



New Deal Photography

The Works of Dorothea Lange and
Walker Evans

Judith Keller

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J. PAUL GETTY TRUST, LOS ANGELES

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Introduction: A Tale of Two Photographers



Dorothea Lange had an extraordinary life and career as a prolific photographer. She worked for Arnold Genthe in his portrait studio in New York and studied photography with Clarence White at Columbia University. In 1918 she began to travel around the world to make her living as a photographer. She found herself stranded in San Francisco, so she opened a photographic studio there. Paul Taylor, who would become her second husband, hired her to document migratory workers in California.

In 1935 she began to work for the Resettlement Administration, later known as the Farm Security Administration (fig. 1). During this period, she made her most famous image, *Human Erosion in California (Migrant Mother)*, of Native American Florence Owens Thompson and her children in a pea-pickers' camp. Other less famous subjects included Japanese internment camps and scenes of workers in factories during World War II. Lange became the first woman awarded a Guggenheim fellowship, and she spent nearly ten years making photo essays for *Life* and other magazines. She also traveled extensively, making photo essays in Vietnam, Ireland, Pakistan, India, and elsewhere.



Dorothea Lange, *Resettlement Administration photographer, in California*, 1936. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

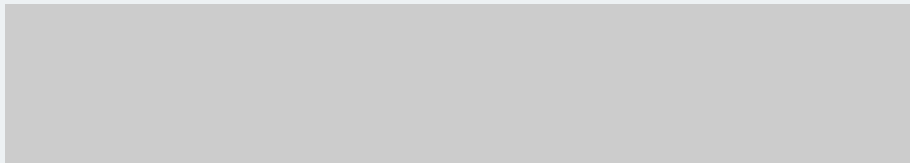


Walker Evans, *profile, hand up to face*, 1937. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

Walker Evans began to photograph in the late 1920s, making snapshots during a European trip. Upon his return to New York, he published his first images in 1930. During the Great Depression, Evans began to photograph for the Resettlement Administration, later known as the Farm Security Administration (FSA), documenting workers and architecture in the Southeastern states (fig. 2). In 1936 he traveled with the writer James Agee to illustrate an article on

tenant farm families for *Fortune* magazine; the book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* came out of this collaboration.

Throughout his career Evans contributed photographs to numerous publications, including three devoted solely to his work. In 1965 he left *Fortune*, where he had been a staff photographer for twenty years, to become a professor of photography and graphic design at Yale University. He remained in the position until 1974, a year before his death.



<https://w.soundcloud.com/player/?url=https%3A//api.soundcloud.com/tracks/336879231>

Echoing the work of Lange and Evans, contemporary photographer Chris Killip documents social landscapes and is known for a series of powerful images of struggling industrial communities in North East England.

American Photographs: Evans in Middletown

Judith Keller, Senior Curator of Photographs, J. Paul Getty Museum

Excerpt from Walker Evans: Catalogue of the Collection (1995) by Judith Keller. Available for free download in its entirety, in the Getty Publications Virtual Library.



When Evans was officially hired in October 1935 as an Information Specialist by the Historical Section of the Resettlement Administration, his duties were described as follows: "Under the general supervision of the Chief of the Historical Section with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgement and decision as Senior Information Specialist to carry out special assignments in the field; collect, compile and create photographic material to illustrate factual and interpretive news releases and other informational material upon all problems, progress and activities of the Resettlement Administration."¹ Evans was to make liberal use of his right to exercise "independent judgement" during his time with the RA, and he perpetually resisted the idea that his purpose there was to gather illustrations for the promotion of the RA's (that is, the federal government's New Deal) programs. While considering a position with the RA in the spring of 1935, he jotted down those things he would require of his employer, including the "guarantee of one-man performance," and what he would provide, adding that he should not be asked to do anything more in the way of political propaganda: "[I] Mean never [to] make photographic statements for the government or do photographic chores

for gov or anyone in gov, no matter how powerful—this is pure record not propaganda. The value and, if you like, even the propaganda value for the government lies in the record itself which in the long run will prove an intelligent and farsighted thing to have done. NO POLITICS whatever." (Evans 1938)



