

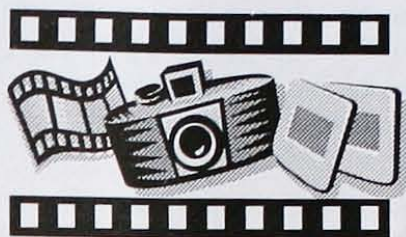
By Kelly Robson

The best photographs are simple. They convey a message directly and vividly. This same simplicity often applies to the way they are taken. Creative photography develops the ability to take interesting pictures by the most straightforward means. Modern cameras and films, efficient and easy to use, have reduced difficulties in assessing exposure and other problems.

Good photographs come from developing an eye for a picture. Your success requires no more than the ability to make the essential creative leap from what you see to what will work as a photographic image. Look through the viewfinder frequently, even when you do not intend to take a picture. Concentrate on what you can actually see in the frame and how the shapes and colours there work together.

The first creative step in taking a photograph is to choose the subject. This may seem obvious, but any situation usually offers a wide range of choices. As a general rule, you should look for a subject that will make a strong single point. The more elements there are in the scene, the more important it is to have a clear idea about what you want the picture to show at the instant you press the shutter. If there are too many details in the viewfinder that do not support the main point, the picture will tend to look untidy – a random snap rather than an effective photograph.

Many camera users set about taking pictures assuming everything will fall into place. They aim the lens directly toward the subject, lining up the most important features with the centre of the viewfinder. This approach will certainly record the subject on the film, but it is unlikely it will produce an appealing image. You will achieve better results by thinking for a few seconds and allowing yourself time to study the scene in the viewfinder carefully. Are there distracting elements in the frame that would be better excluded by changing camera position? Are there patterns that can be used to give the picture a bold visual



structure? A pause for thought can make all the difference between an ordinary snapshot and a picture with real impact.

For sharp, well-framed pictures you must hold the camera absolutely still while you release the shutter. Camera shake at the moment of exposure is the most common cause of blurred or crooked pictures.

To achieve a firm but comfortable hold for both horizontal and vertical pictures, you can vary the exact grip to suit your own hands and camera. But you should make sure to cradle the camera securely, with the controls within easy reach of your fingers. Whenever possible, take advantage of any additional support: lean against a wall, sit down or use a tripod. While aiming, rest your index finger lightly on the shutter release so you can press it gently and smoothly at the decisive moment. Holding your breath as you release the shutter may help to minimize movement.

Although you should avoid strong light shining directly into the lens, you can vary the camera's viewpoint in relation to the light, and achieve remarkable changes in appearance and mood of your pictures as a result. Move around and study the way shadows fall as your viewpoint changes.

Remember, frontlighting – light behind the camera – brings out good details and colour but tends to flatten form unless the light is soft, and backlighting – light behind a subject – tends to conceal form altogether, especially if you expose for the background, turning the subject into a silhouette.

It's easier to take successful shots if the film matches the subject and lighting conditions as precisely as possible. The most

important property of a film is its sensitivity to light – the film speed. Medium-speed film (ISO 100) offers fine-quality results but can still be used in below-average lighting conditions. High-speed film (ISO 200) is useful when light is changeable and for many action subjects. Very high-speed film (ISO 400) is useful in a wide range of situations, from poor light to rapid action.

Hopefully, this information will be helpful for improving your photographs and also for showing you that the art of photography, although frustrating at times, can be extremely interesting and fun.



Kelly Robson is the Tweedsmuir History Curator for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. She can be reached at 579 Main St., Box 1164, Lively ON P3Y 1M9, Phone: 705-692-0630, Fax: 705-692-3081, Email: dkpuboo@hotmail.com

The Allure of Lace

For centuries lace represented allure, mystery and piety. It is a fabric, which reveals half and conceals half. The creation of this intricate material lies at the patient fingertips of a woman. Whether lace comes in the form of doilies, linens, collars, lingerie, gloves or a bride's veil, it still holds the same allure. Originating in the Middle East, the art of the woven thread made its way to Europe. During the French Revolution lace was torched because it was viewed by the masses as a symbol of aristocracy. During the Victorian era, lace was popular because it was both fashionable and pious. Due to the painstaking hours it took to create lace, it was treasured and often a family heirloom. Today, huge mechanical looms create an almost identical replica of lace from the past.

The Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead hosted "An Exhibit of Vintage Lace, Linens and Needlework" last May in commemoration of Museum Month.

For more information about the Hoodless Homestead, contact Curator Sue Doiron at 359 Blue Lake Rd., RR 1, St. George ON N0E 1N0, Phone: 519-448-1130.

Submitted by Rachel Hamilton,
Summer Student Assistant Curator.