

FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION PHOTOGRAPHS IN INDIANA

A STUDY GUIDE



Roy Stryker Told the FSA Photographers

*“Show the city people what it is like to live on the
farm.”*

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Introduction

This study guide is meant to provide an overall history of the Farm Security Administration and its photographic project in Indiana. It also provides background information, which can be used by students as they carry out the curriculum activities. Along with the curriculum resources, the study guide provides a basis for studying the history of the photos taken in Indiana by the FSA photographers.

The FSA - OWI Photographic Collection at the Library of Congress

The photographs of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) - Office of War Information (OWI) Photograph Collection at the Library of Congress form a large-scale photographic record of American life between 1935 and 1944. The collection encompasses the images made by photographers working in Roy Stryker's Historical Section as it existed in a succession of government agencies: the Resettlement Administration (1935-1937), the Farm Security Administration (1937-1942), and the Office of War Information (1942-1945). The collection also includes photographs acquired from other governmental agencies, including the News Bureau at the Office of Emergency Management and various branches of the military, as well as nongovernmental sources. The total collection consists of about 164,000 black-and-white film negatives and transparencies, 1,610 color transparencies, and approximately 107,000 black-and-white photographic prints. The black-and-white photographic prints consist of about 77,000 images produced by photographers under Stryker's direction and about 30,000 photographs acquired from other sources.

Great Depression and Farms

Between 1931 and 1940, the nonfarm jobless rate never fell below 21%. In no year in the 1930s would the unemployment rate fall below 14% and the average for the decade as a whole was 17.1 %. Workers under the age of 20 or over 60 were twice as likely to be out of a job. A study commissioned by Harry Hopkins, Director of the Works Progress Administration, found that unemployment affected most heavily the young, elderly, least educated, unskilled and rural Americans.

The time period from 1900 to 1910 is known as the golden age of American agriculture. But farm mortgages doubled between 1910 and 1920 from \$3.3 to \$6.7 billion. After the Armistice in 1918 farm prices plummeted. For farmers the depression started with the end of the wartime boom of the First World War. There was a steep decline in agricultural prices. For example, cotton went from wartime high of 35 cents per pound to 16 cents in 1920. In the 1920s per capita farm income was one-third the national average. The agricultural depression was not a result of

the 1929 crash, for on the farm the Great Depression was well into its second decade. In addition to declining crop prices, the causes of the problem also included:

- Crop overproduction
- Extremely high farm debt
- Disappearing foreign markets
- Changing domestic markets
- Droughts and floods

Rural poverty had been spreading and intensifying the entire decade of the 1920s. Many farmers had to sell their land. Sharecropping increased throughout the country, especially in the South. Over-farming led to erosion. The most pressing problem was the plunge in the standard of living among many farm families.

In 1930, 49% of all Americans lived in communities of less than 8,000 and 45% in rural areas of less than 2,500. Forty-seven percent or nearly 3 million farmers lived in poverty. Only one in ten farms had electricity.

In 1932, the annual net farm income dropped from \$56.1 billion in 1929 to \$2 billion. Wheat dropped to 23 cents a bushel, the lowest in 200 years. There were 533,000 more migrations to the countryside from urban areas than vice versa.

In 1933, the value of farm goods dropped 62% since the stock market crash to its lowest point in February. The value of farm property dropped from \$57.7 million in 1929 to \$36.3 million. Farm income was less than one third of the already depressed 1929 figure. Nearly 45 % of farms were behind in their mortgages and faced foreclosure.

Poverty was more visible in cities and the rural poor were often overlooked in the rustic beauty of the countryside. Historically, rural poverty was a private matter. No programs existed for social welfare in rural areas. The need for relief and rehabilitation programs was looked upon with ambivalence and embarrassment. Farmers still constituted 30% of the nation's workforce, a significant sector that was in jeopardy.

Roosevelt and Rural America

Franklin Roosevelt had a strong affinity for farmers. While Governor of New York, he gave a speech in Indianapolis in June 1931 at the Annual Governors' Conference entitled "Acres Fit and Unfit: State Planning of Land Use for Industry and Agriculture." He believed that industrial recovery would depend on the revival of agricultural purchasing power and the nation's prosperity rested on an agricultural base. He felt that what was good for the farmer was good for the country and that poor land created poor people. Roosevelt also believed that the quality of

farm life was a key indicator of American character and crucial to recovery. He cherished the old agrarian conviction that rural life sustained both individual character and community.

In 1932 while campaigning for the presidency, Roosevelt reminded voters that New York was not just tall buildings but a farm state, first in the nation in income from dairy cows and hay, second in production of apples and grapes, and sixth in overall farm income. He even listed himself in *Who's Who* as a tree farmer. He considered himself a sort of a gentleman farmer, harvesting trees and selling some at Christmas time. He started conservation efforts at Springwood, his home at Hyde Park, in 1910 and by his death in 1945 had overseen the planting of half a million trees on 556 acres.

In a 1936 campaign speech President Roosevelt praised “the American farmer, living on his own land” as “our ideal of self-reliance and of spiritual balance - the source from which the reservoirs of the Nation’s strength are constantly renewed.”

Creation of the Resettlement Administration

In 1935 President Roosevelt consolidated several farm programs into the Resettlement Administration by Executive Order and named Rexford Tugwell as Head. Tugwell was a professor of economics at Columbia University, who became an advisor to Roosevelt during his campaign for the presidency in 1932. He was part of Roosevelt’s original Brains Trust. In 1933 he was appointed to the Department of Agriculture and served as Undersecretary. He helped to create the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and was its Director, until taking over the Resettlement Administration. Tugwell advocated government planning and economic intervention to improve living conditions in rural America and to reduce rural poverty. Tugwell talked about the importance of government, industry and agriculture working together, in what he called a “concert of interests.” The reform of agriculture through planning in the interest of efficiency was the ultimate aim. Tugwell resigned from the Resettlement Administration at the end of 1936. He later served as the Director of the New York City Planning Commission, the last appointed Governor of Puerto Rico from 1941 to 1946, where he wanted to establish a photographic project like the FSA’s. He eventually returned to academia.

Creation of the Farm Security Administration

In 1937 Congress passed the Farm Security Act, which folded the Resettlement Administration into a new body, the Farm Security Administration (FSA), which operated until 1942. The aim was to take millions of acres of unproductive land owned by farmers that had been exhausted by deforestation, over-farming, and drought and resettle families on better land into communities planned by the agency, including homesteads, model farms and greenbelt towns. The goal was to resettle 450,000 families, but only 10,000 to 12,000 were ever resettled. The FSA sought to

establish cooperative farm communities of small landowners reflecting the frontier spirit of sharing. Farmers would live together under the guidance of government experts and learn more efficient farming methods. The FSA was created to rescue the chronic rural poor, receiving little or no benefits. The chronic rural poor included subsistence farmers living on marginal land, migratory farm laborers and tenants and sharecroppers.

President Roosevelt's early agricultural policy had been to try to decrease agricultural production and increase prices. But what many renters really wanted was financial aid to purchase farms. The Department of Agriculture did not have a program to help farmers to buy farms. Then in 1937, with funds from the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act, the FSA was able to help tenant farmers purchase farms.

The FSA had four main tasks: resettlement, rehabilitation, land utilization and technical assistance.

Resettlement was the least costly but most controversial. The aim was to:

- Relocate impoverished farmers to new rural communities and relocate the urban poor to suburbs
- Build model cooperative farmsteads, subsistence homesteads and greenbelt towns
- Help tenant farmers purchase or enlarge farms with funds from the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act

Rehabilitation was most costly but least controversial. The aim was to:

- Administer emergency loans at low rates to buy or improve farms
- Give loans for feed, seed, fertilizer, livestock, equipment and repairs
- Provide emergency grants for natural disasters and relief
- Settle farm debt adjustment cases

The aim of land utilization was to:

- Battle soil erosion and promote soil conservation
- Take the worst land out of production and resettle displaced farmers
- Buy substandard, submarginal land and convert to more appropriate uses

The aim of technical assistance was to:

- Give educational aid to farm families
- Provide demonstrations, instruction and supervision
- Provide training in basic business skills and bookkeeping
- Teach classes in the areas of home economics and child rising
- Develop other related businesses

The magic ingredients that were supposed change rural America were cooperation, education, financial help and expert supervision.

Organization of the FSA

The Resettlement Administration, later the FSA, started with twelve employees and by end of the year it had 16,386. Approximately 4,200 employees came from nine other agencies. The staff ultimately numbered 19,000 and was in every state. Seventy-five percent were employed outside Washington, D.C. There were twelve regional offices, plus Puerto Rico. There were district offices in each state, with county offices as well. The FSA employed over 4,000 rural rehabilitation and home management supervisors. Other staff included lawyers, accountants, statisticians, doctors, nurses, soil engineers, teachers, sociologists, political scientists, economists, and specialists in farm management, sanitation, public health and preventive medicine. In 1941, Theodore Schultz, who later won the Nobel Prize in Economics, reported that the FSA led all other federal agencies in the number of personnel with training or education in the social sciences.

In essence the FSA county supervisor was a teacher, banker, farm expert, family case worker and community organizer. The county offices were very active at the local level and interacted with numerous government agencies, including the Soil Conservation Service, Works Progress Administration, Farm Credit Administration, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, National Youth Administration, Agricultural Extensions and local elected officials. They also worked closely with local teachers, bankers, ministers, civic and farm organization leaders, health and hospital officials, and relief and welfare workers.

Historical Section of the FSA

There were five Sections in the Information Division: Historical, Radio, Documentary Film, Special Publications and Editorial. The Information Division maintained offices in each region, coordinated in Washington, D.C., but under the supervision of Regional directors. The Information Division of the FSA was responsible for providing educational and press information to the public and government. The official job description was:

To direct the activities of investigators, photographers, economists, sociologists and statisticians engaged in the accumulation and compilation of reports, statistics, photographic material, vital statistics, agricultural surveys, maps and sketches necessary to make accurate descriptions of the various phases of the Resettlement Administration, particularly with regard to the historical, sociological and economic aspects of the several programs and their accomplishments.

In 1935 Tugwell appointed his former Columbia University student Roy Stryker in charge of the Historical Section in the Information Division of the FSA. The Historical Section's headquarters was located in Washington, D.C. The Historical Section hired staff, drafted budgets and allocated travel funds. They also distributed film and equipment. The staff at headquarters developed, printed, and numbered negatives. The headquarters also distributed images to newspapers, magazines, publishers and government agencies. Over the summer months of 1938 Stryker estimated that his lab processed 7,000 prints for the FSA and other clients. In 1940 more than 1,400 images appeared in publications each month.

A Committee on Exhibits, made up of one member from each of the divisions concerned with exhibits, also put together photo exhibits. A technical subcommittee, including the Chief of the Historical Section, was set up to execute approved exhibits. Exhibits were a form of advocacy education. The exhibits were designed by the Special Skills Division and the Historical Section of the Information Division.

The exhibits fell into three groups. Large scale exhibits for expositions included the: California Pacific International Exposition in San Diego, Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas and Great Lakes Exposition in Cleveland. The second category was for smaller conferences, conventions and meeting such as the: Columbia Teachers Meeting, National Conference of Social Workers and Museum of Modern Art. The last category was a standard panel exhibit covering the programs of the agency. It was designed to be easily handled and shipped and adaptable to presentation under varying conditions. It was reproduced for each region. They showed exhibits at county fairs, libraries, and other types of local meetings, such as 4H Clubs. It was also reproduced as an under the arm photographic portfolio for individual travel by county employees.

The Historical Section had a photographic lab and darkroom. Usually no more than six photographers were employed at any one time. They were compensated about \$2,300 to \$3,200 per year. Stryker's staff never exceeded 28, with lab technicians and clerical staff outnumbering photographers. The low point was ten in 1937. In 1941 and 1942 Stryker estimated that his budget was between \$67,000 and \$68,000 with two-thirds going for salaries. This was when total expenditures for the entire FSA exceeded a billion dollars.

The Information Division of the FSA was responsible for providing educational and press information to the public and government agencies. Under Stryker, the Historical Section adopted the goal of "introducing America to Americans." Stryker hired photographers to document the plight of the rural poor. For example, one of Stryker's plans was to photograph migrant workers in a way that would tell a story about their daily lives, and to achieve this, he assigned his photographers various themes. In later years the photography project was expanded to include depictions of life all over the United States. In 1942 Stryker's unit was transferred to the Office of War Information, at which point the photographers focused on mobilization during

World War II. FSA photos were used by newspapers, as in the *New York Times* article by Lee E. Cooper, entitled *FSA Winding Up Its Homestead Program; Built 11,800 Farm Dwellings as 'Models.'* In the article there is an insert of six FSA photos, including a photo of a typical home at Wabash Farms in Indiana. The caption over the photo says “The FSA Hopes These Small Homes Will Be Models for Future Rural Construction.”

