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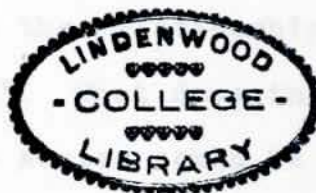


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SECRET GARDENS

MARK A. FISHER

MAY 14, 1982



HANS LEVI, FACULTY SPONSOR
KIM MOSLEY, FACULTY SPONSOR

RICHARD RICKERT, FACULTY ADMINISTRATOR

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN PHOTOGRAPHY
THE LINDENWOOD COLLEGES

Although the major portion of the culminating project titled "Secret Gardens" has to do with photographs made in Montgomery City, Missouri, three other areas of endeavor are to be discussed prior to a more lengthy discourse on the Montgomery City (MC) project.

In December of 1980 I completed a conceptual sequence of thirteen photographs titled "The Automotive Industry's Relationship to Humanity". In the guidelines for Graduate Culminating Projects, it is stated that my discussion of this series, and all other parts of my culminating project, should be an "analytical component...which explains the relationship between the Project and Study at Lindenwood 4". What does that mean? Analytical component? To analyze the car series could be undertaken on various levels - printing ability, humor, composition, lighting, etc. I will describe how it happened, and hopefully all these levels will be covered.

The old car is one I drove to college in my undergraduate days, and when it finally blew a piston, I didn't care to sell it or throw it away. I've always had more love for old cars than new ones, and after a recent skirmish with contemporary automotive genius, I was in a mood to lambast them, while preserving my respect for the old-style, cast-iron autos.

Much to my mother's chagrin, the old car graces her yard, looking eversomuch like a two thousand pound flower pot. On a visit to her home, my brothers and I were putting around the car, taking bets on how long it would take for the old car to disintegrate if left to its own devices. I had been thinking of how I

had been devoured by countless cars and white-shoed, white-belted car salesmen, and easily enlisted my younger brother's aid in a visual replica of being 'sucked in' by automotive fever and fervor.

The sequence, though germinating in my mind for several months, was essentially unplanned. Brad (my brother) would stop as I shot each frame, and then listen for direction regarding the next. All of the photographs were made within twenty minutes because the late afternoon light was fading quickly, and I was uncertain when I would have the opportunity to return for a re-shoot. There were positive effects because of this spontaneity - his expression, the texture given to the car's surface in the 'late' light, the quiet shine of the chrome. And there were negative effects - loss of detail in Brad's face, rather erratic placement of the car in various frames, an unsharp image on occasion, caused by shooting hand-held at 1/30th second, while kneeling.

The reasons that this sequence is included in Secret Gardens are that the photographs were made in MC, the subject matter reflects my humor, and it was the first of my photographs that I printed in an acceptable manner since beginning my program at Lindenwood Colleges; acceptable to me, and to my instructor, Hans Levi. Looking at them now, I see the technical flaws, the errors made. But that does not diminish them in my eyes. It was the beginning of a vast improvement in printing ability and skill, something which I had been struggling with (I still am) since the outset. The series pointed out to me, and made me place a larger measure of concentration upon, the area of weakest skills, the darkroom. I can look at the series now, find all of the flaws, make plans about improving the

Concept in a re-shoot, and feel comfortable in exposing all of it to a critical eye - mine.

And there is the key to why the car series is a part of the culminating project. It was in the making of the series that I began understanding what is entailed in analyzing, criticizing, and completing a photographic thought. This process of viewing photographs with a critical eye has been continued and improved through subsequent projects and processes, but it was with the car series I first felt minimal success, both in my concept and its execution.

Another area that increased and improved my visual perception and compositional ability was glass design, which I became involved in during the spring of 1981 and again in the spring of 1982. Glass design involves a great deal of planning, design, and problem-solving prior to actual cutting and assemble of a piece. This system of working out every problem before the project can begin was carried over into the photographic medium which has been my primary thrust. Each of the four pieces exhibited required an average of sixty to seventy hours to complete, from first sketch to final bead line. When a person's efforts are concentrated that strongly on a single piece for such an extended period, it should do a great deal in sharpening the ability to previsualize what the end result might be. That seems to be so in my case, at any rate.

"Project #2", a window designed for an existing space in a fireplace mantle, began as a design around a tail light from a

1930 Ford. Each student was given one of the lenses, with total freedom to implement it in any creative manner. I had set limitations concerning size, and after many sketches, drawings, and design flaws being erased, the window titled "Project #2" was ready to cut and solder. The instructor said the plume figures were extremely difficult to cut and might be better if redesigned. But time was rapidly waining for such thoughts, and I went ahead with it. Another valuable experience for me, which I have since repeated. The projects that were most difficult for me, the ones that required the most labor and care, are the ones ultimately chosen by me as favorites. The easy-to-do, quick-to-get-done situations hold little pleasure for me, and I realize the reason - they are pieces I don't care for.

"The Marble Maze", a glass sculpture incorporating seven eye glass lenses and fifty marbles, was, as my instructor, John Wehmer put it, "a unique and creatvie approach to the designing of glass in a sculptured form". In this work I had to develop and, in some cases invent, some methods and techniques which are not commonly practiced in art glass. This was a very experimental piece in several ways - soldering, support methods, strengthening and finishing. No one, to my knowledge, has done anything quite like it in glass work. The instructor said I had made 'stained glass history'. What came of this? How does it apply to the overall program?

More than any other lesson learned and truly incorporated into my style of work, the idea of exploring as many alternatives

as possible has been the major point I have carried into my photography (and other endeavors). "Exploring alternatives" did not suddenly become imprinted on the double-hinged top of the Marble Maze, nor in the Project #2, nor in the car series. It filtered slowly into my thought process through my own exploration and experimentation, and through the sometimes gentle remonstrances of two instructors, John Wehmer and Hans Levi; to keep my mind open, look every possibility over, and reject nothing at first sight or hearing. The Marble Maze evolved in this fashion. I had four or five designs in wide variance, and after much planning, much discussion with John, much exploration of every facet of each design, a synthesis of all of them came to be known as the Marble Maze.

The third glass piece in the show, the "Linen Cabinet", took more invention and new methods, and was the lengthiest to complete. My wife and I bought the cabinet while on vacation in the summer of 1981, and stripped four coats of paint and varnish from it, sanded and stained it, and refitted it with new hardware. In the refinishing process, the top door panel was damaged, and I pulled a design from my files, played with it, mulled it over, and finally accepted the panel design in its present form. Because there was no room for error, this panel was the most exacting glass application done yet. After completion it was held to the light, only to discover that the central octagonal shape was much too dense, allowing no light transmission. With the aid of John Wehmer the piece was removed, and the alternate eight pieces with central eye

were installed. The invention and new methods mentioned above are to be found in the manner in which the glass is affixed to the door frame, using lead came and thirty pieces of copper wire. This construction method can be viewed only with the door open. The final element was the electrical wiring, added just prior to the exhibit opening, so from start to finish the project covered an eleven-month time span. It is the most practical application to which I have put glass design, as the cabinet does, indeed, fulfill our requirement as a linen repository.

Only one glass piece incorporates photography as an integral part, and this piece has changed form drastically from its original design. Nettie's World, a glass sculpture containing thirteen photographs from the MC project, initially was to be a stained glass panel with photo images etched in glass with hydrofluoric acid. The central figure of Nettie was to have been mounted on pins and allowed to revolve when touched. The original title was to have been "Push the Indian Around-Everyone Else Does". The concept presented itself at the time I photographed Nettie Bradford in front of the pile of rubble she called home. I had earlier that day been photographing the affluent area of town, and was struck with the sharp contrast in the two lifestyles. Nettie is a Choctaw Indian, married to a black man in MC, and yet, the grace, serenity, and beauty in her face, and especially in her eyes, gave no sign that she took note of her situation. The original panel was to have had Nettie in the center of a colorful tipi, surrounded on all sides by white people and white people's homes, no hope for escape.

When the time came for the design to be expanded to actual size, it grew to gargantuan proportions, three feet square. This presented problems of function, a final resting place, a museum wall in which to house it. It was too damned big! So, the entire panel concept was scratched, and a brand new sculpture was substituted.

During all of this planning, sketching, and revision, experiments were being made in the area of etching photos on clear glass. At about the time it was decided to scrap the large panel, it was also found that too much detail was lost in photos on glass if acid was used. That was scrapped, too.

Two new solutions to the entire problem had to be solved, if Nettie was to be presented as I saw her - another displaced Indian, robbed of land, life, and even the most basic comforts, but not of her dignity. After two more weeks of design work and thought, Nettie's World was ready to cut. After the inordinate amount of time spent in the design process, the piece went together rather quickly.

The first solution was to use the same photo images and tipi element; the idea of the Indian Nations being overrun and eventually destroyed - but in a cube, which houses another cube, which in turn holds a tipi. Looking down on all of it is Nettie, still serene, still gentle. The cube design was relatively easy, given my earlier success with the Marble Maze. A stickier problem was the non-etched photos. How could they be incorporated?

The solution was the film itself. Using Ortho film, positive

images of eight MC dwellings were made, four positive images of Nettie's house, and a larger positive of Nettie herself. These positives were then sandwiched between clear and amber glass, sealed with copper foil, and soldered into place.

Initially the lid to the box was to have been permanently soldered to the box, but after some discussion and thought the lid remains loose, held in by pins, removable for easier viewing. Hanging loops have also been added for display purposes.

This interest in glass design, the combination of MC photos and glass, and inclusion of the piece in the culminating project, all stem from exposure at an early age in MC to stained glass in the church I attended. To me it fits a niche in my "Secret Garden".

