



*B.N. Tracks across Central Avenue and
15th Avenue Northeast, Minneapolis, 1990*

BONNIE G. WILSON

*Bonnie Wilson is curator of sound and visual collections
at the Minnesota Historical Society.*

Art in



MHS COLLECTIONS

MIKE MELMAN, artist and architect, has been pursuing beauty in out-of-the-way places for the past 17 years. He photographs in railroad yards, under bridges, in basements, and in hallways, portraying visual and architectural treasures hidden from the casual viewer. To get the right atmosphere and light, he makes outdoor photos at dawn on cold days from November through March. As the Minnesota winter wanes, he moves indoors to find evocative views in nooks and crannies of public buildings, modest businesses, and neglected properties.

Over the last 10 years, Melman has regularly shared the results of his quest through an annual donation of photos to the Minnesota Historical Society's fine art photography collection. Fifty-two of his works are now in the collection, available for research and exhibition.

Although his work makes a strong argument for historic preservation, Melman feels that his mission is the portrayal of beauty. "I'm drawn to these places because they are so beautiful. I subscribe to historic preservation, but I make the pictures to satisfy my own search." His training as an architect at the University of California, Berkeley, leads him to likely subjects, while his artist's eye for light and shadow selects the time and the place to create the art and design the photos.

Found Places



James J. Hill House Laundry Room—St. Paul, 1992



Parsonage Basement, Congregational Church of Faribault, 218 3rd Avenue Northwest, Faribault, Minnesota, February 1995



Samuelson's Confectionary Store, 1505 Washington Avenue South, Minneapolis, July 1994



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