

# America Under Construction



*A Photo Collection by  
Bonniejean Alford Hinde*



**Thank you for viewing this collection of photographs that I have spent my life taking. Each one was selected to represent some aspect of American identity as expressed through thirteen thematic sections.**

**As you view each picture I would like you to try to think about how each one connects to the larger structure in which we exist as Americans, trying to forget how I might understand each photograph.**

**I want you to be open to feeling whatever you want as you see each moment captured in a particular context that I have tried to avoid spelling out with words, for it is the photographs that are meant to communicate the significance of the moment, not what I have to say about them.**

**In essence, this work does express my idea of what it means to be an American, but I do not expect you to agree with me, only appreciate the narrative in which I express the eclectic, and often scattered, identity of American.**

**A brief statement regarding the formation of each section as it relates to my understanding of identity appears at the conclusion of the collection, following the biography.**







***“It is my intention to present  
- through the medium of photography -  
intuitive observations of the natural  
world which may have meaning to the  
spectators.”***

***Ansel Adams (1902-1984)***



## **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to my husband, William Douglas Calder Hinde, for helping me to complete my work; to all my friends and clients who have allowed me to photograph them through the years; to Richard Quinney for introducing me to the art of using photographs to tell a story; and most importantly, to Dr. Richard Holt, Dr. In Duk Kim, and Dr. Gülsat Aygen for guiding me on this journey.

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Used in partial fulfillment for the Master of Art's degree  
Department of Communication  
Northern Illinois University

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# *America's Beauty*

*“My energies for near a lifetime have been used almost entirely to win such prominence as I could in outdoor photography, and in this effort I could not help falling in love with the Dells.”*

*H.H. Bennett (1843-1908)*





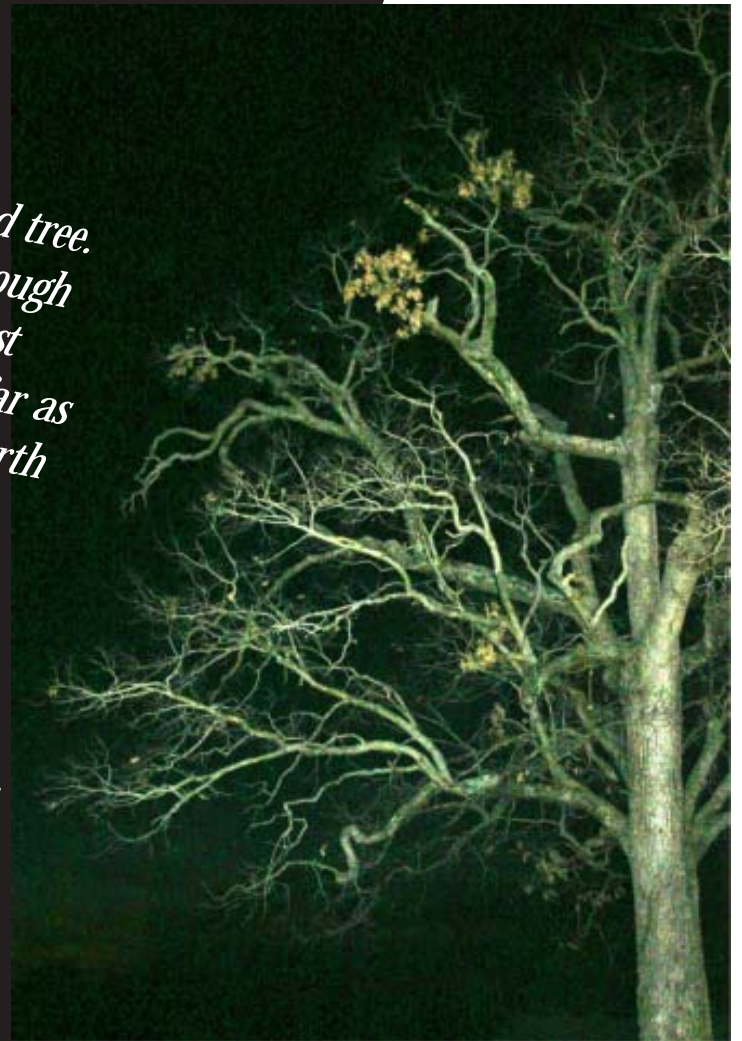
**Niagra Falls, the border water to America's neighbor.**





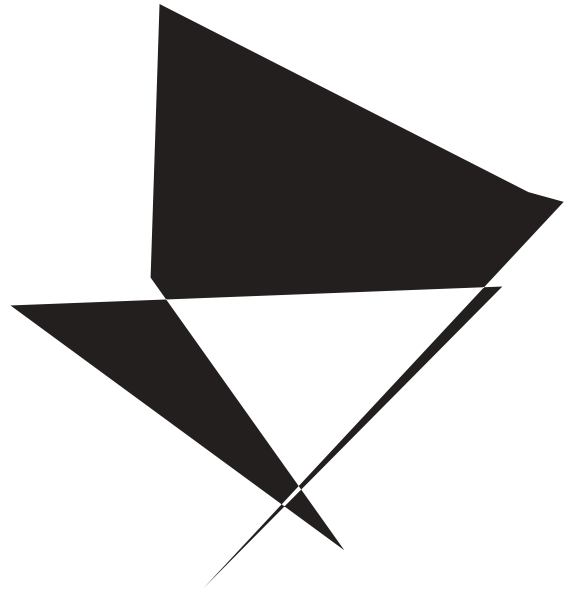


*"I never saw a discontented tree. They grip the ground as though they liked it, and though fast rooted they travel about as far as we do. They go wandering forth in all directions with every wind, going and coming like ourselves, traveling with us around the sun two million miles a day, and through space heaven knows how fast and far!"  
John Muir (1838-1914)*