Stryker sought photographs that "related people to the land and vice versa" because those photographs helped the idea that poverty could be changed through reform. One method was to send photographers to shoot before and after stories about resettlement and other projects to show the need for action and the results of FSA programs. There were many aims, including to:

- Emphasize the importance of agriculture to the overall economy
- Promote the benefits of FSA programs and ensure continued funding from Congress
- Explain to Congress and the public its programs and what it was trying to accomplish
- Create sympathy with the public and government officials for sharecroppers, tenant farmers and migrants
- Distribute photos that are different than those taken by commercial and industrial photographers

Photographers in the Historical Section were sent out on assignments throughout the entire country and Puerto Rico. Stryker was very good at getting the best out of his photographers. Before going out on assignments every photographer was supposed to learn as much as possible about the geographical area they were going to. They were encouraged to consult J. Russell Smith's socioeconomic text, *North America: Its People and the Resources, Development, and Prospects of the Continent as the Home of Man*, as well as maps, government pamphlets and magazines, such as *Look*, *Life*, *Harper's* and *Atlantic*.

Stryker did not tell his photographers how to shoot their photos, but he did give them lists of themes. He briefed them on their assignments before being sent out, giving them detailed instructions, or so called “shooting scripts.” He also wrote letters, memos and notes as well, such as one, dated January 14, 1936, to Dorothea Lange:

As you are driving along through the agricultural area and if you can do it without too much extra effort, would you take a few shots of various types of farm activities such as your picture showing the lettuce workers? I think Dr. Tugwell would be very appreciative of photographs of this sort to be used as illustrative material for some things which the Department of Agriculture is working on. I would not want you to take too much time to do this, but of the various types of agricultural activity in the area I think it would be very much worthwhile.

Lange took eleven photos in Clayton in Hendricks County, Indiana, very near US 40, the old national road, in July 1936. The summer heat was intense and she was worried about the quality

of the negatives, but they turned out wonderfully. Her photos of threshing convey the nature of this hard and dirty work. She became interested in the mechanization of agriculture and thought perhaps that threshing crews were a rare and disappearing sight on the American landscape.

Assignments usually took photographers on lengthy trips to several states at a time. In July of 1936, Dorothea Lange was possibly in twelve others states besides Indiana, as well as the District of Columbia. Some of the FSA photographers were travelling through Indiana on their assignments. For example, when Arthur Rothstein photographed Parke and Vermillion Counties, he most likely entered Indiana in February, 1940 on highway US 52 from Ohio at West Harrison, Indiana and left the state most likely on highway US 36 near Dana, Indiana on his way to Illinois.

Stryker was not the only one to give scripts or outlines to photographers. Other administrators in the Information Division as well as regional and district administrators gave ideas as well. Often the photographers were accompanied on their assignments by regional or district officials, who also provided suggestions and took their own photos for the local FSA offices.

Criticisms of the FSA

The FSA was never sure of its aim, whether it was to hasten modernization and efficiency of farming or increase the number of small land owners who could stay on the land. The agenda of the FSA was complex and sometimes contradictory, attempting to combine old agrarian ideals with a new faith in the ideas of experts and governmental policies.

Throughout the 1930s, one half of all seats in the U. S. House of Representatives and nearly all U. S. Senate seats represented districts or states with substantial farm populations. But most rural representatives in Congress were concerned with large farm owners and not tenants, small farmers and sharecroppers. They latter looked to the Executive Branch for help. The rural poor did not constitute a true power base or constituency, and there were no lobbyists for the rural poor.

Administrative and construction costs were high. The FSA communities often had serious cost overruns. This was a major criticism, as the per unit housing cost often exceed those in the private sector.

Because of the extraordinary rapid growth of the FSA, administrators had a hard time keeping track of their divisions and field supervisors lacked a sense of direction. FSA county supervisors were also second-class government bureaucrats, denied civil service status and paid less than their counterparts in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration or Soil Conservation Service.

There was overlapping and competing federal government agencies that were supposed to work with the farm sector, including the Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, Farm Credit Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority, Civilian Conservation Corps, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Works Progress Administration and Public Works Administration. They competed for money and power.

There were rivalries and infighting with Congress, federal agencies, land grant colleges, extension officials, local realtors and elites and various farm organizations. There were personality conflicts, intrusive bureaucrats and domineering planners.

Some farm organizations, including the Farm Bureau, Missouri Farmers Association, Farmers Union, Farm Holiday Movement, Farmers Independence Council, National Farmers Alliance, Corn Belt Liberty League and Farmers Guild often opposed the work of the FSA.

Tenant farmers, with yearly contracts, tended not to worry about soil erosion, crop rotation, fertilizers or soil building crops. The increased productivity per farmer and per acre more than made up for the planned removal of land from use. Most farmers applied to the FSA for easy credit. They did not always heed the advice to make changes to their farm management.

There was considerable redbaiting, calling the work of the FSA collectivization, socialism, communism or utopian. In 1936 the Republican National Committee said that "President Roosevelt's Resettlement Administration is establishing communal farms which follow the Russian pattern" and that they were communistic in conception. Rexford Tugwell had travelled to the Soviet Union in 1927 with a delegation of trade unionists and academics. He was interested in the planning of Soviet agriculture and was impressed with the magnitude of their efforts, but not with their tactics. He wrote a chapter on Russian agriculture for the report *Soviet Russia in the Second Decade: A Joint Survey by the Technical Staff of the First American Trade Union Delegation*. Because of his background and ideas, Tugwell was called "Rex the Dreamer", "Rex the Red" and "Lenin of the New Deal." Needless to say, he was a lightning rod for criticism for the Resettlement Administration.

A 1942 Department of Agriculture study of subsistence homesteads concluded that clients did not really want to live simple pastoral lives or become pioneering homesteaders. What they wanted was more income and consumer goods. The report went on to say that "Good housing with earth to dig in, a chance to garden, elbow room, a wholesome and beautiful place in which to rear children - such things are good and widely desired. But they do not substitute for an adequate cash income and security of employment." Malcolm Crowley, in a 1933 *New Republic* article, made fun of the back to the land movement as wistful and primitive Arcadian simplicity. He argued that any effort to transform people back into "peasants of the thirteen century" would

be dissolved by the irresistible forces of modernity: “money, automobiles, radios and Greta Garbo.”

In December 1942 parts of the Farm Security Administration were combined with other agencies to form the Food Production Administration, which became the War Food Administration in 1943. President Roosevelt moved the FSA housing programs to the National Housing Agency in late 1942, which was replaced by the Farmers Home Administration in 1946. The Historical Section of the FSA, where the photographic project was housed, was transferred to the Office of War Information, an agency created to consolidate government information services. The Office of War Information included two photographic sections, both of which photographed the mobilization effort during the early years of World War II. One of the sections was headed by Roy Stryker. The other, the News Bureau, had begun in the Office of Emergency Management in 1941 and was merged with Stryker’s section in 1943. The Office of War Information operated till September 1945. Although the Farm Security Administration photographs were being filed for future use, there was a danger that critics of the agency would have them destroyed. In order to find a safe home for the photographs, Stryker transferred the photographic collection to the Library of Congress, after getting approval from President Roosevelt.

The Indiana FSA Photographers

Nine FSA photographers took photos in Indiana. Arthur Rothstein made two trips to Indiana, in 1938 and 1940. John Vachon made two trips, in 1940 and 1941. Jack Delano made two trips, in 1942 and 1943. The other six photographers made only a single trip to Indiana.

Jack Delano was with the FSA from 1940 to 1942. In 1939 he received a grant from the Federal Arts Program. He produced a series of photographs about mining conditions in Pottsville, in the Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania coal area, where illegal workers were employed. Subsequently, he sent some photographs to Roy Stryker at the FSA. He applied for a position, but none were available. Stryker did hire him in 1940 to replace Arthur Rothstein, who was leaving. His first assignment was to photograph workers and small towns along the eastern seaboard, from Maine to Florida. He travelled to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in 1941 for the FSA. Puerto Rico affected him so deeply that he and his family settled there in 1946. He returned to the mainland in 1942 and photographed the railroads for the Office of War Information. He pictured how the railroad industry operated and the people who did the work. He worked in Chicago and then the Pacific Coast, and started using color. The two Indiana series he shot were done under the auspices of the Office of War Information.

Esther Bublely was with the FSA from 1942 to 1943. In the fall of 1942, Roy Stryker hired her as a darkroom assistant at the Office of War Information, where his photographic unit had recently been transferred from the Farm Security Administration. With the encouragement of Stryker and

some of the other FSA photographers, she started taking pictures for the Office of War Information, documenting life on the home front during World War II. In late 1943, she followed Stryker, who left the Office of War Information to work on a photographic project for Standard Oil of New Jersey. Reprising of her earlier Office of War Information Greyhound bus story, she did a bus story series for Standard Oil of New Jersey, earning her the award for Best Picture Sequence in the Encyclopedia Britannica/University of Missouri School of Journalism "News Pictures of the Year" in 1948.

Dorothea Lange was with the FSA from 1935 to 1939. As the Great Depression progressed and her portrait business declined, she turned her camera to unemployed people. These photographs led to her employment with the FSA. In 1935 she married economist Paul Schuster Taylor, professor of economics at the University of California, Berkeley. Together they documented rural poverty and migrant laborers. Lange took the photos, and Taylor did the interviewing and collected data. Because FSA photos were distributed free to news publications and magazines, many of her photos became icons of the Great Depression. Lange's most famous photo is undoubtedly "Migrant Mother."

Russell Lee was with the FSA from 1936 to 1942. Lee took the most photos in Indiana. He was a true Midwesterner. He grew up in a small town in rural Illinois. His family was engaged in business and owned farmland near Ottawa, Illinois. He attended Culver Military Academy in Indiana and graduated in 1921. He joined the FSA in 1936 and worked all over the United States. In the fall of 1936 he was traveling alone through the Midwest. For months he lived in hotels and boarding houses in small towns. He went to Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and parts of Michigan. He was best known for his photographic work in San Augustine, Texas and Pie Town, New Mexico.

Arthur Rothstein was with the FSA from 1935 to 1940. Rothstein was an unlikely FSA photographer, as he was the youngest. He was also middle-class, urban and did not have much professional experience. He developed an interest in photography while at Columbia University, where he met Stryker who was an instructor. As a senior at Columbia University in 1935, he helped to create a visual record of American agriculture that Stryker was assembling for a National Youth Project. Before the year was out, Stryker had hired the twenty year old at the newly created Resettlement Administration to establish the photographic laboratory and darkroom. Rothstein was one of the FSA's most productive photographers. His first assignment was to photograph Virginia farmers who were being relocated to make way for the Shenandoah National Park. In 1936 he went to Cimarron County, Oklahoma to cover the Dust Bowl. He took a photograph that was captioned "Fleeing a Dust Storm," "showing a man and his two sons walking into the face of a dust storm." It became another iconic FSA photo. Rothstein left the Farm Security Administration in 1940 to join the staff of *Look* magazine.

Carl Mydans was with the FSA for almost a year and a half from 1935 to 1936. His time at the FSA was brief, only 16 months. He was the fifth photographer to join the group, starting at a salary of \$35 dollars a week. Mydans became interested in photography while an undergraduate student at the Boston University School of Journalism. His first reporting jobs were for *The Boston Globe* and the *Boston Herald*. After graduating from Boston University in 1930, he went to New York as a writer for the *American Banker*. He travelled throughout New England and the South for the FSA. He gained recognition for his photographs of Arkansas farmers and their families. In 1936 he joined *Life* as one of its earliest staff photographers.

John Vachon was with the FSA from 1936 to 1943. While enrolled in graduate school at Catholic University he was looking for a job in Washington, D. C., when he heard of a possible opportunity with the Resettlement Administration. He interviewed with Stryker, who told him the job was temporary and consisted of the “rather dull work” of copying photo captions onto the back of prints done by the Historical Section’s photographers. He started as a trainee and clerk in charge of the photographic file. He began studying the images of the FSA photographers as he worked and in 1937, with assistance from Stryker and encouragement from other FSA photographers, he began taking his own pictures around the Potomac River area using a borrowed Leica camera. In 1938, Stryker gave him his first solo assignment in Nebraska. Vachon and continued to take on assignments and to classify the FSA photographic file until 1941. Vachon continued working with the FSA until it was disbanded. After he finished his military service in World War II he worked with Stryker at Standard Oil of New Jersey.

