

3 July 1971

Sunset, Maine, 04683

Miss Julia Scully, Editor
Modern Photography
165 West 46th Street
New York, N. Y. 10036

Dear Miss Scully:

I have finally gotten around to writing the statement
your requested, which follows:

It is usually possible to say what events most influenced
the course of one's life. In my case this is especially true. After
I was well launched on a career of scientific research and teaching
two events occurred which combined to change drastically the direction
of my interests. The effect of the first of these was only recogniz-
able in hind sight. Some time in the 1930s I met Ansel Adams at the
house of a friend in a suburb of Boston where he showed a selection
of his prints which were to be exhibited by Alfred Stieglitz. At
the time I was interested in photography only as an avocation. Adams's
photographs opened my eyes to the ultimate attainable beauty of a
photographic print. The second event, which set the course of my
career irrevocably in photography, occurred in 1939 when Stieglitz
offered me an exhibition at An American Place. The offer was the
culmination of a process of self-instruction which started with
Adams's startling revelation and continued through a series of
critical evaluations of my work by Stieglitz himself.

However, I doubt that even these encounters with Adams and
Stieglitz were the basic determinants of my becoming a photographer
which ~~went~~ much deeper and were already present when I met these men.
Other influences had more to do with determining the kind
But these

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of photography I did and the subjects I photographed than with the broader question of how I happened to take up photography as a full-time occupation.

One of these, probably the significant event which diverted my pre-occupation towards color photography, was the occasion when I showed a collection of black and white prints of birds to the Executive Editor of Houghton, Mifflin Company for publication and was told that for identification purposes bird photographs should be in color. The remark was undoubtedly an easy excuse for refusal, but it happened to coincide with the introduction of Kodachrome film on the market and set me on a new line of endeavor which soon led away from birds to more general subjects.

Yours sincerely,

EAGLE-A
TYPE-ERASE