"There Is No Why", the hand-tinted, acrylic-painted, and otherwise-altered series of eleven photographs, is from another niche, the world of auctions. I attended my first farm auction at the age of thirteen, and have been hooked since. They are fascinating places to watch people, talk, and photograph. The photographs made in this series were done September 6, 1981, at an auction in Wentzville, Missouri. Although geographically removed from MC, the flavor is the same.

After making the photographs, I was unsure of how to present them. They weren't actually a part of the MC project, and none of the people portrayed were MC natives. I printed the photos in black and white, was pleased with them, but put them aside as my efforts became more concentrated on the MC project. Then, in February,

1982, I began working with Kim Mosley, another photo instructor. I was to have spent the term working in color photography, but LC had no facilities for color, nor did I. I had seen the hand-tinting done by a St. Louis photographer, Susan Hacker. I discussed this with Kim and with Hans, and decided to try it myself. While casting through my darkroom for suitable prints to experiment on, I found the auction photos. The eleven photos in the series are the first tints I've ever done, and I see flaws and mistakes in them, but overall I was pleased with this initial step.

To cover some of my flaws, I decided to take Kim's advice and do some painting with acrylics of them. The images were good, but something needed to be added. Alternatives needed to be explored. More playing was there to do, I just needed to do it.

During the time I was tinting the series, a friend loaned me Kurt Vonnegut's novel Slaughterhouse Five. I had read it years before, but became reacquainted with the Vonnegut manner of presenting the world. One passage stuck in my mind, as did the description of Tralfamadorians given in the text. Using the text, I transferred segments of that one passage to tag board using red type-written print, affixed one to each of the photos with 567 adhesive film, and painted my version of a Tralfamadorian on each. People wanted to know why I tinted the prints, why I didn't do each realistically, why the cards were glued where they were, why the Tralfamadorians weren't the same size. The answer/non-answer is in the last photo: "There is no why".

After tinting, painting, and other alterations were completed, Kim suggested that a plain overmat was not sufficient for the subject matter, and perhaps altering of those, too, might enhance the overall flavor of the series. Such ideas as stapling leaves to the mat, gluing on cotton balls, or glitter, or wrapping each in aluminum foil were introduced. After more experimentation, I found crumpled aluminum foil to give the most interesting effect. This series is by far the most experimental work done by me in photography, and was unsettling when first begun. By the time of completion, it emerged as one I find a great deal of pleasure in. I'm certain few people will enjoy the altered fashion, but having undertaken the process, I now find it stimulating and challenging. It is a field for many such explorations.

The one project that remains to be discussed is the largest portion of the exhibit, and gives the exhibit the title "Secret Gardens". There is a certain amount of introduction and background necessary for the works shown, but after these introductions it will be ascertainable to all but the most dense what the title implies, and to which the photos give credence.

The title, "Secret Gardens", is also a song title by Judy Collins, a singer better known in the 60's and 70's than today. I submit the lyrics in their entirety, because they are what the photos represent, the emotion and feeling to be found in them, the 'heart' of the entire project. The song is the point of origin for the entire project.

SECRET GARDENS

JUDY COLLINS

My Grandmother's house is still there, but it isn't the same
A plain wooden cottage, a patch of brown lawn, and a fence
That hangs bending and sighing in the Seattle rain.

I drive by the strangers and wish they could see what I see
A tangle of summer birds flying in sunlight,
A forest of lilies, an orchard of apricot trees

Secret Gardens are the heart where flowers bloom forever

I see you shining through the night in the ice and snow of winter.

Great Grandfather's farm is still there, but it isn't the same
The barn is torn down and the fences are gone,
The Idaho wind blows the topsoil away every spring

I still see the ghosts of the people I knew long ago
Inside the old kitchen they bend and they sigh,
My life passed them up and the world in its way passed them by

Secret Gardens are the heart where the old stay young forever

I see you shining through the night in the ice and snow of winter.

But most of all it is me who has changed and yet still I'm the same
That's me at the weddings, that's me at the graves
Dressed like the people who once looked so grown up and brave

I looked in the mirror through the eyes of the child who was me
I see willows bending, the season is Spring,
And the silver-blue sailing birds fly with the sun on their wings

Secret Gardens are the heart where the seasons change forever

I see you shining through the night in the ice and snow of winter.

I include also a brief article I wrote for the Image Center for photography, St. Louis, in conjunction with a mini-portfolio they devoted to my project:

"Secret Gardens" is the title of a song performed by Judy Collins. I have listened to the song during myriad "rot" sessions (evenings of beautiful music and fine scotch) with a composer friend of mine, and each time I hear it, visions of boyhood and growing up in a small town come to mind. The first line is 'My Grandmother's house is still there, but it isn't the same...'

My instructor, Hans Levi, suggested that I needed to develop an individual style. My composer friend, Michael Ludwig, suggested I photograph what was an important element of my background, namely my home town, Montgomery City, Missouri. And so came to pass the photographic project, titled "Secret Gardens", a photodocumentary of Montgomery and its inhabitants.

Unfortunately, "small town boyhood" will eventually go the route of the dinosaur and the nickel Coke (yep, I used to buy them for a nickel). Near my present home in St. Charles County, Missouri, I have watched the sleepy village of St. Peters grow from a populace of 486 in 1972 to an asphalt maze of 15,700, replete with fast food, fast cars, sprawling subdivisions, and "PacMan" games in every gas station and bowling alley. This progress (?) has not yet engulfed Montgomery City, but ten or twenty years down the road, it's going to happen. My "Secret Gardens" will give way to Condo's and Commerce. I felt I had to capture this way of life before it was gone.

That article, and the lyrics of the song, are the rationale for the entire project. They were the primary thoughts in my mind as I photographed in Montgomery, and hopefully the prints reflect the sentiment in a proper fashion.

My relationship to the town has wained in recent years; not for a lack of interest, but for lack of opportunity. The project gave me an opportunity to renew old acquaintances, re-evaluate my thoughts on the effect MC and its inhabitants have had on me, and to spend time learning who I am, why I am.

I fought many years to deny my heritage, to downplay my roots.

I no longer have the urge to deny anything. Now I take pride in knowing that I gained enormously from the small-town, common-sense, giving, loving community. Now I long for more communities to adopt this basic way of life. It won't happen, but the world would be so much better for it.

The prints were mentioned as reflecting the sentiment behind the project. I tried to print them so they would be sympathetic to my viewpoint. All of the photographs were printed from February 1982 through late April 1982, and were the most uncomfortable part of the process. Most of them had earlier been printed on Agfa Lustre double weight paper, a material I found to be warm and forgiving. It was a pleasure to use, and all were developed in Kodak Dektol Developer, requiring minimum developing times.

When I began working with Kim he didn't care for the Agfa. He felt it was too forgiving, that the images would be better represented using different materials. He suggested Ilford Ilfobrom paper and LP4 Developer. I tried these materials, and found them to be much more time-consuming, more difficult to control, and overall a pain in the rear. But, he was right. The images were much improved because of the change. Several times I was ready to chuck it all and take up bomb disposal as being a less nerve-wracking way of life. I continue to use the materials he suggested. It's a price I'm willing to pay for good prints. After all, that's why I'm here. To learn every facet of the craft.

Other facets of the craft were encountered in finalizing this exhibit, and should be mentioned. Before this exhibit, for example,

I had no notion of what archival processing involved. All of the prints, however, were archivally processed and mounted after Kim explained the processes to me. I had never cut a mat in my life. By exhibit's end, I had cut ninety of them. I had never spent \$99.10 on clear glass for covering photos. I had never spotted 40 photographs in one afternoon before. I had never spent 20 hours cleaning glass, hanging photos, breaking glass, putting up labels. And I had never worked so hard to get any project to such a high level of accomplishment. This is the closest I have ever come to doing an "excellent" job at anything - even to the point of re-typing all of the identification tags on French hand-made paper.

An addendum to this paper is my daily journal, made during my month-long sojourn to Montgomery City. In my journal entry of October 11, 1982, I wrote, "The merits of this project will ultimately be determined by me alone. At this moment, I feel very good about it. I only hope the feeling grows. If not, I have failed miserably". Well, the feeling has continued to grow. As my photographs are exposed to more viewers, and I receive their reactions, I feel as if this project has been totally worthwhile, and will receive as much of my time in the future as necessary to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. There remains much to be done, many more photos to be made, much more of Montgomery City to explore, capture, cherish. Rather than a culminating project, this is only the beginning.

9/14/82 The first day. It's 9 pm and I'm waiting for my D-76 to cool.

Got up at 6:30, had sweet rolls and coffee with Teresa. She left for work and I was on my own. Some nervousness this morning - I want this project to go well - my entire Master's program hinges on it. Delayed my departure as long as I could, drinking coffee, playing with the dogs. Rolled away about 8 after packing tons of gear in the Velve.

Decided to delay further by stopping for more coffee at an old haunt, Nickerson Farms. Chatted idly with Ilse Hochhalter about her sons, Rainer and Michael and other mutual friends.

Arrived in Montgomery City about 9:30, went to Mom's to unload the car. Talked with Greg - he was preparing for work. He helped me unload the refinished walnut table from the car, and I drove him up town. We stopped in NECAC to see Mom and I finally put film in my camera, reluctantly, I might add. By this time, the reader probably has a vague idea about my procrastination in beginning this venture.

Fear not! The intrepid photographer, spying his first portrait of the day, leapt at the chance. The gentleman's name was R.R. Sturgeon, a spry 80-year-old, who was delighted with such photographic attention. My project was launched!

With such tremendous, fortuitous beginnings, how could this project fail? It can't. It won't. I drove out to the edge of town, took a few shots of the Hwy 19 entry way, and began working my way north, building by building. Several things came to mind as I worked: 1. There are a lot of metal "Butler" type buildings of recent vintage 2. Most of the businesses have gravel drives 3. I'm not completely certain a 28 mm wide-angle is my best choice of lenses 4. It was hotter than hell today 5. The people in this town are still friendly, even toward a long-haired, bearded man in sandals, cut-offs, Greek fishing cap, trout/camera vest, and a T-shirt emblazoned with "Have a Wild Time at Camp Derricotte".