Theodor Jung was hired in 1934 by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to draft statistical maps, pictorial graphs and charts of unemployment statistics. In 1935 he began work in an educational unit of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration doing visual graphics and designing pamphlets. He showed Stryker some of his photographic work and was hired to be an FSA photographer and a graphic designer for publications and exhibits in September 1935. Stryker had high hopes for him. Supposedly Jung had an instinct for good photos, but his technical grasp of cameras was lacking. Stryker was disappointed with his output, especially his April 1936 Midwest trip to Ohio. Within two months he was transferred to another division in the Resettlement Administration, the Special Skills Division. His Indiana pictures include photos of poor roads, erosion, and inadequate living quarters.

Paul Carter joined the staff of the Historical Section in late 1935. His brother, John Franklin Carter, was the Head of the Information Division and Roy Stryker’s supervisor in the Resettlement Administration. He visited Michigan in May 1936, cut across Indiana and was in Minnesota in July, covering two early New Deal projects there, the Beltrami Island Settler Relocation Project and Austin Acres, a project to provide suburban housing for workers in a town where the Hormel meat packing plant was the major industry. He also took photographs in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Iowa. He was in ill health and lacked the energy for trips. This demonstrates just how physically

grueling it must have been for the FSA photographers on the road. Stryker convinced him that the life of an FSA photographer was not for him. Stryker also believed he did not have the eye for compelling photos. He left the FSA to open a camera store near Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in 1936.

Nine photos taken in Indiana are not attributed to any photographer. They are all taken in Decatur in September 1935. Four photos are of the Railroad station and the rest are of Decatur Homesteads. They might have been taken by a photographer assigned to photograph Decatur Homesteads or simply a FSA photographer traveling through Indiana, either by car or train, on another assignment. One of the requirements of photographers was that they own a car. But it is also possible that they traveled by railroad. Decatur was on the Erie Railroad line from New York to Chicago. One of those photos lists Rothstein, Mydans or Carter as the possible photographer. But the photos may have been taken by Ben Shahn on his trip to the Midwest and South in 1935. He took photos of Dyess Colony, a Federal Emergency Relief Administration and Works Progress Administration community in Mississippi County, Arkansas during that time period. He also travelled to Kentucky and Tennessee. Or perhaps it was Theodor Jung entering the state on his way to Brown County on an assignment. Or they could have been taken by Carl Mydans, as he was in Cincinnati in September of 1935.

The Indiana FSA Photographs

There are 678 Indiana photographs with captions in the Library of Congress' FSA – OWI Collection. There are others that do not have captions, the "killed" or "untitled" ones. Generally the FSA photographers mailed their exposed negatives to the Historical Section's photographic lab in Washington, D. C. for developing, numbering and printing. In the beginning years Stryker was almost solely responsible for reviewing contact prints made from the negatives and selecting images that he considered suitable for printing. Over time, the FSA photographers had greater responsibility in image selection. Rejected images were referred to as "killed." In earlier years, a hole was sometimes punched through the "killed" negatives. This practice was discontinued. Later, near duplicate photos without captions were referred to as "untitled." The rejected images are almost always near duplicates or alternate views of a printed negative. After Stryker reviewed and selected images, the negatives and contact prints were returned to the FSA photographers in the field for captioning. The resulting captions were edited at the Historical Section's headquarters. The selected images were then printed and mounted. Captions were applied to the photo mounts, and the photographs were filed in the photographic file. They maintained files of negatives, prints and captions.

All the Indiana photos are black and white. While there were FSA color photos, there are no color photographs taken in Indiana. There are photos from 24 out of 92 Indiana counties, a quarter of all Indiana counties. There are nine photos with no location given. They were taken by

Esther Bublely during her Greyhound bus trip through Indiana. The Indiana photos were taken between 1935 and 1943, except for 1939, when no photos were taken. That is probably a reflection of the Historical Section's budget and priorities. Almost two-thirds were taken in 1937, 1938, and 1940 focusing on the Ohio River flood, tenant farmers, homesteads and the U.S. Army Chaplain School at Fort Benjamin Harrison.

Most of the Indiana photos are primarily concerned with rural and traditional agricultural life. There are no photos of the major industries, including iron, coal, limestone, glass, steel and automotive. There are some photographs of signs, but not as many as in other states. Signs abound in the overall FSA photographic collection, including amateur commercial signs and hand painted ones. The photos of signs are now part of cultural heritage of the Great Depression. Stryker told the FSA photographers to "Show the city people what it is like to live on the farm." And in the case of Indiana that is what they did. Most of Stryker's photographers came from the urban centers of the east and west coasts. For them the American heartland was terra incognita. Jack Delano said "I had always been a city boy." Stuart Kidd said, "It [rural America] was the neglected backyard of an American Dream that has transferred to the dynamic cities." Carl Mydans said "I lived in an isolated world." So traveling to the heartland was an educational experience for them.

There are photos of crops: oats, soybeans, sorghum, wheat, cantaloupes and corn. There are photos of livestock: chickens, cows, hogs, sheep and horses. The photographers liked to photograph small towns including main streets, courthouse squares, parks, schools, post offices, churches, hotels, stores, cafes, barbershops and gas stations. The lasting impression they left is of the small town as a friendly and social public space. The small town became a powerful cultural symbol for a society longing to be reassured about the soundness of its origins, the simplicity of an earlier age and nostalgia for the rural past. One can also think of the images put forth by Frank Capra, Thomas Hart Benton and Thornton Wilder, all projecting images of the nostalgic small town America. There are some beautiful photographs of small town life in Indiana. There are no photos in Indiana of drought, dust storms, migrants or migrant camps. The FSA constructed 95 migrant camps. The closest migrant camps to Indiana were in Michigan, Missouri and Arkansas.

City and Town

City assignments generally were very specific. There were more photos of cities after July 1942 when the FSA photographic unit, the Historical Section, was transferred to the Office of War Information. Photos of cities increased as the aim shifted to showing a country ready for war. By then many photos portrayed the city as a symbol of hope and renewal for the future. The only city in Indiana photographed was Indianapolis. Indianapolis in 1930 had a population of 365,000 and was the only genuine metropolitan center. The other four major Indiana cities with about 100,000 each were Fort Wayne, Gary, South Bend and Evansville. The rest of the state was

much more rural, dotted with smaller cities and towns. Although the rural part of the state was by then a minority, it still dominated the character of the state in the 1930s.

There are several photos of downtown Indianapolis, showing the Woolworth store on Washington Street near Meridian Street and people around Monument Circle. But they do not show the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in any photos. They were taken by Vachon in January 1942. The Indianapolis city shots show crowded, anonymous life in contrast to the friendly small town scenes. There are two photos taken also in January by him in Brazil, Indiana on US 40. Perhaps he was passing through the state, maybe on a bus, to a larger assignment in Missouri and then the Dakotas. Just the previous month, December 1941, he took numerous photos of the Greyhound Bus Station in Washington, D. C., which is why he perhaps was on a bus trip. Those are the only photos he took in Indiana that year.

There are many photos by Esther Bublely in the Greyhound Bus Station in Indianapolis taken in 1943. The photos show people boarding buses and in the waiting rooms. Waiting is a theme in many FSA photos in general. Waiting was part of the fabric of life during the Great Depression. It could also symbolize the lack of hope or opportunity and the frustration of everyday life.

There is one photo of the Indianapolis 500 and four of the crowds at the race by Rothstein in 1938. It was the return of single seat racers. The 1938 race was won by Floyd Roberts with a record setting time of 117.2 miles per hour. He was killed the following year while attempting to defend his title. In one photo is car number 14, Russ Snowberger's, and car number 26, Frank Brisko's. Snowberger had qualified with the second fastest speed of 120 miles per hour. He finished 25th as a broken rod ended his race on lap 56. Brisk started in 11th position and went out of the race on lap 39 and finished 31st. As it was Memorial Day, and a holiday weekend, perhaps Rothstein decided to go to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and take a few photos of the famous race. Generally there are very few FSA photos of big events, celebrities or places. There are very few FSA photos of President Roosevelt prior to World War II. For example, there are no photos of the Stock Exchange on Wall Street.

The only other urban area for which there are photos is Vincennes, taken by Rothstein and Vachon. But Vincennes probably had more of the feel of a small town and not a city. The country as a whole and Indiana became an urban society in 1920, with 50.6% of Indiana classified as urban. By 1930 Indiana was 55.5% urban. The population of Vincennes in 1930 was only 17,000. The 1930 census classified places with 2,500 people as urban. This may seem strange to us today, but it indicated a state gradually becoming more urban.

In early 1936 Stryker sought out Robert Lynd, the author of *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture*, a socioeconomic study of a small American town. The town was Muncie, Indiana. On the train back to Washington, D. C., after meeting with Lynd, Stryker wrote up a draft of a shooting script on small towns that was to become a permanent directive for

all FSA photographers in the field. It is too bad that Stryker never sent any FSA photographers to Muncie, as it would have been wonderful to compare the book with FSA photos.

Erosion of the Land

There are several photos depicting erosion, mostly in Brown and Martin Counties. Stryker sought to build a photographic file on erosion from the outset. He did not want to rely on photos from the Soil Conservation Service, Forest Service, or other federal agencies. As late as May 1941, almost six years after the photographic project started, Stryker still regarded the erosion collection as incomplete. He wrote to Frank Delano that “we are a little short of that type of erosion picture where the house and human are included.” Brown County was known for making railroad ties. Nationally, the FSA photographers shot the lumber industry and sawmills extensively. They were the most photographed industries in the South. It was probably because of their rural and quaint rustic character.

River Floods

There are many photos of the 1937 Ohio River flood, which broke all previous flood records in the lower Ohio Valley. At one point the river’s entire length, 981 miles, stood above flood level and covered 15,000 miles of highway. Indiana was hit very hard. On the Indiana side of the Ohio, ninety-five percent of Jeffersonville, Clarksville and Utica were under water. At Evansville the flood crested at 53 feet on the last day of January and did not recede to flood stage level until 40 days later. From Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Cairo, Illinois, one million were left homeless and 385 dead. Property losses totaled \$500 million. At some points in southern Indiana, the Ohio stretched twenty miles across. The river stood almost twenty five feet deep in downtown Jeffersonville. Four thousand Works Progress Administration workers were sent to Evansville and one thousand to Jeffersonville to help battle the flood. The town of Leavenworth, Indiana, with a population of 400, was completely destroyed. Works Progress Administration workers relocated Leavenworth after the flood. Over 100,000 were left homeless in Indiana. The Red Cross opened more than 1,500 refugee camps and 300 field hospitals. The Resettlement Administration cared for thousands of unfortunate farm animals during the flood and afterwards repaired damaged croplands and distributed thousands of seed packets.

Stryker wanted to get the human side of the story and the effects of the flood upon the land. He was more interested in the aftermath of the flood and its environmental impact. Although he used Walker Evans, Ed Locke and Russell Lee to cover the flood, he was reluctant to commit too many resources, as the press and media would provide extensive coverage. The flood was widely reported in newspapers, movie newsreels and on radio. Evans and Locke spent their time along the levees in Arkansas. Lee was assigned the Ohio Valley. Russell Lee was visiting relatives in

northern Illinois and headed to Posy County at the confluence of the Wabash and Ohio rivers. His assignment was to wait till the floodwaters receded and record the effects. The flood story was only Lee's second assignment. Stryker urged Lee to concentrate on the devastation to farm buildings, houses and the land. Stryker said that "The newspaper is all subject and action. Ours shows what's back of the action." Lee also took photos of the flood in Illinois and Missouri.