<https://youtu.be/BpGN0UUtqQU>

A selection of Walker Evans photos from the across the United States of America, 1930s. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Because his pictures had been issued by the agency with policy-approved captions for the past three years, Evans felt the need in 1938 to distance himself from that establishment, as well as the world of commercial publishing, by prefacing *American Photographs* with this statement: "The responsibility for the selection of the pictures used in this book has rested with the author, and the choice has been determined by his opinion: therefore they are presented without sponsorship or connection with the policies, aesthetic or political, of any of the institutions, publications or government agencies for which some of the work has been done."² Stryker's business was to provide informative images to the mass media, and he and Evans would always disagree about the most appropriate vehicle for the latter's photographs, as well as the definition of "documentary." But when the photography project of the RA began, the two men were able to agree on its primary subject: American history as exemplified by life in the average American town. Evans's vision for documenting American life had begun to form much earlier; a letter drafted to his friend Ernestine Evans, an editor at J. B. Lippincott, in February of 1934, makes clear his aspirations:

*What do I want to do? ... I know now is the time for picture books. An American city is the best, Pittsburgh better than Washington. I know more about such a place. I would want to visit several besides Pittsburgh before deciding. Something perhaps smaller. Toledo, Ohio, maybe. Then I'm not sure a book of photos should be identified locally. American city is what I'm after.... People, all classes, surrounded by bunches of the new down-and-out. Automobiles and the automobile landscape. Architecture, American urban taste, commerce, small scale, large scale, the city street atmosphere, the street smell, the hateful stuff, women's clubs, fake culture, bad education, religion in decay....*³

The two men could find common ground in part due to the widespread influence of the 1929 publication *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* by Robert and Helen Lynd, professors of sociology at Columbia and Sarah Lawrence, respectively. A 550-page field investigation by social anthropologists with subject headings including "What Middletown does to get its living" and "The houses in which Middletown lives," this pioneering project attempted an objective analysis of life in a small Midwestern American city (Muncie, Indiana). The Lynds' study was hailed as a very accessible report that was most appealing because it made "no attempt to prove anything" but simply recorded "what was observed." The Lynds introduced their topic by saying their goal "was to study synchronously the interwoven trends that are the life of a

small American city. A typical city, strictly speaking, does not exist, but the city studied was selected a shaving many features in common to a wide group of communities." (Lynd 1929, 3)



Figure 1
Walker Evans. *[American Legionnaire]*, 1935. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

The "Outline Memorandum" that Evans prepared in October 1935, probably at Stryker's request, laying out plans for an eight-week automobile trip through the Southeast, makes reference to Middletown and presents thoughts similar to the photographer's musings of 1934:

*First objective, Pittsburgh and vicinity, one week; photography, documentary in style, of industrial subjects, emphasis on housing and home life of working-class people.... Ohio Valley: rural architecture, including the historical, contemporary "Middletown" subjects; Cincinnati [sic] housing; notes on style of Victorian prosperous period.... Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois river towns, gather typical documents, main streets, etc., in passing. Ditto Mississippi river towns. Select one of these towns, such as Hannibal, Missouri, for more thorough treatment, if time allows.*⁴



Walker Evans. *Sons of the American Legion, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1935*. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

This document goes on to list antebellum plantation architecture in Natchez, Mississippi; small rural French towns in Teche Parish, Louisiana; industrial themes in Birmingham, Alabama; and a cotton plantation in South Carolina, as objectives of the proposed trip for gathering still photography of a “general sociological nature.” In early 1936, one of *Middletown’s* authors had a chance to directly affect the RA’s Photography Section: Stryker showed Robert Lynd, a former Columbia colleague, some RA pictures and asked for his opinion while lunching with him in New York. The result was a “shooting script” for “things which should be photographed as American Background,” issued by Stryker to his team of photographers. The script contains an extensive listing of items like “People on and off the job,” “How do people look?,” “The wall decoration in homes as an index to the different income groups and their reactions,” and “A photographic study of use of leisure time in various income groups.”⁵



Walker Evans. *Graveyard, Houses and Steel Mill, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1935*; printed later. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Once Evans was officially on staff, his first trip under Stryker’s direction seems to have been an extended fall visit to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where steel mills, workers’ housing, parading legionnaires, and elaborate gravestones (fig. 1, 2, 3) were his subjects. Between November 1935 and April 1936, Evans made two lengthy road trips that would account for the bulk of his entire production for the RA and many of the 169 mid-thirties pictures that follow this essay. From November to mid-January, here turned to industrial centers in Pennsylvania, finally spending some time in Pittsburgh, and went on to Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, following to some extent the course outlined in the memorandum above. In February 1936, he left again, with a completely Southern itinerary that would take him through many small cities, some of them renowned for ante-bellum architecture and Civil War battles, in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, the Carolinas, and Virginia.

