TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

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TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

BY

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

AUTHORS WORK

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INTRODUCTION

Without Travel Photography it would be impossible to have an idea of how our ancestors lived, worked and what exotic places they visited. Travel photography can therefore indirectly keep us in touch with our past.

In modern society, travel photography is becoming much more popular because many photographers, amateur or professional take images of places that are visited.

This dissertation will cover many aspects of travel photography, discussing some of the earlier photographers, as well as technical and practical aspects.

With travel photography, high ideals can be set. This is the reason why the author has chosen this topic to discuss. A travel photographer must produce images that would encourage the viewers to visit these destinations.

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY OF TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

"and are at a loss of words to describe adequately the fascination of these pictures no moral hand has drawn" Mayor Philip Hone.

(Fabian 1981:8)

With the invention of photography, came the invention of travel photography. The first photographs taken were photographs that documented places from the photographer's point of view.

The earlier photographs were taken on copper plates, invented by a Frenchmen, Louis Jacques Maudé Daguerre, in the year 1839. The process became known as the Daguerreotype Process (Fabian 1981:8).

It involved exposing a sheet of silver plated copper, sensitized with Iodine, in a camera for five to twelve minutes. The image was finally developed by holding the exposed plate above Mercury heated to 75 degrees Celsius (Langford 1980:12). At first these images could not be fixed and thus could not be viewed for long periods of time. In the same year a British scientist, Sir John Herschel, discovered that Hyposulphite of Soda could be used as a sufficient fixer solution (Fabian 1981:14).

With the help of mechanical inventions such as trains and the invention of steam, many photographers made use of Daguerre's invention (Fabian 1981:10). Even photographers who did not make use of these mechanical inventions, used mobile darkrooms to expose their plates in distant places. Early photographers photographed everything from the Notre-Dame Cathedral to details of roadways with Daguerre's invention. The daguerreotype craze was sweeping the land (Fabian 1981:8).

Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre

Fig. 1.1 The inventer of the Daguerreotype Process.
(Fabian 1981:8)

The main problem concerning the Daguerreotype process was that copies could not be made from the original Daguerreotypes. By 1940 an Englishman, Henry Fox Talbot, invented a process which solved this problem. This process involved the use of the very first negative. He called his process the Calotype process (Fabian 1981:14).

The negative was made from high quality writing paper, which was sensitized with sodium chloride and a solution of silver nitrate (Fabian 1981:14). Compared to the Daguerreotype process the exposure was relatively shorter. The image was then developed by using a bath of silver oxide treated with gallo nitrate of silver (Fabian 1981:14).

To produce a positive, another sheet of prepared paper was contacted face down onto the negative and exposed in bright light. The image was then fixed, by using the technique adopted from Herschel's invention (Fabian 1981:14).

A travel photographer, who adopted Talbot's invention was Maxime Du Champ. Maxime travelled with a friend, Gustave Flaubert, who was a writer, to the Middle East. Maxime produced two hundred and twenty Calotype's, during his two year journey, he photographed everything that caught his attention, which included ancient architecture to landscapes (Fabian 1981:348).

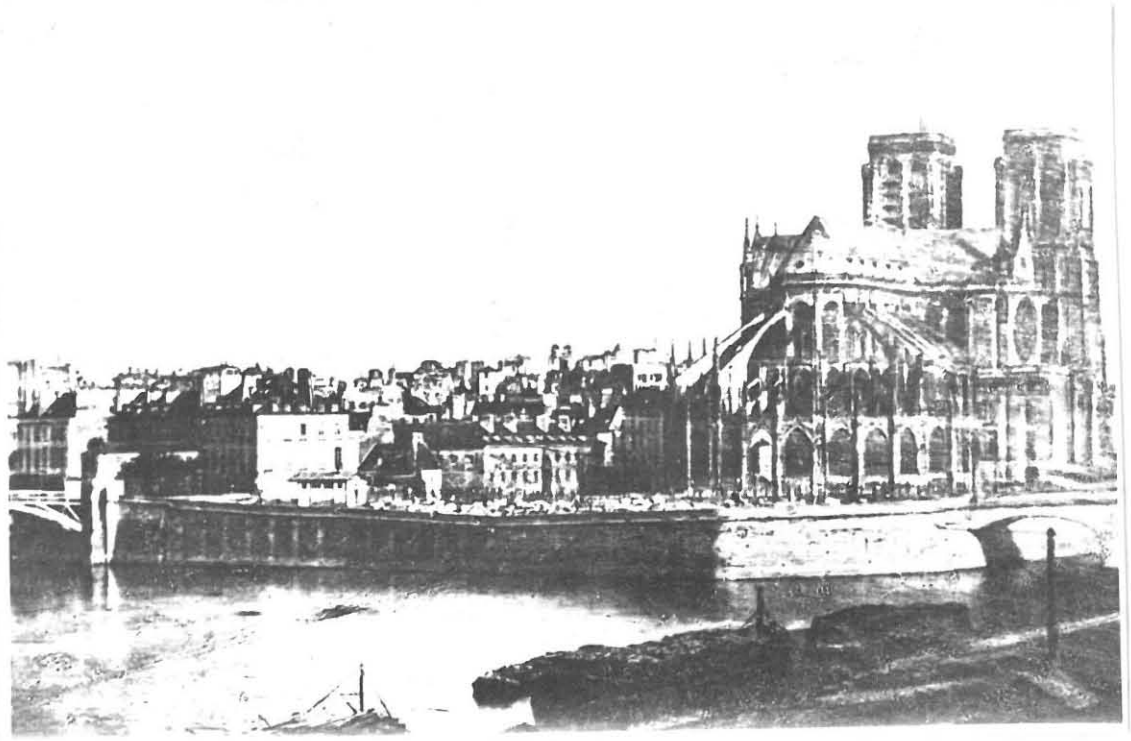

Fig. 1.2 A Daguerreotype of the Notre-Dame Cathedral.
(Blaker 1988:5)

In 1852, 122 of Maxime's 220 albumen prints were published in a book, which was the first book to contain original photographs in France (Fabian 1981:57).