I had a wonderful time deciding angles, backgrounds, compositions - subject matter was not a problem. I park the car, go down one side of the street 2 blocks or so, shooting each and every structure, then cross over and work my way back to the car. Man, it was hot!

After 1½ hours of shooting, took my second portrait - Dan Rush, a young man employed by Fairway Lumber. At this rate, I will only have collected 60 portraits in a month. Better be more aggressive. No, my primary thrust today is structures, and any portraiture that occurs is gravy.

Either these homes and buildings are all being refurbished, or I was extremely inattentive as a child, because the majority of them look a hell of a lot better now than when I was a kid.

9/14 Cont. Met several great people today in my meanderings, particularly the Logans. She's a bit mental, and he had just had a stroke - kept saying he couldn't stand up. Finally, I did get their portraits, and left. Their dog must use the entire house as a urinal. But they both seemed happy to have a visitor.

Got waylaid again, by Mable Leu and her brother-in-law, Bud Bennett, and I was glad, 'cause they gave me iced tea. I'm forever in their debt. They promised to be photographed, when they were 'better fixed'. He said he came here in '28, when all the roads were gravel and mud, and people parked in the middle of the road.

Meandering again, and completed all of Hwy 19, with the exception of $\frac{1}{2}$ dozen buildings on the north edge of town, which will be my beginning point tomorrow.

I shot 149 images today - 15 persons, and 134 places/things. I have had invitations to dinner, beer, iced tea, and bull sessions, and partook of several of the latter. If the trend continues, I'll be here 'til 1990. But I am determined to complete what has begun.

During the writing of this entry, I have been waiting for my chemicals to cool. They eventually did, and I developed my first three project rolls. Either I underexposed (again), or more probably overdeveloped. They seem workable, but I would feel better if they looked more "right" to me.

Every shot today was metered from a gray card, and special care was taken with contrasts contained in each scene, so I feel the problem must lie in my development - for one thing, I forgot my trusty timer, and had to rely on Timex for tank time, a method I'm not overly fond of. Next time, I'll compensate, and see if the problem is corrected.

It is now 12:50 pm and I have been laboring steadily for 12 hours. It feels good to be doing this, and trust that I'm doing the subject matter justice. I planned so carefully and worked so hard on organization, I don't want to let anyone down, especially myself. I have inordinately high hopes for this series, and will settle for nothing less than perfection. But whatever the outcome, no one will be able to say later that I didn't work my ass off!

Wait a minute! Is it possible I overexposed? I've never done that before - a new experience. Check it out tomorrow.

9/15 Payday, and I'm not even there to find out how much of a raise I got. Maybe I'll find out tomorrow. It is now midnite, and I have heat rash of the crotch. Am very glad no more shooting is to be done today.

9/15 The day began quite pleasantly by raining like crazy. So, Cont. drank coffee, did some planning and took a much sought after shower. By the time my ablutions were complete, the rains had ceased and I began Day 2.

First stop was the radio station, KVCM FM, to speak with Roger Ames. Informed him of my schedule and requested that no announcements be made until I contact him. So the next move is mine - aren't they all?

Completed shooting Hwy 19 and did a few short side streets. Then went to Bishop Acres, a relatively new subdivision of faceless, tasteless homes - no more character than hamburger. Completed that, and began work on Walker Street, the 2nd longest in town. Continued with it 'til 4:30, with a few stops at home for ice tea.

Went home, did some planning, for this evening and tomorrow, cut the neg's I did last night and ate dinner. By that time it was 6:45 and time to go again.

Drove around, counting houses on streets of subdivisions. Of the streets I've counted there are 569 buildings to be shot, and I've shot 318 more/less. No shooting will capture the fresh air, tree trimmed streets, or beer caps flattened in the tar. The sound of the noon whistle, dogs barking, and the hum of 3 grain elevators will forever escape any viewer of these photographs. As I walked these past 2 days, I felt right at home. It has been no problem at all, and hands continue to wave.

Walker Street has to be one of my favorites in the town, and my other favorite street is Wentz. These two were my main bicycle thoroughfares as a child, with quaint homes and well-kept lawns. Most of them are still there; some of the residents have changed, but most are still as I remember them.

Tonight, I went to a rehearsal of the World Famous Montgomery Town Band - a group of locals that gather each Tuesday to play Sousa and other assorted toe-tappers. They are a part of the old guard - friends from my childhood, and it was as if I had been here forever. I played clarinet, drank beer, discussed my project and had a rip-roarin' good time.

After 2½ hours of clarinet and flash gun, the group adjourned to Giuseppe's, a local tavern, where my brother holds court every evening. So I loaded my gear and headed over there, too. Took more shots inside, chatted with Greg and the patrons and headed home. Didn't develop tonight for which I'm sorry - I'm six rolls in the hole now. Maybe tomorrow, after the Methodist Church choir rehearsal.

9/15 Cont. I'll never catch all of this town - for one thing, most of the homes are equally worthy of being shot from the back yard, too. I was an alley kid, and remember many of these homes by the treasures in their trash cans and garages.

9/16 A beautiful fall day. The hottest it got was 63 degrees. Fresh crisp air and a continuing flow of smiling faces and waving hands.

This morning, after coffee and my shower, I finished shooting Walker Street, then headed to Wentz, one of my favorites. All of the trees of my youth still provide gentle friendly shade and cast beautiful patterns on manicured lawns. It took a good part of the day. Toward the north end of Wentz my digital light meter quit. At first I thought it was the batteries, but I replaced them and still no luck. So the rest of the day I used the BTL meter in my FTb. I hesitate to trust it, but I have no choice. I am going to process some film tonight, and cross my fingers and toes until the rolls are out of the soup. They are out!

The neg's look great! Apparently my trusty FTb hasn't let me down, and my guess about underdevelopment seems to help also. These look so much better than the ones I did Monday. If only this holds true throughout my stay, and I can remain consistent in my shooting.

As hard as I have worked to notate each shot, properly meter each one and watch for subtle lighting changes, I don't think I'll lose my consistency. Hoeray! The neg's look good!

Back to my story. I shot all of Allen Street with the BTL meter, hoping I still remembered how, and that the coupling was working properly. Started getting cooler and breezier, and several 'john' breaks were necessary, due to copious quantities of coffee consumed earlier. After shooting Allen, went home to add red lines to my map and plan my next attack.

Ate an early dinner, then hit the streets again. Drove thru the fair grounds and did some criss-crossing of minor streets. Most of the latter contain only garages and alley entries, but still interesting to me. As I noted yesterday, I'm an alley fan, or perhaps an attic fan.

The cloud cover began rolling in at 7, destroying what little light I had, so I headed home to draw more red lines. 7:15 found me in the car again, taking mom to church choir practice, where I fired off 10 more. Talked with the minister about setting up shop on Sunday morning to do some family portraits - told me to speak with Richard Lwulf. I will.

9/16 Cont. Came home at 8:45 to develop. D-76 had been in fridge all day and was too cold, so I had to wait awhile. Good chance to look at the light meter. I still can't figure out the problem - time for it to go to the shop, I think.

Talked with Teresa. She will bring out my timer, briefcase, and more film Friday night. It was good to hear her - I have missed having her with me as I shoot. I'm certain she could have helped with the note-taking, too.

It's midnite, and time to call it quits. Maybe I'll add more in the morning. Right now, it's time for iced tea, a pipe, and bed.

9/17 Decided not to take the time for a full shower today, but just clean up and hit the streets sooner. Began on Walsh, and worked the off-shoots on both sides. When I was growing up, most of Walsh was a country road, and we thought it a long distance to go for a bicycle trip. The entire area now known as Werges Meadows was a wheat field where we would fly our kites every April...

Included in those "off-shoots" mentioned were Garden Place and Penrose. After them came Spinsby, backing to my mother's home. Things have changed there, too. Every morning 'til I was 9 or 10 I would awaken to the sound of the sawmill on Spinsby, located directly behind mom's garden, where Coach Ballew's house now sits. Spinsby has been extended thru my beloved kite field, and led me in to photographing Werges Meadows, the Ladue of Montgomery City, minus trees.

After completing that subdivision, I returned home to draw more red lines, make a phone call to St. Louis, cancelling a weekend dinner engagement, and headed to NECAC to see if my proposal had been approved. It had, so I went to the radio station and gave them the go-ahead for my advertising. The young lady, Ms. Saak, filled out the bill, totalling \$475.00. After recovering from my coronary, I requested 1/10th that amount of service and handed her a check for \$47.50. My word, who said advertising was cheap?

Once removed from my iron lung and oxygen tent, I went on my merry way, working the length of Columbus. I also did Miller Street, which contained only one house in my younger days, the Bothe home. I always thought it to be palacial as a youth - how one's perceptions change with age.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent in other familiar haunts - my old neighborhood. Bean fields, corn fields, craw-dad holes, and wet-weather creeks have given away to progress on such modern achievements as paved roads, telephone lines, and \$30,000 slab homes.

Then back to the older beautiful homes on Lawrence, Pickering, and Salisbury. At one time or another I moved most of these

9/17 Cont. 3HP, and my first car, a 1948 Pontiac Silver Streak, Straight 8. I loved that car. It cut grass better than the mower too, but most property owners took a dim view of my methods.

Home again, home again, jiggety-jig. Drew more red lines. Zeroed in on another area, and shot the remainder of First Street. Then headed home again. Met Brad on the road, and followed him home. The Brothers Dimm - Greg, Brad, and Mark - had a riotous time counting houses on streets as yet unsullied by the screaming cacophony of my shutter release. Located an additional 496 unscathed structures, and I'm certain of at least 200 more to be counted. So I am about $\frac{1}{2}$ way there with the building part.