***Winter***

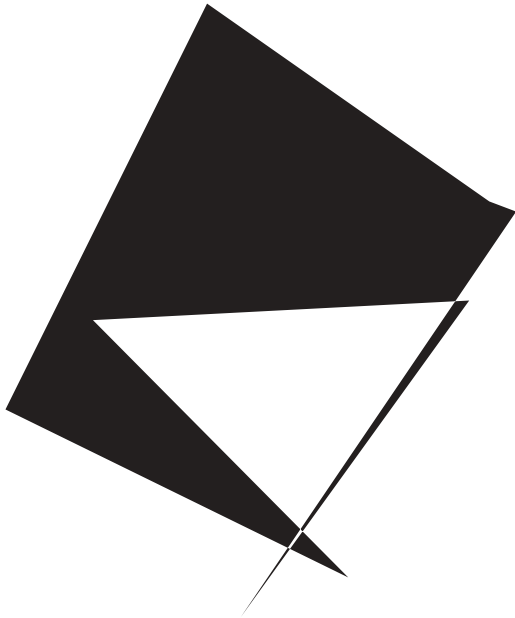


***Spring***





***Summer***



***Fall***



***Cave of the Mounds, Wisconsin***



***University of Chicago, Illinois***

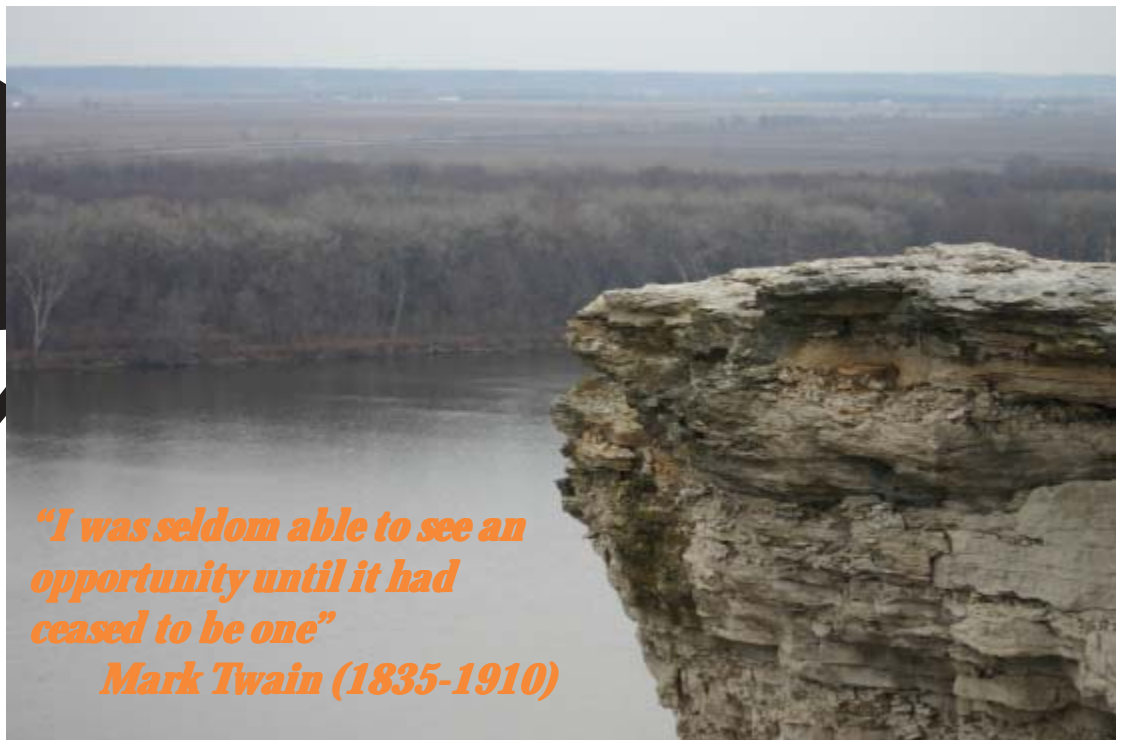




***Daniel Boone National Forest, Kentucky***



***Mississippi River, as seen from Hannibal Missouri***



***"I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it had ceased to be one"***  
***Mark Twain (1835-1910)***





# *America's Animal Kingdom*



***Animals in Captivity***  
***Brookfield Zoo, Illinois***

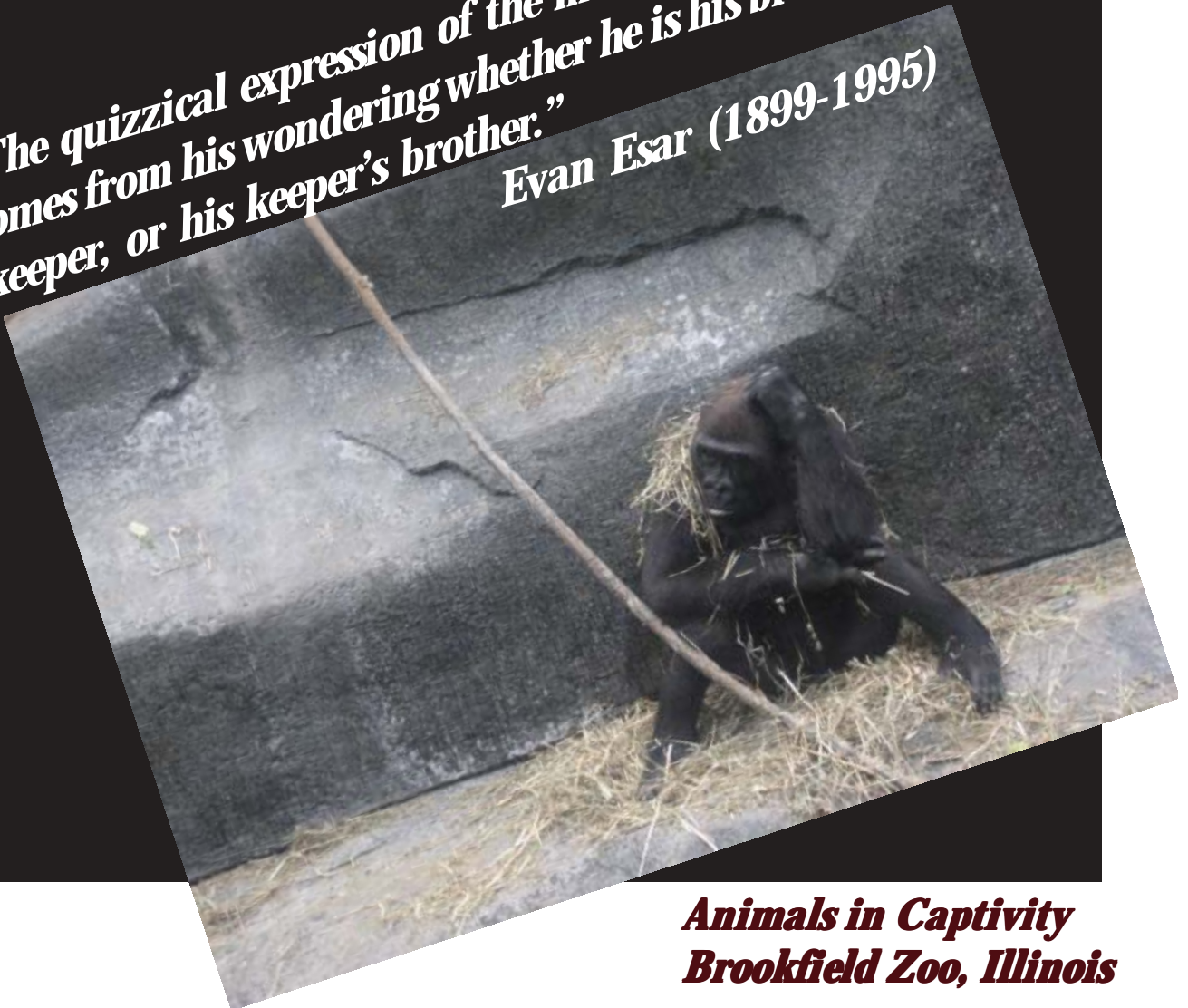






**“The quizzical expression of the monkey at the zoo  
comes from his wondering whether he is his brother’s  
keeper, or his keeper’s brother.”**

**Evan Esar (1899-1995)**



***Animals in Captivity  
Brookfield Zoo, Illinois***



*"Let me out!"*



*Old World Wisconsin*







*Got Milk?*



***Felines, at home and in nature.***









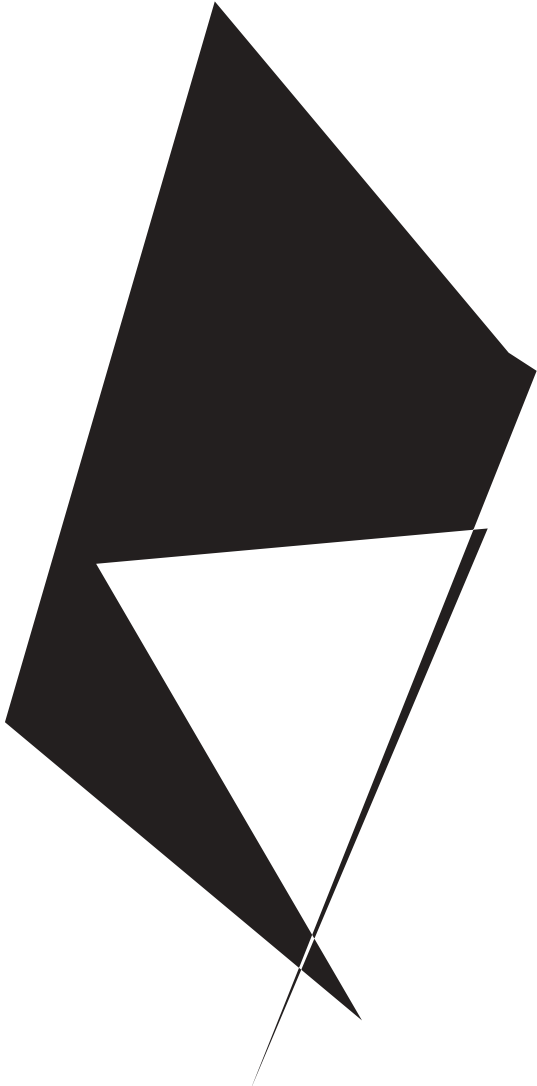
***“It’s not the size of the dog in the fight, it’s the size of the fight in the dog.”***