For the travel photographer, this process took a long time to complete and the paper prints were not of the same quality of original Daguerreotypes. Due to these reasons few photographers adopted this technique (Langford 1980:19).

A photographic breakthrough came with the invention of the 'Wet Plate' process'. This process combined the image quality of the Daguerreotypes and the ability to produce many copies from the negative, adopted from the Calotype process.

This new invention was invented by a London sculptor, Frederick Scott Archer in 1851 (Langford 1980:27). A sticky solution of Collodion was spread over a sheet of glass which was sensitised with Silver Nitrate. The glass sheet was then placed in the camera and exposed between a period from thirty seconds to two minutes. The image was developed by pouring Pyrogallic Acid over the glass, fixed with hyposulphite of Soda, washed and dried (Langford 1980:27).

The prints were produced using the same technique as used in the Calotype process. The only difference was that the paper was first coated with a layer of Albumen and common salt, before it was sensitised with the Silver Nitrate (Langford 1980:27).

William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–77),

Fig. 1.3 The inventer of the Calotype Process.
(Fabian 1981:13)

The main problem with this invention was the fact that these glass plates were of a great size and weight, and the Collodion could not last long, once applied to the glass plates. The photographer had to be near a darkroom at all times, so photographers then converted ordinary wagons into darkrooms and storage areas for their equipment.

One of these photographers was William Henry Jackson. Jackson began his travels between 1870 and 1877, when he made no less then eight trips to the American Frontier while working for the United States Geological Survey of the Territories (Fabian 1981:349). Jackson was the first photographer to ever enter the famous Yellowstone region. It was due to him that the Yellowstone region was made a national park, (Langford 1980: 83) saved for the travel photographer of the future.

Another important travel photographer was a man by the name of Francis Frith. His interest in travel began in 1856, when he ventured on the first of three trips from, England to Egypt, and Palestine. Three years later he travelled up the Nile, 1,500 miles south of Cairo, to a region where no photographer had ventured before. He later published a book, "Egypt and Palestine", which consisted of 140,000 original Albumen prints (Fabian 1981:349).

In 1879 the Dry Plate process was invented, these plates contained a new binder called Gelatin.

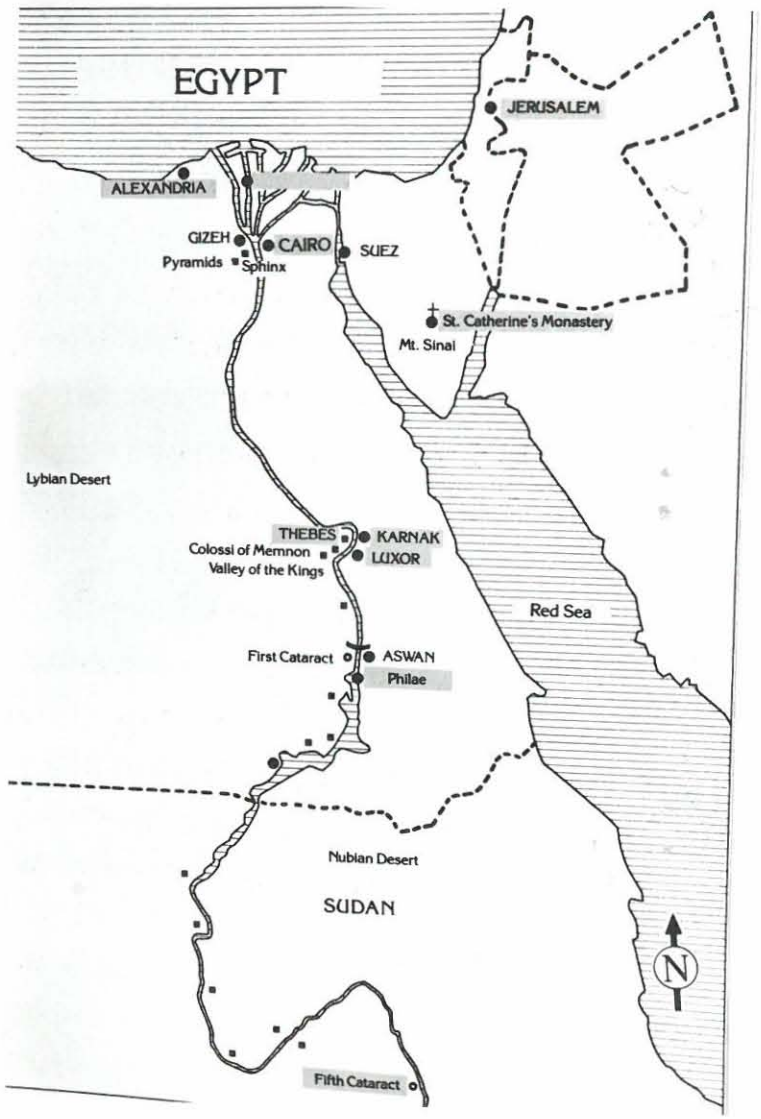

Fig. 1.4 Francis Frith's travels to Egypt.

(Fabian 1981:11)

This process was invented by a English doctor, Richard Leach Maddox (Langford 1980:50). This emulsion could last much longer than the Collodion emulsion and by using a process called Ripening, these plates would be so sensitive that exposures of a 1/125 of a second could be used. The term Ripening was a process used to sensitise the plates by extending the heating process during the manufacture of these plates (Langford 1980:50).