In the spring of 1936, Stryker approved a furlough for Evans to work on a *Fortune* story with James Agee. This leave for mid-July through mid-September allowed Evans to return to the “middle south” with Agee to prepare “an article on cotton tenantry in the United States, in the form of a photographic and verbal record of the daily lives and environment of an average white family of tenant farmers” (fig. 4, 5, 6, 7). (Agee 1941, viii) According to the terms of Stryker’s arrangement with *Fortune’s* art editor, the pictures Evans produced on this job would become the property of the RA after the magazine had run the finished essay in a fall issue.



Walker Evans. *Alabama Tenant Farmer Family Singing Hymns / The Tenge Family, Hale County, Alabama*, 1936. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



Walker Evans. *Floyd and Lucille Burroughs, Hale County, Alabama*, 1936. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



Walker Evans. *Washroom in the Dog Run of the Burroughs Home, Hale County, Alabama*, 1936. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



Walker Evans. *Farmer's Child, Alabama / Othel Lee (Squeakie) Burroughs, Hale County, Alabama*, 1936. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Once Evans returned from this trip south, during which he and Agee documented the lives of the Burroughs, Fields, and Tenge families in Alabama (see *Bud Fields with His Wife and Burrough's Family*), he spent September and October printing his pictures and preparing presentations for both *Fortune* and Stryker.⁶ Stryker again talked about a New England trip, on which he planned to accompany the photographer, but it did not materialize, and Evans was once more sent to the South, this time to photograph the catastrophe of flooding in Arkansas and Tennessee. An unusual and demanding assignment for Evans, this trip of late January and February 1937 was made with another RA photographer, Edwin Locke, and required that he spend considerable time in the affected area, photographing the flood victims and their temporary shelters.

This would be his last travel for the RA, an agency that was absorbed into the Farm Security Administration at about this time. Evans's contributions to the RA's documentation of Depression-era America had essentially been obtained

between the summer of 1935 and the spring of 1936, a period of less than a year. The Alabama pictures made while on leave to *Fortune* would become his best-known photographs and, ironically, those most closely identified with his work as a New Deal photographer.

The events generated by the Museum of Modern Art in the fall of 1938 could be viewed as the culmination of a highly productive period made possible by the patronage of the federal government. The sequences of images that appeared in the exhibition and book of *American Photographs*, though composed of different selections and gleaned from a decade of the photographer's work, might just as appropriately have appeared under the title of "Middletown." In fact, Kirstein refers to the Lynds' *Middletown* in his *American Photographs* essay, suggesting that, although Evans's work should not be considered merely "illustrative accompaniment," a study such as theirs "might have been more effective had it also been plotted in visual terms." (Kirstein 1938, 196) An article by Anthony Westen titled "Middletown and Main Street," one of the most insightful contemporary comments on Evans's subject matter, appeared in *Architectural Review* to mark the publication of *American Photographs*. (West 1939, 218-20)

A closer look at two little-known RA images—one that appeared in both exhibition formats and one that appeared only in the book—provides a glimpse of how much the exhibitions and publication differed and of the way in which Evans went about editing his own work. Appearing almost in the very middle of the New York installation of *American Photographs* were two 1937 images of Arkansas flood refugees. One of them—a young African American woman asleep under a quilt in a heavy, metal-frame bed—is found in an almost square Getty print bearing an incomplete MoMA loan number. A second image of almost the same size—a person who looks more like an African American man, partially con-sealed behind a boldly patterned makeshift curtain—is also found at the Getty, but this print, apparently of the same vintage, does not possess a loan number or label. Both images have been severely cropped from the original negative.⁷ Prints of the two images hung as pendants in the New York show between a photograph of a poor Cuban family from 1933 and a picture of the Tenge family in Hale County, Alabama, singing hymns. The installation list for the circulating version of *American Photographs* calls for these two images to appear together, only this time toward the end of the show, in group XV (of eighteen groupings specified), where they would be part of a larger selection of seven pictures, including three Alabama tenant farmer images, two Cuban pictures of workingmen and women, and views of factories

in Louisiana and wooden stores in Mississippi.