After dinner, I developed 3 rolls of film while listening to the melodious strains of my nephew Chad's favorite song, Medley of World War II Bombing Runs in Germany. Quite a toe-tapper, and soothing on jangled nerves. Although I found it hard to part from the concert, I went to the ambulance district building and photographed the employees. From there, back home to 3 more rolls of film and a reprise of Chad's medley. They left at 11:45, just as I was hanging my last 3 rolls of the night and I took the opportunity of this quiet time to babble as I have. It is now 12:10 - do you know where your red lines are?

By the way, using a gray card with my BTL meter proved quite satisfactory - using a graveyard on a BLT, however, does not-goodnight!

9/18 It is 2:30 in the afternoon, and I have not taken a photograph yet. It is the first day of studio work, and no one has come in yet.

I spent the first $\frac{1}{2}$ hour here setting up lights and nervously awaiting my first portrait of the day. When no one arrived I got out my city map and continued mapping my route. There are 509 more buildings that I know exist, plus these in the business district (approximately 35 buildings) and the Hill - the black section of town (about 50/75 buildings). So I am 50% done with the building shoot. And I've only shot 4 days.

The portrait work may not be too successful. If it isn't, then I'll hit the streets again. I feel more comfortable on the streets anyway. Everyone likes the idea of my project, but no one is willing to show up. I'll get 'em.

I sat here 'til noon, bemoaning my fate and planning ways to change it in my favor. Had a glass of iced tea, and hit the streets, taping up posters about the studio. I still know all the people in town, and got tied up several times in con-

9/18 Cont. conversations. Did that for an hour, covering most of the shops on Sturgeon. I think I'll have more activity next week, when the radio advertising begins, and when more of my posters are up. Almost everyone I've spoken with has been appreciative of the idea but won't be in until 'some other time', primarily because they weren't in their dress clothes. That's ok if they do show up.

I stayed at the studio til 4:30 and had no customers. It was a good time for me, however. I spent time planning and mapping my next steps and watched the good part of life flow. Due to my agreement with Mr. Smith of NECAC I couldn't photograph any of them, but I experienced them none the less. 1. A young couple, in dire need of \$20 to buy water for their cistern - they have 3 children, he receives \$200 monthly for service disability and \$250 in food stamps. They settled for \$10 for $\frac{1}{2}$ a load. Both very polite, with weary faces. Grateful for anything. He's a reformed alcoholic. Need wood for their stove, too, but don't have \$2 to buy a pickup load of scraps from the sawmill. \$2 between being warm and being cold. 2. A woman borrowed 50 cents to buy gas for her husband to wash engine parts in - ~~unless the engine is fixed~~. his client won't pay him, and they'll have no food this weekend. 3. People coming in and paying a dime a piece for articles of clothing to brighten their life or make the autumn days warmer. 4. Blank faces peering in the door, no stated purpose, just passing time. 5. Old people, worked out, played out, talking about their dead spouse, children, grandchildren, all in one sentence, then shuffling off to the next listener. No one talks anymore. They scream silently for a smile, a little caring, a bit of someone's time.

And my mother. The one constant in their lives. "Is Mrs. Fisher here?" "No, not today." "Oh, well, she knows our problem. She's helped us a lot. She's a good lady. There is a reward for her waiting someday. I wish we could repay her."

I wish they could, too. I wish I could. She has done more for me, and 80% of the town's residents, all poor, than anyone else I know of. And all of it quietly. No fanfare, no hoopla. Quietly, \$5.00 here. Baking soda there. One man said she drove him around in her car for 3 days, talking with him, sobering him up, helping him get on the wagon.

I did nothing after leaving NECAC until dinner. Then I cut and catalogued 6 rolls of film, and waited for Teresa to arrive. By 8, she still wasn't here, so I went to the high school football game for more photos. Took 2 shots, realized I'd left my film in the car. It wasn't there, but at mom's house. When I got there, Teresa was waiting. Had car trouble. We headed back to the game, with film this time, and did some shooting, talking. Teresa was hungry. Grabbed some goodies

- 9/18 Cont. at the local Quick Shop, headed home, where we announced our engagement. Mom was very pleased, we were very tired and everybody hit the hay.
- 9/19 Up at 6:00 to photograph the Optimist Club meeting at Frank's Grill and Game Room. I hope the camera functioned automatically, because my brain was still a bit clouded from lack of sleep. 18 members present and again, I know most of them. Shot 'til 8:45 when it broke up and didn't write down one shot. Must remember to make notations in my log book. Most promised to come to the studio and I trust they will.

Back at home waited for Teresa to wake up. Drank coffee, relaxed, planned the day. When Teresa was up, clean, and fed we headed out for a day of shooting. I enjoy having her along. She does my note-taking for me so I can concentrate on what I'm doing. We shot from 11:30 'til 3:30 and would have got much more accomplished than we did, except we were given tours of two fine old Victorian homes, complete with mini-histories of them. Both were on Walker, one built in 1904, the other in 1905. Both were catalogue homes - homes purchased through mail-order houses, shipped by rail, milled in boxcars, and brought by horse and wagon to their present sites. Several lengthy conversations also filled the day. One man, Harry Hollenbeck, is the grandfather of three of my former students in O'Fallon. He gave us his history from birth in 1904 thru the present, then accompanied us down the street giving us capsule histories of his home and others. In 1937, it cost his family \$3750 to build and has hardwood floors "you can't drive a nail thru, they're so hard". He was a telegrapher for the railroad in town, having studied telegraphy at Chillicothe Business School in 1928. He retired in 1970.

Went to Fairgrounds to shoot the MSCA Teen Queen Contest at 4, but were told it wouldn't be 'til 6:30, so we checked the town map and went back to shooting. Took 149 shots by 5:30 today - 143 buildings, 6 people and/or things - at the MSCA Campvention, I took an additional 60 or so, and enjoyed playing clarinet for 2 hours with the World Famous Montgomery Town Band.

Got home about 11 pm and immediately went to bed.

- 9/20 I slept late today. Got up at 8:30. Drank coffee, read the paper, relaxed most of the morning. I didn't realize how physically tired I have become this week. It's been a string of 14-16 hours a day, consistently on the go. Teresa got up about 11, and by the time we had showered, eaten, chatted it was 12:30. Still no photos. Went to the auction at 1:30. but it was indoors - not too interesting, visually, but I took some shots anyhow and did some bidding. Took mom home - she wanted a nap - then went out to the Bethel Methodist Church on Shamrock Road. I had more fun shooting the church

9/20 Cont. than any shots I've taken today. It's a beautiful place, like the churches my father ministered to. My father didn't do a hell of a lot for me but I did gain a love of old churches thru him - the buildings, not the thought processes. There must be something tremendous about attending a church in the wildwood, but for me the fascination lies in the ambience of the place.

We spent an hour or so wandering about the place, Teresa playing the piano, me shooting. I used to go there on picnics, as a kid,

We headed back home, got mom and went out to dinner. I've lost 6 pounds this week, and didn't feel guilty at all about having a complete chicken dinner. As soon as we got home, Teresa had to pack and leave. It was a tad depressing to see her go, but I can't dwell on that. We both realize this project is at least one month long, and the more I work, the better my work is, the less time I will spend away from home.

I went to the dandy darkroom and developed 3 rolls of film. I believe I have found the problem in past developing - I have been overdeveloping. These neg's appear to be much less contrasty, much more printable, than most others I have done. I might experiment with the next 3 to see if even less time in the soup would be beneficial. None of these neg's quite match my Plymoth series, and that's really what I'm shooting for.

Somehow, I need to get these neg's to Hans for inspection.

Hans, I'm trying very hard to remember all the little suggestions you've tossed my way, and I feel most of them are valid and useful. I especially am pleased with the wide-angle. I never would have been able to encompass all the little items that make each of these homes, activities and streets unique. The "juices of Life" is your term Hans. Every photo I've taken has been very deliberately composed to include little touches - electric lines, TV antennas, garbage cans, tricycles, weed-covered sidewalks and especially the trees and shrubs. Each home here has landscaping totally different than the next. It can't be captured in the aggregate unless it was made street by street. But with the wide-angle I can pull enough of the surroundings to make each shot different, just as each structure is different. The distortion of the buildings is minimal and fits what I want to say about these homes anyway. So overall I'm pleased.

I can't develop any more film tonight, until I mix some more D-76. I did some coloring on my glass design for the linen cabinet. Using 4 shades of green, 1 blue, and some brown and yellow, the pattern is more distinctive, with a background

9/20 Cont. of white or clear. It will be necessary I'm certain, to illuminate it from within in wome fashion. Perhaps Teresa's father can help in that department, especially when he learns of our impending marriage.

After completing the color scheme, I hit the sack, hoping for a more active day at the studio tomorrow. Supposedly, the advertising will begin then,

9/21 My studio increased 100 fold today. I had 1 customer, a woman from St. Louis. That's ok, she looked as if she belonged in MC. The studio, I'm convinced, is a bad idea. There is more going on outside the door, and I am feeling more like a realtor than a photographer. The Kelly Real Estate office has more action than this, and I haven't seen any action there in a year.

The weather continues to cooperate and I'm anxious to hit the streets. But I feel some responsibility to those who have seen my posters and heard the radio advertising, so I'll continue my vigil, and see if anyone comes in by week's end. If not, I fold my tent, cancel my ads, remove my posters and go in search of the populace.

I'm not certain why people didn't come. Perhaps it's apathy or mistrust - no one gives things away - or just that most are very involved in survival. Times are hard for the majority of the town, and people can't or won't take time out from stering nuts for the winter. My next plan of attack is to approach those people I know best in the town and photograph them in their own homes. I liked this idea better from the beginning, but felt it would be impractical to hit every home. Since no one seems interested anyway, maybe I'll just contact the ones who interest me.