Within the next ten years a very important development took place, which made travel photography much easier for the travel photographer. This development was the invention of a handheld camera, called the Kodak no. 1 camera, invented by George Eastman in 1888 (Langford 1980:50). The Kodak no. 1 could be purchased from Eastman's company for twenty five dollars, which included a roll of 6 metre light sensitive material already loaded in the camera. After the film had been exposed the camera itself could be returned to Eastman's company and processed for ten dollars. Eastman's slogan, "you press the button, we do the rest" (Langford 1980:51) was quite true and encouraged many amateurs to take up photography.

All these developments combined, formed travel photography as it is known today. Quality images could be produced with much more ease than before, and travel photography was here to stay.

Fig. 1.5 Francis Frith, Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, 1859 (Fabian 1981:29)

CHAPTER TWO

EQUIPMENT AND FILM

CAMERA'S AND LENSES

For the travelling photographer it is important to pack a kit that is light, compact and relatively varied in lenses to capture for many different types of photographs which are going to be taken. The single lens reflex camera can offer all this.

The single lens reflex or SLR camera is widely used in society today, due to its many advantages. The photographer is able to view and focus through the lens and is therefore able to precisely frame the image. Secondly almost all SLR's can accept a wide range of lenses, which allows the photographer to manipulate the image in a way the photographer wishes (Bodin 1982:5).

The author uses a Pentax K 1000 35mm camera with a 50mm lens and a Pentax Ashahi MX 35mm camera with a 28mm lens. The 50mm lens is the standard lens used for the 35mm system, which means that the images captured are very similar to how the eye sees.

A 28mm lens is known as a wide angle lens, these lenses cover, across the angular diagonal of the negative, an angle of view of 60° or more (Focal Encyclopedia 1969:1674). Wide angle lenses offer great depth of field which means that with the aid of good lighting the majority of the elements in the image will be in sharp focus (Purcell 1988:44).

To fill in the needs of lenses with fixed focal lengths it is best to incorporate a zoom lens into the photographic collection, these lenses are very handy for the travelling photographer because one lens can be carried around instead of a couple of different lenses.

FILTERS, TRIPODS AND FLASH.

Other equipment such as filters can enhance an image. The best filter for colour photography is the Polarizing filter. This filter removes unwanted reflections (Focal Encyclopedia 1969: 1136) and impressionably darkens the sky. If the sky is slightly cloudy, the clouds will be enhanced, giving a lovely mood to the photograph.

A tripod is used as a support for the camera (Focal Encyclopedia 1969:1588) used when exposures longer than 1/60 of a second are used. When using a tripod it is always advisable to use a cable release to trigger the shutter, so that absolutely no movement occurs during the exposure.

A flash has two functions, one it can be used as a light source when lighting conditions are poor and secondly, used as a fill in, meaning that the back lighting is stronger than the front lighting causing detail to be lost. The flash can be used to bring out this foreground detail.

CLEANING EQUIPMENT.

Camera cleaning equipment is essential for all photographers. It includes cleaning fluid and lens tissues for lenses and a blower brush, which the photographer can use to remove dust particles from within the camera body. If these dust particles are not removed it can result in badly scratched negatives and badly marked photographs. Remember good care of all the equipment results in a good image.

CHOICE OF FILM.

The type of film taken on a trip depends entirely on the photographer, but a good supply must be kept on hand.

Film includes black and white, colour and reversal film. The most universal film is slide film, good quality prints and even black and white can be produced. This is done by transferring colour slide to black and white negative film and making a print (Purcell 1988:45).

Standard film has a film speed of 100 ISO, which refers to the films sensitivity to light (Purcell 1988:45). The higher the ISO rating the more sensitive the film is. This means that shorter exposures are needed for photographs taken on 200 ISO compared to 100 ISO.

X-RAY.

For the travelling photographer there are hazards when

encountering x-ray's at airports. Scanners at airports are not likely to harm film, but poorly adjusted machines, or repeated scannings can fog film. Foil bags from some photographic shops do give protection against this hazard (Time Life Books 1982:89).

CHAPTER THREE

USE OF LIGHT

"Light is merely one of the many forms found in nature."

(Focal Encyclopedia:864)

The type of light most often used in travel photography is natural light with the sole source being the sun.

What makes natural light so effective is the hardly noticeable separation between the subject and the lighting, which works well for travel photographs. When using the sun as a main light source one can obtain many different effects, firstly the way the sun's rays moves through the atmosphere before reaching the object. Secondly, weather conditions change the effects as well, this includes cloud cover and even pollution. Lastly the surroundings of the object photographed, where the light is absorbed and reflected (Freeman 1988:22).

The best time to work with the light from the sun is early morning or late evening, roughly a hour before sunrise and sunset. Best lighting conditions can be obtained when photographing at this time. The majority of the light is backlighting which could result in silhouettes in the foreground, this could enhance the image if so desired, although fill in flash could be used to illuminate objects close to the camera.