The Works Progress Administration, which provided disaster relief, made a documentary, entitled *Man Against the River*, about the flood of 1937 in Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. The FSA documentary film, *The River* by Pare Lorentz, used actual footage from the 1937 flood as well. Lorentz was planning on using stock footage of flooding, but Hollywood was not obliging. *The River* was a film celebrating the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Tennessee Valley Authority mitigated flooding, put a stop to the spoiling of forests and provided hydroelectric power to a vast area. This documentary film shows the importance of the Mississippi River. It details the history of the flood prone Mississippi basin and how farming and timber practices had caused topsoil to be swept down the river and into the Gulf of Mexico. The film covers the efforts to control floods and conserve soil. The documentary shows the way in which the Mississippi River is misused. At the same time it is also a paean to the American natural landscape. Lorentz combined stunning visuals, a magnificent score and moving narration to show the necessity of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Supposedly the documentary was inspired in part by a map of the United States, with the Mississippi River running down the middle of the country, which hung in the Secretary of Agriculture's office. The documentary was filmed in fourteen states. It was budgeted at \$50,000 and Lorentz brought it in under budget. The visual beauty of Lorentz's images is complemented by his script. The script, essentially free verse, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in poetry in 1938. Lorentz had been asked to do an article for *McCall's* about the condition of the Mississippi River. He thought the article might be the basis for his next documentary. When the article was done, he thought it too long, and spent a week writing the poem. Stylistically, he used a Walt Whitman inspired repetition of names in the poem. He sent both to *McCall's* allowing them to decide which they wanted. They published the poem in May 1937 and received 150,000 requests for copies by readers. He decided to use it for the script of *The River*. Many newspapers gave it glowing reviews, although some critics looked at it as government propaganda. The government made it available to theaters for no charge and it was picked up by Paramount Pictures. It was a critical and commercial success with both the public and even government agencies. It was nominated for an Academy Award and won the top prize in the best documentary category at the Venice Film Festival in 1938, beating Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympiad*.

There was major springtime flooding of rivers in the Midwest in 1943 as well. In addition to Indiana, the flooded states included Illinois, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Mississippi. The Red Cross estimated that 1,350,000 acres of land were inundated. High water on highways and railroads meant shipping had to be delayed. Logansport, Indiana, which

had five industrial plants with war contracts, all had to be shut down. The Red Cross estimated that 30,000 families, 100,000 people were homeless in shelters and 9,663 homes were destroyed or damaged. President Roosevelt released seven and half million dollars for the states to match for rebuilding highways and bridges. The FSA set aside \$235,000 for immediate needs and instructed county supervisors to make small loans, usually \$30 or less, to distressed farm families. Generally the average FSA grant was \$20 for emergency reasons. More than a quarter of a million dollars was available for loans to put in new crops. There are two photos of the 1943 flood of the Arkansas River near Fort Smith taken by the U. S. Army Signal Corps in May in the FSA – OWI Collection at the Library of Congress.

Tenant Farmers

In February 1937 Stryker asked his photographers “to make a big drive on tenancy pictures.” This was due to the publication of *The Report of the President’s Committee on Farm Tenancy* and the imminent consideration of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant bill. The report established that tenancy had increased from 25% in 1880 to 42% of all farmers in 1935. Stryker urged Russell Lee to get as many photos of tenant farmers as possible. Less than 25% of the farms in the sixteen southwest Indiana counties were farmed by tenants. The highest concentration of non-owner operated farms was in the northeast Indiana counties of Benton, Newton and White. More than half the farms in those three counties were operated by farm laborers and tenants. One major absentee investor owned 74,000 acres in Benton County. By 1941 the Indiana Defense Relocation Corporation purchased 10,000 acres, mostly in Benton County to resettle hundreds of farm families displaced from La Porte, Charleston and Madison by munitions plants and ordnance proving grounds. The FSA was to provide loans and grants where necessary. In FSA Region Three they estimated that 2,500 families would be displaced in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Iowa and Missouri.

By 1937 the in-depth picture story was the preferred working method for the Information Division and Historical Section. It was intended to expedite the FSA’s service to the press and media as well as legitimize their work. In a letter to Russell Lee in January 1937 Stryker listed various newspapers and news agencies that were interested in stories. Stryker wrote “They would like a story which could be labeled “The Tenant’s Day” or “A Day in a Tenant’s Life.” Subsequently he instructed Lee to concentrate on selected families and photograph them in depth. Stryker also wrote Arthur Rothstein that Beverly Smith was writing an article on tenancy at Gee's Bend, Alabama for an issue of *The American Magazine*. The FSA had made loans and provided farm and home advice and instruction at Gee’s Bend. Stryker thought perhaps a major magazine would be interested in using FSA photographs for a major story. He told Rothstein, "We could do a swell story; one that *Life* will grab." *Life* did not do a story about Gee's Bend, but an article entitled “The Big World At Last Reaches Gee’s Bend,” by John Temple Graves ran in the *New York Times Magazine* on August 22, 1937 using ten photos by Rothstein.

Undoubtedly some of the Indiana photos taken by FSA photographers were probably meant to be used along with a newspaper or magazine story if possible. There are over thirty photos of Tip Estes and his family in Benton County, showing them doing chores and relaxing. There are over a dozen photos of Frank and Mrs. Sheroan in Tippecanoe County at the auction of their possessions. Most auctions took place in late winter. Auctions reached their peak in February, as sellers anticipated the property tax assessment due in March. In addition to those two families, there are over forty photos of six other tenant farmer families in Indiana. It is very possible that some of these sets of photos were used by local newspapers in Indiana.

Wartime Stories

During the War World II years, the stories changed from those about the lives of farmers to stories related to the war effort. There are nearly a hundred photos of the U. S. Army Chaplain School at Fort Benjamin Harrison by Frank Delano. His photos show clergymen preparing physically and spiritually. The photos are of the first four classes, including topography, first aid, military law and defense against chemical warfare. In 1942 the U. S. Army Chaplain School was moved to Harvard University. The photos taken at the U. S. Army Chaplain School by Delano reflect the unity of the war effort with interdenominational and interracial settings.

There are over thirty photos of the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad by Frank Delano. It was 1943, and gas was rationed because of World War II and public transportation was being encouraged. Delano spent a typical twelve-hour workday on the trains as they were switched from yard to yard. He slept overnight at the Gibson YMCA. One of the photos Delano took shows snow on the ground, the only Indiana photo to truly convey a winter scene.

There are over forty photos of Esther Bubleby's Greyhound bus trip through Indiana in 1943. Bubleby travelled across Indiana from Chicago to Cincinnati by bus. It was a four-month cross-country bus trip from the District of Columbia to as far north as Chicago and as far south as Memphis. The goal was to document bus travel, which had dramatically increased with the rationing of gasoline and tires. Her trip was under the auspices of the Office of War Information.

New Deal Communities

Overall the Government planned and started 99 communities, with almost 11,000 housing units costing an average of \$9,691. There is a disagreement about the number of communities. Depending on how they are counted there are perhaps as many as 200 communities that reached some level of development. They have been called a "forgotten legacy of the New Deal." There were several different types of communities and subsistence homesteads, including:

Garden cities

Stranded communities
Farm communities
Industrial communities
Farm villages
Cooperative farms
Farm and rural industrial
Industrial communities
Forest homesteads

There were two communities in Ohio:

Dayton Homesteads in Montgomery County
Greenhills in Hamilton County

There were two communities in Kentucky:

Sublimity Farms in Laurel County
Christian-Trigg Farms in Christian County

There were two communities in Michigan:

Ironwood Homesteads in Gogebic County
Saginaw Valley Farms in Saginaw County

There was one community in Illinois:

Lake County Homesteads in Chicago

Most communities were in the South and Northeast and not the Midwest. Overall, the Division of Subsistence Homesteads planned 34 communities. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration planned 28 communities. The Resettlement Administration planned 37 communities. There were a few communities planned for Indians but they were transferred to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

The first communities were started by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads in the Department of Interior. The Division of Subsistence Homesteads was created through Section 208, Title II of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933. The communities were meant to demonstrate a new direction toward a healthier and more economically secure future. Subsistence homesteads were to be a new balance between industry and agriculture absorbing the industrial unemployed and displaced farmers.

There was concern and debate about the term subsistence homesteads. Other possible terminology suggested included back to the land, part time farming, subsistence farmlets, part time gardens, rural homesteads, semirural living and farmsteads. President Roosevelt did not like the term subsistence because he thought it gave a misleading impression of what he hoped they would accomplish. Subsistence seemed to imply scraping by or doing just enough to get by. But the word subsistence was intended to reassure the farm lobbies that the new communities would not produce goods for the commercial market. The word homestead was clearly intended to echo the great American experience of settling the public land of the West. Milburn L. Wilson, Director of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads, hoped that the subsistence homesteads would demonstrate the feasibility of thoughtfully designed and constructed homes at reasonable prices. He also hoped they would build community spirit to ensure a well-rounded community life.

There was a revival of handicrafts started by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads, including woodworking, weaving and metalworking. The Resettlement Administration's Special Skills Division had experts that travelled around teaching those skills. For each community the Special Skills Division set up simple furniture at demonstration houses. It advised the architects and engineers on house designs, flagpoles, and playgrounds. It planned curtains, rugs and upholstery for the homes. Painters provided murals for community buildings. Community buildings were used for dances, movies, plays, lectures and recreation. The Special Skills Division also provided teachers in the areas of fine arts and applied arts, painting, sculpture, music, dramatics, furniture design and landscaping.

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration also planned and initiated communities. One community started by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration was Skyline Farms in Alabama. It was started in 1934. It was originally called Cumberland Farms Project. It was for whites only. It included a school, commissary, warehouse and manager's office. It had 181 farm units varying in size from 40 to 60 acres. Residents were part of a cooperative and together owned a store, a cooperative marketing association, a prepaid health care program and a prepaid veterinary association. There was a Skyline Farms Band, which performed for President and Eleanor Roosevelt at the White House in 1938. Musicologist Alan Lomax later recorded the Band for the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress. It is perhaps the first time a traditional music ensemble performed at the White House. In 1944 the federal government began to liquidate the community's assets, selling to private buyers. Only two of the original families were able to buy their farms.

The Resettlement Administration planned and initiated thirty-seven communities, including three greenbelt towns. They originally planned to build twenty-five greenbelt communities, but only started three "Tugwell Towns", as they well called. They were

Greendale, Wisconsin (outside Milwaukee, Wisconsin)

Greenhills, Ohio (outside Cincinnati, Ohio)
 Greenbelt, Maryland (outside Washington, D.C.)

Frank Lloyd Wright offered to help Tugwell design and build a greenbelt town, but he reportedly asked for an astronomical figure of \$ 100,000,000. He said he would build Broadacre City, the finest city in the world. All three of the greenbelt towns were to be built for approximately \$31,000,000.

The aim was to disperse the working population out of overcrowded cities into planned new towns involved in community decision-making. The goal was to provide work, low rent housing and introduce planned garden city principles.

Greenbelt towns were incorporated with city managers, either appointed or elected by the city council. They did encounter opposition, as local realtors feared lower land values and local governments feared lower tax revenues. They were opposed by organizations such as the National Association of Home Builders, the Savings and Loan League and the Mortgage Bankers Association.

The three greenbelt towns were only three out of 99 New Deal communities but they absorbed over one third of the cost and accounted for one fourth of the total settlers of the entire community program. Ultimately, all 99 communities came under the jurisdiction of the FSA.

The greenbelt towns influenced town planning around the world, being only second to the Tennessee Valley Authority in interest to foreign guests. The U. S. Department of State received requests for information from several foreign governments about greenbelt towns.

Photographing Indiana Communities

The FSA photographers preferred to be assigned to problem areas and not the new communities, which they considered routine work. They felt that the new community projects offered the photographers few creative avenues for their work. The new communities were barely established, under construction and often in denuded landscapes. Irene Delano, who often traveled with her husband Frank, referring to communities, said “There’s got to be a limit as to how many ways you can photograph it.” When photographing the communities, Ben Shahn said he found “neat little rows of houses” that were “impossible to photograph.” Marion Post Wolcott complained about photographing communities. She said “I am sorry I squawked about projects, it seemed that I just couldn’t face the sight of another coop jackass or pressure cooker.” But she eventually photographed twenty communities. Neither Ben Shahn nor Marion Post Wolcott took any photos in Indiana. After 1937, photographing the communities became more intensified. During the next five years the FSA photographers made 37 working visits to communities. There were three communities in Indiana that were photographed by FSA photographers. Decatur Homesteads was a FSA planned industrial community. Wabash Farms was a resettlement project

with FSA funding and expertise. Deshee Farms was a cooperative farm, with land leased and managed by the FSA.