After such a propitious day, I didn't feel up to street shooting - sitting on my ass wears me out more than 14 hours outside. Went home, ate dinner and developed 3 rolls of film. While they washed, I cut 6 processed rolls and filed them, and mixed fresh D-76. After it cooled, I developed 3 more rolls, had an exciting hour with Quincy as he saved yet another errant boy from the gallows, and went to my chambers knowing full well an action-packed day would greet me upon arising in the morning.

9/22 It was so dead today that I closed up at 3:15 and headed home. Had a glass of tea and waited for mom to get home. She had said earlier she would go with me to photograph Nettie Bradford, a Choctaw Indian who has been a resident forever. Only a picture could capture her home, the humor, wisdom, and sadness of her eyes, and her serenity. We went, she was home, and I think they will be the best photographs I've taken in the town, possibly ever. I took forever, making certain the

9/22 Cont. lighting was right, and then bracketed about 6 times. She is being moved to Joplin by her son, and her home is to be bull-dozed. It probably is a good thing for her physical health and safety. That pile of rubble and bricks has been her home forever and she feels badly about as my mother would if she were asked to move away from her friends and neighbors and 70 years of memories. Nettie's children were there, with their children, all willing to be photographed and to talk. I felt quite good after being there, knowing I had captured a dying breed - determined people, never willing to give up, no matter how many times life kicks them in the teeth.

This made my day. All the dead time in the studio was forgotten after this 20 minute session.

We headed back for dinner. Then I went to the town band rehearsal. Played clarinet very badly for 2 hours, then went to Giuseppe's to talk with the locals and take a few shots. Stayed much too late, drank too much beer and stumbled home.

9/23 Studio started out well today. Had 2 people in within the first hour, and 2 more that stepped in to ask about it. They said they'd be back with their families, so I'll wait. And that's exactly what I did - until 2 o'clock, when John Fischer, the owner-editor-delivery boy-photographer of the local newspaper came in. He asked me to ride along on his delivery route thru-out the county. We rode for 2 hours, talking about my project, Montgomery City, his life, job and perspective on the world, and I enjoyed it thoroughly. Took more photos on the road than I did in the studio all day.

Upon returning to the studio, I waited 'til 5, then to the house for munchies, and back to the streets again. I just drove, not knowing exactly what I wanted to shoot. I finally landed at the RR Depot, about dusk, and experimented with the light. It's increasingly pleasant to just go out and play with the camera and chase light around in its various forms. I plugged in the flash and played some more, when Helen Burchfield and Louie Geek came sauntering by. Photographed them with flash, which I have come to hate. Flash is anathema to me and is wrecking more of my photos than any other problem. I know it's my own damn fault, and my inability is showing, but I haven't got the hang of it yet. I'll keep working with it but I get tight when I'm shooting what I feel is a critical photo - by that I mean people shots, in spots I'll never be allowed again. Thru my mother I'm being admitted to many homes where I never would have made it otherwise.

I drove by American Hotel and looked for the longest time at its interior - it's phenomenal. I will shoot 3 rolls of film there, to be certain nothing is missed. There are many things about small towns that must be caught and this is most definitely one of them.

9/23 Cont. I also shot Oquist's shop with flash, but I'll go back during daylight hours, to be certain it's there.

Stopped off for a beer, then went home and developed 6 rolls of film. I was very excited about my pictures of Nettie Bradford, until I developed the film. I was a bit displeased with them initially, but on closer inspection I think they'll work. I hope so, because I won't have another chance.

Not an extremely productive day. Every shot that used a flash was totally screwed up and will be impossible to print. What am I doing wrong?

9/24 More interesting today. Started with a family portrait, the kind I had hoped for.

Then Father Behan of the Catholic church came in and chatted for thirty minutes. I photographed him and he granted me permission to shoot the church services. He also said he was to have a notice in the church bulletin about me and the studio and was urging them to come in. That made me feel better--word is getting around.

Mom came in about 1 and we went to several people's homes that she knew, to photograph them. Marvelous old people 75 to 92 years of age, who are bright and alive as a dollar. I enjoyed the visits and the time out of the studio.

From 2:30 to 4:30, nothing else occurred at the studio, and I went to Dr. Nichols' office for an employee portrait. He had 3 workers and was most cordial. Then I went home for dinner.

About dusk, I decided to try some experimental flash work outside, since flash is my weakness. Took some of the RR Depot, Oquist's building and the business district on 2nd Street. I haven't developed all of them yet, but the depot looks good on roll 81-071. I did some flash work at mom's house, too, and with my old Plymouth. The rest of the evening was spent developing film.

That provided another lesson for me, also. I must be positive the reels are totally dry! I almost ruined a roll of film trying to force it in to a damp reel. In the process I became quite frustrated, waiting to see if it came out, which it did. Sigh of relief.

9/25 Started out slow again, so I took shots out the door with the telephoto, of people that won't come in anyhow. People from my past that would be best remembered on the street anyway. Then the former town librarian, Mrs. Chandler, and a friend of hers, Mrs. Hoehn, came in. I had run into them at the Tip-Top Cafe and convinced them to come in. Nice to see them again.

9/25 Cont. Mr. and Mrs. Waggoner came in then, from the Methodist Church. Mom had told them about me. Again, very nice. Only 3 more customers today, but all were most cooperative and I feel good about doing this. If I only have 5 a day for the next 2 weeks that will be great, because I'm sure I can catch the remainder on the street, at least the ones I want. The rest will have to wait for another day.

I had planned to shoot a horse auction this evening out at the sale barn, but apparently my informant was incorrect. The barn was bare and dark, so we took the evening off. I had hoped to get more done tonight. Damn, maybe tomorrow.

9/26 A much more enjoyable, profitable day today. Spent the entire day at Truxton at an auction. I know quite a few of these people also, because my father was minister of the Methodist Church there for 8-10 years. It technically isn't Montgomery City, or even Montgomery County, but it is a part of my past and the faces are too. Was there from 10-2, and by the time we left, I was exhausted. A gale wind was blowing, which wears me out every time. After getting all the junk loaded in the wagon we went to D&D Auction to look it over before tomorrow's sale. It was closed, so we started over to The American Hotel for interior shots, but got side-tracked by Penny Harness. She invited us in to see her home and we spent 2 relaxing hours shooting the breeze. I was still pooped from the auction this afternoon, so we didn't do anything the rest of the night.

It seems as if the entries of each day are getting shorter and shorter. It isn't that things aren't happening, but they weren't particularly noteworthy. Things like, all of the people in this building speaking a 200 decibals above normal, trying to remain busy when I have nothing to do, watching the world from the wrong side of the door. But, with all that, I still feel successful. I can't take much more of NECAC office-- it is amazing how much misery and suffering there is in this little community. Unemployed, disabled, low income - push come to shove, and these people are pushed the hardest.

9/27 This morning broke bright and beautiful, as have most of the mornings here. Only one has been marked by rain and it was soft and gentle, during the first week of my stay.

I showered, dressed, and loaded my gear to attend Mass at Immaculate Conception. I left $\frac{1}{2}$ hour early, thinking I could set up uninterrupted, but on arrival found a host of parishioners had come before. And quite a crowd! It surprised me that the church has so many active participants - at least for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours on Sunday morning.

9/27 Cont. Father Behan directed me to the choir loft where I set up my tripod between the elder and younger factions of the choir - I wonder if they are bi-partisan by choice or design.

Shot about a roll and a half during and after the service, using just the wide-angle. I possibly could have used the telephoto for some facials and portraiture but didn't think the angle (from the loft) would have been advantageous.

After communion, Fr. Behan invited me to shoot the altar view of the congregation, and while I was shooting, he explained my purpose to the parish, requesting they participate by visiting my studio. I trust they will, but I'm not counting on it. I've learned a lot in the last two weeks.

Arrived home just in time for lunch, after which all necessary equipment and paraphernalia was loaded in the cars. Teresa's parents were having a get-together this pm and I wanted to go, just to get out for a few hours without taking pix.

Before leaving, however, we went to D&D Auction - we had seen a treadle sewing machine last week and Teresa wanted to bid on it. We waited! They sold countless pieces of no interest to us. Then - the big moment! They were standing next to the machine! It was next. But no, they took a detour to auction an antique auto parked on the street. And upon returning started in an entirely different area than they had left earlier! Teresa was pissed! We had to be in O'Fallon by 4 and by this time it was 3:20. So I told her to go ahead and I would hang around to bid on it. She left and I waited (patiently? I doubt it!) through a wall cabinet of 50¢ plates, chipped depression glass and a cream pitcher formed with the visage of Elsie the Cow. My tenacity paid off! I bought the damned machine for \$42.50, far less than the \$100.00 Teresa said she was willing to pay.

I left feeling smug.

At the Welch's everything was pleasant, and it was good to see Dana and Ron again, but the overall effect was one of rolling down hill in an oil drum. Too many people talking at once - that damned 'stream of consciousness' rearing its ugly head. After all visitors had gone, we dropped our little egg. They were both delighted about our impending marriage, probably more because Teresa will finally be an 'honest' woman, than for any feelings they have toward me. I'm not the successful \$50,000 a year pilot she landed the first time, nor do I hunt, fish, or water ski, prime requisites for acceptance. But I am me, and don't profess to be otherwise. At least they have come to realize that. And I have come to realize that. Family, co-workers, parents, students and friends may not care for my

9/27 Cont. life style, my photographic style, subject matter, physical appearance, or philosophic inclinations, but I don't give a damn, I am me. How profound.

At the farm, we unloaded the cars with the help of Jim the Landlord. Then Joyce the Landlady came to pick up Jim the Landlord and Jim and Joyce the Landpersons stayed and talked a few minutes.

