer setting foot onto new lands. There was something about this section of the city that excited me, and I wanted to place it on film. What was interesting and had the potential of being visually
exciting were the myriad combinations of people and the Four Corners environment of office buildings, restaurants, parking lots, alleys and more parking lots. Four Corners was dull without its people, yet it had a certain beauty all of its own when dusk came. The contrast of old and new are visually present, and lent themselves photographically to my documentation.

In personalizing my encounters with the nature of Four Corners, I began to utilize an approach I had discovered during the summer of 1971. This evolution will be discussed in the procedure section of the thesis.

My photographic documentation of this area or place, is to me a synthesis of what I have seen and done in the past and utilized in the present. It was what I felt and wanted to communicate about the existence of Four Corners during a specific time period.

"...as the language of vocabulary of photography has been extended, the emphasis of meaning has shifted—shifted from what the world looks like to what we feel about the world and what we want the world to mean."

Aaron Siskind, 1958
"If it is practiced by a man of taste, the photograph will have the appearance of art (but) The photographer must...intervene as little as possible, so as not...to lose the objective charm which it naturally possesses.... Photography should register and give us documents."

Matisse, from an article in Camera Work, 1908
As I have stated before, events and experiences contributed to my growth and style as a photographer in an often dynamic and chronological manner. Each experience was a building block for the next experience. Each new discussion on the nature of art and photography made me think of my place in the medium. Each encounter with a photographic artist's book of pictures made me wonder, challenged me, and motivated me to do more and make better images than I had before.

**Early 1971**

My procedures for this Thesis can be traced back to the Winter of 1971. During that time period I spent two weeks in Rio de Janeiro photographing the people. I spent the next seven weeks after that trip developing, printing, and editing the images. I returned to Rio in the Spring to marry Judy, my wife. I also made more photographs. The experience from the two trips aided me significantly in my growth of
seeing and ability with the camera and wide angle lens. The images from both trips were developed in D-23 Kodalk and printed on Agfa papers. The several photographic prints are examples from those trips to Rio.

(Illustrations A, Al)

Summer 1971

I began to experiment with the photographic approach I used in Rio, and applied to assorted trips my wife and I made throughout the summer of 1971. The approach was one of standing before my subject in what I thought was a pleasing, visual background. I made the pictures when "the decisive moment" arrived between background and subject matter. People contributed most of my subject matter. The 5x7 photographs, shown here, are examples of my photographic approach at that time.

(Illustrations B, C, D)

Fall 1971

By the Fall I had no idea where my visual ideas were going. All I knew was that I liked the images I made, but could not place the ideas of the pictures into words. I made arrangements to take a pre-thesis, 2 hour credit independent study with Charlie Arnold in order to help me solve this problem. Prof. Arnold
suggested that I find one interesting background, stage, and stay in one position and make photographs of the moments I thought visually interesting. The several contact shots shown here, are example of preliminary photography done in October. The sequence of the dog by the grocery store. This, however, was not all that successful. I happened to spend an afternoon in downtown Rochester, at Four Corners earlier in November. I had an immediate response to this environment. The next contact sheet illustrates part of a day's shooting by the Red Dome restaurant, utilizing the stage, and shadow idea. Later in November, I shot a sequence by a covered fire hydrant. The third contact sheet illustrates the product of this day's photography. After early photographic sessions, I made contact sheets, proofs then attempted to put into words what it was I did and wanted to do. Often difficult at times, the process became easier as I kept on rewriting and reading each previous statement, and improving it. (Please note illustrations E and F).
"...There are, I suppose, many ways of getting at reality. Our province is this small bit of space; and only by operating within that limited space-endlessly exploring the relationships within it-can we contribute our special meanings that come out of man's varied life. Otherwise, our photographs will be vague. They will lack impact, or they will deteriorate into just 'genre' as so many documentary shots do...."

Aaron Siskind
January-February 1972
During this time period I continued to photograph in different areas of Four Corners. I photographed on cloudy, snowy, and sunny days. Each visit was exciting, for a sense of exploration existed: visually and personally. Contact sheets were made of each day's shooting as were the respective 5x7 proofs for later editing. Bi-weekly visits with Charlie Arnold and Dave Robertson was begun.

March 1972
Charlie Arnold suggested I "stand back" more than I had been in photographing particular stages in the Four Corners area. This worked quite successfully, and was a major concept used in completing my documentation of the area. At this point in time, I really felt free in Four Corners, and things visual appeared everywhere. I also began using the 24mm lens, experimenting to see if it would contribute visually and spatially to my stage concept. It did, and the remarkable photograph of the old man and the umbrella is an illustrative example using the 24mm lens.