Walker Evans. *Arkansas Flood Refugee*, 1937. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

For the book, however, Evans chose a vertically oriented print from another negative of the sleeping woman mentioned above. This image (fig. 8), which might seem more invasive than intimate, is even more startling and unorthodox than the first. It presents the weary flood victim at bedside level, awake but nestled under the quilt. Below her on the floor of the old cotton warehouse that is supplying emergency shelter are a few items of clothing and a bedpan. Occurring at almost the exact center of the book—that is, as plate forty-four in a sequence of eighty-seven images—it falls between a van Gogh-like interior entitled *Hudson Street Boarding House Detail, New York* and a portrait of three working-class neighbors passing the time together in *People in Summer, New York State Town*. As comparative material from this winter of 1937 Arkansas assignment, three other prints in the Getty collection depict African American women displaced by the flood and huddled in or near a bed due to cold and illness. Like the

two images chosen for the MoMA show, these three reflect substantial cropping of the negatives in an effort to close in on a single figure and eliminate the barn like interior of this uncomfortable temporary home.⁸ Always after portraits of “the anonymous people” of Middletown, Evans seems to have taken full advantage of the unusual vulnerability of these residents of Forrest City, Arkansas.

Evans had company on this RA assignment, which must have been one of the hardest emotionally as well as technically of his career. The report submitted to Stryker by his more communicative colleague, Edwin Locke, gives an immediate picture of the conditions the two men found and the way they attempted to record them. It also confirms Evans’s perfectionist nature, his persistent determination to get the right picture, and the reasons why Roy Stryker, like Tom Mabry, valued his work so highly. The handwritten letter on hotel stationery reads in part:

My God, we are tired tonight! Got up at 6 this morning, worked until 5:30 PM, made the 6:20 PM train back to Memphis, having covered the refugee camps as well as we could without flashes. And now a word about the camps: L White camp (about 2 miles away from Negro camp—we covered this twice on foot with equipment): well run, adequate tent space, good (regular army) food. A detachment of soldiers from Fort Leavenworth are running the outfit along with the CCC.... The Negro camp: Overcrowded. There are many more negroes than whites affected by flood in this area. Found 11 in one tent. They are not “happy-go-lucky” about it, but dazed, apathetic, and hopeless. There is a good deal of illness: excruciating coughs, pneumonia and influenza cases laying in a dark cotton warehouse. I shot in there with the Leica, but Walker said it was too dark. He bought photoflashes and shot with the 4x5, but is afraid that the exposures were wrong. He will undoubtedly want to go back....⁹

Evans and Stryker parted ways, mostly because of the bureaucratic requirements that Stryker adhered to. Working under difficult conditions was certainly not something the photographer shied away from, particularly when he was after the archetypal portrait of “Everyman” that he treasured. In pursuit of this goal, for his next major series Evans would contrive to photograph only by remote shutter release while riding the New York subway in winter.

NOTES

1. Memorandum draft by Walker Evans, reproduced in *Walker Evans at Work*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 112.
2. Walker Evans to Ernestine Evans, unfinished two-page letter in

black ink on hotel stationery, dated Feb. 1934, first published in *Walker Evans at Work*, 98. This letter is part of the Evans Collection at the Getty (JPGM84.XG.963.42).

3. From a review by W. B. Shaw, quoted in *Book Review Digest: Books of 1929* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1930), 591.
4. Walker Evans to Roy Stryker, "Outline Memorandum," ca. Oct. 1935, *Stryker Papers*. Also published in Walker Evans at Work, 113.
5. Roy Stryker to all FSA (then RA) photographers, outline for "Suggestions recently made by Robert Lynd or things which should be photo-graphed as 'American Background,'" dated by Stryker to early 1936, first published in Carver, *Just Before the War*, n.p.
6. For more background on this Alabama series and a discussion of two photograph albums in the collection of the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress thought to be Evans's "first draft" for Fortune, see Judith Keller and Beverly Brannan, "Walker Evans: Two Albums in the Library of Congress," *History of Photography* 19:1 (Spring 1995).
7. See Maddox, *Walker Evans: Photographs for the Farm Security Administration, 1935-1938*, ill. nos. 432-33.
8. See Maddox, 429-31, for a more complete look at these three negatives.

9. Edwin Locke to Roy Stryker, six-page letter on hotel stationery, Feb. 4, 1937, *Stryker Papers*. Seven days after this letter, the two photographers are still in Memphis; Locke notifies Stryker that Evans is ill with a serious case of the flu but refuses to be taken to the hospital. Locke to Stryker, two-page letter on notecards, Feb. 11, 1937, *Stryker Papers*.