For more on this intriguing day, turn to page 492 of your Sears Catalogue.

9/28 Right off the bat, Ruth Logan, my 7th grade English teacher came into the studio, had her protrait made and vanished just as quickly. Three other clients were photographed today, which brings to 68 the number I have caught to date. That includes those I have found alone on the street. Not an earth-shattering amount, but a fair representation of the types of people to be found here. My historical record will have large gaps in it if I don't go back to the street. Several people have invited me to come to their homes for shots, and I will, before this project is complete. I feel that I must allow people time to take advantage of the existing studio, since so much has been invested in time and money publicizing my location. I fantasize about having 2000 lined up outside my door, waiting to be captured on film. Fat chance. At the end of this week the tent gets folded and I steal away in the night, back to the street. Anyone coming into the office can leave a message with one of the NECAC workers, and I will go to their home, but this inactivity is destroying my drive. The first week I was a whirling dervish - now my whirl has slowed to a mere whisper. Time to get my steam up again and run like hell.

I got some steam up this evening by processing 6 rolls. The underdevelopment seems to give me a more satisfactory neg, but for some reason, 6 neg's on one roll were badly scratched, severed, in fact. This was the roll I attempted loading on a wet spool last week and apparently there was more on it than mere water. They were of the high school football game, which can be re-shot. Thank goodness, no studio portraits were affected.

I had planned on doing 9 rolls tonight, but my planning was faulty, because I ran out of D-76. Will mix fresh and try for 9 tomorrow or Wednesday.

9/29 My, my! How time flies when you are bored out of your brain! To get any slower at the studio, the door would have to be locked. Spent the am working on journal updates, since I hadn't done anything in the book since Friday. That took me most of the morning and conversing with Earla occupied the rest of the time.

About 1:00 Homer Nelson, local house painter and fixer-upper

9/29 Cont. began repairing an awning next to the studio and I went out and popped off 3 of him. Just as I finished 2 couples came in wanting a group portrait. Delighted to have some action I ran 3 of them off, too. Sam and Nellie Mealy, one of the couples, had been in earlier & had promised to return. Glad they kept their word.

About 4:30, Mom came in, as she said she would. I packed up all my gear and we headed off for some street shooting. Her presence was probably not essential, but I felt more at ease in dodging dog teeth in the section of town we planned to shoot. The black section of town, though not forbidding to me by any means, still is an unknown and I tense up in unknown areas on occasion. They no longer deter me, but I plan warily on such occasions.

They weren't nearly as many homes as I remembered from my childhood forays, and quite a bit of change has taken place. New homes, better cared for, are mixed in with shanties and tumble downs. The shanties are more representative of the old Montgomery City, with its racial division. "The Hill", as the area is known, is still populated by the same families of my youth, and their children and grandchildren. Very few outlanders have moved in, much the same as in the white community.

Mom knows all of them by name, and they, her. She has befriended many of them in hard times, and still does, when she becomes aware of a bad situation. I shot 21 people on the street in the span of 1 hour, and 29 buildings. I feel great.

How often I speak too soon. At home, the phone was ringing. Teresa had a letter from NECAC to me, which she read. In essence, it said I couldn't use the office as a studio. Governmental assholes! My initial reaction was to drive to Bowling Green and punch Betty Martin in the mouth, but within 2 seconds of that thought, I realized what a blessing it was. I can devote all my time to 'street' shooting. I raced up town, took down my lights, backdrop, everything, stuffed it in my '53 Ford, and raced back home, to dinner. Did some planning for tomorrow, then went to the town band rehearsal. Of course I took beer! No admittance without a 6-pack.

Before my reed was wet, or my first beer gone, the fire whistle blew, I grabbed all my gear and became cub reporter for an hour, chasing fire trucks over country roads to a non-existent fire. Someone had smelled smoke, but it turned out to be fumes in an old air conditioning unit. Drat the luck. Oh, for the old Chicago Blaze Days!

9/29 Cont. Back at rehearsal, nothing had improved. Sam Bishop, who had played in the band with my grandfather 60 years ago, is totally deaf and uses two aides to boost his voltage. Doc Ball still shouts over everyone, and I still play a shitty clarinet. Barring all that, it's a great deal of fun.

Afterwards, we headed to Giuseppe's to hoist a few, and talk. Then I headed home, only to awaken at some ghostly hour to the thrill of stomach cramps. Flu season, here we come.

9/30 After 400 trips between my room and the bathroom last night and this morning, I decided to take it slow and easy. After that decision, I worked my ass off.

Went to the radio station, talked with them for awhile, then went to the Auction Barn at the edge of town. My stomach was a little queasy and I'm not sure any of the shots are worth a damn, 'cause I wasn't concentrating as I should. It was very hot, and I had to keep my eye out for the next 'john'.

But I kept wandering, and then went back into town, stopping by the Standard Station to ask Johnny See about a master cylinder for the Ferd, and then went to the quilting bee at the Methodist Church. Ten women, all I know by sight, not by name. I took individual shots, and some of the whole activity, as well as some hand portraits.

I know this entry is not extremely well written and is very disjunct, but I'm actually writing it 10/4/81, and my memory is a bit foggy.

Driving back from the Methodist Church, I happened across Rev. Forrest and Eddie Logan working on St. John's Baptist Church front steps. Rev. Forrest is retired from a career at the hardware store, when I knew him as Tobe. An awfully nice man. I photographed both of them and the interior of the church. Took a short detour to fortify myself with more iced tea (and a trip to the john) and went back to some street work.

The red lines on my map are growing in number and the blank spaces are harder to find. I worked on Rollins, State, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and Hwy 161 (2nd Street).

By this time, my stomach was better, and I headed back to cool off and grab a bite to eat.

After supper, I went to the American Hotel, on Allen. Incredible!

No words can describe this place. You won't believe it 'til you walk through the door. The only notes in my film log book reads, "Incredible! If this roll, taken at the American

9/30 Cont. Hotel doesn't come out, I'll take 50 more rolls! Fantastic! American Hotel, 116 years old. Daisy has been proprietess 42 years. Age 86 or 87." I was a bit excited when I wrote that, and it has not abated. I want to explore every inch of that place with my lenses and I would have, except I had to go to choir practice.

I promised my old church, I would sing at the service this Sunday, and my presence was required at rehearsal. When I arrived, I found that plans had changed, I didn't need to be there after all, and I left, only to be stopped for an hour-long conversation in the parking lot with Leo Hadfield, an old friend.

From there to Giuseppe's for the shuffleboard tourney. At this event, I met with my first opposition to my camera - a young lady who said she's 2/3 Indian and has a fear of cameras - so much for that.

10/1 No shooting today. Went to radio station to make an appointment for a radio interview tomorrow (10-2-81). Then took Mom to St. Louis to the airport. She's visiting my sister Fran in Florida for 12 days. Switched cars at my house, went to B&T's for a few minutes, then the airport. From there to Camera Country, then out to school to see Herb about camp program.

From school went to LC to show Hans my neg's, give him an update on my project. Glad I went. He said my neg's were improperly fixed and should be re-fixed or I would lose them. More work, but much less than if I had to re-shoot instead of re-fix. Also talked to him about helping out with a beginning photo class 2 nights weekly, beginning the week of October 12. Am apprehensive about this, but it will be good experience for me. Might also give me a chance to get some contact sheets done, too.

Also visited LCIE office to try registering, but everyone was busy, so I went to the Art Building to locate John Wehmer. Spoke with him for an hour, about glass, the poor, taxes, and photography, to name a few. I really like him. Also asked him about my evaluation from class last term. He hadn't done it, so I gave him a blank one, and he said he'd fill it out and turn it in.

From LC to Camera Country for \$60 more in materials - when is it going to stop? I really can't afford much more.

Stopped by Dorato's for a beer with all the teachers - it turned out to be 3 of them, and not my favorites, either. But they saw me before I could escape, had a quick beer and went home. As soon as I got in the door, Teresa said we were

10/1 Cont. due at her parents' house for dinner, so it was back to the car.

Spent the early evening at Welch's, then to Westhoff's to talk about camp. Made it home at 11.

For not shooting today, I certainly did a lot of running.

10/2 This morning I drove back to Montgomery City from home. Cleaned up mom's a bit - I had left quite a mess, and thought I better get it done before it gets totally out of hand.

Then went to KVCM and taped an interview for the news about the demise of my studio, the nature of my project and where it's going.

Went to Honey's and asked her if she'd take phone calls for me about portrait appointments. She said fine, and I went home to record my radio interview. Thought my ego might like to hear it later.

Then back to the streets, completed 2nd, 3rd, and a few candid portraits - About 4 I decided to pack it in. Drew more little red lines on my map, packed a great deal of my gear in the car - stuff I will need this weekend, and things I no longer require in my work here.

Went home, paid bills, and Teresa & I went shopping in St. Charles. Picked up material to re-upholster the dining room chairs. Had a pizza, went home to the sack.

10/3 Woke at 6:30 to a gorgeous sunrise. Cleaned up, had some coffee and headed to LC for the first colloquia. Miriam King-Watts had asked me to do some photos for her on the day's events, to be used later in a brochure.

It was my first time using the new bounce unit, and I shot more than normal, to make certain I got useful neg's. Shot from 8 to 10:30, then ran some errands while awaiting the next event - the first annual LC picnic.

Stopped by Camera Country, headed to the tobacco shop, and went by the house to pick up Teresa. We drove to St. Charles for the LC picnic and I did more shooting. Ran into Hans and his family, introduced them to Teresa. Photographed awhile, then went to Noel Steinman's to order our wedding rings. By the time we discussed various patterns, sizes, prices and sewed up other little details, it was 4 o'clock and I was bushed.

