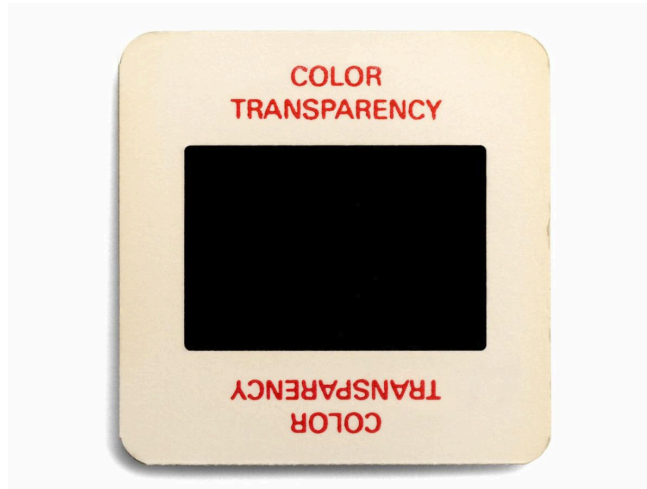


## A Three-Part Series on Slides — Part 2: From Glass to Film

*A Weekly Sunday Newsletter from Stilson Video Services*



*The familiar 35mm slide*

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Last week, we talked about glass slides—images preserved on glass and projected using a magic lantern.

As remarkable as that technology was for its time, it had limitations.

Glass is fragile. It's heavy. And it's not something you'd casually carry around to capture everyday moments.

So naturally, the next step was to find a better way.

By the early 1900s, that better way began to take shape in the form of **photographic film**.

For the first time, instead of being limited to professionals in formal settings, photography could fit into everyday life. Families could begin documenting their own lives.

As this film technology improved, a new type of slide began to emerge.

These were 35mm slides—small images mounted in familiar 2×2 inch frames. The image itself is square, and this format would go on to become the standard for decades. We scan this format more than any other in our studio.



*A typical box of slides ready to be preserved in our studio*

Unlike glass slides of the past, these were made from film transparencies. They were easier to store, easier to transport, and far less fragile. What had once required careful handling and specialized equipment was now becoming something families could manage on their own.

And then, in 1935, something happened that truly changed everything.

Color arrived in a practical, lasting way.

With the introduction of **Kodachrome** in 1935, color photography finally became practical—and reliable. Paul Simon even wrote a song about it, but I digress.

Developed by the Eastman Kodak Company, Kodachrome produced rich, natural colors that held up over time. Unlike earlier color processes that often faded or looked unnatural, these slides were designed to last. In fact, many Kodachrome slides from the 1940s and 1950s still look remarkably vibrant today.

Because the film produced a positive image, it could be projected directly—making it a perfect match for the growing popularity of slide viewing at home. Kodachrome was so effective, it wasn't discontinued until 2009.

Now for the first time, capturing life in color—and sharing it—became something many families could enjoy.



*Many of us can remember gathering to watch slide shows at home*

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This was a turning point.

Photography was no longer just about documenting something important. It became a way of holding onto everyday life.

And just as important, it became something that could be easily shared.

The idea of gathering together to view images—something that started with glass slides—began to feel more personal, more familiar and less formal.

It was becoming a common family experience. And it was only the beginning.

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**Next week:** when slides took over the living room—and why so many of them are still stored in our homes.

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**Lives are important.**

Our mission is to connect them to future generations the best way possible.

Finally, if you have a topic you'd like me to write about, let me know at [stilson@stilson.com](mailto:stilson@stilson.com) and I'll add it to the list.

— Bill Stilson  
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