***Mark Twain (1835-1910)***











***Canines  
and their  
human counterparts.***





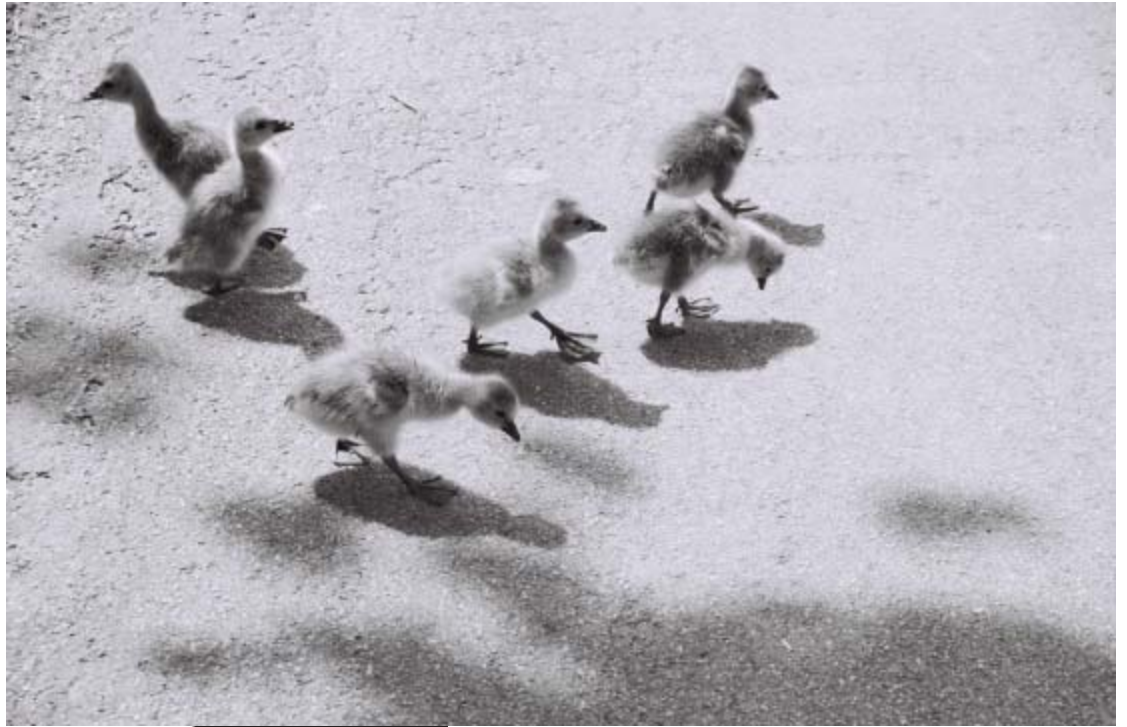




*Let's be friends.*





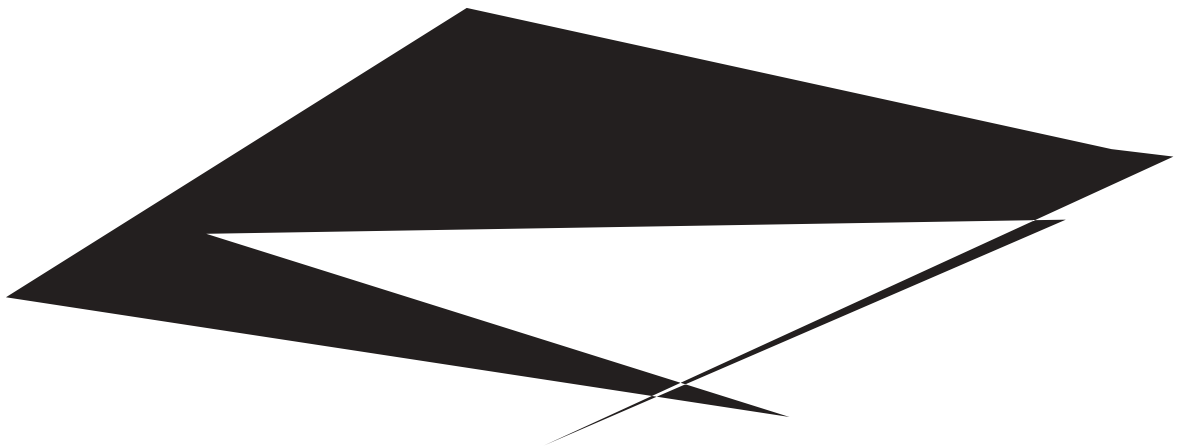


*"If I had to choose, I would rather have birds  
than airplanes."*

*Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974)*





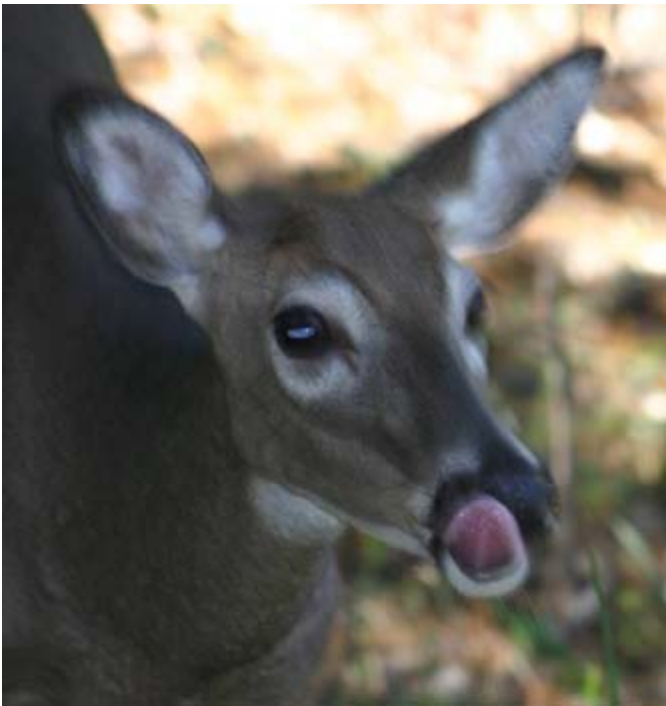




*When a butterfly flaps its wings..*







***Road Kill?***



# *The Building and Moving of America*



***“Never mistake motion for action.”  
Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)***

# **Chicago, Illinois**



*"Eventually, I think Chicago will be the most beautiful great city left in the world."*

*Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959)*





**“An architect’s most useful tools are an eraser at the drafting board, and a wrecking bar at the site.”  
Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959)**











***Air Show  
Chicago, Illinois***



*The El, Chicago, Illinois*

*Roadway, Washington D.C.*





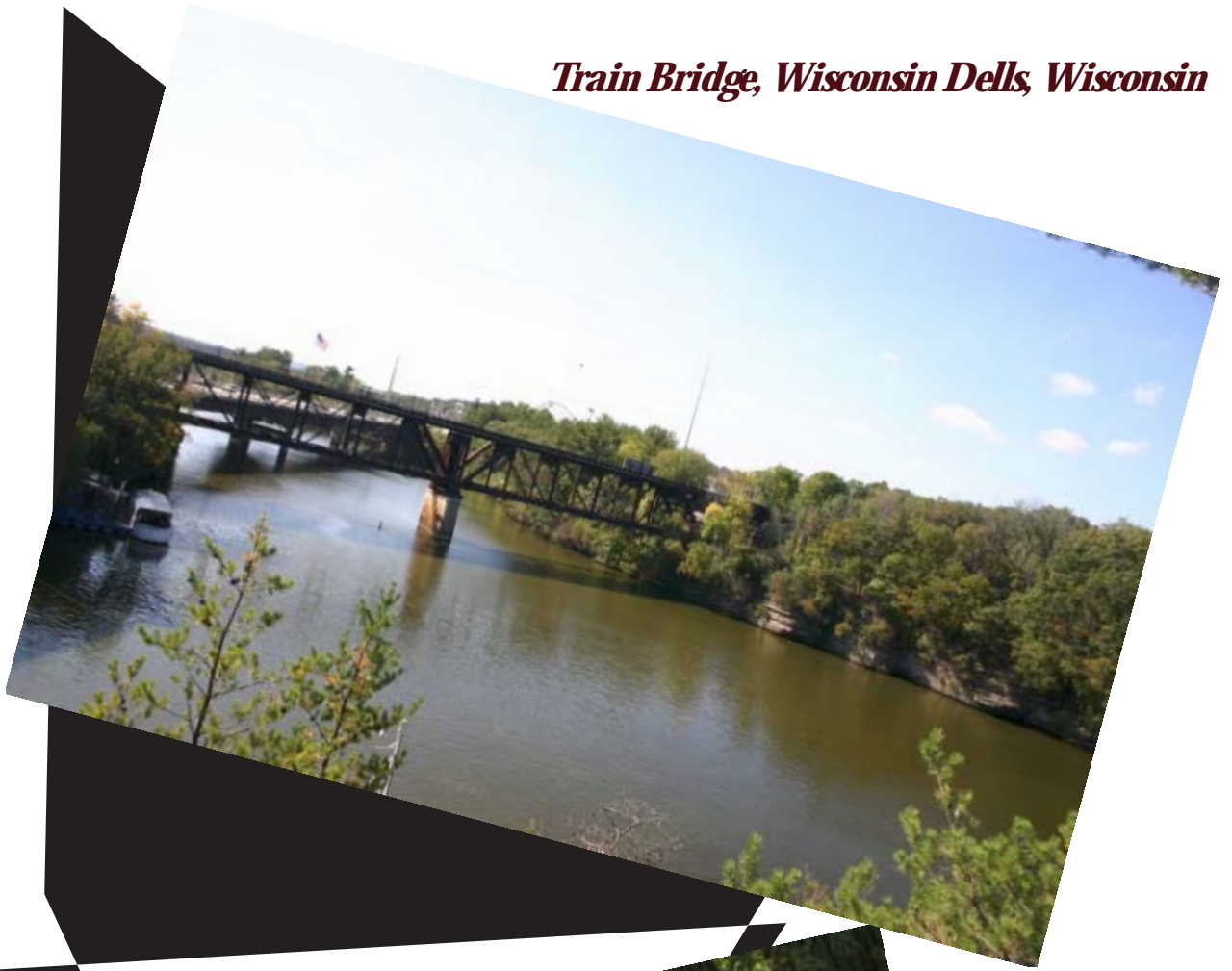
*Roadway Tunnel, California*

*Golden Gate Bridge, California*





***Train Bridge, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin***



***Walking Bridge, Michigan***

*Bridge, California*



*Mackinac Bridge, Michigan*



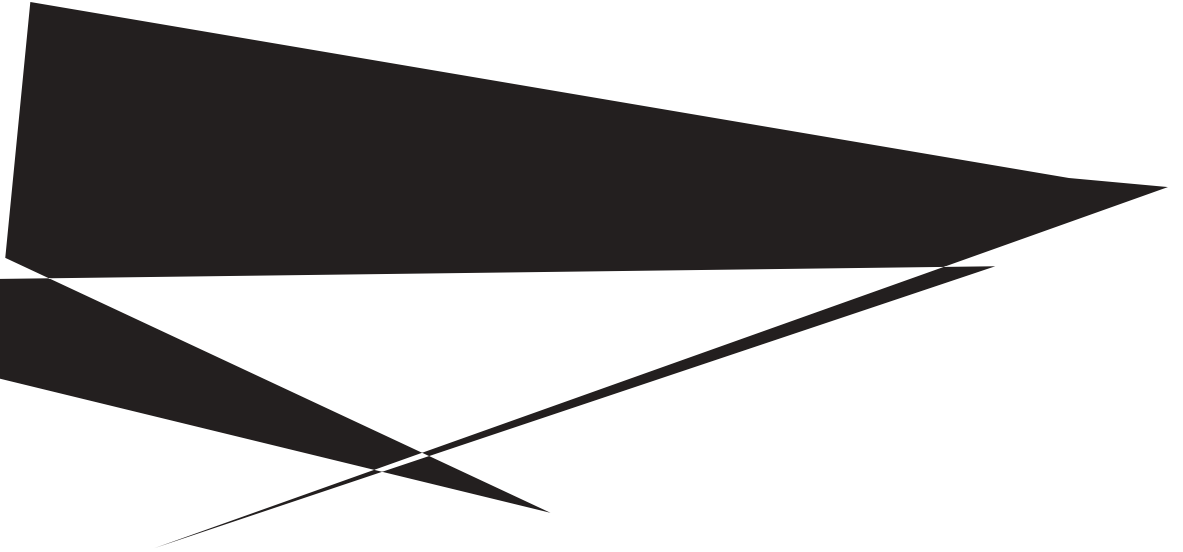
*Lake Michigan, Michigan*



*Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin*



*"Little boats should keep near shore."  
Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)*





***Lighthouse  
Hannibal, Missouri***



***Lighthouse  
Grand Traverse Bay, Michigan***

*Lighthouse*

*Lake Michigan, Michigan*





*Washington D.C.*



*Mackinac Island, Michigan*



*Ontario, California*



*San Francisco, California*





# Home in disarray....







....or not.