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Kirstein 1938

Kirstein, Lincoln. *Photographs of America: Walker Evans American Photographs*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938

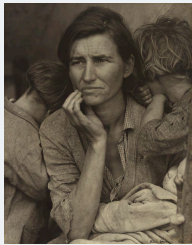
Lynd 1929

Lynd, Robert S., and Helen Merrell Lynd. *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1929; reprint, Harvest/HBJ, 1956.

West 1939

West, Anthony. *Middletown and Main street. Architectural Review* 85. 1939.

Catalogue



Cat. 1. Human Erosion in California / Migrant Mother

8



Cat. 2. Pea Pickers, Nipomo, California

12



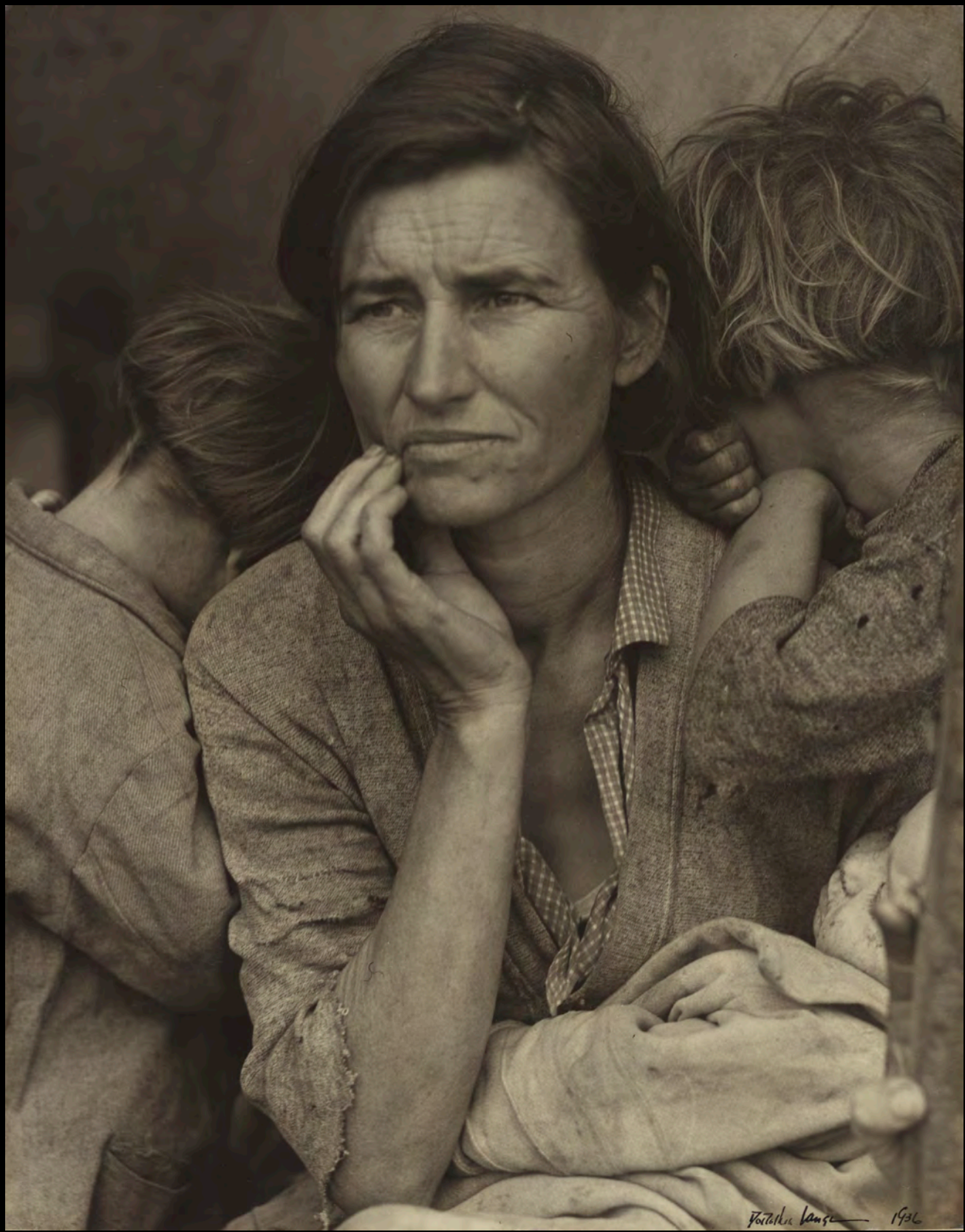
Cat. 3. Bud Fields with His Wife Ivy, and His Daughter Ellen, Hale County, Alabama