Good light conditions are bright enough to make exposures at the right f-stop to obtain maximin depth of field, but at other times even daylight can be so poor that a tripod is needed to obtain an adequate depth of field. According to professionals the best time to take photographs during the day is between sunrise and 10:00 or 11:00 and again from 15:00 or

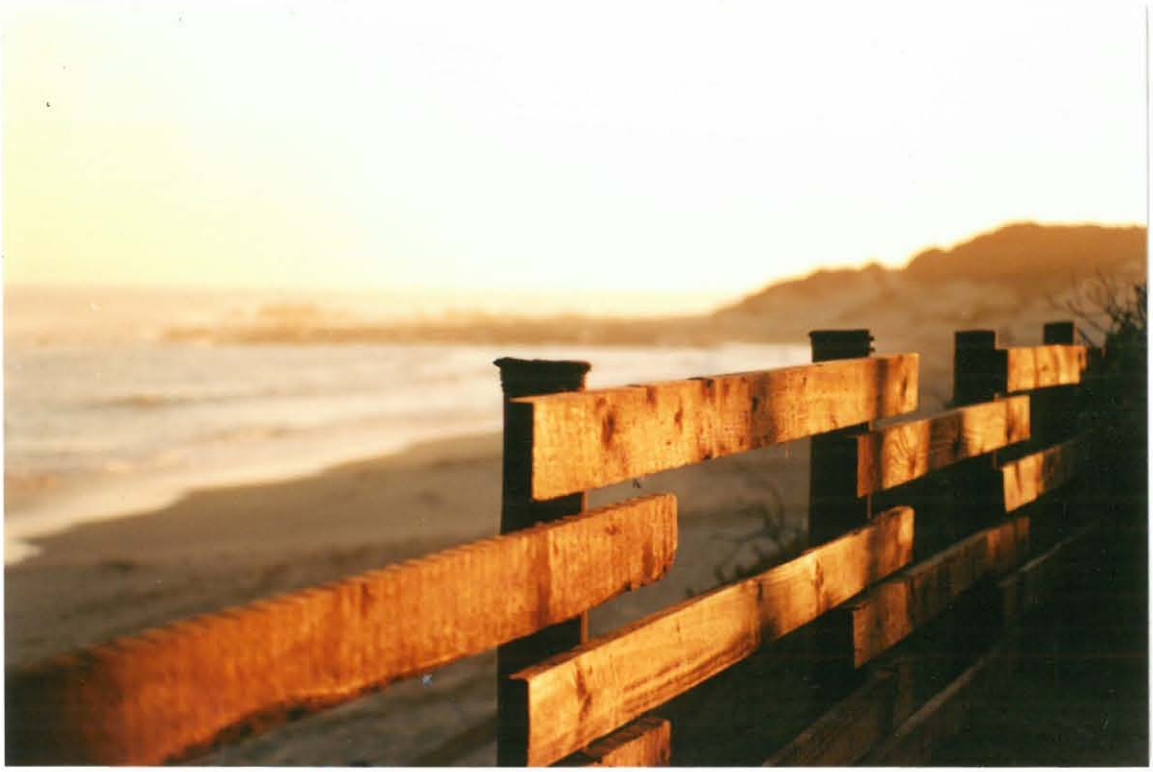

Fig. 3.1 The effect of the sun before Sunset.

M. Rowe

16:00 until sunset (Jacobs 1991:78).

Light can changes every minute, when comparing high sun to low sun, both have disadvantages as well as advantages. Photographs taken when the sun is high result in a difficulty to obtain character in the photographs. High sun on the other hand is useful for subjects that are strong in shape, tone, pattern and colour, like modern architecture (Freeman 1987:163).

Low sun can result in photographs with a warm feel and warm colours, but the lighting is very unpredictable, depending on the direction of the light and the weather conditions (Freeman 1987:163).

Fig. 3.2 The effect of morning sun a hour after Sunrise.

M. Rowe

Central University of Technology, Free State

CHAPTER FOUR

TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

THE DIAMOND FIELDS - KIMBERLEY

Mining is an important economical lifeline in the Northern Cape. The historic era began when a boy found a shiny pebble, which turned out to be a twenty carat diamond. A little while later the 'Star of South Africa' a eighty three carat diamond was found and the rush for diamonds was on (The South African Northern Cape:10).

The present day city of Kimberley still has many old buildings which remind visitors of it's historical significance. A reconstruction of the original mining town still stands today, lying right next to the Big Hole, the largest man-made excavation in the world (The South African Northern Cape: 10).

Other tourist attractions include the Humphreys Art gallery, which contains paintings of south African artists, as well as works of sixteen and seventeen century Flemish and Dutch artists. The national monument of the Dutch Reformed Church which dates back to 1871, as well as other monuments, museums and memorials, attracts the travelling photographer (Kimberley:12).

SETTLERS COUNTRY - GRAHAMSTOWN.

Grahamstown was originally an abandoned farm known as 'De Rietfontein' It was proclaimed Graham's Town on the 14th of August 1812, by a Colonel John Graham. De Rietfontein was used as a military headquarters to clear the amaXhosa from the

Zuurveld and restore the boundary of the Great Fish River (Settlers Heritage:Walton, P.E.)

By 1820 the British Settlers arrived in Grahamstown, which at that stage only consisted of twelve houses. Since then the town developed using the style of the settlers, which can still be seen today in it's architecture (Settlers Heritage:Walton, P.E.).

One of the major tourist attractions to Grahamstown is the famous Camera Obscura which represents the beginning of photography. Travellers can also appreciate the beautiful architecture along the wide, quiet streets, and in July enjoy the festivities of the Grahamstown Arts Festival.

THE HEART OF THE SUNSHINE COAST - PORT ALFRED.

Port Alfred is also well known as the Kowie because of the Kowie river which runs through the town. The river joins the sea to the Royal Alfred Marina and small boar harbour (Port Alfred:13).

Port Alfred has a relaxed atmosphere and beautiful beaches. The beaches are long stretches of magnificent golden sands adjoining the Indian ocean (Port Alfred:13).

Tourists can enjoy all water sports and play golf at the Port Alfred Royal Golf Club. Tourists can also experience farm life by visiting, Summerhill, which is a tourist farm very

near to the town. Summerhill is also the home of the giant pineapple (Port Alfred:13).

For the tourist who is interested in the history of Port Alfred, they can visit the Kowie museum. A series of photographs are displayed here, to show the places of historical significance in Port Alfred and surrounding districts (Port Alfred:26).

