

Statement/Information
"Grandfather Photos"

My grandfather, William Adams, has a collection of 3500 slides documenting family vacations. Interspersed throughout are images of the road of which I have selected twenty from 1950 to 1979, the years covered by his archive.

The early trips are confined to the North American continent. Later he traveled to Hawaii and Haiti. Everywhere the road is the same.

The road symbolizes both freedom and confinement. Stretching beyond the horizon, it promises infinity yet is part of a grid defining space...a grid of boundaries. Each image reflects a desire to transcend those boundaries, to reach that point of infinite space.

"...it became clear within the genre that the Western hero, winning the West, had left himself nowhere to go. Only in the postwar period did the Western discover and explore one of its central paradoxes: that the triumph of civilization meant the end of what was bad and what was good in the West and that, in helping to achieve this triumph, the Western hero acted as the instrument of his own destruction."

Lowry: Program Notes: Ride the High Country

"...But the longing for an unravished land is obviously not a new emotion for Americans...when Huck Finn lit out for territory he too, even in his time, was trying to escape the restrictions of civilized modern life...For all these men the unspoiled forests, prairies, mountains, and rivers of America make not only the setting for their quest of freedom but also the actual condition by means of which they discover their wholeness and worth as human beings."

Tilling: Easy Rider and Its Critics

Cindy Bernard
1989