Decatur Homesteads

There was only one homestead in Indiana, Decatur Homesteads. An Afro-American homestead was suggested for Indianapolis but never got off the ground. U. S. House Representative Louis Ludlow protested after getting complaints from various sources. Decatur Homesteads was authorized in December 1933, following the first subsistence homestead, Arthurdale, which had a unit cost of \$16,635, the highest of all 99 communities. The population of Decatur in 1930 was 5,156 and only 5,861 in 1940. Decatur Homesteads, which was listed as an industrial community, had 48 units of five-room homes, each with an average of 1.3 acres of land. It was developed with assistance of Purdue University and residents were promised work in the local General Electric plant. General Electric was doing a highly profitable business in New Deal contracts and the manufacture of electrical appliances purchased by rural consumers financed by New Deal funds. General Electric had a contract to manufacture electrical equipment to consumers of electricity produced by the Tennessee Valley Authority. President Roosevelt and his mother also owned 5,792 shares in General Electric. The city of Decatur furnished water lines and electrical hookup to the power plant. It was on an 80-acre site. Seven different styles of homes were built. Each unit faced a fifteen-acre park. The aim was for occupants that were selected to establish their own gardens. By 1935 all 48 houses were completed and occupied. A 1941 survey of resettlement communities found that the average size of a family was 5.2. The average age of the husband was 37.3 years and average age of the wife 33.3 years. The average education of the husband was 7.2 grades and the average education of his wife was 8.1 grades.

The residents paid \$19 a month to the Homestead Association Corporation to purchase their homes. The unit housing cost at Decatur was \$3,277. Of the 99 communities only ten had a lower unit housing cost. The corporation was dissolved in 1947. Homesteaders in the Decatur photos look happy, proud, and very content with their new homes. There are scenes of children skipping down the street or playing outside. There are photographs of families cheerfully working in their gardens. They are positive images intended to build support for the programs of the FSA. The photographs of the homesteads served to preserve forever the visual memory of what they looked like. Presently, the homes are now part of the Homestead Housing Addition on Homestead Drive, including Homestead Park. All the homes have been enlarged and remodeled.

Wabash Farms

In 1935 more than 21,000 rural Indiana families were on relief. The state of Indiana and the federal government pursued the conversion of unproductive land to conservation and recreation. The largest of these was the Hoosier National Forest, with almost 300,000 acres in nine counties. In the late 1930s, the Department of Agriculture proposed the White River Land Utilization

Project for a portion of Martin County characterized by submarginal farm land and low living standards. The Project provided for the purchase of 32,000 acres of land with the goal of restoring its forest productivity and creating a state park. Early in 1940, with the war already in progress, Congress passed the first supplemental National Defense Appropriations Act. Three million dollars was earmarked to build a Navy Ammunition Depot at Burns City, Indiana on the site of the White River Project. In 1943 the name was changed to Crane Naval Ammunition Depot. Some of the destitute and low income rural families who had been displaced by government purchases of submarginal land in Martin and Brown counties were resettled on individual and cooperative farms. There was a subsistence farm project on the outskirts of Loogootee, consisting of a barn and fifteen houses. Antipathy to government programs in Martin County ran high and it was dubbed "Hilterville" by many.

Deshee Farms

In late 1937 and early 1938 money was tight for Stryker. The Public Health Service discovered that FSA photographers did first rate work and began to use their services regularly. As the Public Health Service paid their bills on time and the Historical Section needed the money, Rothstein did work for the Public Health Service. But a trip for another agency could also be used to pay for an assignment for Stryker. That summer Rothstein travelled extensively in the Midwest at the expense of the Public Health Service. He did one project for them in Indianapolis. During that trip he took the five photos of the Indianapolis 500. He was able to go to Vincennes and photograph a FSA cooperative farm, Deshee Farms, in action.

General cooperative associations started with the Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926, but were greatly expanded by the Farm Credit Acts of 1933 and 1935. The FSA helped with 177 cooperative grain elevators in the Midwest. Throughout the country there were cooperatives for pastures, dairies, woodland, cattle breeding, canneries, hog breeding, poultry, feed grinding, orchards, filling stations, coal mines, seed houses, hatcheries, sawmills, freezing plants, tearooms, inns, blacksmiths' and cobblers' shops, garages, restaurants, rock quarries, gristmills and handicraft industries. There was a Division of Self-Help Cooperatives within the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration provided funds to help cooperatives turn to producing goods and services, including landscaping, butchering, plumbing, fishing, logging, carpentry, house repair and wrecking, dentistry, printing, baking, cider production, sewing, tailoring, pickling, rug and broom making, repairing shoes, radios and furniture, and operating cafeterias, beauty and barber shops. The goods and services could not be sold through normal market channels. Federal funds were given to cooperatives through the fall of 1935, with approximately 30,000 people participating during a two year period. In 1935 to 1936 there were 10,500 active cooperative associations. Minnesota led the nation with 1,401 followed by Wisconsin with 1,086 and Iowa with 954. Most of the 3.6 million members were in marketing cooperatives and farm supply cooperatives.

There were also medical cooperatives. In 1933 only 6% of the U.S. population had medical insurance. Medical assistance started with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, which provided money to pay medical bills. According to the FSA, nearly half of all loan defaults were due to illness. The aim was to protect government loans by improving clients' rehabilitation potential. The medical cooperatives started in 1935. At its peak in 1942, the FSA had over 650,000 rural farmers enrolled in prepaid medical cooperative plans. There were almost 1,200 medical plans in 41 states, including 221 dental cooperatives

On January 25, 1938, fifteen men and one woman met in Vincennes to found Deshee Farms. It was a large cooperative farm ten miles south of Vincennes in Knox County. It was named Deshee Farms for a creek running through the area. It was a cooperative farm incorporated under the laws of Indiana. They negotiated with the Federal government to lease 2,771 acres of land in six scattered tracts, two large ones, seven miles apart with smaller farms in between. Deshee Farms included 42 houses, nine barns, three milking sheds and ten poultry houses. Forty one families could live in the cooperative at one time. It never reached full capacity. There were 38 in 1941 but was down to 28 a year later. Each house had running water and electricity but no indoor toilet. Each house also had a root cellar and garden plot. It was a diversified farm operation, including crops and livestock. It was a full scale farm with modern equipment. Residents were paid on an hourly basis. They received free rent from the cooperative and were eligible for a share of the profits or losses from the farm. The farm included a dairy herd, chickens and hogs. They also grew melons, tomatoes, wheat and corn.

The lease and loan agreements with the federal government provided both the land and capital. Under the terms of the agreement, the FSA had considerable control over management and operation of the farm, since a member of the FSA was to serve on the board of directors. The FSA hired and paid the farm manager and an accountant. The FSA also required the farm to submit a farm plan, with a line item budget, subject to approval to the FSA regional office in Indianapolis and the FSA headquarters in Washington, D. C. The agreement was to protect the government's investment by providing FSA training, supervision and education by farm specialists and home economists. The farm was managed by a board of directors with three year terms. The Deshee Farms community manager was the highest-ranking local FSA official. The board meetings also provided an opportunity for speakers, forums and movies. The farm sent a group of members each year to the Farm Institute at Purdue University. There were also correspondence courses members could take.

Membership turnover was significant. There were at least 86 different farm members over the course of seven years. Twenty-five percent stayed less than one year. Fourteen stayed between one and two years, 23 stayed between two and three years. Only two members stayed from the beginning to the end. Board members seldom served full terms and there was little continuity in the membership of committees. This may have contributed to the fact that a core of recognized leaders never really emerged. The FSA short-term objective of maximizing the use of resources

by providing access to more clients superseded the long-term goal of developing a stable membership and future success. Another problem was the ambiguous role of the FSA in the management structure. The structure of a farm manger, which was hired by the FSA, hindered the development of independent farm management. Cooperation became “going along” with the manger and not true cooperative work. The goal of instilling cooperative principles through educational and social programs faded over time. The scattered layout of the farms strained the members’ sense of community. Another rift was between members with either a background in hill-land or bottomland farming, who employed different framing techniques.

Resettlement communities in general were often unstable, poorly integrated, with high rates of turnover, factionalism, and mini revolts. It is no surprise that the cooperative spirit did not catch on. Residents rarely participated in civic meetings, such as literary courses, as they seemed dull. They did participate in purely social functions, such as picnics, suppers, dances. While they showed little interest in narrow special interest activities, they did support organizations and activities that addressed real community needs and concerns. They did not have the time to participate intensively because of illness, busy schedules and divergent interests. They were often overwhelmed by the pressures and challenges of starting over. Community members were not anxious to participate in experimental reforms as they simply wanted economic security.

Deshee Farms was a focus of animosity and sometimes called “Little Russia.” The floods of 1943 were physically and financially devastating to Deshee Farms. In 1945, at a special meeting, members voted to dissolve the corporation. Five families purchased individual farms from the FSA.

Ideal of Agrarian Life

In contrast to urban workers, the farmer was imagined as representing the authentic American, a synthesis of hard labor, civic pride, autonomy, but with middle class sensibilities. Rural life was associated with nostalgia, sentimentality, hardiness and virility. Rural life was approaching mythic status in its importance to the nation’s founding and development. There was a belief that agrarian life must be preserved because of its centrality to American history and identity. There was also a belief that rural life was intrinsically superior to urban life. The idealization of agrarian life more often reflected sentimental values than contemporary realities. Even as the farmer as icon retained considerable symbolic power, the real life struggling farmer seemed external to the concerns of a growing commercial society. In a sense, the photos of struggling poor farmers are even more startling, suggesting a segment of society caught off guard.

One commentator suggests that the celebration of people during the Great Depression represented a search for a “coherent national character” that transcended divisions of class and religion. The FSA photos made a substantial contribution to the “cult of the people” which

emerged in the 1930s and was part of the New Deal democratization of American culture and a nation desiring stability and harmony in a tumultuous decade. Jack Delano defined the purpose of the photographic project as a “Search for the heart of the American people.” And he believed that the sentiment that united the FSA photographers was an effort to register “the pulse of the nation through its people.”

Others have said that the efforts of the FSA photographers also sought to capture:

- A pastoral ideal
- A sense of rootedness in the land
- The mythos of the American yeoman
- The rugged individualism of the farmer and rural family

Stryker also had a personal dream to create a pictorial encyclopedia of American agriculture to preserve what he felt was rapidly disappearing:

- Neighborliness
- Kinship with nature
- The spaciousness of the country
- A simpler, safer, peaceful way of life

There are many photographs of Indiana farmers near the crops they raised themselves. The symbolism of such photos is touching and convincing. An American farmer and his wife have survived hard times and the Great Depression and are now enjoying the results of their diligent work. There are photos of successful FSA clients who were able to better themselves and with an FSA loan to help their farm. The average FSA loan was \$412, with an average interest rate of 2.5%. Nationally, approximately 900,000 families received FSA loans.

Faces and Character

Ansel Adams called the FSA photographers “a bunch of sociologists with cameras.” Others called them “Poets with cameras” or “Crusaders with cameras.” Stryker described the images as “dignity versus despair.” Other commentators have said that their efforts also sought to capture a sense of renewal or that individuals could rise above disaster and have the ability to regenerate themselves.

Ben Shahn noted that, “the poor who were rich in spirit” maintained “a transcendent indifference to their lot.” The cult of the common man was that they were poor in substance but rich in spirit. The FSA photos gave common people voices. Bernarda Shahn recalled her husband’s “glee that these people are so real and are so ordinary, and that in each one, in his ordinariness, is so markedly unique.” William Stott contends that the FSA photographers searched for the “look”

that encapsulated adversity, fortitude, pain and grace. In the Indiana photos you can easily find such photos that depict farmers showing the hardness of the Great Depression. There are photos of faces showing the strength and fortitude of farmers. There are also photos of homesteaders glowing with their appreciation and looking to the future. As with many of the FSA photos, portrait style photos shot in Indiana also included many of the following:

- Men on tractors
- Farmers showing their produce
- Families posing in front of their homes
- Women working in the kitchen or doing chores
- Families in the living room, reading or listening to the radio

One commentator remarked that, “With haunting permanence, the documentary venture of the 1930s fixed an ambivalent image in place. The dignity of the poor, closest to nature and simple virtue, graces the FSA photographs, but so does the indignation that such poverty should exist in a land of such rich resources.”

Women, Work and the Hearth

Women encountered hostility in seeking employment with New Deal programs. For example, the Civilian Conservation Corps was established in 1933. The program was designed to conserve and develop the nation’s natural resources, primarily forests and soil, but also wildlife and water. At the peak of the program in 1935, the Civilian Conservation Corps had more than 500,000 enrollees in over 2,600 camps and provided work and training for a total of 3 million men. There were 80 Civilian Conservation Corps camps in Indiana. Women were excluded altogether in the original act. Only at Eleanor Roosevelt's insistence were eighty-six camps enrolling 8,500 women established before Congress eliminated them in 1937.

