

Dorothea Lange: life, biography, photos

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Dorothea LANGE

This report is about Dorothea Lange. The main reason I choose her was because, she was a woman and I thought I could probably write better about her for that reason.

Dorothea was born in 1895 and died in 1965. Dorothea's first photographic job was as a commercial portrait photographer in San Francisco in the 1920's. Her first independent work was taking pictures of Native Americans in the southwest with her first husband Maynard Dixon.

In the early 1930s Dorothea got tired of working in the studio so she decided to head to the streets. By this time the Great Depression was underway. She was living in California and had access to a lot of unemployed people. Now she was with her second husband Paul Schuster Taylor, documenting the struggles of all the people in need. Dorothea would take the pictures of the people and Paul would write essays to go with them. She took pictures of families migrating west to look for jobs that didn't exist, she took pictures of the Dust Bowl and of other numerous things. Things that showed the truth of the Depression, what was really happening. During this time she took what is probably her most famous picture "Migrant Mother" this picture was a recognized symbol of the migrant lifestyle. Her pictures showed an urgent need for government assistance in America. If you think about it, if the Great Depression had never happened then I probably wouldn't be doing a report on Dorothea Lange because that's what really set her career off. So, I guess that would be a major event that influenced her in her work.

The beginning of WW II brought her to a new turning point in photography. During the war Dorothea took very vivid pictures of the forced relocation of Japanese American citizens, they were placed in internment camps. She also took pictures of minority's and women workers in the shipyards. This showed that everyone could work equally so why shouldn't they be treated equally. These pictures were some of her last pictures taken in America because she was stricken with illness. In the 1950's and 60's she over came her illness by a little and traveled to Ireland, Asia, Egypt, and Midwestern utopian to take a lot of beautiful pictures. I think I would of liked to of met her just about this time in her life, the reason being I think she would had a lot of answers for a lot questions I have. I think her style of photography is very unique in it's own way. It has a sort or calmness about it, but also a sadness and a touch of reality.

After her death in 1965 Dorothea Lange's great collection of photograph's became a gift to the Oakland Museum of California from her husband , Paul Schuster Taylor. The most Interesting thing I leaned about Dorothea Lange would have to be that, she never wrote a book documenting her life and all of her great adventures threw out her life.