14



Cat. 4. Burrough's Family, Hale County, Alabama

16





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KODAK SAFETY FILM

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EASTMAN-KODAK-NITRATE



Cat. 1. Human Erosion in California / Migrant Mother

Artist	Dorothea Lange
Year	1936
Dimensions	34.1 cm × 26.8 cm (13 7/16 in × 10 9/16 in.)
Medium	Gelatin silver print
Location	J. Paul Getty Museum

The first publication of this renowned image occurred on March 11, 1936, on the third day that the San Francisco News ran a story about the pea pickers' camp at Nipomo. It was also featured as a full-page reproduction in September 1936 issue of *Survey Graphic*, titled "Draggin'-Around People" and captioned "A blighted pea crop in California in 1935 left the pickers without work. This family sold their tent to get food." Also in this issue was an article by Taylor entitled "From the Group Up." His report on demonstration projects of the New Deal's Resettlement Administration in Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, and California was illustrated with four more picture by Lange.

Since it was first published, this composition, best known as *Migrant Mother*, has come to represent not only the pictorial archive created by the RA/FSA during the 1930s but also the Great Depression itself. Posters and other publicity of later activists fighting racial, economic, and political oppression have borrowed from Lange's icon of the time. The handsome, androgynous face, the pose of stoic anxiety, and the encumbrance of three young children proved to be universal attributes. With Lange's artistry, Owens took on the timeless quality of Eugène Delacroix's strong female rebel (*Liberty Leading the People*), Jean-François Millet's peasant woman (the agrarian ideal), Honoré Daumier's laundresses (the working woman) and Käthe Kollwitz's proletarian woman warrior (one of the mothers leading her *Peasants' War*).

Owens, although she became famous, did not enjoy, even momentarily, the life of a celebrity. She had three more children and kept moving with her family, following the

California crops. She did become involved in efforts to organize farm labor and would sometimes serve as the straw boss, one who negotiates wages for migrants as the picking season begins. She was still working in the fields at age fifty before finally marrying again (to George Thompson) and settling into a stable life in Modesto, California.

EXHIBITIONS

Tradition and Innovation: Recent Additions to the Photographs Collection, the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), June 20–October 8, 2000; *The Public Record: Photographs of the Great Depression from the J. Paul Getty Museum*, Pomona College Museum of Art (Claremont), March 10–May 19, 2002; *About Life: The Photographs of Dorothea Lange*, the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), October 15, 2002–February 9, 2003; *Photographers of Genius*, the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), March 16–July 25, 2004; *In Focus: The Worker*, the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), November 3, 2009–March 21, 2010; *Route 66: The Road and the Romance*, Autry National Center (Los Angeles), June 7–January 4, 2015.

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Cat. 2. Pea Pickers, Nipomo, California

Artist	Dorothea Lange
Year	1936
Dimensions	29.5 cm × 24.4 cm (7 11/16 in × 9 5/8 in.)
Medium	Gelatin silver print, with applied pigment
Location	J. Paul Getty Museum

This print, made in Washington, D.C. darkroom of the resettlement Administration and sent to the New York Times for publication in August 1936, has pencil inscriptions in several different hands on the verso. Among them are various captions (“Pea pickers in Calif. ‘Mam [sic], I’ve picked pea from Calipatria to Ukiah’” and “Members of the roving army of fruit pickers”); date stamps; the RA stamp (“Kindly use the following credit line: RESETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION PHOTOGRAPH by Lange”); and the picture editor’s directions (“single x 2 col, 4 x 3 3/4, tonight”). The Times art department worked on the picture itself, applying white, gray, and black pigment to make the figures appear more three-dimensional and to set them off from their auto/home and the grassy foreground. Crop marks provide further aids to the printers responsible for making zinc printing plates and laying out the feature.

The truck or car modified to act as a home for migrants traveling from job to job was a common sight on California highways and at roadside camps in the 1930s. In this case, a truck has been adapted to provide sleeping quarters—complete with sunroof—and other household requirements. The couple has obviously covered a lot of miles, as the man is quoted as saying, picking peas from the Imperial Valley of Southern California to northern Ukiah Valley of Mendocino County. Lange found them in Nipomo, midway up the coast and midway through

another season that would cause them to traverse the length of the huge state.