*The way they used to live, in the Arizona Desert.*







*The way they used to live, in midwestern America.*

***“People are trapped in history, and history is trapped in them.”  
James Baldwin (1924-1987)***





*Dam, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin*



*Hoover Dam, Nevada-Arizona border*









*Road construction needed, Cicero, Illinois*



*Road construction underway, Washington D.C.*



*Old gas station, out of service, along old Route 66, Illinois*

*Old time Amerca, Pontiac, Illinois*







*Holland, Michigan*

*Factory life*

*Milwaukee, Wisconsin*





*We the people...*



# *America's Civic Mindedness*



***“Patriot: the person who can holler  
the loudest without knowing what he  
is hollering about.”***

***Mark Twain (1835-1910)***







*To protect  
and  
to serve.*





*Historical Reenactments,  
Fort Michilimackinac  
Mackinaw City, Michigan*





*Guard tower, Fort Mackinac*

*Mackinac Island, Michigan*





# *Volunteerism...*





*....at its very best*







***“Occasionally in life there are those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meanings can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart.”***

***Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968)***





***Protesting  
Human Rights Abuses...***







*...in Washington D.C.*



*"Please sign my petition?"*



*Honoring Teddy Roosevelt.*

***“Anyone who trades liberty for security deserves neither liberty nor security.”***  
***Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)***







# *Americans at Work*

*“We work to become, not to acquire.”*

*Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915)*



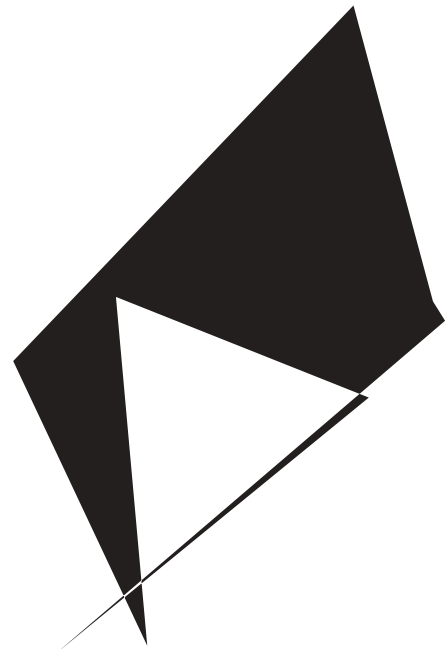


*On the job or in meetings, it is all the same.*





*Illinois construction  
workers  
working hard.*



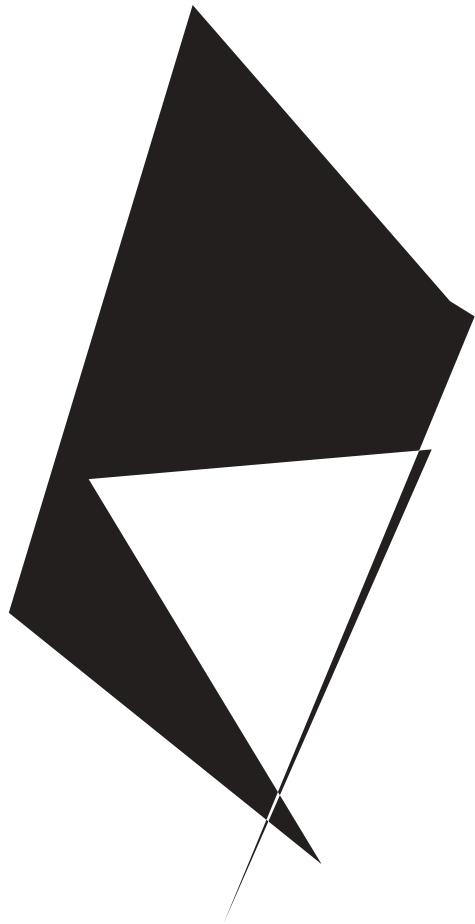






***“I will never put my name on a product  
that does not have the best that is in me.”  
John Deere (1804-1886)***





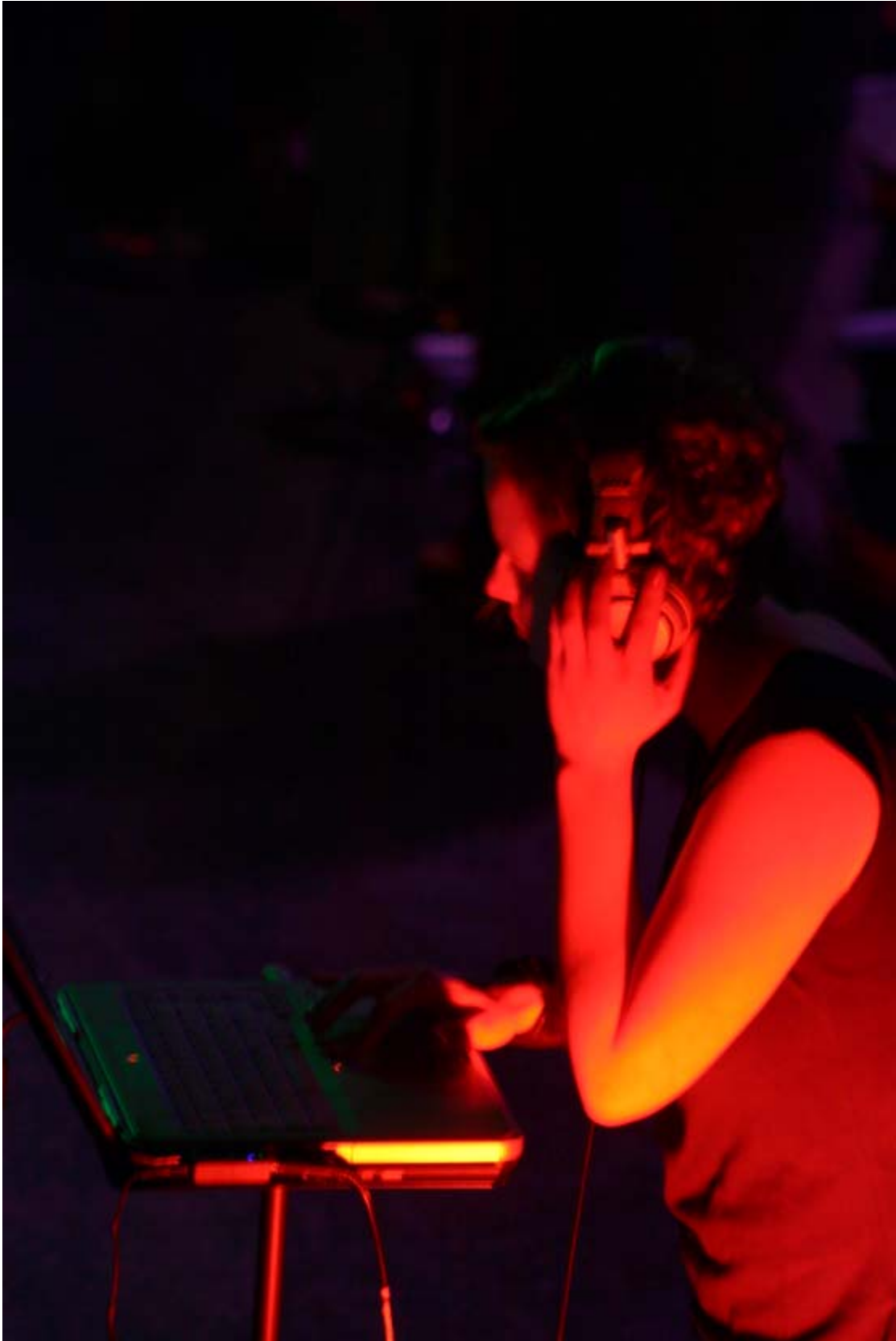




*May I help you?*

















***Making Connections***







***“Coming together is a beginning  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success.”  
Henry Ford (1863-1947)***







# *The American Education System*



***“There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can’t move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies.”***

***Robert Frost (1874-1963)***





***College life  
Northern Illinois University***



*DeKalb, Illinois*





**Auditorium  
Riverside Brookfield High School  
Brookfield, Illinois**



***“Education’s purpose is to replace an  
empty mind with an open one.”  
Malcolm Forbes (1919-1990)***





*Chaffey High School Science Program  
Ontario, California*





*Ontario, California*

*High School Reunions*

*Dunlap, Illinois*





*Building Bridges Conference  
University of Illinois  
Chicago*





*Education, as it once was: the one room school house.*



# *American Artistic Expression*



*“A live concert to me is exciting because of all the electricity that is generated in the crowd and on stage. It’s my favorite part of the business, live concerts.”*

*Elvis Presley (1935-1977)*



*“Music can name the unnamable and communicate the unknowable.”*  
*Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)*







*"It's a Wonderful Life," Radio Style Performance  
Park Forest, Illinois*



***"Throughout my career, if I have done anything  
I have paid attention to every note and every word  
I sing - if I respect the song. If I cannot project this  
to a listener, I fail."***

