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Midcentury Memories: Anonymous photography project explores family life through amateur eyes

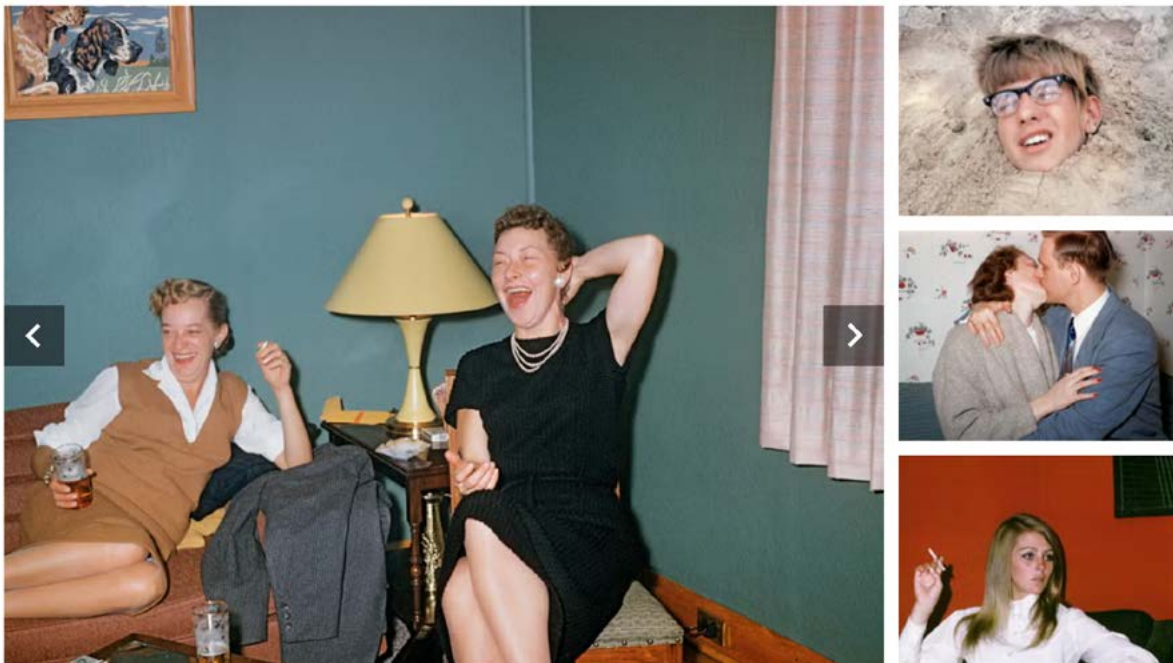
Hundreds of thousands of snapshots from the 1940s to the 1970s provide a fascinating journey back in time

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Midcentury Memories: The Anonymous Project

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Rewind back to the midcentury, before the age of Instagram and Snapchat, where people were using 35mm cameras loaded with colour film to document both monumental and mundane moments in their lives.

They took pictures of their loved ones, their vacations, their celebrations. They memorialised the births of babies; a child in a cowboy outfit; a new colour television set; sightseeing in national parks; fishing trips; lazing on the beach; weddings; office parties; **family** reunions; holding hands, kissing and dancing.

Imagining these lives and the possible stories that lie behind the images is what makes *The Anonymous Project* such a compelling journey into our past. The passing of time is enhanced by the book's narrative that begins with scenes of early childhood and ends with old age, with all the stages of life in between.

It all started with an innocent purchase on eBay. Filmmaker Lee Shulman bought a set of 35mm Kodachrome slides — anonymous family photos — and was so taken with what he calls “the emotional value of these slices of life” that he knew he had to have more.

He launched the Anonymous Project in 2017, and has since acquired around 700,000 images, both by donation and vintage sellers.

The images taken between the 1940s and 1970s offers an intimate glimpse into the lives of these anonymous subjects. The locations, dates, and the subjects may be unknown, but these shots taken by skilled amateur photographers - and the fascinating stories they contain - are universally familiar.