(Illustration H)
Late in March, I received Press accreditation to cover the launch of Apollo 16 from the Kennedy Space Center. Enthused about applying my stage approach to that event, Charlie Arnold suggested, with the approval of the committee, that I make the trip and use the images in my thesis. I, therefore, added this concept to my proposal, as noted in the beginning of this paper.

I spent one week photographing at the Space Center, shooting almost 26 rolls of black and white, and 14 rolls of color. There were, however, problems that I did not anticipate. Due to extensive security at the Space Center, primarily because of the Apollo launch, and the extensive number of world press at the Cape, my time permitted to various areas of visual interest was very limited. Everywhere I went in the Cape, I had to be escorted by a NASA official.
The key to my stage approach is one of time, patience and relaxed atmosphere. This I did not have. The pressure on me was incredible. In illustrations I, and slides KSC 1-5 are a few examples of what I made. Other examples are in the slides, marked KSC 1-5, in the back of this volume.

Once these images were contacted, and some 120 5x7 proofs were made, it was clear to my advisors and I that not only was there an enormous mount of material but that the images were not as successful as those images from Four Corners. A bit dismayed, but very realistic, I decided to drop the Apollo images from the Thesis presentation.

A copy of the letters sent to Mr. Henry Beck, Coordinator of the MFA program in Photography is attached in illustration 11. My explanation of the problems encountered at the Cape are defined. Thus, most of April was utilized in driving to and from Cape Kennedy and developing and making the prints from the trip.
May 1972

1st week; 2nd week - Preliminary thought was given to the editing of the material. A meeting with my three thesis advisors produced the first initial reactions, observations, and comments to the seven months of photography. I continued to photograph at Four Corners using the new 24mm lens. The parking lots, empty and full, really fascinated me. The weather was getting better.

3rd week - Final editing was accomplished with the aid of my advisors. With the NASA material no longer required, the channel of thought was all towards Four Corners. The letter to Mr. Beck was sent explaining the change of plans on the NASA-Apollo images. (Illustration 1-1)

Once the final editing was done, some 70 images were selected. I printed the images I was most happy with first, and did those I was least happy with last.

4th week - Most of this period was spent in the darkroom finally printing the images to be used in the Thesis exhibit. My technique is explained under "Technical Statements".
June 1972

1st. week - Mounting of the images, and arranging the manner of presentation was accomplished copying the finished images on a Repro-vat unit in the Library rendered me the slides found in the back Kodachrome II, type A, at 5-6" seconds at F 11 was used. Selection of Birch-white, and the painting of the Gallery was also done. The photographs were hung over the weekend of June 2, 3, 4.

2nd week - June 6, 1972, my Thesis Committee first saw the exhibit, discussed it among themselves, then with me. All approved the nature of the exhibition and images, except for a particular few images which did not work together with the others.

The exhibition runs from June 5-June 15, 1972.
"I am the moment.
But I am the moment with all of myself.
And anyone is free to be the moment with me."

Alfred Stieglitz
TECHNICAL STATEMENTS

The Camera

The only image making equipment utilized in the filming of this project were two Nikon Ftn Cameras, and the primary use of a 28mm Nikor lens, f/3.5 and the secondary use of a 24mm Nikor f/2.8 lens.

I used these wide angle lenses because of their wide perspective and unique spatial qualities. Formulating and designing my composition became more challenging visually. The end results were a different type of spatial composition: pleasing to photograph and pleasing to look at. Many of my images were successful due to these characteristics applied to situations where I became very close to my subject matter within the stage setting selected. The sequence of the gangster type of men coming out of the shadows is an example, as well as the clown sequence in front of the War Memorial. The only physical problem that seemed to bother me was the use of the camera in 0 degree temperatures and high wind. I tended to shoot for only 15 - 20 minutes at a time.
The film

I used Kodak Plus-x film rated at ASA 225. I began shooting the Four Corners area with Tri-x, ASA 800, however, I did not obtain the contrast I liked.

I rolled most of my film, buying Plus-x by the 100 feet, and placing it in the Kodak film cassettes in 36 exposure lengths. When shooting on location I had the extra film placed in empty color film cans taped together. This way I was able to keep from 4 to 6 tolls ready at all times.