***Frank Sinatra (1915-1998)***





*Sing to Live Choir  
Oak Park, Illinois*

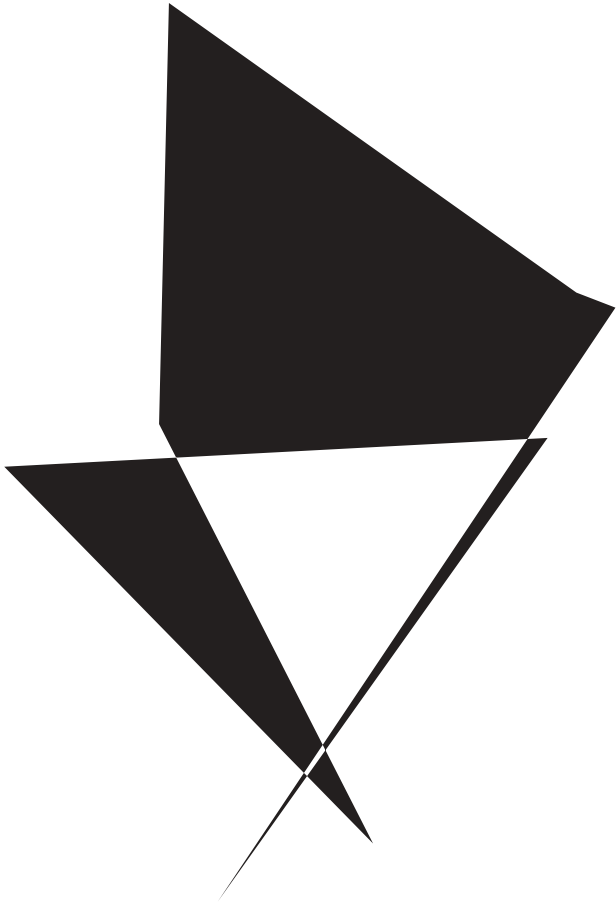






*Salt Creek  
Sinfonietta  
Illinois*









## *The Audience*







## *The Performance*





*The  
art  
of  
voice*









*The  
voice  
of  
art*









*Chicago  
Music  
Awards*





*"I just dance. I just put my feet in the air  
and move them around."*

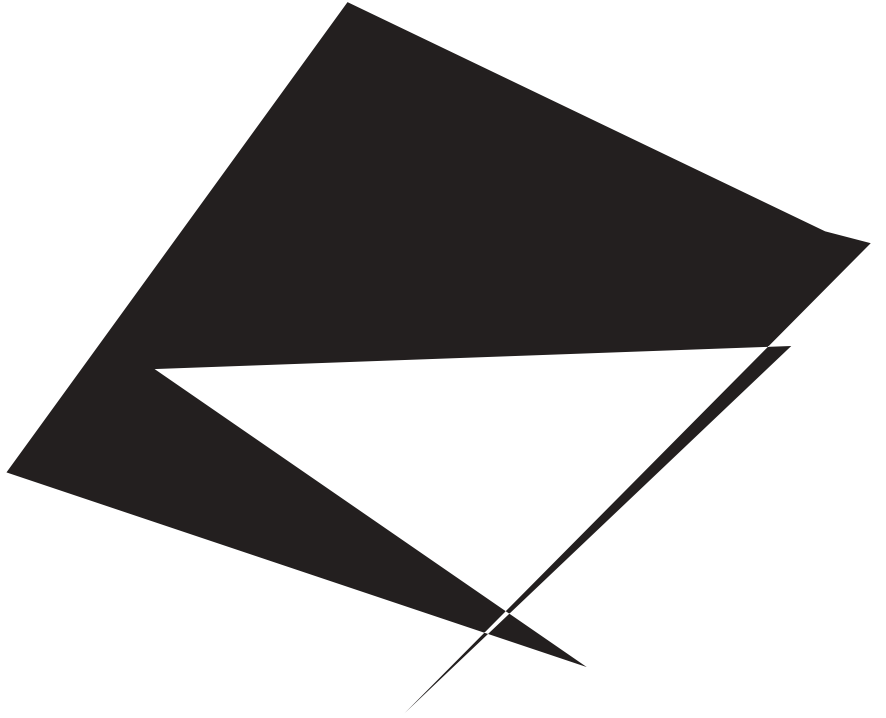
*Fred Astaire (1899-1987)*













***“Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and  
paints his own nature into his pictures.”  
Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887)***









***History  
as  
Art***





# *Religion in America*



*“Sometimes I do get to places just when God’s ready to have somebody click the shutter.”*

*Ansel Adams (1902-1984)*





*Processional*

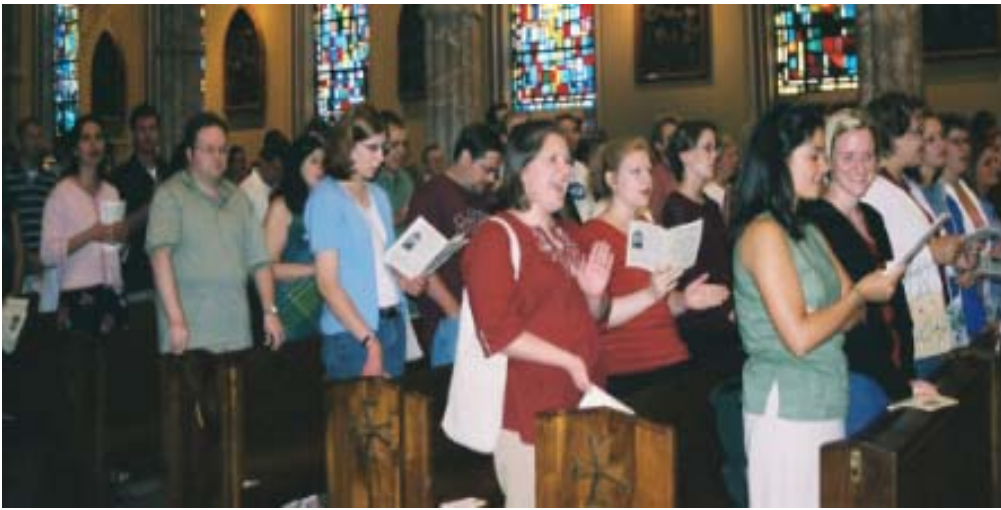






*Communion*





*The Congregation*







***“What do I believe? As an American I believe in generosity, in liberty, in the rights of man. These are social and political faiths that are part of me, as they are, I suppose, part of all of us. Such beliefs are easy to express. But part of me too is my relation to all life, my religion. And this is not so easy to talk about. Religious experience is highly intimate and, for me, ready words are not at hand.”***

***Adlai E. Stevenson II (1900-1965)***





*Retreat*





***Celestial  
Voices***









*Places to worship.*







# *Symbols*





# *Symbols*





***God is Love!***





# *Americans and Commercial Entertainment*



*“I, Mark Twain being of sound mind,  
have spent everything”*

*Mark Twain (1835-1910)*





***Disneyland***  
***Anaheim, California***

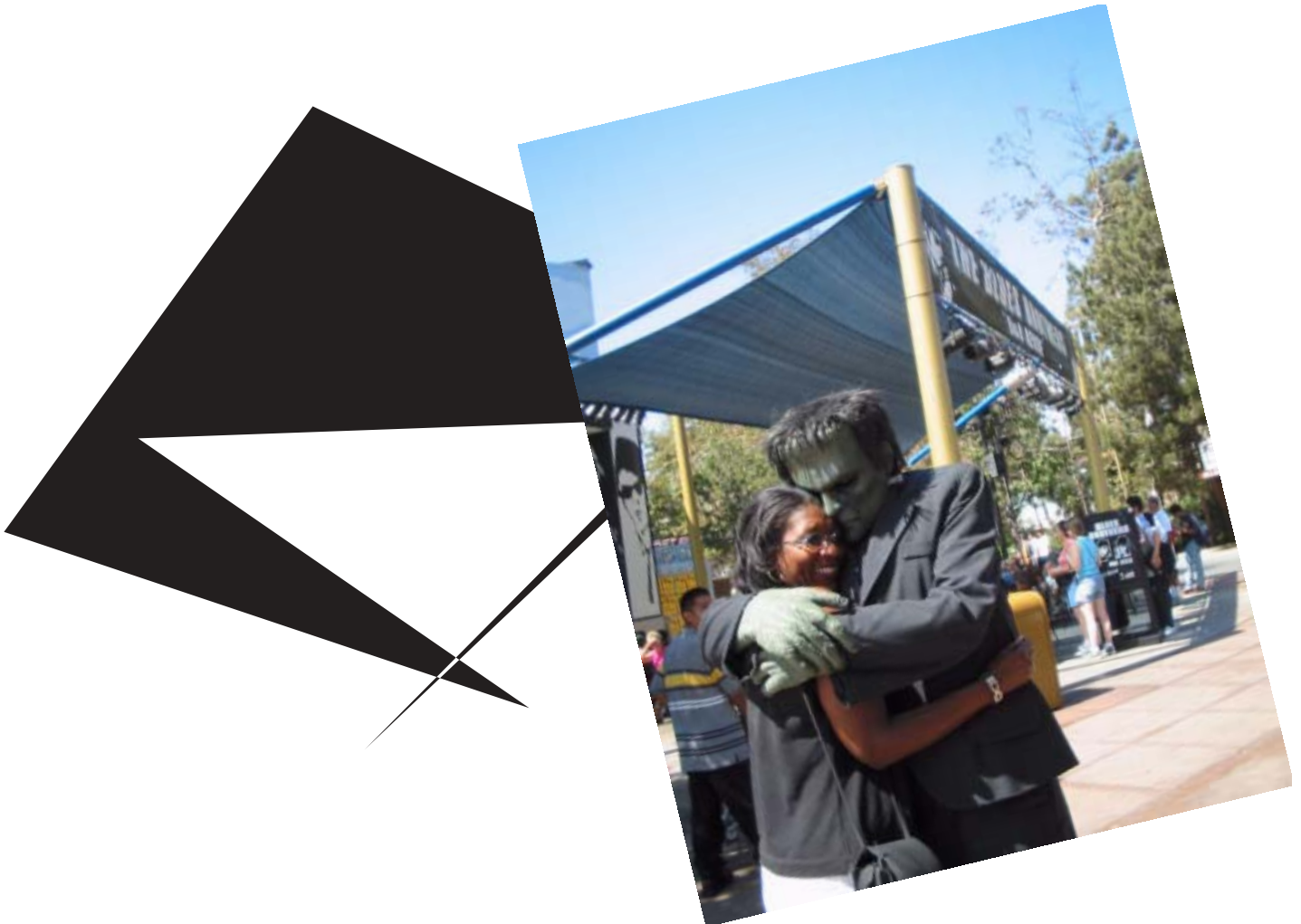


***“I would rather entertain and hope that people learned something than educate people and hope they were entertained.”***