I was supposed to shoot the cocktail party at the LC president's house, but knew I wouldn't make it in time, so I didn't try. It's a bit hard for me to see how a cocktail party would

- 10/3 Cont. fit into a college brochure anyhow. Did a bit of grocery shopping and went home to watch the last quarter of the Mizsou game. First football I've had a chance to see this year, and it was a good game, relaxing.

Ate dinner, and spent from 6:30-10:30 refixing 24 rolls of film, of the 34 I have developed in the project. A time-consuming, boring pain-in-the-ass task, but essential. A valuable lesson learned here, and one I will never forget. Watch all chemicals, and don't try to save money by stretching too long. A very long day.

- 10/4 My days are filling up again. Up at 6:45, cleaned up, drank some coffee and headed to Jonesburg to shoot the CCD class at St. Patrick's Catholic Church. Shot 15 minutes, again using the new bounce unit. I hope to fuck that thing works!

From there to the Methodist Church in MC. Set up my studio lights in the conference room, then climbed into a choir robe for the service. Participated in the service, and sang a solo for the offertory. Not bad for a guy who doesn't like organized religions. After church, ran back to my 'studio', shot 13 families that were pleasant enough to hang around.

By that time it was noon and I headed home to change. Drank a glass of tea and went back to Jonesburg to shoot the homes on the Historical Society House Tour. Got done at 3.

Didn't have the energy for any street work, so I attended the D&D Sunday Auction, hoping to grab some locals. Pepped ½ dozen or so, enjoyed watching people for about an hour. Decided I was hungry, went by to see if Greg wanted to go to Nickerson's for dinner with me. He didn't, I did.

Rolled back home about 7:30, mixed all new chemicals, and spent the remainder of the evening attempting to update this journal from last Tuesday. Made some progress but still 2 days short. It's now Monday and I just got up to this point.

Is anybody reading this? Does anyone give a shit what I've been doing? Does anyone think it's worthwhile? or valid? I do.

- 10/5 Awoke very early. I had set my mind alarm for 7, but it went off at 6 instead. I didn't want to get up, but finally crawled out at 7, fixed coffee and took a bath.

After coffee, went to KVCM for their staff meeting. Roger had asked me to shoot them, and I spent an hour there, talking, joking, focussing. A pleasant group, and most supportive of me.

Back to the streets today and once again, it's hot! 91 degrees by 1 o'clock. Where did fall hide? Shot 'til noon then took

10/5 Cont. a tea break. Caught a couple of people on their porch and shot them. Back to the pavement about 1, and ran into a couple more, including Art Beabout, who is recovering from open heart surgery. I got to see his scar! Oh, boy!

Then went to a 1:30 appointment with Edith Gentry, an old friend. Talked to her much too long, hiding from the heat.

Continued shooting 'til 4 on the streets, when it started raining. Rained 'til after dark, so I relaxed awhile, went to Nickerson's for dinner, then came home to develop film. I'm waiting now for D-76 to cool, and hope to do 9 rolls tonight.

It is now 6 pm and I've done 6 rolls so far. Another valuable, but expensive lesson was learned tonight. I scratched 7 or 8 neg's while squeegeeing (strange word) them after the wetting agent. I applied too much pressure and pulled them thru the squeegee too quickly, consequently peeling off 7 strips of emulsion, all neatly spaced. By watching my step on the next 2 rolls, I ascertained that that was the problem.

I am finding that 90% of my problems in photography are due to my own haste and carelessness - underfixed neg's, scratched neg's, underexposures, unwatched backgrounds, too little care in watching the light. I think I've conquered all of these bug-a-boos, and will not let them crop up again. If they do, it can only be blamed on my own stupidity.

Something just occurred to me. I must contact Dean Eckert tomorrow to get into his art history class. It's the next step in my project and I mustn't neglect it. Although I don't know when I'll find the time.

In addition to finalizing this project, I still want to complete the Home Cookin' Series, the Cat Series, and several glass pieces I've designed, plus begin a color portfolio, teach a beginning class 2 nights weekly and do some furniture refinishing. This oughta be great, if I get 'em all done.

My neg's are washed. Time to hang 'em and put me to bed.

10/6 Fall returned this morning. It is 60 degrees, crisp, clear, and totally refreshing in comparison to yesterday's heat. I only had a few buildings to finish up - about 150, including the business district.

Began on the fringe of the 'Hill', and before I shot 10 pix, I ran across 2 old high school cronies, now in business as remodelers. Talked with them for an hour about everything.

10/6 Cont. under the sun - 'Nam, drugs, the poor, Reagan, politics in general. Nice to see there are people aware of the world situation.

They took me to Bishop's Barn, where the cooling tower of the Callaway County Nuclear Plant is clearly visible. Took some shots from the top of the barn, then went back to street work finishing up the Northwest section of town.

Many more people became available to me thru my wanderings than ever would have done so in the studio setting. All marvelous in their demeanor, and so much more natural in their work clothes, street garb, whatever you want to label it. James B. Hill, an old black man, was probably my best find of the day. Tired eyes, but friendly, and apparently a gentle soul. Another lonely oldster, looking for conversation.

I got the card game! A group of men have been playing 'pitch' and 'hearts' at the Shell Service Station since my childhood - the participants may have changed, but the activity goes on. And I got it - happened to be passing by, and saw them thru the window. Grabbed my flash and bounce unit and ran thru a dozen from every angle.

Later, I decided to do some twilight work in the business district. The light is more gentle with them, and fewer cars obstruct my views.

Tonight was town band night and I picked up 3 pictures of the old town band that Walt wants reproduced. Should be no problem, except time and money - and they'll foot the bill, so I'll get it done.

Afterward went to Giuseppe's - probably my last time with the band. I should have developed film, but didn't want to. I'll get it tomorrow.

10/7 Today was one of relative leisure. No photos today. Woke up to the dog - he wanted out. Let him out at 7:20. At 7:30, the Man in Blue Polyester arrived. I have never seen a better dressed dog catcher in my life, nor one with a .357 Magnum pistol on his hip. I suppose the rhinos and hippos are staging an uprising at the water fountain in the park. He had come to slap cuffs on my mother's errant cur, and the dog had lobbed a hand grenade at him and lammed it for home. I promised the canine incarcerator the dog would be severely punished and not allowed to watch Lassie. That pompous ass! He would make an excellent brownshirt, or perhaps a Klansman.

After slapping the dog around and drinking coffee, I headed

10/7 Cont. to the woods for a quiet time working on next week's camp program at Troy. Stayed 'til 3:30, then went to LC to take care of business.

Went to see Dean Eckert, but he was in a meeting, so I talked with John Wehmer instead. He contacted Eckert for me and made an appointment for me at 4:45-5:00 today. So I ran up to the LCIE office to get my receipt for enrollment. I need it to get my LC I.D., which in turn I need for access to the library. The library is somewhat limited in its collection of photo material, but there still are worthwhile books. I especially want to look again at Walker Evans' collection, and Auguste Sander's Men Without Masks. Evans, especially, seems to be a somewhat kindred spirit conceptually. I don't presume to have his artistry or mastery of the craft, but it is a goal to strive for.

Checked the darkroom to see if there were any familiar faces - none but Hans. Some light conversation about the new bounce unit, and my attendance next Tuesday-Wednesday, also my bringing in photos to the intermediate/advanced classes for critiquing. I need to do that - I'm confident in the content of my photos, but I'm still a bit tentative on the printing itself.

Still had time before my appointment, so I went to the library to get the materials I wanted. While there, Hans came in to ask me if I was available for some shooting. Unfortunately, I'm not. Still have several days work in MC, then to Troy. I won't even be back in town 'til 10/16, except for those two classes.

Back at the art Building I spoke for 45 minutes with Eckert discussing various aspects of my programs, and how he would best help me. I feel we worked out a solution, but it involves 14-15th Century art, not 19-20th Century, as I initially had planned. Must speak with Hans about this, get his opinion. Don't want to screw up.

Had a little time before my chiropractor's appointment, so I drove around. Occasionally, I enjoy doing that, and it was a beautiful time for it - colorful sunset, clear air, and minimal traffic, until I returned to St. Charles. There is never minimal traffic in St. Charles. I hate driving there - That's why I drove to St. Louis County.

Chiropractor at 6:30. He said I was $\frac{1}{2}$ out - popped me all around and I went home and read the rest of the evening. Got to get an early start tomorrow.

10/8 Well, I didn't get an early start. Woke up late, couldn't get going. Finally made it to MC about 11, started shooting business interiors. Shot a dozen or so, got bored for some

10/8 Cent. unknown reason, so went home to mom's and putzed around awhile, preparing the dining room for painting.

Had a 4 pm appointment to shoot a 4-generation picture for some people, then did a few more interiors. Got caught in an endless conversation with Ernie Long, a 91-year-old business man who has killed four men. He has reproduced some of Matisse's works in his shoe store, on the wall just below the ceiling. He said it was done so no one would notice how lousy his ceiling looks. He's right - I didn't see the cracks until he mentioned them.

To this point I have been waiting for the light to be right for shooting my own street, Sullivan. And today was the day, I hope, 'cause I shot it.

Ate dinner, relaxed awhile, then went to the R-2 School Board Meeting. Stayed 'til around 9, shooting various aspects of a governmental body, then ran home to do some developing. Boy, did I develop! Worked 'til 1 am, did 9 rolls and they look good to me. I hope upon making contact sheets of all of these, that they look as good as they appear to be now. I will feel a tremendous fool if all of this work is for naught. In 2500-3000 negatives, there has to be 50-100 acceptable neg's with visual interest. If not, I definitely will go back to teaching. By the way, I don't miss teaching at all. This has been too fascinating a project.

10/9 I'm running out of time on my initial plan and still don't have it all. Today, I stopped by KVCM to tell Roger I had scratched the neg's of him and his sketches, and that I really wanted to reshoot. He's been so supportive, I didn't want to screw those up. He suggested I come back this afternoon about 1:30.

