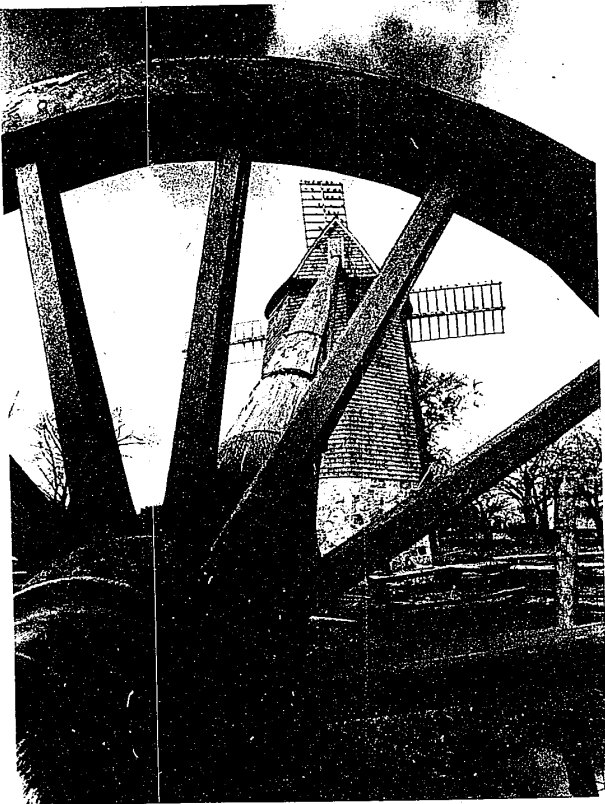




photography

Monte Nagler

# Many advantages in wide-angle lens



Here is an unfamiliar view of a familiar subject — the old mill at Greenfield Village, seen through a wide-angle lens. Many camera buffs would have skipped this day because the trees were bare. (Photo by Monte Nagler)

When it comes to buying that first accessory lens, most amateur photographers opt for the telephoto.

f/22, you never have to focus the camera as long as you are at least 10 inches from the subject.

Bringing a far-away subject up close is too tempting to pass up, and having all those inches of lens in front of us can make us look and feel like pros.

SECOND, YOU CAN get by with much slower shutter speeds with a wide-angle lens — a nice advantage when your light is limited.

But did you know that through selective cropping and enlarging, you can achieve a similar effect with your normal lens? I'm not detracting from the telephoto lens usefulness. It serves a vital function, and I have many which I use often. I'm trying to get you to think "wide angle" and realize its worth.

A 28 mm lens can be safely hand held (free from shutter release shake) at 1/30 second, but a 17 mm lens can be held at 1/15, or even 1/8 second.

A wide-angle lens will alter the depth of field and perspective and give you a picture quite unlike what a normal lens produces. Wide-angle lenses have much more to offer than the merely being able to "fit it all in the viewfinder."

With slow speed film, low level light and a desire to maximize depth of field, this can be quite an advantage. Try shooting a telephoto or normal lens at these shutter speeds and see your shaky results.

A WIDE-ANGLE LENS is one whose focal length is less than the diagonal measurement of the film. With the popular 35 mm cameras, this distance is about 50 mm.

Many photographers ask about distortion, the bending of light rays characteristic of wide-angle lenses. Buildings will curve upwards and subjects may begin to look unreal. It happens, and there may be situations when distortion is undesirable.

In short, it's a lens that "sees" more, taking in a wider expanse than a normal lens.

But the inherent distortion of wide-angle lenses can be turned to one of your biggest advantages. Selective distortion can be a plus. Strength, drama, excitement can be added to your photographs through proper use of distortion.

There are several advantages to the wide-angle lens.

Creatively used, distortion can emphasize certain parts of a picture and can give a photograph an artistic quality no other lens can produce. Sweeping foregrounds and bold subject framing are easily attainable. And you can deliberately exploit the wide-angle lens' tendency to exaggerate the size of close objects at the expense of distant ones.

First is the increase in the depth of field — the zone of sharpness finally realized in the picture. A 28 mm lens at f/8 will produce a depth of field from five feet to infinity. In contrast, a normal 50 mm lens, properly focused, will give you a depth of field of about 20 feet to infinity. This means that more of what you see in the viewfinder will be sharp and in focus.

Mastering the use of wide-angle lenses can also give you to a better understanding of normal and telephoto lenses.

Going even wider, a 17mm lens at f/22 will produce a depth of field of 10 inches to infinity. This means that, if light conditions enable you to shoot at

Monte Nagler is president of the Greater Detroit Camera Clubs Council.

P-02

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