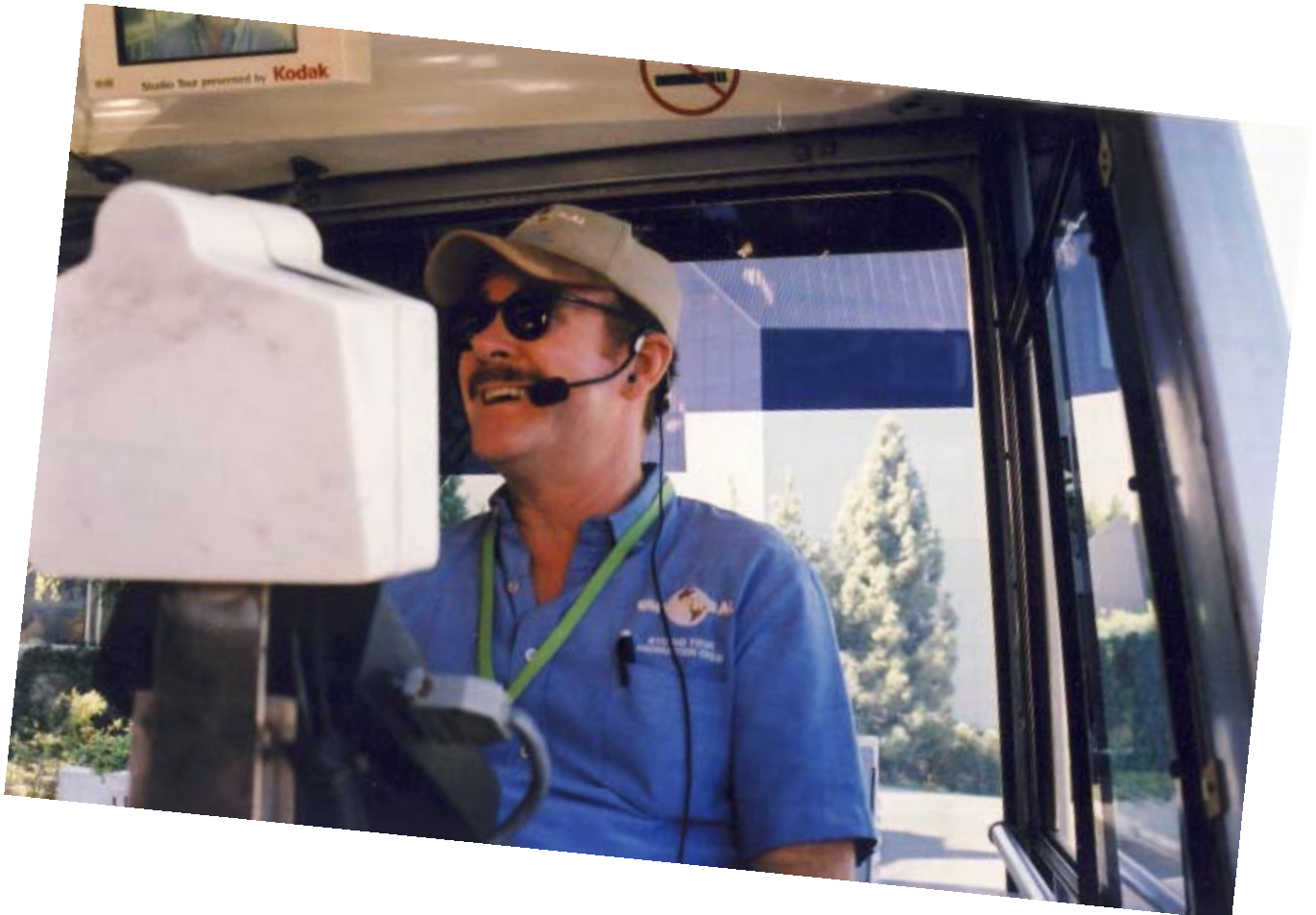
***Walt Disney (1901-1966)***







***Universal  
Studios,  
California***









# *Las Vegas, Nevada*







*Six Flags  
Great America  
Gurnee, Illinois*







# *Americans at Play*



*“Hello again, everybody. It’s a bee-yooo-tiful day for baseball.”*

*Harry Caray (1920-1998)*







***Go Cubbies!  
Chicago, Illinois***









*Oh, the irony...*



***Brewers  
Miller Park  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin***









# ***Football***



# ***El Fútbol?***





*“Leaders aren’t born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that’s the price we’ll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal.”*

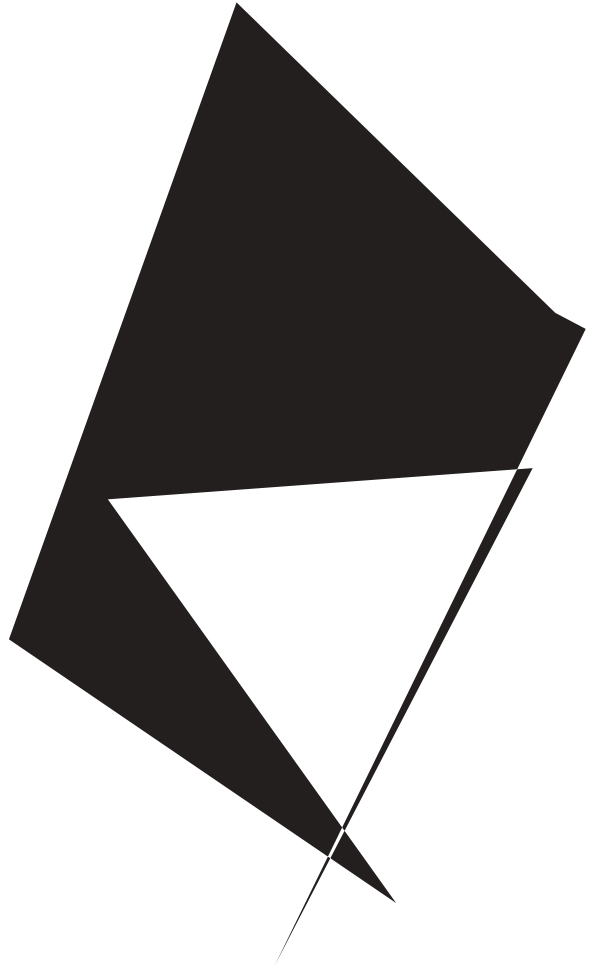
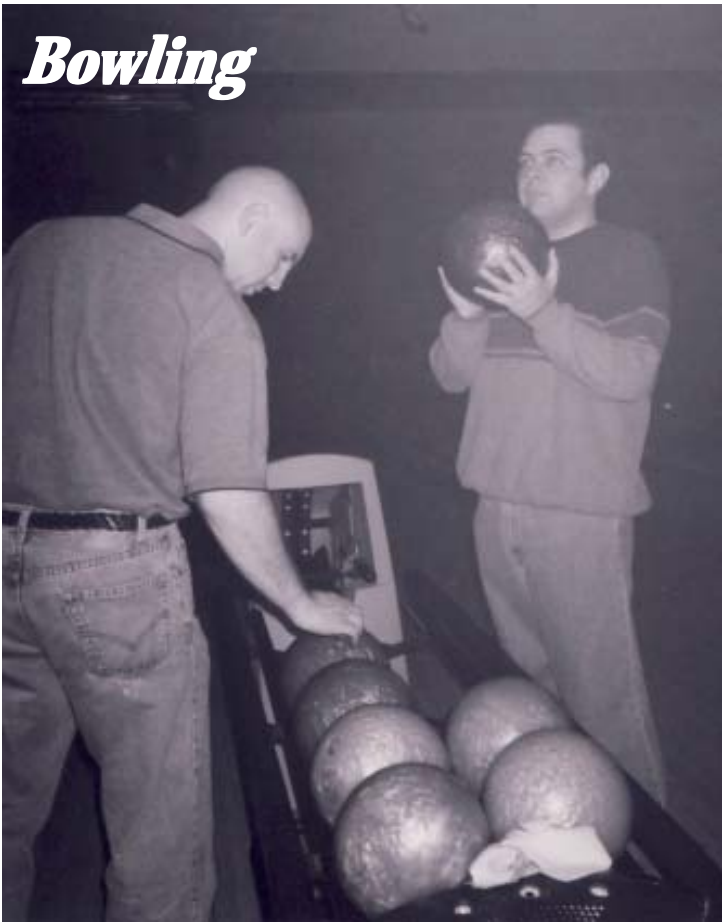
*Vince Lombardi (1913-1970)*