Visited the elementary school this morning. I got my primary education here, from a group of talented, stern, disciplined teachers. Most of them are gone. Naturally - I'm 32 now. Only one remains - Mary Powell, my 6th grade teacher. Shot her and her class, and a great many others.

The school has changed some physically, with additional wings of rooms standing where we played softball and climbed trees, but the old section is exactly as I remember it. Brought back memories of band in the furnace room, my first (and last) basketball game in the gym, skits in the class room, and a variety of pleasant thoughts of my childhood. What a marvelous place to get an education - small town America. Ride your bike to school, enjoy cool mornings on the playground, explore the world of books, then a lazy winding trip home again astride your 2-wheeler, down tree-lined streets, to - no, not your own home. Always someone else's. To play ball, catch frogs, fool around, or go back

10/9 Cont. on the streets to race your bike and explore, the sound of playing cards against the wheel spokes providing a sound nothing at all like a motorcycle motor - but we thought they were 'neat'. Your motor always held out, until Mom wanted to play solitaire, and $\frac{1}{2}$ the deck was missing, eaten by a child's imagination and his bike spokes.

At 1:30, back at KVCM, to get Roger and his sketches. Done.

There are many buildings in the town whose interiors have changed so drastically they provide no real visual interest to me, so I have elected to shoot them only if I have time and money at a later date, but I did spend the remainder of this afternoon, shooting some that do still hold some old memories for me - the barber shop, butcher shop, welder's and a jewelry store, to name a few. All these businesses are located on 2nd street and have changed only on the surface since my youth, some not at all.

I was under the misconception there was to be a high school football game this evening, but on my arrival found it to be a powder puff game between Junior and Senior class girls, with 2 groups of drag cheerleaders. Visually more interesting than a regular game, and more exciting. Girls can be brutal, too!

Teresa arrived about 8 and we went for pizza and beer, chatted with Greg, then headed home. It's been a long day.

10/10 Arose early to shoot the Koffee Klatch at the Tip-Top. A changing group of retired businessmen, farmers, and laborers meet there each day at various times. I'm told the times are 7:30, 8:30, 10:00 and 2 pm and each group is different. If I were to spend 1 month in the Tip-Top, I could probably capture $\frac{1}{2}$ the town with no effort. I spent 2 hours there, drinking coffee, listening, watching the group change and grow, then recede again, only to be replenished by a new influx.

These people are the adults I learned from as a child. Happily not everything took - like their racism, conservatism, and general narrow-mindedness. But their friendliness, discipline, and overall sense of rightness, has stayed with me. That seems to be a dichotomy somehow, but it isn't. Don't ask me why. I'll have more to say about these men after I've seen the photographs.

Had an appointment to shoot Luella Britt, my old Sunday School teacher - yes, folks, I used to participate in organized religion - and talked with her for 30 minutes.

Back to the house to retrieve Teresa, then to the American

10/10 Cont. Hotel. She couldn't believe it, either. I'm tellin' ya, Hans, ya gotta go! Shot another roll and a $\frac{1}{2}$, this time in the lobby alone, and then to D&D Auction. It's raining and cold and seems reasonable to find comfortable surroundings to work in.

They had a set of Time/Life Photo Books to be auctioned off, and we waited an hour to see if they were close to selling. They weren't, so we drove thru the mist-shrouded hills to Hermann and its famous Stone Hill Winery. The Grand Poo-Bah Compah Polka Band was performing - the same group that comprises the nucleus of the World Famous Montgomery Town Band. I worked on them for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, playing with faces, costumes, and instruments, then we went for a drive in Hermann. What a town for a photo series. I had forgotten how charming it is. I used to wander around here quite a bit, running errands for my father, cruising with friends, exploring on my own or enjoying the delights of the Maifest. And for scenery in the fall in Missouri, it remains unrivaled. When gas was considerably cheaper, I would wander these back roads all day, taking in the sight of the world of changing colors and well-kept German communities.

Back at the auction, watched, waited, chewed the fat with old friends. Still the books hadn't sold. Teresa was getting a headache from lack of food, so we went to the renowned Tip-Top, had a great home-cooked meal, more fat chewing with townspeople, and back to the auction. I want those books! After countless collections of old sheets, Avon bottles, ugly lamps, non-functioning clocks, and chipped stemware, they finally started the books. I had hoped to get them for \$10 but a book dealer was there and ran me up to \$27.50. Still worth it, but I didn't want to spend that much. Oh, well, they're mine now.

Two braided rugs were there, and caught Teresa's eye. So we waited for them. They were the last items of the evening. Natch! But after waiting that long, we didn't want to go home empty-handed. At \$25 each, they were bargains.

The auction lasted 8 hours and \$77.00, and delayed us in beginning our paint and clean project at Mom's.

We had decided to vacuum Mom's 'cause it needed it, clean the kitchen and begin painting the wainscoting in the dining room. At 2 am the kitchen was sparkling, including a freshly mopped floor and the dining room and family room had been vacuumed and straightened, even under the furniture. About 60% of the wainscoting and woodwork had been given a first coat of paint in the dining room and looks vastly improved, but a 2nd coat will be required. Even so, it looks so much cleaner and brighter. We were both exhausted by 2 am, and hit the sack.

10/11 Time to pack and move on. Got all my clothing, equipment, and supplies together. Teresa vacuumed the front room and we both took showers and dressed. After loading both cars to the hilt, we left for lunch at Nickerson's on our way to photographing the 25th anniversary party of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Winter in Jonesburg.

I have known the Winters most of my life and found it agreeable to shoot this last event on my departure from the county. Shot for 1½ hours to get all the weathered faces and the traditions of such a gathering - the money tree, the punch and cake table, the reception line. Not so different from a wedding, except the age and subdued nature of the participants.

My allotted time is gone. I have mixed feelings about stopping now. I know there are myriad images still in MC, and that a life-time could be spent there, probing into all facets - seasonal changes, weather conditions, births, deaths, weddings, graduations - all the everyday occurrences of a small town. If I were as dedicated as Evans, Sander, or Dysfarmer, I would devote my life to that pursuit, but there are too many occurrences in my life to discard and too futile a feeling of attempting to capture an entire town.

In Evans photographs, for example, they tell you volumes about the event, the time, the humanity and the physical, but still leave open to question what happened immediately after. Those people - if they survived, where, what they're doing now, if anyone cares or cared then, except Evans. Did he?

Have I approached the entire problem correctly? Would it have been more interesting, more worthwhile, to follow the day-to-day occurrences of one or two select families, live in their homes, explore their dreams, follow their successes, and failures, their happy and sad times? Perhaps, but the way I chose is how it must be presented, and in a fair, unbiased eye. With the images I have, it would be possible to convey several impressions of the town - affluent, poor, old, young, well-dressed, raggedy, educated, ignorant, growing, dying, a good town to inhabit, a nice place to move from.

My selection of ensuing exhibits, shows, portfolios, or books must encompass Montgomery City in Toto (and Dorothy too) every part or I have failed. I don't think I have. I think the work I have done in the past 30 days is by far my best, with much more thought put into each frame than anyone would believe. Some of them look so haphazard, so 'grab shot', that viewers will believe I was 'snapping'. I wasn't. Every shot was planned. My planning may be faulty, my imagery unacceptable. If true, so be it. To me they do exactly what I wanted. Suck

10/11 Cont. in as much of the periphery as possible, with the central areas still the most telling. The periphery becoming adjectives and adverbs.

A book was mentioned previously. Why? Because a large number of people have suggested it. I don't presume to be capable of forming all this material into book form, because I'm still not sure of the strength of the photos. They still are in unprinted negative form. Certainly raw material is there, the germ of an idea is hidden somewhere in all of this, but I personally don't have any high aspirations of publishing, either now or in the future. If I find that the images are capable of that kind of exposure and if enough people continue suggesting it after viewing my final prints, perhaps I'll consider it, but I ain't holding my breath.

What have I learned these past thirty days? Technically, quite a bit. I shoot better by myself, when I have the time to explore, with no family, friends, or other persons present. I start feeling rushed, responsible for their comfort (where's a bathroom? Are you thirsty? Tired of walking?) I discovered my best shooting is done just the way I have always done it - informally, on the street, talking with people, exploring.

Studio work is not for me. Perhaps there is some higher cosmic challenge I am unaware of in studio portraits, but to me they are dull.

Old people and kids are most pleasant to shoot. They have no preconceived notion of what they should look like. They just do. People in the 25-50 age range are extremely vain. "I've got to get my hair fixed. Let me get into something other than work clothes. My make-up's a mess."

I've learned my ability to convey thought with the written word is lacking.

I must push myself constantly. I'm the world's best procrastinator.

My concepts are frequently more interesting than my final work. I never quite seem to carry them off successfully.

I have a very basic grasp of flash work now. At least I have a toe-hold. Perhaps someday I'll master it. It's a good goal to set, because I find myself in those situations more frequently.

I've become more interested in night shooting, outside with and without flash. There are secrets out there, maybe I'll discover some.

10/11 Cont. During the day, outside, on most subject matter, I do better overexposing and underdeveloping. My negatives seem much more printable than any I've done in times past. I sure as shit hope so. This has been my major project. It damn well better be good.

As I stated at the outset "I finally put film in my camera, reluctantly, I might add". The reluctance never left me. Each time, I felt a tremendous pressure and responsibility to those places, things, and people on the other side of the lens to be accurate, artistic, and fair in what I was doing. The artistry is suspect, the accuracy and fairness can be judged only from my eye. The technical aspect can be ascertained good or bad by any competent eye. The merits of this project will ultimately be determined by me alone. At this moment I feel very good about it. I only hope the feeling grows. If not, I have failed miserably.

I did not fail.