I developed the film within 24-48 hours of making the photographs in solutions of Kodak D-23 and Kodalk. The process was simple. I processed at 68°F in both solutions. The film, normally four rolls at a time, in a Nikor tank, was developed for 3 minutes, in D-23, agitating for 30-45 seconds, then stopping for 15 seconds. The D-23 was emptied, then the solution of Kodalk was poured in the tank for 3 to 4 minutes, agitating for about 30 seconds in every minute. The solutions were mixed by the chem mix room, however, one could also mix his own solutions by obtaining the dry chemicals from the mix room with prior permission. After the Kodalk
solution, the film was stopped in a solution of acetic acid (28%) for 30-45 seconds, agitation once or twice. Fixing was accomplished in the normal manner for 5-8 minutes, then the film was washed for 20-30 minutes, placed in photo-flo solution, then hung to dry. No squeegeing. The quality of the negative is much better than Plus-x developed in D-76, since the D-23-Kodalk combination render better contrast and shadow detail. The balance of highlight areas and shadow areas are quite remarkable in the final print. Contact sheets were made on Kodabromide F 2&3 papers shortly after the film was dry.

Initial Prints

Initial proof prints, normally 5x7 inches were made of those images I thought successful from a days shooting. These proof prints were made on Kodabromide F 2&3 papers. Exposing the film for ASA 225 normally rendered me images printable on a Kodabromide 3 paper. As the time grew in my photography of Four Corners, so did the proof prints. By the middle of May, more than 150 proof pictures were ready for editing.
Editing

One of the more difficult yet challenging aspects of my thesis was the editing of the eight months of material. This took me about two weeks. Breaking down the photographs into subjective areas was done first, then re-examined to select images that were outstanding from each group of sequence and non-sequence photographs.

The edited photographs at this point were hung on the gallery walls of the MFA room for analysis by my thesis advisors and I. The advise and criticism extended to me was quite useful and appreciated. At times, the abundance of material often proved mind boggling. The opportunity to view and discuss the photographs with my advisors was a very useful and informative teaching encounter.

Utilizing the ideas obtained from this crit, I began to single out those images that seemed the most successful visually and worked well with my thesis objectives. It was at this time that my advisors and I realized the success of several of the sequences made over the eight month period. I then began to group the pictures into a possible layout for the exhibition.
Any uncertain photographs were also added at this time, since Charlie Arnold suggested that I begin to finally print those images I was most happy with, and print those I was least happy with later. This advice worked quite well and helped me to evaluate and re-evaluate the final outcome of the pictures to be used in the exhibit.

Final Printing

Final printing was done using Agfa Brovira double weight papers, mostly numbers 3 and 4. The prints were developed in a solution of Kodak D-72 print developer, 1:3 at 68-70°F. This information is found in Arnold Gassen's "Handbook for Contemporary Photography". It is a very useful handbook.

I normally measured 16 oz of stock solution to 48 oz of water. 15-20 prints were processed per tray of mixed solution. Developing normally took up to 2 minutes. The prints were stop bathed, then placed in a solution of fixer for 5 minutes, then in another tray of fresher fixer for another 5 minutes. The prints were washed for one hour at 72°F in a spray type-siphon washer.
The prints were made using an Omega Pro-lab D-6, 4x5 enlarger for the entire eight month period. The same enlarger was used every time to guarantee uniformity. A Pro-timo-lit enlarger timer was used with the enlarger. Exposure ranged from 8 to normally 14 seconds with respective dodging and burning where necessary. A Sanders easel was used with a 35mm Omega carrier with cut edges to render the black boarders found in the images. A Gra-lab timer (Universal) clocked my time in the print developer. There was more burning in of light than dodging due to the nature of my exposures of shadow areas in a high-light area. The foreground in the "picking up of the drunk sequence" is an example.
Final Preparation of Printed Images

The washed prints were placed in a print flattening solution for about 5 minutes. This helped the surface quality of the print, since it was matt dried, it helped to prevent foreign material to adhere to the print while drying. I used an Arkway Dual-Dri, Pro-Model 150 drier. Two 8x10 prints were dried together, vertically, at a slow rate of time. The temperature was kept at a medium heat. The prints came off the drier in beautiful condition, although often curling.

All the prints were matted using Kodak mounting tissue and mounted to 11x14 white mount boards, and 16x20 mount boards. The sequence images were cut according to the design of the exhibit, and later mounted on larger 20x30 boards, using 3-M spray cement. Once mounted, the prints were spotted where necessary using Spot-tone number 3. Spotting was minimal, since I assured clean negatives before making the prints. The use of Omit pressurized air helped to free my negatives of dust particles.
The Exhibit

The hanging of the exhibit took 3 days, plus the painting of the flats. I chose the color, Birch-white, from G.M.Fields Co. This color was different enough to break the traditional institutional gray and stark white often found in shows. The softness of the white was able to set the mounted pictures on white board off quite nicely, without over powering the images.

