

## Time&Again

### Photography – Norman Edson and Terry Donnelly

By Bruce Haulman and Terry Donnelly

The earliest photographs we have of Vashon were taken in the 1880s, and photographers have been capturing images of the island ever since. These photographs provide a fascinating look into our past, providing a visual accompaniment to the many stories and account we have of the island's past.



"Sun's Last Glow", Norman Edson Photograph

Norman Edson is one of the photographers whose photographs have given us a peek into Vashon's past. Edson came to Vashon in the early 1920s, already

trained as an artist and a photographer. His rigorous training in Canada and France prepared his eye for making some stunning photographs. Probably his best-known work is “Sun’s Last Glow” – a photograph of Mount Rainier, taken from the north end of Vashon, framed by majestic firs, and hand tinted by the photographer. He was the only professional photographer on the Island for years. There were some significant amateur photographers who did extraordinary work, like Albert Therkelsen, but Edson was Vashon’s professional photographer whose career was photography. Edson had his own studio, his own dark room, and printed, and sometimes hand tinted, his own photographs. Edson used both glass plates and film to create his photographs, and worked mainly with a large format, wooden, box camera. The photograph of Edson at work in the forest is a good example of the photographer’s craft. Edson stands next to his camera, which is mounted on a tripod with a focusing cloth to allow him to see and focus the image on his ground glass.



Norman Edson, Vashon-Maury island Heritage Museum

In the nearly a century since Edson began photographing on Vashon much has changed in the world of photography. Terry Donnelly, came to Vashon in 1994 as an emerging landscape photographer, and in the years since has developed a national reputation with photographs used regularly by National Geographic, the Sierra Club, and the Land Conservancy. Terry's photograph "View of Mount Rainier" is a good contrast to Edson's "Sun's Last Glow." Digital sensors have replaced glass plates and film. Lightweight composite and metal handheld cameras have replaced heavy and bulky large format wooden box cameras. Built-in image stabilizers have replaced tripods, LCD screens have replaced focusing cloths, and computers, software, and high-resolution digital printers have replaced darkrooms and chemical processing. The photograph of Terry Donnelly at work in Yellowstone National Park is a good example of the modern landscape photographer at work with only a small backpack to carry all the equipment needed.



Terry Donnelly, Greg Vaughn Photograph



“View of Mount Rainier”, Terry Donnelly Photograph

These two photographs of Mount Rainier are good examples of the changes in techniques and sensibilities that have evolved between Norman Edson’s and Terry Donnelly’s photographs. While the tools and technical aspects of photography have changed dramatically, the creative fundamentals of the medium remain largely unchanged. Photographers today still find that the fundamental elements of light, color, moment, and composition, and how they are used, make all the difference in creating a photograph of meaning and expression.

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Photo 1 – Norman Edson courtesy Vashon Heritage Museum  
Photo 2 – Norman Edson “Sun’s Last Glow” courtesy Vashon Heritage Museum  
Photo 3 – Terry Donnelly courtesy Greg Vaughn / [www.GregVaughn.com](http://www.GregVaughn.com)  
Photo 3Alt – Terry Donnelly courtesy Bruce Haulman  
Photo 4 – Terry Donnelly’s “View of Mount Rainier” courtesy Terry Donnelly