John Steinbeck describes the important of the truck to the Oklahoma farmer of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) as they load theirs to begin migrant life:

The house was dead, and the fields were dead; but this truck was the active thing, the living principle. The ancient Hudson, with bent and scarred radiator screen,...this was the new hearth, the living center of the family.

EXHIBITIONS

The Public Record: Photographs of the Great Depression from the J. Paul Getty Museum, Pomona College Museum of Art (Claremont), March 10–May 19, 2002; *About Life: The Photographs of Dorothea Lange*, the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), October 15, 2002–February 9, 2003; *Engaged Observers: Documentary Photography since the Sixties*, the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), June 29–November 14, 2010.

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Cat. 3. Bud Fields with His Wife Ivy, and His Daughter Ellen, Hale County, Alabama

Artist	Walker Evans
Year	1936
Dimensions	19.4 x 24.4 (7 5/8 x 9 5/8 in.)
Medium	Gelatin silver print
Location	J. Paul Getty Museum

From mid-July to mid-September 1936, Evans took a leave from his position as an information specialist for the Historical Section of the Resettlement Administration to work with the writer James Agee on an assignment for *Fortune* magazine. They traveled to the Deep South to prepare an article on tenant cotton farming. In Alabama they documented the lives of farmers, including the Fields family. Evans found in this average American household the archetypal portrait of the everyman that he treasured. The straight-forward style of this portrait emphasizes the

family's hard life as much as their pride.

EXHIBITIONS

Walker Evans: An Alabama Record, the J. Paul Getty Museum (Malibu), April 7–June 21, 1992; *In Focus: The Portrait*, the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), January 27–June 14, 2009.



Cat. 4. Burrough's Family, Hale County, Alabama

Artist	Walker Evans
Year	1935
Dimensions	19.2 x 24.1 (7 ⁹ / ₁₆ x 9 ¹ / ₂ in.)
Medium	Gelatin silver print
Location	J. Paul Getty Museum

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, with text by James Agee and photographs by Walker Evans, was published in 1941. The book focused on three tenant cotton-farming families living in Hale County, Alabama, during the Depression. Agee invented the name "Gudger" for the book; this family's real name was Burroughs. The Burroughses hosted Agee and Evans for nearly a month, and this photograph was made at George Burroughs's request.

The family sits and stands against the side of their house, dressed in their best clothing, posing for a family photograph. George Burroughs, standing at the center, does not smile; rather, he looks proud and strong, his arms

extended across the shoulders of his wife and eldest daughter on either side of him. The photograph shows the Burroughses as they wished to be seen and differs from other photographs of them that express Evans's view, portraying their situation more bleakly.

EXHIBITIONS

Walker Evans: An Alabama Record, the J. Paul Getty Museum (Malibu), April 7–June 21, 1992; *The Public Record: Photographs of the Great Depression from the J. Paul Getty Museum*, Pomona College Museum of Art (Claremont), March 10–May 19, 2002.

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West 1939

West, Anthony. Middletown and Main street. *Architectural Review* 85. 1939.

Contributors

Judith Keller



Judith Keller joined the J. Paul Getty Museum in 1986 and since 2008 was an Associate Curator of Photographs. In 2010, she was named the Senior Curator of Photographs. Keller received her B.A. in Art History and a Masters in Museum Practice and Art History from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. She also completed course work for a Phd. in Art History at the University of Michigan. Prior to her tenure at the Getty, Keller worked at The University of Michigan Museum of Art (1979 – 1981) and at the Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery (now the Blanton Museum of Art) at The University of Texas, Austin, as Curator of Prints and Drawings.

I. American Photographs: Evans in Middletown

About

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- ◆ Background colors
- ◆ Navigation bar style

By diving further into the included style sheets and layout templates, there's almost no limit to what can be done.

The text excerpts included in this starter theme come from *Walker Evans: Catalogue of the Collection* by Judith Keller (Getty Publications, 1995) available for free download in the Getty's Virtual Library; *In Focus: Dorothea Lange* (Getty Publications, 2002); and from the J. Paul Getty Museum online collection records.

The images included come from the J. Paul Getty Museum online collection records under their Open Content Program. The pictures of Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans used in the Introduction, come from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.