

PCQC Video Presentation

Fundamentals of Travel Photography by Bob Krist—National Geographic

Lesson 21: Photographing a City: Philadelphia

This lesson will use many of the techniques of preceding lessons to paint a photographic picture, from eight perspectives, of a typical American city

- **Geography:** No city story is complete without a skyline to set the scene. The easiest skylines to shoot are those which allow ground level vantage point, like the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia
- **Architecture:** Philadelphia has a great collection of colonial buildings, skyscrapers, and European style structures. We will focus on Philadelphia City Hall, flanked by other building facades providing an excellent frame. The interior basement provides massive marble columns, shot with a wide-angle lens
- **History:** The Philadelphia historic district provides many potential shots of historic buildings. A group of reenactors dressed in period clothing always provides an opportunity for capturing the moment and place. In the example, a telephoto lens brings a building in the background forward to provide an impressive backdrop for the gathering
- **Recreation:** Check for local events to provide foreground interest to shots of impressive buildings
- **Food:** Every city has food specialties; in Philadelphia it is the Philly cheesesteak. The photographer shot a restaurant scene from behind the preparation counter rather than a typical food shot
- **Special Events:** No matter what your assignment or locale, it is worth tracking local special events such as a parade, ball game, local festival etc. In the example, a small group of musicians gather on the first Friday of each month to entertain the crowds enjoying late evening shopping and snacks. The photo is shot at twilight, so the lighting inside and outside is the same, simultaneously allowing views inside and outside the shops
- **Day-to-Day Life:** Part of photographic storytelling is to portray the day-to-day life of the city. In the example, the photographer contrasts the quiet leafy scene of Society Hill and the colorful and vibrant Chinatown
- **Serendipity:** Serendipity is usually spontaneous but sometimes the nature of the scene is attractive. Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary, no longer a prison, is a frequent tourist attraction. The photographer took advantage of a wide-angle lens, a high vantage point, a darkened space with splashes of light, and leading lines to get this memorable shot
- **Exercise:** Shoot skylines in a city near you.