

HOW I GOT INTO PHOTOGRAPHY

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A 15-Year-Old's First Photographs

Some of you have asked me how I got into my hobby of photography and here it is. It happened in 1957 when I was fifteen-years old. My parents sent me on a trip with a bunch of other kids riding an old school bus across the country. Of course I had never done anything like this before so it was very exciting to even think about much less do it. For one, I was very shy at the time and seldom had left home for anything and suddenly I was riding with a bunch of kids (mostly a little older than me) on a couple of old yellow school buses heading for the west coast, and with a dip into Mexico and then all the way back across Canada. For sure I couldn't imagine it.

Before I left on the trip my dad (who was a very good amateur photographer) handed me his little Kodak Retina 2a camera and a light meter. He then carefully explained how to use them both; I am sure (or it is my guess) that he had no expectation that I would remember all that much of what he said, much less painstaking follow his instructions. I did remember everything and I even spent most of my "treats" money for the trip on more film. And after that I even wrote home for more money for yet more film.

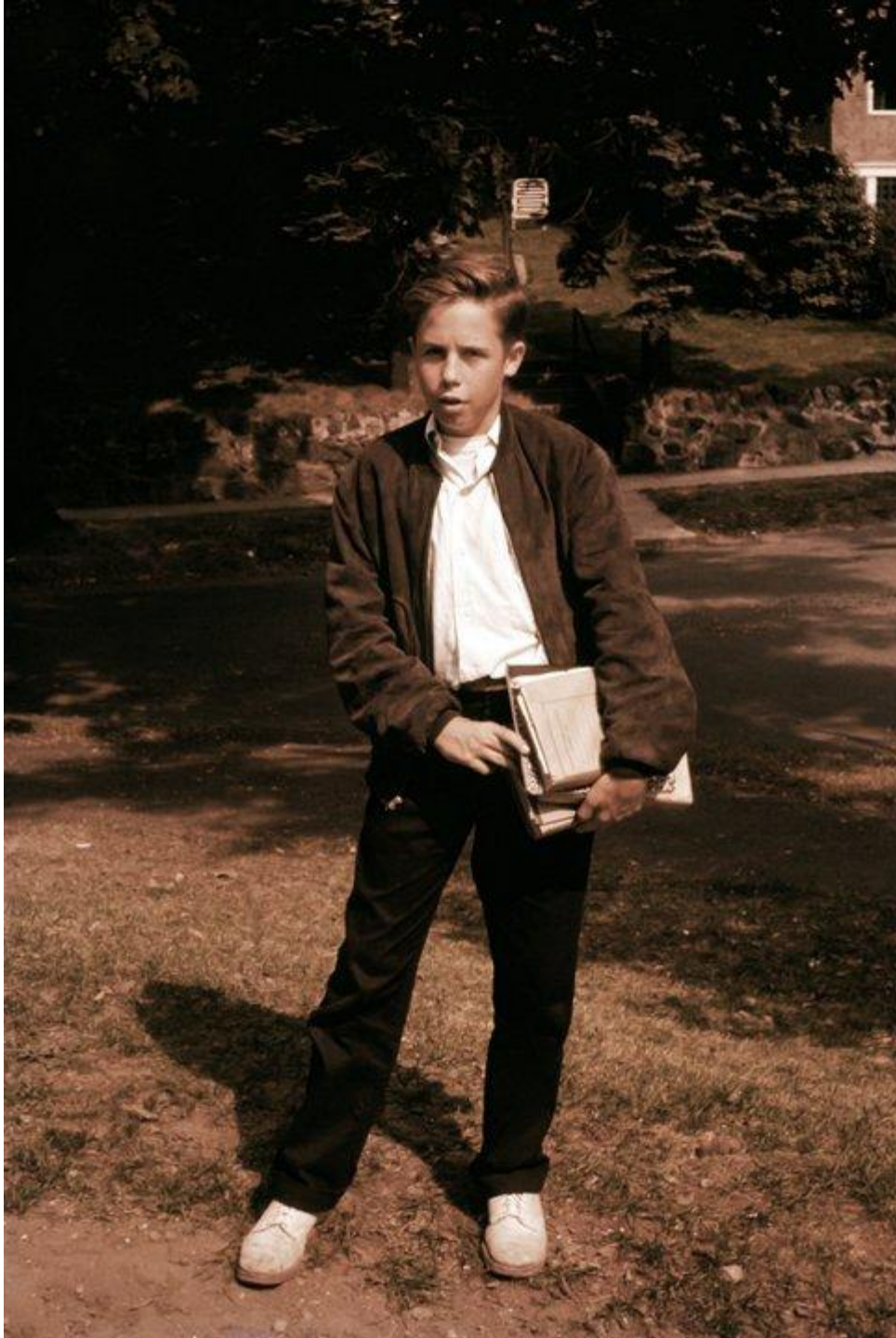
The trip was an eye-opener for a fifteen-year old kid with no social knowledge much less travel experience, and when I came back dad had the rolls of film developed. When the slides came back dad was flabbergasted at what (in his opinion or so he told me) great photos (photographically speaking) they were. I of course had nothing to compare them to. I just had done my best to do what he said.

It was one of the few times in my life that my father was actually taken by surprise (in a good way) by something I did. Mostly (starting a few years later) I was probably a big disappointment to him because I dropped out of high school, did exactly what I wanted, and was not interested in business or business people until rather late in life. After all, I became an astrologer! How weird that must have appeared to him.

And my younger brother Stephen did too! Two astrologers in the same family... and on it went. Dad had five sons (and no daughters) and we all more or less found ways around taking the obvious course our father would have laid out for us. Both my mom and dad were graduates of the University of Michigan. Their five sons mostly took different paths. Sorry dad for the suffering and probably humiliation that caused!

Anyway here are a few of my photos from that summer trip of 1957 for those of you who want to see my first efforts at photography. I was probably better back then than I am now.

P.S. You will have to forgive the quality of the photos. They did not scan well from 54-year old slides with dust on them. Here they are.



That's me in 1957 with my white bucks and charcoal-suede jacket.



I was already seeking out compositions.



This must be in western Canada.



Salt Lake City.



Bryce Canyon.





Lake Louisa, Alberta.









Bryce Canyon.





Alberta, Canada.





Here I am with a boa constrictor. I was a herpetologist early on and know all about reptiles and amphibians. Mostly I was studying salamanders and frogs.