The very nature of the subject material required that it be hung differently, rather than the traditional one picture after another approach. Again, with the help of my advisors, I came up with a number of ways of hanging the images. A total of 59 photographs were used in the thesis show, with 38 mounted pieces on the walls. T pins from Scrantoms were used to hang the pictures. A pair of pliers, the cutting type, was an absolute necessity to place the pins in the flats. Once the photographs were hung, final adjustments were made, floor cleaned and posters hung. The introduction to this Thesis is also used as the preface to viewing the show. It is the first thing one encounters before studying the exhibit.
The exhibit does have to be studied, since the arrangement of some of the separate images, when viewed with the image near it, often combine into a new image.
"The moment dictates for me what I must do. I have no theory about what the moment should bring. I am not attempting to be in more than one place at a time; to do more than one thing at a time. I am not in any hurry. I want nothing from anyone. I simply react to the moment. For, to me, all lived moments are equally true, equally important. Thus, only in being true to all moments, can one be true to any. It is in this sense that I say that I am the moment, but that I am the moment with all of myself.

When I am no longer thinking, but simply am, then I may be said to be truly affirming life. Not to know, but to let exist what is, that alone, perhaps, is truly to know."

Alfred Stieglitz
CONCLUSION

Within the framework of this Thesis I began searching for words to express my thoughts verbally about my photographic statements, and concluded successfully, I believe, not only in being able to discuss my work verbally, but I am also much more visually aware of objects, and people and their interplay of form and design in an environment. I have gained a better understanding of what documentation visually represents when approached with a certain framework.

I have learned to take advice from others, and to listen, explore, try, and, perhaps, even challenge. Some of these experiences were challenging but very satisfying in the long run.
The experience at the Kennedy Space Center was, by no means, a failure. Analysing these images side by side with those from Four Corners, the approach and visual quality of the Apollo images are not as successful. The Apollo images would, however, work as a separate group of images satisfactorily. The actual working experience of photographing at the Space Center contributed to my visual and technical understanding of newspaper/magazine type photo-journalism. I expect to edit the Kennedy Space Center material and present some of it as a show. The Strassenburg Planetarium has expressed an interest in my Apollo coverage.

Thus, I have gained a number of techniques from this Thesis, and expect to apply them in other practical ways, in other areas of photo-journalism. I have also realized that I need not limit myself to such measures as full frame, one lens, one film, when shooting on location. I am not at the Bresson level, for example, of being able to render images that swiftly and that exquisite...yet.

Michael R. Soluri
June 6, 1972, Rochester, New York
"Thus photography from being merely another way of procuring or making images of things already seen by our eyes, has become a means to ocular awareness of things that our eyes can never see directly. It has become the necessary tool for all visual comparison of things that are not side by side, and for all visual knowledge of the literally unseeable - unseeable whether because too small, too fast, or hidden under surfaces, and because of the absence of light. Not only has it vastly extended the gamut of our visual knowledge, but through its reproduction in the printing press, it has effected a very complete revolution in the ways we use our eyes and, especially, in the kinds of things our minds permit our eyes to tell us."

William Ivins
APPENDIX

Personal comments about my research at the George Eastman House Research Library and at the National Archives of the United States.

A. The research center at the George Eastman House of Photography has proved to be a remarkable source of motivation and inspiration as well as a viable and creditable storehouse of information on photography as a fine art - from the past to the present. Not quite knowing what perhaps a visually good photograph should possess I spent many sessions studying the photographs of Henri Cartier Bresson, as well as the sundry articles written about him in his many volumes of published work. His feeling for the decisive moment within a framework of unique composition, spatial order/disorder and design appealed to me very much. As I studied his photographs I sensed what the decisive moment must be like, and began to apply it to my type of photography while in Brazil and then to the thesis. The more photographs I made the more I began to sense and feel the decisive moment of any event. The method of Bresson's style also appealed to me - one of simplicity. That I liked, and to this day, I too work with one camera body and one or two lenses, mostly wideangle. I also studied the works of Bruce Davidson a bit more closely after having seen him in December, 1970. His approach, combined with Bresson's offered something of a challenge to me. My problem was to resolve the nature of their visual approaches and find something that was unique "Soluri". At a later time I returned to the center and spent several days rummaging around through the portfolios in the collection. In fact I began with names from
A to Z, studying and analyzing these photographs to see what I might gain. At times I could not understand why some of these pictures were there and mine were not; at other times I fully understood. This state of questionability is still an enigma to me. Perhaps what I learned most, was the nature of photography as a fine art and its place in a museum. You have to be good, but you also have to have your contacts - most important.