THE PERFUME ISLANDS - COMORO ISLANDS.

The Comoro Islands are situated in the Indian ocean, north-west of Madagascar. They consist of four islands namely, Grand Comore, Anjuan, Moheli and Mayotte. They are of volcanic origin, surrounded by breathtaking coral reefs (World Travel Guide 1994:181). The island of Grand Comore is most frequently visited by tourists.

The capital of Grand Comore is Moroni, which has narrow, winding streets, modern government buildings and the market place. Tourists can purchase numerous products at this market, such as jewellery, carved chests, pottery, baskets and many more different products. In Moroni a number of mosques can be seen, which shows the religion of the inhabitants, all the inhabitants are Muslim.

Due to the islands volcanic origin, tourists can attempt a climb up Mount Karthala and descend into the largest still active volcano in the world (World Travel Guide 1994:182).

Fig. 4.1 Train Coach at the Kimberley Mine Museum.

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Fig. 4.2 A Anglo Boer monument in front of the Methodist Church in Grahamstown.

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Fig. 4.3 View of the Kowie River and Marina, Port Alfred.

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Fig. 4.4 Overlooking Harbour, to the Mosque, Moroni.

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CHAPTER FIVE

TYPES OF TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

Architecture is exciting to photograph, with a variety of exhibiting the creativity of the architects involved. There are many designs of architecture ranging from ancient buildings to skyscrapers.

Photographers do not have to be technically skilled in architecture photography, trained in the field. Travel photographers who use a simple 35mm camera and through the lens light metering can produce highly professional photographs (Purcell 1988:76).

Architecture includes interior and exterior architecture. Exterior photographs can include the entire building or a detail thereof. Detail can give the idea of how the building was constructed, while entire buildings show how the building fits into its surroundings.

PEOPLE PHOTOGRAPHY.

Many photographers are afraid of photographing people, many feel that camera's invade people's privacy. Professional travel photographers must return home with some photographs of people, because people are important to any location coverage (Purcell 1988:91).

The best way to photograph people is to take photographs when the subject is not aware that photographs are been taken. The subject is then relaxed and looks natural.

Fig. 5.1 Detail Architecture. Moroni, Grand Comore.

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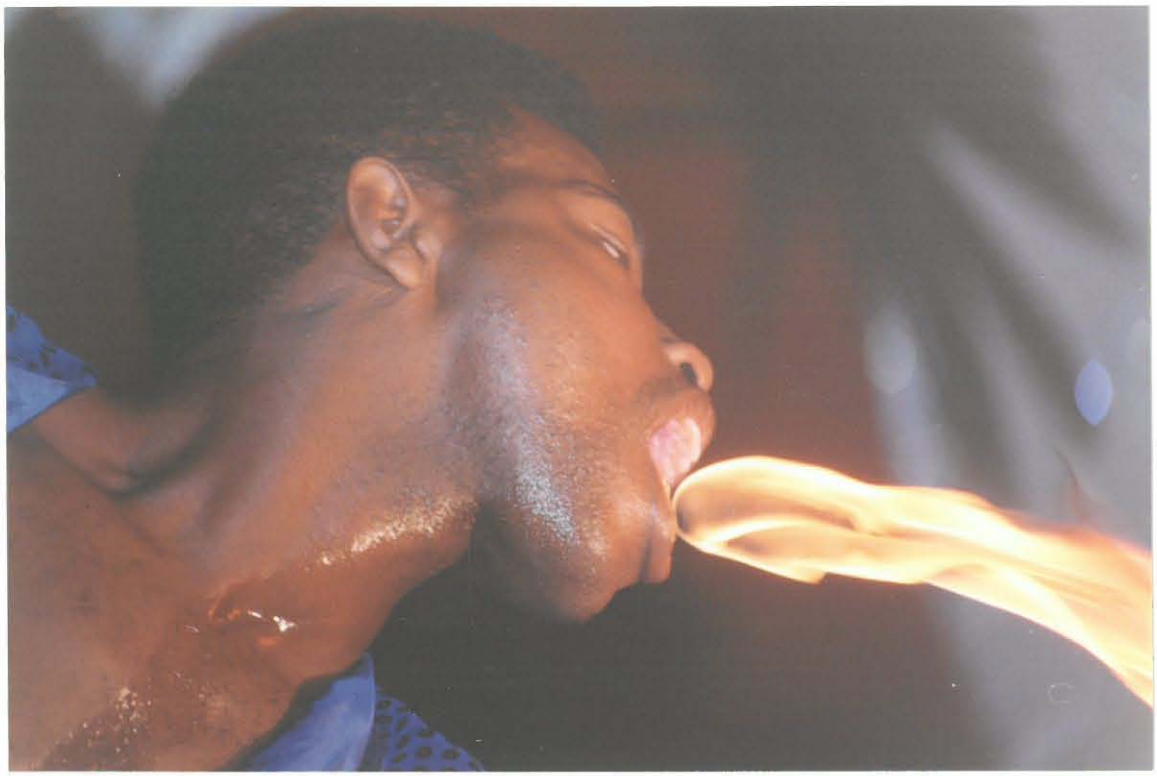

Fig. 5.2 Fire Eater.

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LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY.

To take successful landscapes the photographer must be able to analyse elements within the image. Some photographers make use of line, that leads the eye into the landscape, while others use strong shapes as the major element in the photograph. The use of texture and patterns could be just as effective (Caulfield 1987:49).

The use of focal points in landscape photography is essential. This is done by placing emphasis on some of the elements in the photograph. This can be done in two ways, firstly by using minimum depth of field, so that certain elements are sharp in focus compared to the rest of the image, and secondly by using elements that add contrast in tone and colour to the rest of the picture (Caulfield 1987:60).