The Works Progress Administration was the first New Deal program to directly employ women. It hired widows, single women and those with absent husbands, and assigned them mostly to sewing projects. Women were also hired for the Works Progress Administration school lunch program, which served 900 million hot meals. Far fewer women were enrolled than men. Just 13.5 percent of Works Progress Administration employees were women in 1938, its top enrollment year. There are no photos in Indiana of woman working outside of rural settings or with heavy farm equipment.

While the farmer epitomized the Jeffersonian ideals of autonomy, virtue, and thrift, his wife was the ground upon which those ideals were realized. The Great Depression saw a return to domestic spaces. The household turned inward and women’s role at the center of the family took on an even greater significance. It was a reaffirming of the concept of the family as a domestic

interior space held together by women. Depression era women turned to housekeeping, a quintessentially American quality, to create stability and permanence in a struggling society. Women's identity was closely identified with the home and domesticity. Embracing homemaking was a sort of back to the home movement. Society equated women's identity with family and the home, an attempt to recapture an image of strength and an idealization of domestic sanctuary. Making do was a corner stone of the pioneer spirit and had been carried forward as a premier virtue on the American farm. Making do was an economic necessity and a rural tradition and custom highly valued by farm families. Self-sustenance could be a matter of enormous pride for farm women in the 1930s. Photos show women recreating domesticity in ways similar to pioneer women. There is the sense that those activities are necessary to family survival and to society at large. The central focus is usually on the kitchen and hearth. The hearth suggests stability and decency. Canning was a common FSA subject in photos. Such photos show the success of FSA clients, as well as capture the hearth and homemaking theme. FSA loans were often used to buy pressure cookers, which were called "precious cookers" and used to increase cash reserves by canning food. Washing clothes was a task that women had to endure, but canning and food preservation was work that women enjoyed. It was work that was valued for the skills it required and its contribution to the family and farm.

Other than Mary Lau, no other woman is identified by first name in the Indiana photos. Women are usually referred to as Mrs. so and so or the wife of, but not by their complete name. Mary Lau was a widow and farm owner with a small mortgage and that is why her name appears in captions. While women were important and valued, they still remained unnamed.

Houses and Farm Buildings

The FSA photographers did take a fair number of photos of farm houses, barns and out buildings. It is a veritable collection of folk architecture. But they never considered themselves as cultural anthropologists and did not think of cataloging them for posterity like the researchers employed by the Federal Art Project that produced the *Index of American Design*. A photo of a decrepit barn could be a symbol of the problems of agriculture, but a photo of a new A-frame barn could be a symbol of agrarian self-sufficiency, a plentiful harvest or careful husbanding of resources. The barn and farmhouse assumed a central importance in the Historical Section's photographic collection. Dorothea Lange described the tobacco barn as a distinctive American architectural form. Creating an FSA photographic file of housing was also an interest of Stryker. Owning your own home was part of the American Dream, and as the Great Depression was winding down, the American Dream was starting to grow with the ending of World War II. In Indiana, the FSA photographers took photos of rural farm houses, shacks, trailers and assorted farm building.

Leisure and Relaxation Activities

During the Great Depression, baseball was at the zenith of its popularity in terms of the number of people who played the game, including college players, town teams, industrial and semi pro leagues, soldiers, sandlot kids and prison teams. As a percentage of the population, more Americans were probably playing baseball in the 1930s than any time since. By 1937 the Works Progress Administration had spent about half a billion dollars, about 10% of its total expenditures on new parks and recreation, including the construction of baseball diamonds. The Works Progress Administration had built 3,600 baseball fields and 8,800 softball fields. There are two FSA photos of a baseball game in progress in Indiana. They were taken on Sunday, July 6, 1941 in Vincennes. The Double Cola softball team is playing at Washington Field (later named Inman Field) and spectators are enjoying the long holiday weekend. But the photos are of spectators outside the field, peeking in, perhaps suggesting that even the cost of admission to a ball game was beyond the financial means of many.

Bowling was seen as a working man's sport. Bowling received significant coverage in the 1930s. Newspapers in particular devoted large amounts of space to player's averages and scores. In 1934, New York City served as host to the International Bowling Associations' Annual Tournament. At the national level, churches, schools, office and industries all sponsored leagues. The number of officially sanctioned alleys rose from 450 in 1920 to 2,000 in 1929. But it was not until after World War II with the rise of suburban shopping complexes that bowling received the respectability it wanted and its greatest popularity. The Indiana photos of young adults enjoying bowling are from 1940. Picnics were a popular FSA subject in Indiana, as well as reading the newspaper, eating ice cream, sitting on the porch, listening to the radio, shooting pool and playing cards. You can find many Indiana photos with Hoosiers enjoying those activities.

Afro-Americans

In 1930, only 3.5% of Indiana's population was Afro-American. For the rural population it was .6% and only .3% was classified as rural-farm. There are some Indiana photos that include Afro-Americans. Eight are in the Indianapolis Greyhound Bus station taken by Esther Bublely in 1943. Most of the photos that include Afro-Americans were taken by Frank Delano at the U. S. Army Chaplain School at Fort Benjamin Harrison in 1942. There are no photos of Afro-Americans in rural scenes in Indiana, unlike the FSA photos taken in the South. Between 1935 and 1941, over 20% of the images produced by the FSA photographers in the South had images of Afro-Americans.

The Changing Face of Rural America

The idea of government acting to remove farm families and withdraw land from production must have seemed very foreign to farmers, since state and federal governments had been working for 70 years to do the opposite. The efforts were a modest success at best.

Net farm income more than doubled from \$2 billion to 4.6 billion between 1932 and 1939. But farm income only reached 1929 levels twice before 1940. And on the eve of World War II, 2.4 million American farmers, 39%, still rented their land.

Historian David Kennedy concluded that “farmers tried to sustain their income with higher volume, tilled more acres, lay on more fertilizer, bought more tractors and seed drills, and carried larger crops to market. And as a result collective misery, not the common good, was the bitter fruit of free market striving by farmers.”

David Danborn contends that President Roosevelt “financed the FSA with conscience money, out of guilt for leaving borderline farmers behind, performing a sort of agricultural triage, saving a handful of relatively promising farmers and letting the rest go.”

Anthony Badger describes the New Deal as a holding operation until the recovery arrived with the start of World War II. Until that time, “the nation’s primary agricultural problems still remained underemployment, substandard living conditions, soil erosion, flat commodity prices, and surpluses.”

By the 1940s and the coming of World War II, social and economic circumstances had changed considerably. An estimated five million farm people left the countryside for urban areas between 1940 and 1945, more than any other five year period in the 20th century. The farm population fell from 30.5 million to 24.4 million between 1929 and 1945, a drop from 25% to 18% of the population.

The total number of Indiana farms which had doubled in the last half of the 19th century, decreased by over half in the 20th century. By 1980 there were 88,000 farms in Indiana, fewer than in 1850. The size of an Indiana farm was 103 acres in 1920 and 193 in 1980. The average homestead in the four plains states increased from 390 acres in 1930 to 496 in 1945, an increase of 22% in 15 years, and the total amount of farm land grew by 5%.

Beginning in the mid-1930s tractor sales increased rapidly and the number of tractors in use doubled during the decade. Fifty-five percent of plains farmers had tractors. The percent of farms with tractors in Indiana was 4% in 1920, 22% in 1930 and 37% in 1940. The total number of tractors on Kansas farms increased from 49,798 in 1933 to 87,515 in 1940 and during the same period the number of combines increased from 24,197 to 41,572. The total number of combines in the United States increased dramatically from 4,000 in 1920 to 90,000 in 1937. It was not so

much as result of the prices of tractors coming down, although they did as Ford Motor Company, John Deere and International Harvester competed with each other, but because of three technological advances. A power lift made it possible for an implement to be raised at every turn by pulling a lever. Rubber tires replaced steel wheels. And diesel engines replaced gas engines.

By the late 1930s the technology had achieved a dominant design of a general all-purpose tractor that did not change for the next 30 years, except in size and horsepower. It allowed farmers to expand the size of their farms and required less manpower per acre. The number of man-hours required to grow and harvest an acre of wheat declined from 10.5 in the late 1920s to 7.5 during World War II. The tractor symbolized the modern farmer, representing the transition from farmer as worker to farmer as manager. It was an emblem of farm prosperity and modernity. Horse farming was becoming a mark of poverty and backwardness.

As the United States entered World War II the focus was back on increasing production as rapidly as possible for the war effort. The image of the farmer went from relief client to national asset. Between 1940 and 1945 federal programs generated over one third of the nation's agriculture and farm income tripled. What changed the face of farming were:

- Increased acreage of farms
- Greater capital investment
- Rising farm productivity
- Advances in mechanization and technology
- Consolidation of small farms into larger holdings

The legacy was that it was hard to dismantle many of the programs, such as subsidies, even as the family farm gave way to agribusiness. At the start of the 21st century, 70% of subsidies went to large farms. During the 1920s the family farm was the American ideal. By the 1940s, it was changing from a way of life to a business. The family farm system of agriculture, long idealized as America's spirit, was transformed by intensive technology, increased commodity specialization, absorption into national consumer markets and a reorganization of labor. Family farming was no longer the same, even for farms that were family operated. To survive in the new world of agribusiness, farm families had to develop new strategies.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Timeline

- 1929** Herbert Hoover, a Republican, is inaugurated President
- Harry G. Leslie, a Republican, is inaugurated Governor of Indiana
- Stock Market crashes
- Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*, a socioeconomic study of Muncie, Indiana, by Robert and Helen Lynd, is published
- 1930** Green County, Indiana is the mean center of the U. S. population
- Population of Indiana is 3,238,503, ranking 11th in the nation
- 1932** One-fourth of Indiana's workforce is unemployed
- Unemployment approaches 50% in the Chicago and Detroit steelmaking and automotive industries
- The federal budget ends up \$2.7 billion in the red, the largest peacetime deficit in American history up until that time
- New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Democratic presidential candidate, greets a waiting crowd on the arrival of a special train on Sept. 13 in Indianapolis. The first day of Governor Roosevelt's western tour covered Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri
- 1933** Franklin D. Roosevelt becomes President
- Paul V. McNutt, a Democrat, becomes Governor of Indiana
- U. S. Steel Corporation employs 225,000 fulltime workers in 1929, but only 19,000 in 1932 and none in early 1933
- Unemployment in the U. S. hits nadir with 15 million unemployed, nearly 30% out of work
- Civilian Conservation Corps created; there are eventually 80 CCC camps in Indiana

Division of Subsistence Homesteads in the Department of Interior created

Federal Emergency Relief Administration created

Agricultural Adjustment Administration created

1934 Roy Stryker works with Rexford Tugwell at the Agricultural Adjustment Administration for the summer

Decatur Homesteads in Indiana is started by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads

1935 Resettlement Administration created

Rexford Tugwell named as Head of Resettlement Administration

The Information Division as a department within the Resettlement Administration is created

The Historical Section as a unit of the Information Division created

Roy Stryker appointed as Head of the Historical Section

Arthur Rothstein sets up the darkroom and drafts technical guidelines for the Historical Section and becomes a field photographer

Dorothea Lange, Theodor Jung and Paul Carter are hired as field photographers

Theodore Jung is hired as a photographer and graphic designer for books and exhibitions

Works Progress Administration is created but is later renamed the Works Project Administration in 1939

Dr. Frances Everett Townsend speaks at the State Fairgrounds in September about his idea for an Old Age Revolving Pension Plan known as the Townsend Plan

Carl Mydans works as a photographer in the Housing Authority of the Resettlement Administration, but transfers to the Historical Section

First photographs taken in Indiana by Farm Security Administration photographers

- 1936** President Roosevelt is reelected
- M. Clifford Townsend, a Democrat, is elected Governor of Indiana
- Russell Lee is hired as Resettlement Administration photographer and replaces Carl Mydans who left for *Life* magazine
- President Franklin Roosevelt's train arrives in Gary, Indiana on August 26 en route to Bismarck, N.D., where the president is to start his tour of the drought area
- Paul Carter leaves the Resettlement Administration to open a camera store near Dartmouth College in New Hampshire
- John Vachon is hired as a trainee and clerk in the Historical Section
- 1937** Passage of the Farm Security Act
- Incorporation of the autonomous Resettlement Administration into the United States Department of Agriculture and renamed the Farm Security Administration
- The Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy* is issued
- Passage of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act
- Indiana is inundated with flood of Ohio River
- Pare Lorentz makes the documentary *The River* for the Farm Security Administration
- Rexford Tugwell leaves Resettlement Administration
- 1938** John Vachon is given first photographic assignment by Stryker and travels to Nebraska
- Deshee Farms in Indiana is started
- 1939** Jack Delano applies for job with FSA, but none are available
- No Farm Security Administration photos are taken in Indiana this year