***Little League  
Berwyn, Illinois***



***Bowling***



***Billiards***









*The joy  
of  
indoor "sports"*



*To  
climb  
a  
tree*









# *American Friendship and Comradery*

*“I have learned that to be with those I like is enough.”*

*Walt Whitman (1819-1892)*









































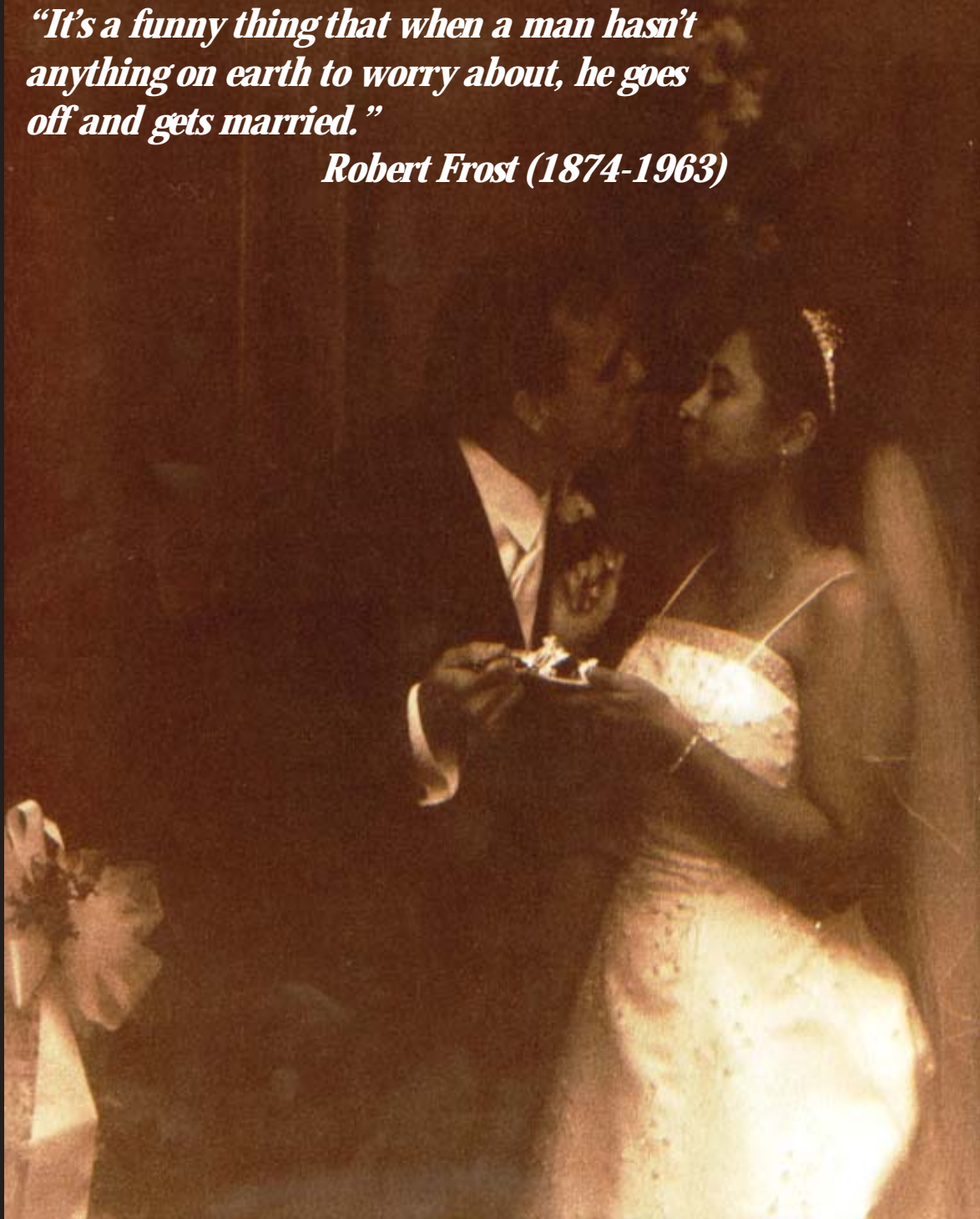




# *America's Foundation*

*"It's a funny thing that when a man hasn't anything on earth to worry about, he goes off and gets married."*

*Robert Frost (1874-1963)*



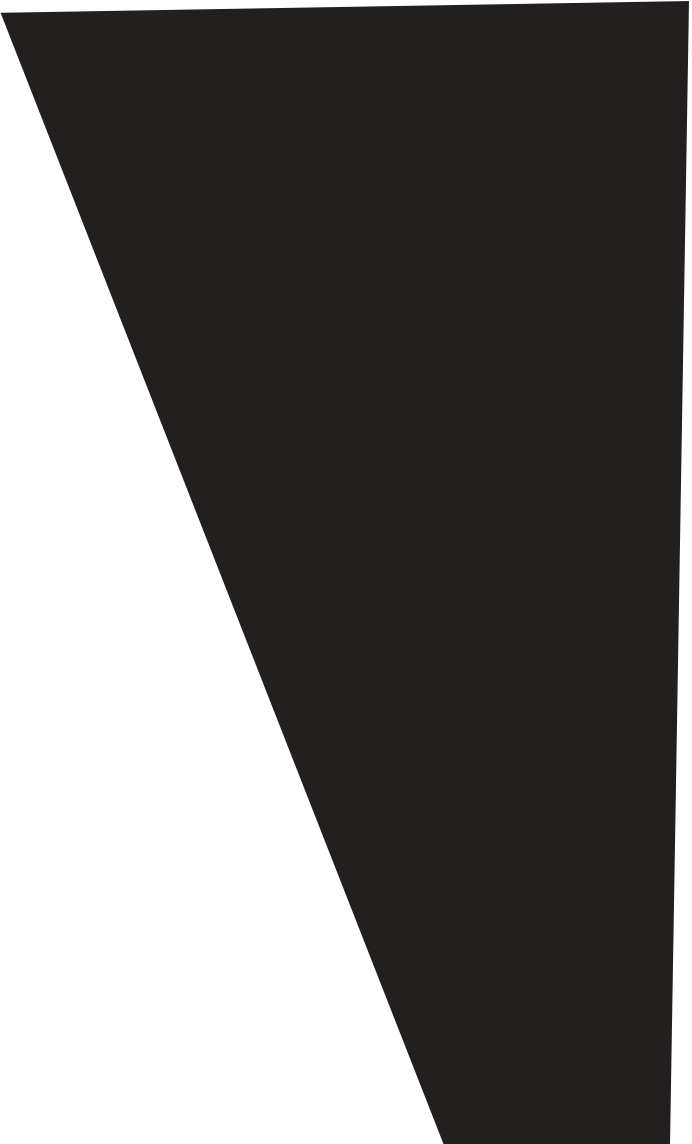












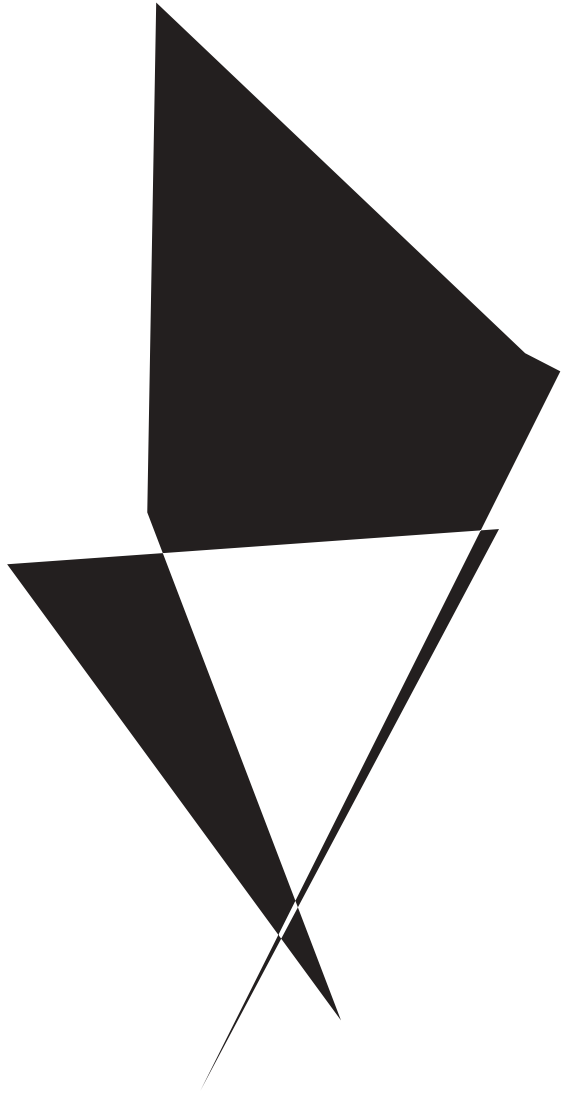
















***“Be who you are and say what you feel  
because those who mind don’t matter and  
those who matter don’t mind.”***

***Dr. Seuss (1904-1991)***







**tools of life  
as it once was**









***Twins***







## *Siblings*

















***“It is not until you become a mother that your judgment slowly turns to compassion and understanding.”***  
***Erma Bombeck (1927-1996)***





