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY.

Nature photography includes wild-life and plant-life. Subjects range from a simple tree photographed against the blue sky to the fine detail of a leaf.

The travelling photographer uses nature to show the viewer plant life and animal life in the different destinations.

With nature photography it is essential to make use of some camera support, especially with close-up photographs. Long exposures will be needed to obtain maximum depth of field.

Fig. 5.3 Comores Landscape.

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Fig. 5.4 Abstract Trees.

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CHAPTER SIX

AUTHORS WORK

DUNLUCE HOUSE - KIMBERLEY.

Figure 6.1 represents a house which has historical significance in Kimberley. When visiting this house, one can see how people lived towards the end of the previous century. This house was built is 1897 and still contains some of the original furniture used during that era.

The photograph was taken with a 28 millimetre lens to obtain a large angle of view, taken at a low angle. To obtain the deep blue colour of the sky a Polarizing filter was used.

BOY FISHING.

Figure 6.2 represents a determined young fisherman, who refuses to give up on his goal. The moody, evening light gives evidence to this statement.

The image was taken with a 75 to 200 millimetre zoom lens, set to the maximum setting, of 200. The exposure used was f11 at 1/30 of a second with the aid of a sturdy tripod.

GRAHAMSTOWN CATHEDRAL.

Figure 6.3 was taken in the Settler City, Grahamstown. It is a detail architecture of the St. George and St. Michael Cathedral. The building was established in 1824 and erected opposite the only triangular "church square" in the country. Grahamstown has had its own Bishop since 1852 who is seated in this Cathedral.

The photograph was taken with a 28 millimetre lens and a Polarizer filter. The Polarizer filter brings out the cloud, and gives the sky a deep blue colour. The image was taken about ten 'o clock in the morning with adequate lighting conditions. It was photographed at f11 at 1/125 of a second.

BEACH AT SUNRISE.

Figure 6.4 was taken from a beach chalet at the Flame Lily Resort in Port Alfred. The early morning photograph was taken using a standard 50 millimetre lens, on a tripod at 1/30 of a second at f5.6. The exposure reading was taken directly into the light of the sun, giving a nice silhouette of the railings in the foreground.

WRECK ON BEACH.

Figure 6.5 was taken of a ship wreck washed to the shore in Cannon Rocks, a holiday village, near Port Alfred.

The photograph was taken using the Polarizer filter attached to a 28 millimetre lens. The capture of the water around the wreck adds to the feel of the photograph, giving the effect that the water had pushed the ship ashore. Due to the good lighting conditions 1/125 of a second could be used at a setting of f16, giving maximum depth of field.

Fig. 6.1 Dunluce House - Kimberley.

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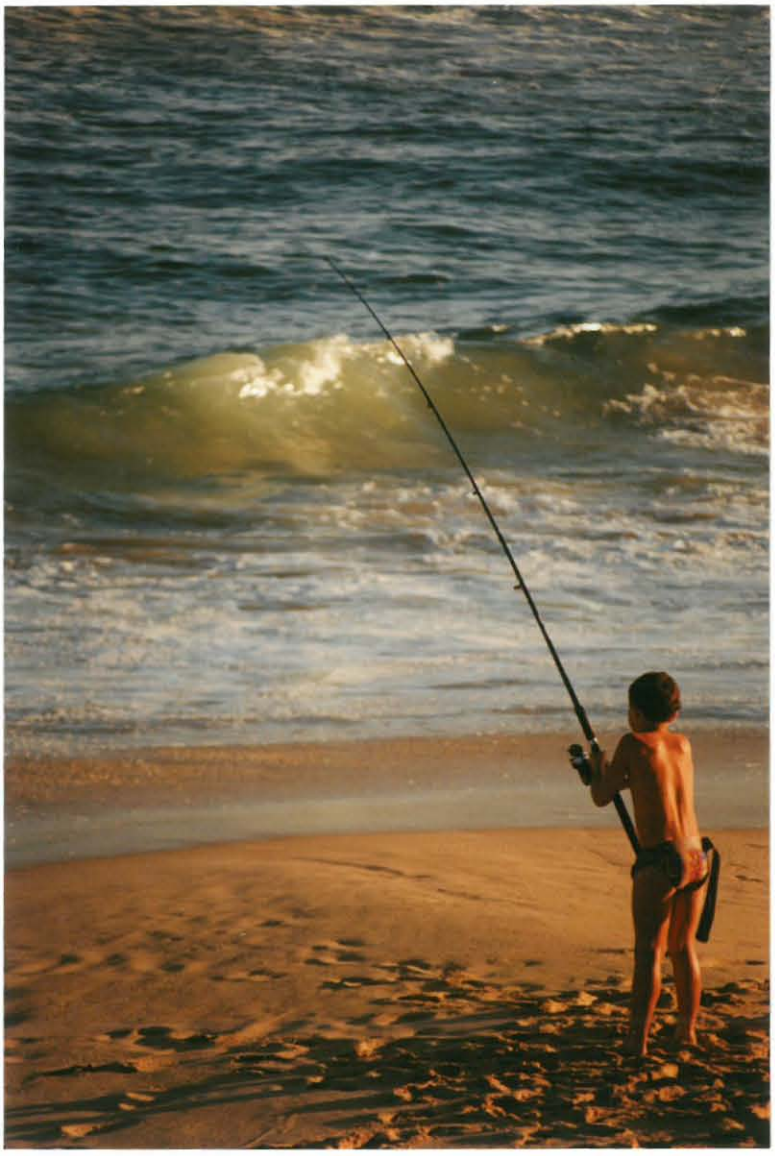

Fig. 6.2 Boy Fishing.

