

The Man Behind the Big Tree Photographs

Richard Malogorski, Ohio's Own Ansel Adams

**Christine Hodgson,
Chair, Ohio Tree Farm System**

Capturing the essence of nature behind a lens of a camera is a talent we all envy. Ansel Adams, world known for his photographs of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, is synonymous for this description. As the official photographer of the fledgling Sierra Club, his photographs were instrumental in persuading the United States government to include Yosemite, Sequoia, Mount Rainier and Glacier into the National Park system.

As a young man, Dayton native, Richard Malogorski studied the works of Ansel Adams and other masters such as Edward Weston and Alfred Stieglitz. Their art forms, using large format black and white photography traced the path that Malogorski would follow later in life.

Like Adams, Malogorski's first camera was a gift from his father. He first experimented with 35 mm black and white and later turned to color. But it is the black and white medium that tugs



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at Malogorski's heart. As he expresses, it is a means "to introduce your own personality into the work."

It was not until the early 90s when the transformation to large format photography was made. He first started with a camera that used 4 inch by 5-inch negatives but quickly switched to a larger 8 inch by 10-inch format. The film that is loaded into the camera is not on a typical roll but as individual sheets that are developed separately. When photographing his subjects, he employs Adam's method of photography, called the zone system. Malogorski explains that he exposes the image for its shadows but later uses the development process to enhance and sharpen the highlights.

His notoriety stems from his panoramic black and white prints that he photographs with a No. 8 Cirkut camera. There was only a brief time in history, 1904 through 1941, when panoramic cameras were produced and marketed for use in large group portraits. Disregarding its initial purpose, Malogorski saw the potential for photographing landscapes and interiors of buildings with the Cirkut. He prefers the panoramic because he studies his subject "in a very linear manner." The camera rotates 360 degrees on a tripod and the equipment weighs 50 pounds and requires at least 10 minutes to set up. Malogorski rolls each film by hand, which measures 8 inches wide up to 78 inches long. Depending upon the light conditions, each photograph may take from 20 minutes up to two hours to expose.

His annual vacations are photographic treks. Malogorski finds the backcountry intriguing and his photographs reflect the solitude and beauty of our nation's natural places. Abandoned storefronts and schoolhouses in the Great Plains depict the simplicity of life that is only now a nostalgic figment of our imagination. American ingenuity is shown in his photographs of the Shaker style round barns and in some cases American frivolity in his photograph of junk cars stacked to mimic Stonehenge. It is rare to find man or beast in the composition.

Malogorski's panoramic and large print photographs have been exhibited in numerous galleries in the Dayton and surrounding area. His prints hang on the walls in corporate offices in New York City, Hong Kong and Qatar.

When not photographing, 47-year old Malogorski is working at his job with a landscape/garden center or improving his 34-acre Tree Farm near Fairborn, Ohio.