- 1940** President Roosevelt reelected
- Henry F. Schricker, a Democrat, elected Governor of Indiana
- Jack Delano is hired to replace Arthur Rothstein who left for *Look* magazine
- Sullivan County, Indiana is the mean center of the U. S. population
- Population of Indiana is 3,427,796, ranking 12th in the nation
- 1941** Criticism of the work of the Farm Security Administration increases
- The Works Project Administration book *Indiana: A Guide to the Hoosier State* is published, using some FSA photos
- U. S. enters World War II
- The war becomes a major focus for the Historical Section
- 1942** There are drastic budget reductions in the Farm Security Administration
- Russell Lee resigns and serves in the Air Transport Command
- Esther Bublely is hired as a lab technician in the Farm Security Administration darkroom
- Frank Delano takes photographs at the U. S. Army Chaplain School at Fort Benjamin Harrison
- Historical Section loses its independence and becomes a photographic division of the Office of War Information
- 1943** Stryker resigns after having securing the preservation of the Historical Section's photographic file
- Esther Bublely becomes a photographer in the Office of War Information
- Springtime flooding of rivers in Indiana, Illinois, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Mississippi
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt tours the Republic Aviation Corporation Plant at Evansville, Indiana on April 27

- 1944** President Roosevelt reelected
- Transfer of approximately 77,000 photographic prints by the Farm Security Administration to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.
- The Library of Congress takes responsibility for the photographic collection in 1944, but loans it back to the Office of War Information for the duration of the World War II
- 1945** President Roosevelt dies on April 12
- Office of War Information operates till September
- Deshee Farms members vote to dissolve the corporation
- World War II ends
- 1946** The photographic collection is physically moved to the Library of Congress
- 1947** Decatur Homesteads Corporation dissolves
- 1948** Indiana Senator Capehart in an article in *Life* said that the Farm Security Administration wasted \$750,000 on silly and ridiculous pictures

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



List of Subjects for Indiana FSA Photos

Afro-Americans	Eating	Milking	Small Towns
Army	Erosion	Mill	Soil
Auctions	Factory	Mortgage	Soldiers
Ballgame	Family	Movies	Sorghum
Barbershop	Farmers	Moving	Spillway
Barns	Farmhouses	Mule	Sports
Bathroom	Farms	Newspaper	Steam Shovel
Bedroom	Flood	Oat Seeder	Stores
Billiards	Food Cellar	Park	Stove
Binder	Garage	People	Telephone
Bowling	Gardening	Picnic	Tenant Farmer
Bridge	Gas Stations	Pile Driver	Threshing
Brooder House	Grain Elevator	Pinball	Timber
Bus	Haircut	Planting	Tools
Cafes	Harvesting	Play	Tourism
Cafeteria	Hay	Plow	Toys
Canning	Hogs	Porch	Tractors
Cards	Hog House	Post Office	Train
Cars	Hog Waterer	Poultry House	Travel
Chaplain	Home	Prices	Trees
Checkers	Horses	Privy	Trucks
Chickens	Horse-drawn	Races	Wagons
Children	Hotels	Railroad	Walking
Chores	Houses	Railroad ties	Water
Church	Husband	Recreation	Weather
City Hall	Industry	Religion	Weaving
City Life	Instruments	Restaurant	Whittling
Construction	Kitchen	River	Wife
Corncrib	Laundry	Road	Women
Cornfield	Library	Rural	Woods
Courthouse	Living Room	School	Work
Cows	Lunchroom	Shay	WWII
Crops	Machine Shed	Shed	YMCA
Dairy	Main Street	Sheep	
Depot	Mass	Signs	
Dogs	Mess	Silos	

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



List of Indiana Counties with FSA Photos

Adams
Benton
Brown
Clay
Daviess
Dearborn
Gibson
Grant
Green
Hendricks
Huntington
Knox
Lake
Marion
Martin
Monroe
Morgan
Newton
Parke
Posey
Shelby
Starke
Tippecanoe
Vermillion

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



List of Indiana Cities and Towns with FSA Photos

Battle Ground
Black Township
Blankenship
Boswell
Brazil
Burns City
Buttermilk Junction
Clayton
Clinton
Decatur
Fowler
Gibson
Hammond
Hazleton
Helmsburg
Hovey
Indianapolis
Kentland
Lawrence
Montmorenci
Mount Vernon
Nashville
Owensburg
Patoka
Point Township
Roanoke
Rockville
Shadeland
Shelbyville
Shoals
Smithland
Templeton
Vermillion
Vincennes
Washington
West Harrison
Winona



Resources at Indiana University

The People's America

The Indiana University Art Museum published *The People's America: Farm Security Photographs (1935-1943): Selections from the Henry Holmes Smith Archive* by Claude Cookman in 1997. The catalogue was published in conjunction with the special exhibition held at the Indiana University Art Museum, April 2 -May 25, 1997. There are 25 photographs selected from the Henry Holmes Smith Archive of the Indiana University Art Museum in an online exhibition. The online exhibit can be found at:

http://www.iub.edu/~iuam/online_modules/fsa/fsa.html

The Roy Stryker Study Collection, Henry Holmes Smith Archive, IU Art Museum

The IU Art Museum has over five thousand prints, drawings, and photographs in storage. The Roy Stryker Study Collection includes works from the Resettlement Administration/Farm Security Administration, Office of War Information/41st Division Aviation, Office of Emergency Management, U.S. Forest Service, Rural Electrification Administration, Washington National Guard/Soil Conservation Service, and Standard Oil Company projects. There are only five photographs taken in Indiana in the Roy Stryker Study Collection.

Indiana University Press Books using FSA Photos

Indiana University Press has published two books using Farm Security Administration photographs. *Back Home Again: Indiana in the Farm Administration Photographs, 1935-1943*, edited by Robert Reid, was published in 1987. The *Children of the Depression*, edited by Kathleen Thompson and Hilary Mac Austin, was published in 2001.

IU Libraries' Digital Library Program Photographic Collections

There are two photograph collections in the collections of the IU Libraries' Digital Library Program that include photos taken in Indiana during the time of the New Deal:

The Frank M. Hohenberger Photograph Collection

<http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/collections/lilly/hohenberger/>

Indiana Farm Security Administration Photographs Digital Collection

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/IFSAP>

Charles W. Cushman Photograph Collection

<http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/cushman/>

Digital Archive of Farm Security Documents

The Government Information Department of the Indiana University Libraries has scanned a number of Resettlement Administration and Farm Security Administration documents and created a small digital archive. These documents are extremely useful for understanding the work and programs of those agencies. The scanned documents can be found at:

<http://www.libraries.iub.edu/index.php?pageId=1001916>

Indiana Farm Security Administration Photographs Digital Collection

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/IFSAP>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



The FSA Photographers

Overall the nine photographers who took photos in Indiana worked in the Historical Section and Office of War Information from 1935 to 1943. Of those nine, John Vachon was in the Historical Section the longest, followed by Russell Lee and Arthur Rothstein. The years they were photographers for the FSA are listed below.

Theodor Jung	1935-1936
Paul Carter	1935-1936
Carl Mydans	1935-1936
Dorothea Lange	1935-1939
Arthur Rothstein	1935-1940
Russell Lee	1936-1942
John Vachon	1936-1943
Jack Delano	1940-1942
Esther Bubley	1942-1943

There were other FSA/OWI photographers who took photos all over the country. Listed below are the names of men and women who were field photographers or staff who worked at the headquarters, but also took some photos as well.

Allison, Jack	Locke, Edwin
Brooks, Charlotte	Parks, Gordon
Collier Jr., John	Post Wolcott, Marion
Collins, Marjory	Roberts, Martha McMillan
Driscoll, Fred	Rosener, Ann
Evans, Walker	Roskam, Edwin
Ferrell, John	Roskam, Louise
Hotchkiss, Reginald	Shahn, Ben
Jacobs, Charles Fenno	Sheldon, Dick
Johnson, Elmer	Siegel, Arthur
Lieberman, Harold	Wright, Barbara

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Roy Stryker

Roy Stryker was born in 1893 in Great Bend, Kansas and grew up on a farm in Montrose, Colorado. After serving in the infantry in World War I, he went to Columbia University where he studied economics. After graduating in 1924, he stayed to teach at the invitation of his mentor, Rexford Tugwell. They collaborated on a book entitled, *American Economic Life*, which made extensive use of photographs to complement the text. He used these photographs to illustrate his economics lectures and writings, and they became powerful teaching tools that brought economic theories to life for his students.

As a member of Franklin Roosevelt's Brains Trust, Tugwell organized the Resettlement Administration, which later became known as the Farm Security Administration, and provided rehabilitation loans and resettlement opportunities to farmers impoverished by the Great Depression. In 1935, Tugwell asked Stryker to come to Washington, D.C. to head the Historical Section, where he set up the photography project. Stryker was very talented at getting the best out of his photographers. He briefed them on their assignments before sending them out, giving the photographers detailed instructions. Stryker did not tell his photographers how to shoot their photos, but he did give them lists of themes to photograph. He also made sure that newspapers and magazines, such as *Life* and *Look*, had access to Farm Security Administration photographs. After the World War II, Stryker resigned and went to work for Standard Oil of New Jersey's documentary project from 1943 to 1950. This project required the documentation of the corporation's operations in the field and other activities related to the oil industry. By the time the project was completed, some 67,000 photographs had been produced. The collection is now in the Photographic Archives at the University of Louisville. From 1950 to 1952, Stryker worked to establish the Pittsburgh Photographic Library, a project of the University of Pittsburgh designed to document the rebirth of Pittsburgh into a modern urban city. After Stryker resigned from the project, the Pittsburgh Photographic Library continued in operation for several more years. After leaving the Pittsburgh Photographic Library, Stryker directed a project at the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation, as well as occasionally consulting and teaching classes on photojournalism at the University of Missouri. He died in Grand Junction, Colorado in 1975.

Roy Stryker Bibliography

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In This Proud Land: America 1935-1943 as Seen in the FSA Photographs. Roy E. Stryker and Nancy C. Wood. New York: Graphic Society 1973.

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Carnegie Library of Philadelphia: The Photographers: Roy Stryker
<http://www.clpgh.org/exhibit/photog14.html>

Oral history interview with Roy Emerson Stryker, 1963-1965
<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/stryke63.htm>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Esther Bublely

Esther Bublely was born February 16, 1921 in Phillips, Wisconsin, the fourth of five children of Russian-Jewish immigrants. In 1936, while a senior at Central High School, the first issue of *Life* was published. Influenced by *Life* and Farm Security Administration photographs of the Great Depression she became very interested in documentary photography. After high school, she attended Superior State Teachers College and then enrolled in the photography program at the Minneapolis School of Art. In 1941 she moved to Washington, D.C., looking for work as a photographer. Not finding a job in Washington, she moved to New York City and found a position for a short time at *Vogue*. Early in 1942, she returned to Washington when she was offered a position as a microfilmer for the National Archives and Records Administration. In the fall of 1942, Roy Stryker hired her as a darkroom assistant at the Office of War Information (OWI). With the encouragement of Stryker and some of the senior photographers she became a field photographer, documenting the home front during World War II. One of her first assignments was a long cross country bus trip in the Midwest and South, documenting bus travel, which had increased because of wartime rationing of gas and tires. In late 1943, she followed Stryker, who left the OWI to work on a project for the Standard Oil of New Jersey. Reprising of her earlier OWI bus story, she did a *Bus Story* series for Standard Oil, earning her the award for Best Picture Sequence in the Encyclopedia Britannica/University of Missouri School of Journalism "News Pictures of the Year" in 1948. In 1947 she started working for the Children's Bureau, a federal child welfare agency. She contributed thousands of photographs to their files, and her images appeared on more than thirty covers of the journal *The Child*. In 1949, her photo essay on mental illness, published in *Ladies' Home Journal*, earned a first place award for a feature in the Encyclopedia Britannica/University of Missouri School of Journalism contest. She continued freelancing for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, producing a dozen photo stories for the series "How America Lives." In 1951, Bublely began freelancing for *Life*, contributing forty photo stories. Also in 1951, she produced a series on the Pittsburgh Children's Hospital for Stryker, who was then head of the Pittsburgh photographic project. In 1953, she worked for UNICEF in Morocco to photograph a project to treat trachoma, an infectious disease that causes blindness. In 1954, she submitted a photo from her UNICEF work in a contest sponsored by *Photography* magazine and was the first woman to win first place in the international division. In 1955, Edward Steichen included her work in his *The Family of Man* exhibition. In 1956, Pepsi-Cola hired her to cover Latin America for their magazine *Panorama*. In the 1960s, Pan American World Airways sent her around the world to take photographs for their corporate library. In the late 1960s, she spent more time at home, photographing New York City. As a devoted animal lover, she walked her dog in Central Park in the mornings, taking photographs and notes about the Park. She did publish two children's books about animals, one about kittens and the other

about puppies, and a book featuring photography of plants. She was one of the first women to successfully have a career as a freelance photographer for major magazines. She died in New York City on March 16, 1998.