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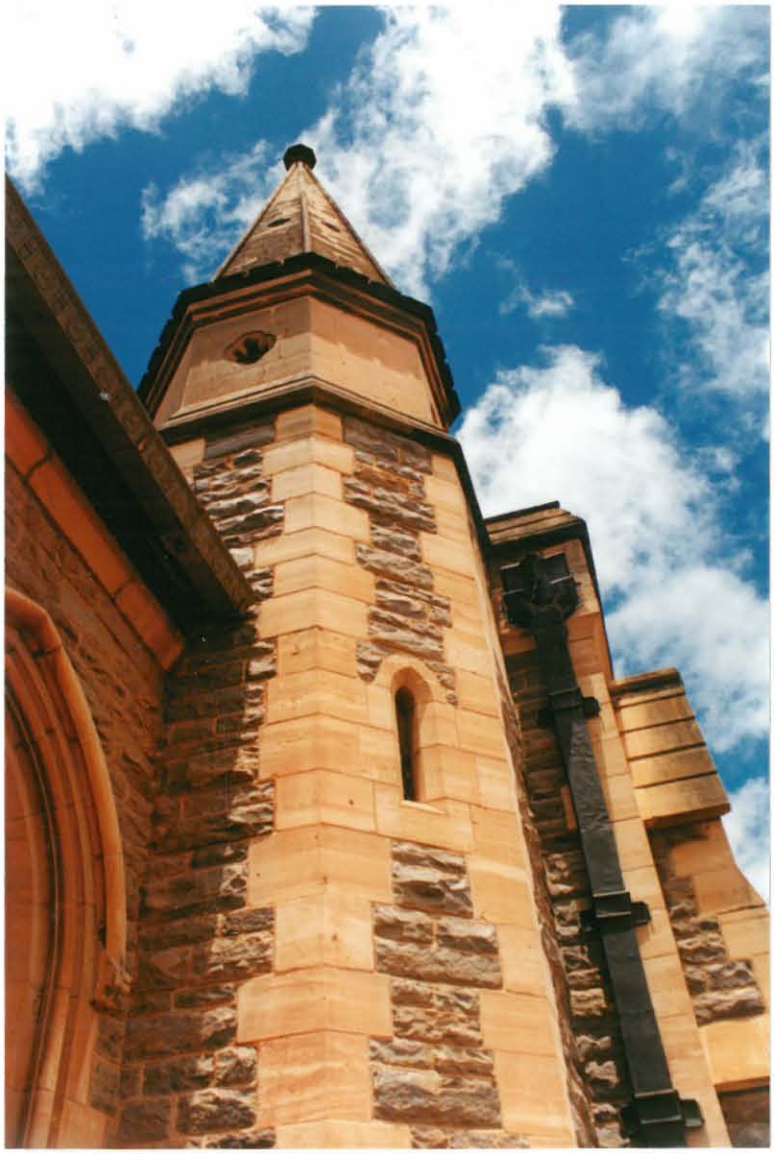

Fig. 6.3 Grahamstown Cathedral.

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Fig. 6.4 Beach at Sunrise.

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Fig. 6.5 Wreck on Beach.

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GALAWA ON BEACH.

Figure 6.6 was taken relatively nearby with a 28 millimetre lens and Polarizer.

The photograph was taken relatively early in the morning which can be seen by the long shadows thrown by the traditional fishing boat.

LOW VIEW OF MINE-SHAFT.

Figure 6.7 was taken in the wonderful mine museum in Kimberley.

The image was taken using a wide angle 28 millimetre lens with a Polarizer attached. This resulted in the distortion of the entire object to a point at the top, where clouds are visible.

OFF-SHORE GALAWA

Figure 6.8 was taken a few metres from the shores of the Le Galawa Hotel in the island of the Comores.

The photograph was taken with a 28 millimetre lens with a Polarizing filter attached, the filter gave the sky a deep blue colour and brought out the colour of the clear water which surrounded the Galawa.

Fig. 6.6 Galawa on Beach.

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Fig. 6.7 Low view of Mine-shaft.

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Fig. 6.8 Off-shore Galawa.

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PALM TREE TOWARDS SKY.

Figure 6.9 was taken during one of the photographers walks to a nearby village in the beautiful Comores.

The slanted palm tree immediately becomes the focal point of the landscape, because of its relative size to the rest of the landscape. This was achieved by using a wide-angle 28 millimetre lens, with a Polarizing filter attached to the lens.

SEASCAPE SHOWING PRIMITIVE ARCHITECTURE.

Figure 6.10 was taken at a village very near to the capital of the Comores, Moroni. The image shows the type of architecture which is seen on the island.

The black rocks represents the islands volcanic origin, which becomes part of any seascape taken in the Comores.

ABSTRACT OBJECT IN OCEAN.

Figure 6.11 was taken during a ride on one of the traditional fishing boats of the Comores. Using a wide-angle lens the photographer achieved to show the vastness of the Indian Ocean compared to the detail of a single object.

The reflection of the sun's rays in the ocean leads the eye from the object, but disappears in to the distance.

COMOREAN WOMAN IN VILLAGE.

Fig 6.12 was taken in a village, very near to the hotel in the Comores. The image was taken with a 28 millimetre lens to reveal what the villages look like on this primitive island.

Just at the time as the image was about to be taken a Comorean women walked past the camera, this was the element the photographer was looking for, this added a journalistic feel to the photograph.

