

Joe Clark:

*His pictures tell stories
of inner human emotions*

By CRAIG NEWMAN

"Photography is a way to make a living without working," says Joe Clark.

Clark, his wife Bernice and son Junebug, have been a photographic team for many years. They have photographed both the mountains of Tennessee and the factories of Detroit. All three live in Farmington.

The eldest Clark started his photographic career in 1909 with a \$12 camera taking photos of his friends and family.

Clark, born in Cumberland Gap, Tenn., grew up in the hills. "I was a hillbilly with not too much education," he said.

Unlike most photographers, Clark sold his first picture he made. "I figured it was a way to make a living," he said.

EVER SINCE, he has been making pictures for all the big automobile manufacturers and renowned magazines.

"I have had a whole heap of pictures published in magazines," Clark said. The magazines have included "Life," "Look," "Saturday Evening Post," "Colliers" and "Coronet."

"It is pretty hard to name a big

magazine I haven't had something in."

Along with his wife and son, he has had 12 picture books published and many more in the making.

This fall, a book under the McGraw-Hill label will be marketed of the Clark's pictures from the south.

Clark has adopted a nick name—"The hillbilly snap-shooter."

"I don't know of anything else that you can have a good time at and make a pretty decent living at."

"If you don't like to roam around you ain't going to make a good photographer, you gotta be ready to move."

"Most people do not realize that there are many different types of photographers," Clark said. "They think that a photographer is a photographer and he should be able to take any kind of picture that there is."

Clark considers himself a photojournalist, not really a photographer.

He is also caught up in the constant changes in photojournalism.

"When I started making a living by photos, it was constantly changing. 31 years later it still changes everyday."

When Clark started out, camera equipment was fairly primitive compared to today's standards. Films were slower and harder to use, lenses were slow and awkward and cameras were more cumbersome.

A certain kind of satisfaction is achieved by a photojournalist when he makes good pictures, he said.

"When I make a picture, I try to get something that satisfies me and the readers, and particularly the guy who is shelling out the money."

"You have to interpret your own ideas through the camera."

Throughout his extensive career, Clark has never been a staff photographer for a publication. He feels that being a free lancer gives him more freedom to discover a greater number of things.

National Geographic was the only magazine to offer him a staff job—he turned it down.

Awards don't impress Clark, although he has received many of them, including a plaque from the World's Fair.

Clark has a contention that there is no such thing as a dull photographic assignment. He said the duller the assignment, the more challenging it can be.

"There is a great future for pictures, more are being made and used than ever."

DESPITE ALL the picture oriented magazines folding, Clark said that there is still a future in the picture magazine.



BERNICE CLARK



JOE CLARK

Below: This photograph was made by Bernice Clark. She entitled this, "The big league." She shot this photo quite a few years ago at a baseball diamond in Hamtramack. Mrs. Clark said she likes to shoot pictures that capture her eye. This one obviously did. She also likes to shoot feature, animal, wildlife and nature type photographs. Mrs. Clark was born and raised in the Detroit area.



Three-year-old Junebug Clark, photo by Bernice Clark.



JUNEBUG CLARK

Above: This baseball photo was made by Joe Clark for "Life" magazine. It also won an award for the best sports picture story of the year, accompanied with two other pictures. This picture introduced the wide angle lens to the public for one of the first times. Clark said some people complained that wide angle lenses distort the picture. But, Clark contends that this kind of lens puts an emphasis on the subject. Below: This photograph was done by Junebug Clark. He shot it as part of an essay he was doing on mini-skirts.

