

THE CAMERA AT THE SEASHORE

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PHOTOGRAPHING AT THE SEASHORE

MOST beginners, in taking photographs at the seashore, fail to take into consideration the fact that the reflection of the sun's rays from the sand and water intensifies the light to such an extent that all exposure that would be fast enough anywhere else is altogether too slow here, and in consequence their negatives are woefully over-exposed. The exposure that should be given for such photographs should never be less than 1-150th of a second with the lens wide open. As most of the shutters are not made to work at this speed we must get the equivalent by stopping down the lens to at least f .32 when 1-50th of a second exposure can be made without the fear of over-exposure. To photograph the waves themselves even a more rapid exposure than this is necessary. The camera should be set up and focused upon that point where the waves are breaking. The lens should then be stopped down to about f .45 and the shutter set at its top speed. Then we should wait until just the wave we are waiting for comes along and just at the moment when it breaks make the exposure.

The picture will be more pleasing if the camera is pointed at the breakers at an angle instead of being set directly in front of them.

I know that this must seem a very short exposure, but it is sufficient when the sun is shining, and if fast plates are used, and anything slower would show the breakers badly blurred.

PHOTOGRAPHING MOVING OBJECTS

Of course photographing very rapidly moving objects with the ordinary hand camera is entirely out of the question, for where an exposure of 1-1000th of a second is sometimes not quick enough to stop motion, it is certain that a shutter that is incapable of being worked faster than 1-100th of a second is inadequate.

We will find, however, that much can be done with the ordinary hand camera if we are careful. Of course we all know that all moving objects appear to move much slower when viewed head-on or at an angle of about thirty degrees than when viewed directly at right angles, and this, then, is the position we must choose. Moreover in any person or animal walking or jumping there is an almost imperceptible instant of time when motion is nearly suspended, and if we are quick enough to catch them at just that propitious moment the resulting picture will not show movement. I should advise, however, that no one whose shutter does not work faster than 1-100th of a second attempt to photograph anything moving faster than a person walking fast.

RULES OF COMPOSITION

We will find that if some very simple rules of composition are followed in the making of landscape photographs, the results will be wonderfully improved.

In photographing a house never get directly in front of it—a little to one side showing it in perspective makes a much more pleasing picture. The same applies to a picture taken from a roadway—never stand directly in the middle of the road. Never let your sky-line cut your picture into equal halves, either have more foreground than sky or *vice versa*; the former is usually better. Do not place your main object of interest directly in the center of the picture, nor yet too near the edge; there is a point midway between the two that is best.

Never try to crowd too much into a picture; one object of interest is always preferable to several, and there should never be more than two objects of equal interest. Never try to take a too extended landscape for the results are never pleasing, for in a monotone, such as a photograph must be, the beauty lies largely in the fact that there is not too much detail. Much better to have a simple view of a few trees with a piece of roadway than to try to make a landscape showing several different planes of field, woodland, meadows, etc.

THE SWING BACK

The swing back is one of the most useful features of the modern tripod camera, and is almost indispensable in all outdoor work, but its uses should be thoroughly understood. These are for obtaining parallel vertical lines when the camera is tilted, and for obtaining a sharper image of the foreground and distance in a view that cannot otherwise be obtained except by the use of a smaller diaphragm. Let me illustrate these uses:

If we set up our camera to take a tall building, it is probable that we cannot include the top of the building in the picture with the camera level, so we must tilt the camera until the whole building is included in the image on the ground-glass. The lines of the house in the image will now appear to converge toward the top, which is caused by the back of the camera holding the ground-glass being thrown out of the vertical plane; but by swinging the back of the camera until it is again vertical, the lines in the building will become parallel. In landscape work, we know that near objects are in focus when frequently those in the distance are mere blurred masses. By pulling out the top of the swing back this can, to a greater or less extent, be obviated fully as well as by the use of a smaller stop.