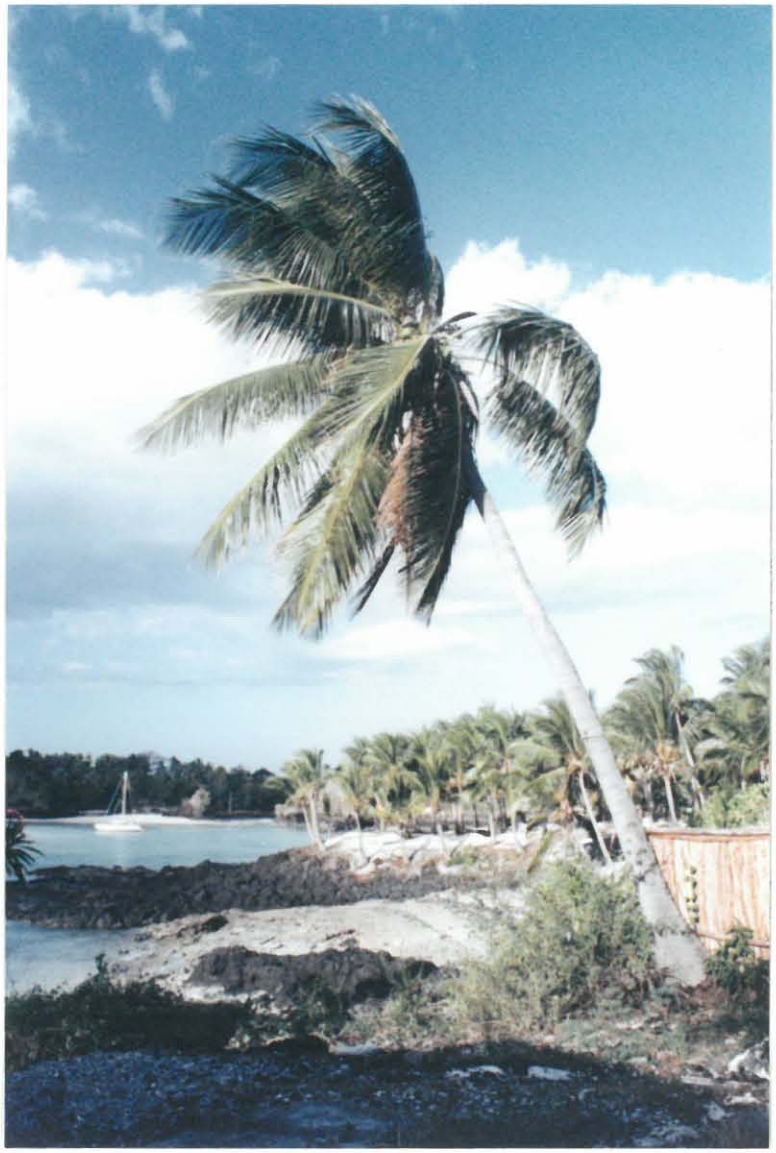

Fig. 6.9 Palm Tree towards Sky.

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Fig. 6.10 Seascape showing Primitive Architecture.

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Fig. 6.11 Abstract Object in Ocean.

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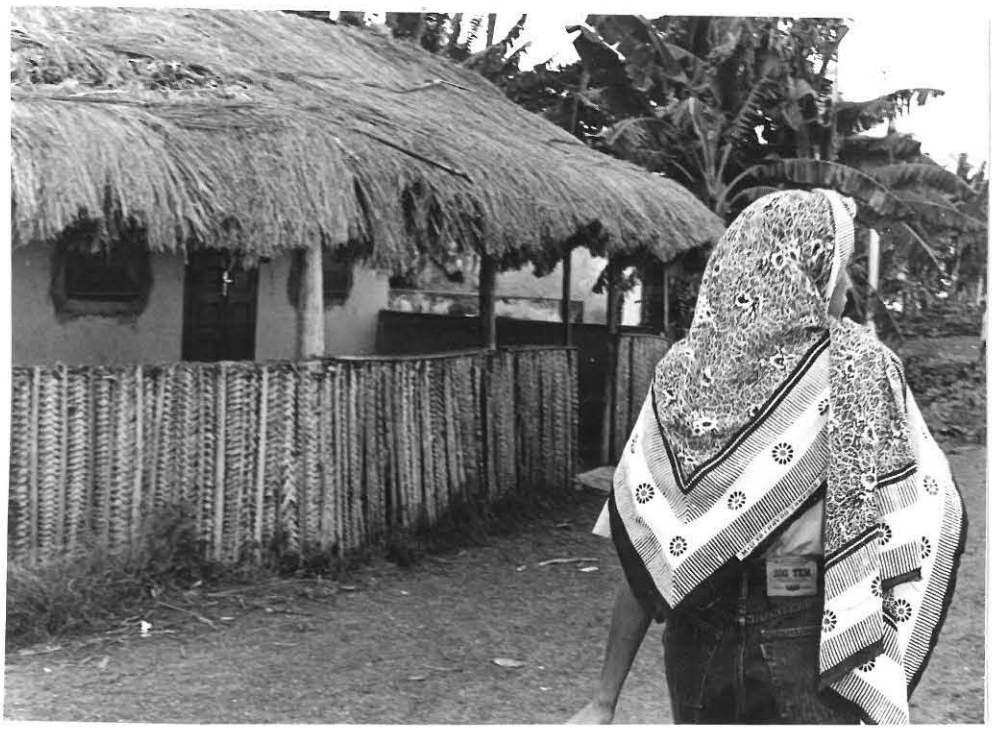

Fig 6.12 Comorean Woman in Village.

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CONCLUSION

The key to becoming a successful photographer is to build up files of images taken at different destinations. Start by taking photographs of nearby towns and even in one's own neighbourhood to find out which travel photographs work and which one's don't.

Travel photography is a growing medium, for the amateur and the professional, that will last for many years to come.

When travelling it is important to use equipment that one feels comfortable with and succeed in capturing the feel of a certain place. This is why the author has so often used a wide-angle lens to capture the environment forever.

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