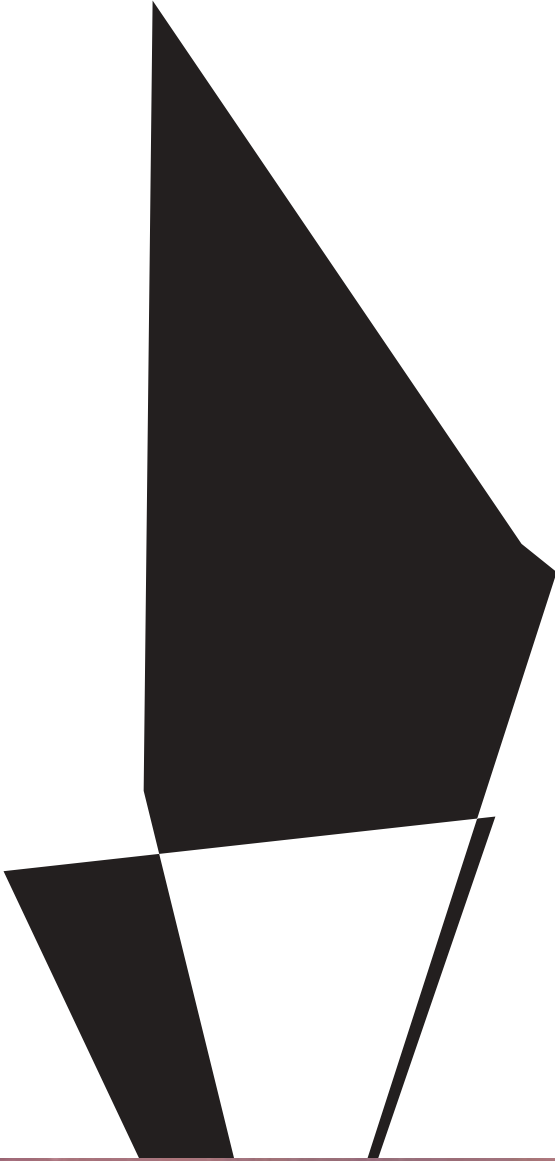
# *America's Hope for Tomorrow*



*“It is easier to pose nature and less  
trouble to please.”*

*Ansel Adams (1902-1984)*

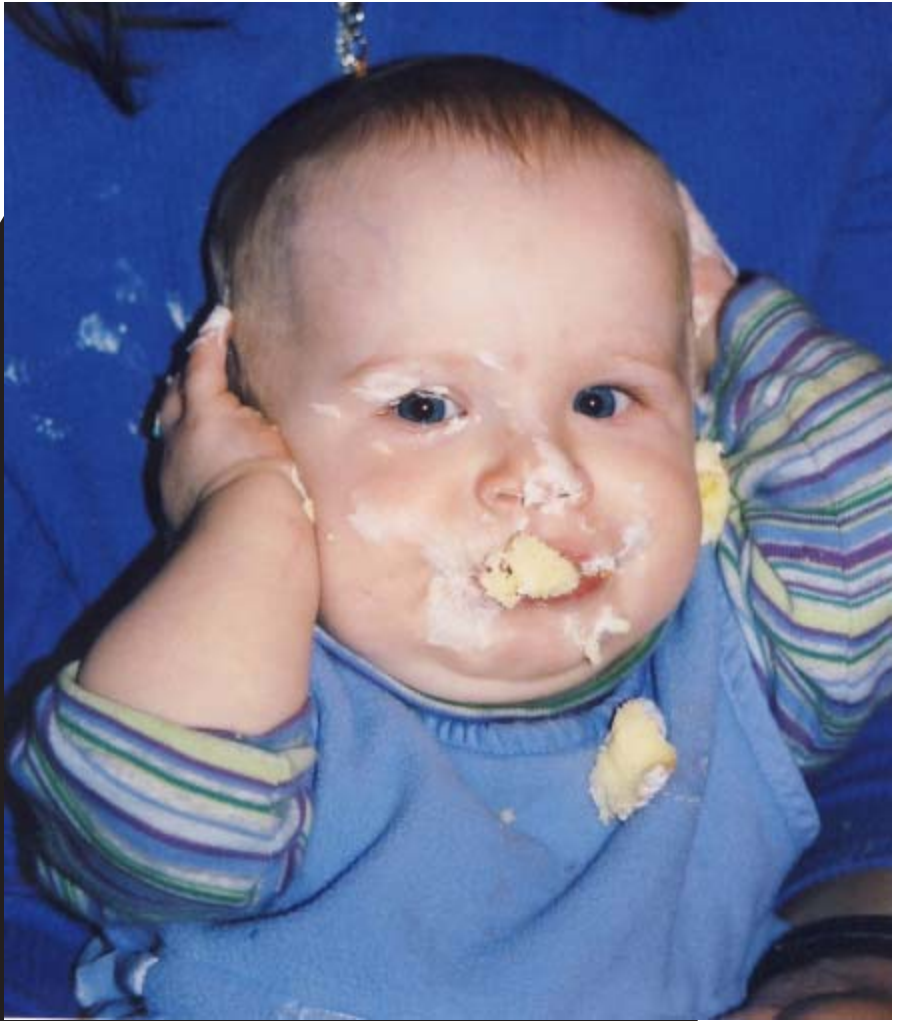






















*“The most interesting information comes from children, for they tell all they know and then stop.”*  
*Mark Twain (1835-1910)*



























# *One American in the Midst of Many*

*"...possess the sociological imagination."*

*C. Wright Mills (1916-1962)*

I have been capturing special moments for over two decades, both in a professional capacity and in my personal life. When talking with friends and co-workers it became clear that the world of portrait photography seemed to lack a certain personality, so as a trained visual sociologist, I decided that the best way to capture the special moments of life was in a more creative and natural manner.

I have a master's degree in sociology from California State University, Fullerton and will have a second master's degree in communication this summer from Northern Illinois University. I have spent years studying identity, excited to finally have the opportunity to combine my skills as a photographer with my academic life.



*Self Portrait*

*"When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs. When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence."*

*Ansel Adams (1902-1984)*

## **My mantra**

A picture, a portrait, not only captures memories, but tells the story of a pet, a family, a time remembered, and can often be the focal point of family existence for generations.



# Thematic Sections of the Collection Discussed

The photographs in this collection have been categorized into thirteen thematic representations, a number selected to honor one historical configuration important to America, in that when America was born there were thirteen colonies. Each theme is meant to represent some component of American identity.

## Cover Photograph

The front cover photograph, a picture of the Washington Monument being repaired, is meant to symbolize the idea that from the beginning America was meant to be an evolving entity with many ways to look at and express itself. America changes and grows constantly and this particular photograph seemed to sum it all up perfectly.

## Section One: America's Beauty

The first section contains an array of fourteen nature shots, reflecting the idea that since the world began with nature, it seemed fitting that this book's conceptual journey should begin there as well. By images of nature I mean organic and inorganic structures, and do not include representations of animals (left to a section of its own). This strongly connects to American identity since Americans, including me, take great pride in our natural resources, as evidenced in the dedication of lands as national and state parks.

## Section Two: America's Animal Kingdom

The animal kingdom is vast and exciting, and is represented here by thirty photographs from different biological domains. Americans have a fascination with animals, breeding them in captivity and domesticating them for home life. This section encompasses a spectrum of animal existence from wild to captivity and includes depictions of interactions between animals and people, who are also part of the animal kingdom. The section begins with representations of zoo life and continues through animals in the wild, ending with an ironic image of a car with a deer on it.

## Section Three: The Building and Moving of America

This section includes forty-six photographs representing America's infrastructure, including transportation and dwellings, as well the construction of these. The section exhibits an array of different places I have visited, which helps connect my individual existence with society as a whole. There is an emphasis on Chicago and the Midwest because that is where I happen to have lived most of my life. I intended this section to be systematic and eclectic at the same time, partly because of the difficulty in determining a natural flow among the photographs.

#### **Section Four: America's Civic Mindedness**

This section involves representations of Americans in civic activities. There are twenty-three photographs in this section, beginning with a picture of a fireworks display and a quote about patriotism, both of which lie at the root of the conventional view of American identity. This is followed by photographs of police officers and how they interact with people. I have captured moments of volunteerism and political action, with images of collective action, protests, and campaign fundraisers, to express how I interconnect with this aspect of American life.

#### **Section Five: Americans at Work**

This section of twenty-five begins with people performing what is referred to as “blue-collar” work. There are photographs of people engaging in manual labor, such as painting and construction. I deliberately included a historical representation here, as well as representations of unpaid work that is a necessity of life, such as mowing one’s yard. Eventually, the photographic array moves into “white-collar” occupations. This is not meant as a value judgment, just that it naturally flowed to end with someone who is working and educating as a lead in to the next section.

#### **Section Six: The American Education System**

Education can be seen as a principal socializing agent of American society. Not only do children attend school to learn basic knowledge, but also to learn social expectations. The fourteen photographs in this section are meant to briefly encompass a topic about which millions of words have been written. I have incorporated images from elementary school, high school, and college, though not in chronological order. The section begins with a photograph representing the literal opening of the educational gates at an American University and ends with a reminder of the way things once were, with the one room school house.

#### **Section Seven: American Artistic Expression**

The thirty-nine photographs in this section show several sides to artistic expression. There is a significant presence of music photographs, in part due to my repeated presence at musical events. Beyond this, music is a pervasive part of society. It seems fitting that this section should include a greater proportion of music shots. The remainder comprises photos of theatre, sculpture, and an artistic style staircase at the Art Institute of Chicago.



## **Section Eight: Religion in America**

The twenty-six photographs in this section represent some aspect of religion and spirituality in America, beginning with parts of the Catholic mass and ending with a very spiritual depiction of the concept of love. This section is constrained by what was immediately available to me as an American Catholic, significant due to its status as the largest single religion in America (Protestantism as a whole is larger, but separate parts are not large).

## **Section Nine: Americans and Commercial Entertainment**

The sixteen photographs in this section represent the commercial entertainment industry, specifically amusement parks and Las Vegas. People spend a considerable amount of money on entertainment and thus it is considered an essential part of life for Americans. Major corporate players working in this arena, such as Disney and Six Flags, are included, but of course there are a vast number of other entertainment providers I have not had the opportunity neither to visit nor photograph.

## **Section Ten: Americans at Play**

Beyond the entertainment venues referred to in the previous section, sports is a major element of American life. The twenty-five photographs included capture this preoccupation. The section begins with baseball, widely thought of as “America’s pastime.” This part of the section is expansive, though not overwhelming. There are depictions of other sports such as softball, football, and soccer, as well as activities that involve playing at something, such as a board game or even climbing a tree. Overall, the section shows Americans at play, enjoying themselves.

## **Section Eleven: American Friendship and Comradery**

Twenty-five photographs comprise this section, each showing people communicating with each other, building relationships. This section is deliberately presented for the most part without captions, leaving you to fashion for yourself thoughts about the nature of Americans and how they interact. Americans are a social people and they need each other. We engage in a variety of different types of relationships on a daily basis, each with a different context and purpose. Ultimately, we need to feel connected to each other to further our own evolution of identity as Americans.



## **Section Twelve: America's Foundation**

This section has forty-nine photographs, each communicating something about family life in America, as some know it today or as it might have been understood by some in the past. There are specific subsections comprising photographs of weddings, family, and home life. There seems to be a common perception in American society that family, specifically certain types of family, are at the root of what we can call American life. The widespread acceptance of this idea is misleading and limiting, because there are many types of family. Despite this, non-traditional family types are unfortunately not represented due primarily to the fact that they were not readily accessible in my life.

## **Section Thirteen: America's Hope for Tomorrow**

Children are the hope for the future, and the thirty-one photographs in this section are meant to show children at their most creative, excited, and brave. The photographs show kids simply being kids. There are no captions in this section, just a few select quotations. It seems appropriate to depict behaviors of kids with no explanation. Actions do speak louder than words, and it is in this light that the photographs of their actions are left to tell their own story.

## **Back Cover**

The idea of a child playing with a trash can spoke to me above all others and seemed a fitting conclusion to the collection. There is a perception by some that life is eroding as the values we hold dear are shifting to encompass greater diversity and equality. Some I have come in contact with have made it clear that living according to the old ways that advocated the ideals of patriarchy and racial superiority are still the best ways to live. As a representation of the future, the child in this photograph, through her game play, is implying that this is simply rubbish. There is a greater future beyond the traps that currently exist, and this photograph specifically seemed to sum that up for me, just as the cover photograph summed up the entire project.