The many domestic and foreign periodicals on hand in the library were quite helpful in that they informed me visually of the present state of the art. I tended to wonder about the editorial judgement in some of the magazines - especially the visual integrity of some of the photographers. But, then again, I too, have an ego. *Camera* was one magazine that I especially liked to read and look at. The quality of presentation fascinated me. Concurrently with my photographic study, I wrote a paper on the influence of photography on the Impressionistic art of Edgar Degas. Utilizing a rare book written on Degas, not found in the public libraries. I became quite involved and fascinated with the wisdom and visual integrity this man possessed. His fascination for light and his manner of resolving it on the canvas intrigues me. I, consequently, became more interested in what light could do for me. I wanted my photographs to possess a quality of light that would not show the source but the effect of light. I believe the results of this feeling, become stronger every time I make new photographs, whether they are personal expressions, or a job for a client. The use of light in my photographs at Four Corners
represent the feeling I had at the time for light quality. Especially the use of the early morning or late afternoon sun, or the light of shade or dusk.

I did not want to become tied down or dependent on the "isms" and intellectual feelings on photographic documentation, so I did not go back to the Eastman House until shortly before my thesis exhibition. I wanted my own form of expression, both visually and verbally, to come about on its own naturally, not forced or impregnated on. To that end, the Eastman House served me well, and I still enjoy returning once and a while to keep abreast of the state of art and view the exhibitions. The staff is most helpful, but careful of their responsibility for the collections. The atmosphere of GEH is, at times, most conducive for motivation and inspiration. (One must be careful what to accept.)

E. On the 18th floor of the National Archives in Washington D.C. is the Audio Visual Department. Questionable by its designation, it houses an abundance of photographic documentation by American photographers on commission by the United States Government. The 18th tier of this archive shelters the actual photographic portfolios of civil war and post-civil war documentarian as Brady, Sullivan, Gardener, Jackson, Hines, Lang et al., including most of their glass plate negatives respectively. It is impressive to say the least, to be able to handle, as I did, an actual Mathew Brady glass plate of General Grant, or carefully examine an original port-folio of O'Sullivan or Jackson, depicting the southwest or midwest. The feeling of observing these photographs
was a bit different than that of the Eastman House browsing. The staff at the Archives are older and know exactly where to find what you want. My wife and I had quite a day here, meeting the 18th tier personnel and examining with curiosity the unseen contents stored in files and shelves. What is even more remarkable, is the opportunity to have prints made from original negatives or have original prints copied on 4x5 sheet film for $0.75. I had an original T.W. O'Sullivan glass plate negative contacted on to conventional photographic paper for $2.25. The photographs of these documentarians are kept on file in simple cardboard boxes or in institutional gray type filing cabinets. The wear and tear and yellowing of the portfolios is quite evident, having been handled all of these years, in many types of situations.

The simplicity and beauty of these visual documents are intriguing. Their composition and design are basic, yet visual in their rendering of early America. The significance of such an experience is an appreciation for the photographer and the reality of being able to actually see, smell and touch an old and perhaps famous photograph, normally seen only in texts.

I went on to examine original prints of Lewis Hines, taken after WWI and through the depression. The images were quite different visually from those in the collection of the Eastman House. At the Archives, these prints were kept in simple grayish-white envelopes and thin cardboard boxes. The prints were well stamped with Hines' stamp of credit, and mostly 5x7 in format. Most of these images depicted scenes of men and women in factories, little stores and shops doing specific
tasks associated with the early 20th Century American environment. The imagery is straightforward, with much of the subject matter posed for like a snapshot. The feeling of these images are, however, not like the imagery Hines made before and during WWI, as depicted in the collection at the Eastman House. At any rate, Hines is surely America's first social-photographic documentarian, and on record for all to see and study.

At best, the opportunity of having been exposed to these two types of research facilities has contributed to my understanding the growth of photographic documentation in the United States and the effect that it has on today's world of changing cultures and life-styles. These facilities are not normally tapped for information, however, both centers do seek more qualified people to take advantage of the information and imagery.
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Research at:

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Exhibits and research library.

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