

ESCHBACH INTERVIEW, CONTINUED

HDD: Tell us a little about your career in photography—how you got interested, assignments, etc.

Phil: Photography was always a hobby, developing film in the bathroom, etc. Fortunately, a family friend, my early mentor, the Episcopal priest at our parish in Cocoa, seeing my interest in photography, gave me his Leica for my first camera. (I still have it). I learned the art the hard way – by hit or miss and making mistakes that I learned from. I never took a course in it but pursued it through high school and college, using that Leica, which I eventually came to realize was one the best cameras ever built – I was so lucky for that. It was all manual, so I had to learn about lenses, shutter speeds, etc. on my own. I did read a lot about it.

All through college I honed my skills and after marriage, started out as a photo-journalist for the local city magazine. I soon realized that there was a finer category of photography which involved a much higher level of technical skill – architecture, which required large format film and cameras. I then used a 4x5 camera for most architectural photography, and even sometimes an 8x10 camera. This all went away with the advent of the digital age. I used a high-end digital Nikon camera for all these church images.

HDD: What has the making of this book taught you about the Episcopal Church, i.e., now having had this closer look at the Episcopal Church via the legacy of these Carpenter Gothic churches?

Phil: Having gone to an Episcopal day school for grammar school, then an Episcopal prep school in Richmond, Va. and then to Sewanee, I have always had the Episcopalian tradition in the background of daily life. So doing this project was a ‘natural’ – I felt right at home in every church we covered. The architecture, layout, furnishings, etc. were all very familiar. A good many of the churches we went to, we found that we had a connection through someone we knew, that they knew from another church or school.



Left to right: Trinity Church, Melrose and Christ Church, Monticello