

The Serendipity of St. Paul

Photographs

by

Joe Lipka

Fred Picker defined “Cruisin’ fer Snaps,” as a leisurely drive through the countryside (with the sun always behind you) searching for the Great Photograph. This is a particularly wonderful way to (photo) safari when properly supplied with a Godzilla sized tub of red twist candy and a photo-buddy to help share conversation and expenses.

Cruisin’ is not a high percentage way to create photographs because it vacillates between great subject matter at the wrong time of day (Oh, look, a great “morning shot”!) and incredibly wonderful light searching for a subject. The variables of time, place, light, weather and mental preparedness must coincide in order to create a photo worthy scenic opportunity. With that many variables involved it is a rare and wonderful thing when the Gods smile, the planets align and you can find a working cable release. If not, you have memories of pleasant conversation, a drive in the country and an empty tub of red twists - but no photographs.

When you experience this photographic serendipity you get your gear out of the truck (Successful Cruisin’ does not happen in the family sedan) you have answered the question, “What will I photograph?” in the most positive fashion. I like the old, the hand crafted, the authentic; anything that stands on its own merits and does not rely on posturing, theorizing or convoluted explanation. This place withstood the test of time. To find such a place at the right time and have the access to create photographs is true serendipity. Enjoy that moment in St. Paul, Oregon.

The Images

The Side Door

Screen Door

The Doctor's Door

Lace Curtain Window

Front Porch II

The Parlor, Afternoon

Side Porch, North

Front Door and Parlor

Side Porch, South

Front Porch I

Door Reflection and Web

Side Porch

























End Notes

Outside of Cyberspace, these photographs exist as platinum palladium prints. The final four images are 5" x 7". All other prints are 8" x 10" platinum prints produced from digitally enlarged negatives.

For those interested in the technical provenance of the 8" x 10" images, the originals were all captured on film using my trusty Wista Field 45 Camera and TMAX 400 film. The film negatives were developed in D-23 (two bath variety). The negatives were scanned on a flat bed scanner and processed in Photoshop. The good folks at Revere Graphics in Portland, Oregon converted the digital files to lithographic film. The prints were made on hand coated Bergger COT 320 paper.

I made the original exposures in September 1997 and 2000 on what has become an annual photo safari with my friend, Brooks Jensen. His help has been instrumental in helping me get digital negatives to behave in a predictable fashion.