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Cloud Project

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For this project, we were asked to observe cloud formations, phenomena while being able to capture an artistic view of the type of cloud we choose. Over the course of the past few weeks I have documented and photographed many types of clouds in a variety of weather conditions. To photograph a cloud, it takes much more than to just point and shoot. The obstacles I ran into had to do with the direction of the sun and wind. Boulder's weather conditions are very fickle in that at any given moment the entire sky could change completely. I found that the best images of clouds occurred when I took photos at dawn right up until sunrise, or between the hours of 5:30 pm to 7:15 pm.

Clouds are identified by an international standard based on the physical observation. The camera was set to focus on infinity to enable the clouds to be in focus. The blanket of clouds shielded the natural light making the photograph shallow in tones and contrast. The image of clouds I chose to photograph illustrates a mix between cumulus and altocumulus clouds within a given time and place. Altocumulus clouds look like small cottony patches arranged in rows or other patterns, and with white and grey coloring and shadows. They contain mostly water droplets but could have some ice crystals. It is difficult for me to determine, for sure which cloud type my image falls under because while it contains aspects of altocumulus properties it also entails aspects of altostratus clouds based on the fact that these clouds create a bluish/grayish haze

hovering over the sky. With this haze a beam of sunlight can still be seen through this effect.

I took this photograph on Sept 14, 2007 at 5:50 am. These mid-leveled, scattered clouds formatted in the early morning during a wind speed of 9 MPH. The temperature was 48 degrees and the dew point was 41 degrees. My shutter speed was 1/180, my focal length was 16.00 mm, while the aperture was 7.7. I did not use a flash while photographing the clouds. When I was looking at the clouds I saw layered (stratus) clouds,

When photographing clouds the spatial resolution was poor because of the distance between the camera and the clouds were set far apart, which resulted in an out of focus image, mainly because the clouds were so far away and the smallest features were not Visible. The photograph of the cloud has excellent temporal resolution because from the camera's point of view the cloud is moving so slowly that it is standing still. While checking the levels of the photograph, I altered the color to find the dark and light colors, then snapped the neutral midtones to enhance the highlights, lowlights and midtones of the photograph. Besides cropping the outer edges of the frame, I did not alter much of the original photo.

I feel that this image effectively shows several different types of clouds. The level of ambient light was low due to the incoming rainstorm, so the clouds in the foreground had to be cropped because they were too dark after the brightness/contrast adjustments were made. Additionally, the dark trees in the foreground are distracting and they partially obscure the low cumulus clouds. Unfortunately, the few times I got far enough from town to not have buildings and trees obscuring the image, the clouds had

moved on by the time I got there, so some landscape in the photograph seems unavoidable when taking pictures of clouds near the horizon. Cloud fraction represents the portion of sky in each pixel that is covered by clouds. Satellites can measure cloud fraction over the entire atmosphere and for all types of clouds. better camera with more manual settings would have created a better picture.

My image, although interesting to look at, is lacking a bit of dramatic content and interest. I would have liked to see this image closer up, and in more focus. I could have achieved this if I were closer to the cloud position and had taken the photograph at a more direct level than angle. The darkness seen below the clouds themselves reveal the height of the clouds in comparison to the angle and direction of the sun at that given time.