Esther Bubley Bibliography

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<http://www.clpgh.org/exhibit/photog6.html>

Esther Bubley, Photojournalist
<http://estherbubley.com/>

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<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0012.html>

Women Photojournalists: Esther Bubley
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/womphotoj/bubleyintro.html>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Paul Carter

Paul Schermerhorn Carter was born Sept. 14, 1903 in Williamstown, Massachusetts. His father was a clergyman of some note. He had five brothers and a sister. He was living in New York City with his wife Edith in 1930, and listed his profession as Day Manager, with a film company. They apparently divorced and had no children. He joined the staff of the Historical Section in late 1935. His brother, John Franklin Carter, was the Head of the Information Division and Roy Stryker's supervisor in the Resettlement Administration. He took photographs in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Indiana. He covered the 1936 flood in Massachusetts in March and April. The flood of 1936 in Massachusetts resulted in over \$200,000,000 dollars in damage. Heavy winter snowfall, sustained spring rains and ice dams combined to cause the great flood. It resulted in ten deaths and 50,000 were homeless across Massachusetts. The Connecticut River crested in Springfield, Massachusetts on March 21. He visited Minnesota in July 1936 and covered two early New Deal projects in the state, the Beltrami Island Settler Relocation Project and Austin Acres, a project to provide suburban housing for workers in a town where the Hormel meat packing plant was the major industry. In September 1936 he traveled to the Newport News Homesteads, capturing images of the homesteaders and the conditions of blacks in the surrounding area. He was in ill health and lacked the energy for trips. This shows just how physically grueling it must have been for the photographers on the road as well. Roy Stryker convinced him that the life of a government photographer was not for him. He left the Resettlement Administration to open a camera store near Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in 1936. He died July 19, 1938 in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Paul Carter Bibliography

Carter, John Franklin. *The Rectory Family*. New York: Coward-McCann, 1937.

Paul Carter Websites

The Carters of Yorkshire: As they relate to "The Rectory Family" and beyond
<http://www.cartertools.com/cartyork.html>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Jack Delano

Jack Delano was born August 1, 1914 as Jacob Ovcharov in Voroshilovka, southwest of Kiev in the Ukraine. His parents and family moved to Pennsylvania in 1923. He studied graphic arts, photography and music at the Settlement Music School. Upon receiving a scholarship, he attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. There he continued his studies of illustration and music, graduating in 1932. After graduating he was awarded a Cresson Traveling Fellowship, which allowed him to travel throughout Europe. He went to France, Italy, England, Italy Austria, Holland and Spain, visiting museums such as the Prado and British Museum. In 1939 he received a grant from the Federal Arts Program. He produced a series of photographs about mining conditions in Pottsville, in the Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania coal area, where illegal workers were employed. Subsequently, he sent some photographs to Roy Stryker at the Farm Security Administration (FSA). He applied for a position, but none were available. Around that time he changed his name to Jack Delano. Stryker did hire him in 1940 for the Historical Unit of the FSA to replace Arthur Rothstein, who was leaving. His first assignment was to photograph workers and small towns along the Eastern Seaboard, from Maine to Florida. He travelled to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in 1941 for the FSA. Puerto Rico affected him so deeply that he and his family settled there in 1946. He returned to the mainland in 1942 and photographed the railroads for the Office of War Information (OWI). He pictured how the railroad industry worked and the people who did the work. He worked in Chicago and then the Pacific Coast, and started using color. The striking color photographs he took at rail yards during the 1940s are especially well known. Delano's photographs are known for their elegance and empathy. He also made the concept of *place* an important dimension of his photos. His straightforward photographs of small towns convey a sense of national identity and the dignity of the individual. Between 1943 and 1946 he served in the U. S. Army Air Corps as a photographer in the Pacific and South America. In 1945 he was awarded a Guggenheim Grant to return to Puerto Rico on a photography project. His earlier work in Puerto Rico led to a lifelong love of the landscape, people and culture. In 1946 he returned and began a long career that included working as a freelance filmmaker and independent photographer. He was also a composer, including music for ballet, orchestra, chamber groups and chorus and solo vocal. His vocal music incorporated Puerto Rican poetry, especially the works of Tomás Blanco. He, along with Blanco and his wife Irene were also collaborators of illustrated children's books. *The Child's Gift: A Twelfth Night Tale* by Blanco, with illustrations by Irene Delano and music by Jack Delano is a classic in Puerto Rican literature. He also created and directed Puerto Rico's public television network. He and his wife Irene worked in the Community Division of the Department of Public Education. There he produced films and composed many of the scores. He directed *Los Peloteros*, now a classic film about rural kids and their love of baseball. In 1979 he received a

Indiana Farm Security Administration Photographs Digital Collection

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/IFSAP>

Puerto Rico Foundation for the Humanities grant to put on an exhibit entitled, "Contrasts: 40 Years of Change and Continuity in Puerto Rico." In 1990 he finally published *Puerto Rico Mio: Four Decades of Change*. He and his wife were intimately and actively immersed in the cultural life of Puerto Rico. He died in 1997 at the age of 83 in Puerto Rico, where he lived since 1946.

Jack Delano Bibliography

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The Conquest and Settlement of the Island of Boriquen or Puerto Rico. Illustrated by Jack and Irene Delano. Avon, CT: Printed for the members of the Limited Editions Club, 1975.

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Jack Delano Websites

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<http://www.railphoto-art.org/galleries/delano.html>

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<http://www.chicagoreader.com/TheBlog/archives/2010/09/03/the-chicago-rail-photographs-of-jack-delano>

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http://www.mocp.org/collections/permanent/delano_jack.php

Smithsonian Archives of American Art: Interview with Jack Delano

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/delano65.htm>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Theodor Jung

Theodor Jung was born May 29, 1906 in Austria. He left in 1912 with his grandmother to join his parents in the United States. In the 1920s he studied book design and the humanities in Chicago and was a graphic designer for the *Chicago Times*. After losing his position in 1932 he returned to Vienna in 1933. While in Vienna he attended lectures in lithography and became acquainted with the Viennese method of pictorial statistics. In 1934 he was hired by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to draft statistical maps, pictorial graphs and charts of unemployment statistics. In 1935 he began work in an educational unit of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration doing visual graphics and designing pamphlets. Then he showed Roy Stryker some of his photographic work and was hired to be a photographer and a graphic designer for publications and exhibits. He took about 200 photographs in Maryland, Ohio and Indiana, but he did not find his place on Stryker's team of photographers and left in 1936. In 1937 he served as photographer for the Consumers Council, another government agency, and as art director for the *Consumers' Guide*. From 1940 to 1943 he illustrated books for the War Food Administration. Later in life he worked in advertising agencies, as well as a book designer for several university presses. In 1960 he settled in San Francisco and worked for the San Francisco Public Library and later as a book illustrator and designer in the publications department of Stanford University. He died in California in 1986.

Theodore Jung Bibliography

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Theodor Jung Websites

Theodor Jung Photo Collection
<http://www.shorpy.com/image/tid/124>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Dorothea Lange

Dorothea Lange was born Dorothea Margareta Nutzhorn in 1895, in Hoboken, New Jersey. She dropped her middle name and assumed her mother's maiden name after her father abandoned her and her mother. Dorothea developed polio at age 7, which left her with a permanent limp. She attended public schools in New York City and was enrolled in the New York Training School for Teachers from 1914 through 1917. Lange worked in the photography studios of Arnold Genthe and Charles Davis and attended a class taught by Clarence White at Columbia University. In 1918, she moved to San Francisco, where she opened a successful portrait studio. In 1935 she married economist Paul Schuster Taylor, professor of economics at the University of California, Berkeley. Together they documented rural poverty and migrant laborers for five years; Lange took the photos, and Taylor did the interviewing and collected data. As the Depression progressed and her portrait business declined, she turned her camera to unemployed people. These photographs led to her employment with the Resettlement Administration, later called the Farm Security Administration. From 1935 to 1939, Lange photographed the poor, sharecroppers, displaced families, and migrant workers. Because FSA photos were distributed free to news publications, many of her photos became icons of the Depression. Lange's most famous photo is undoubtedly "Migrant Mother." During World War II she was hired by the War Relocation Authority to document the internment of Japanese-Americans to relocation camps, highlighting Manzanar, the first of the permanent internment camps. The Army impounded her photos as being too critical. The photographs of the internment are now available in the National Archives on the website of the Still Photographs Division, and at the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. In 1945, she photographed the United Nations Conference in San Francisco for the State Department. Lange was invited by Ansel Adams to accept a position at the California School of Fine Arts, and in 1952, she co-founded the photography magazine *Aperture*. Lange died in 1965 in California. A retrospective exhibition of her work was shown at the Museum of Modern Art in 1966. In 1972 the Whitney Museum used twenty-seven of Lange's photographs in an exhibit entitled *Executive Order 9066*. This exhibit highlighted the Japanese internment during World War II.

Dorothea Lange Bibliography

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Photographing the Second Gold Rush: Dorothea Lange and the Bay Area at War, 1941 – 1945. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 1995.

Restless Spirit: The Life and Work of Dorothea Lange. Elizabeth Partridge and Dorothea Lange. New York: Viking, 1998.

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The Art Department of the Oakland Museum of California Dorothea Lange Collection
http://www.museumca.org/global/art/collections_dorothea_lange.html

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<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fachap03.html>

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<http://www.ibiblio.org/channel/Lange.html>

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<http://www.dorothea-lange.org/text.home.htm>

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Collection: An Overview

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Women Come to the Front: Journalists, Photographers and Broadcasters during WWII

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0013.html>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Russell Lee

Russell Lee was born in 1905 in Ottawa, Illinois. After a childhood that included his parents' divorce and his mother's death, he enrolled at Culver Military Academy in Indiana and later graduated from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania with a degree in chemical engineering. He returned to Illinois, and in 1927 he married Doris Emrick. By 1929 he had grown bored with his career and moved to an artist's community in Woodstock, NY, to pursue painting. After several unsatisfying years of painting landscapes and portraits, Lee purchased his first camera, which he initially intended to use to help with his painting and draftsmanship. He quickly became interested in photographing the effects of the Depression, starting locally with photographs of people forced to sell their personal belongings, and working his way to New York City and to Pennsylvania coalmines. He joined the Resettlement Agency in 1936 and worked all over the United States. He was best known for his photographic series, including those in San Augustine, Texas and Pie Town, New Mexico. In 1939 he and Doris divorced, and later that year he met and later married Jean Smith, a Dallas journalist. On December 7, 1941, the couple was in California, and after the bombing of Pearl Harbor they immediately telegraphed Stryker for instructions. After photographing newsboys with the latest editions of the local newspapers, the Lees went to Salinas, where they were to do a series of photographs about agricultural products that would be needed for the war. In April 1942, Lee joined Dorothea Lange and other photographers in documenting the internment of Japanese Americans. Later that year Lee joined the Overseas Technical Unit of the Air Force Transport Command, where he photographed routes flown by the ATC. After his service during the war, Lee continued to work for Stryker at Standard Oil. After moving to Austin, Texas in 1947, he became the first instructor of photography at the University of Texas in 1965. Lee died in 1986.

Russell Lee Bibliography

Far from Main Street: Three Photographers in Depression-Era New Mexico. Russell Lee, John, Jr. Collier, Jack Delano, John Collier, James B. Colson. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1994.

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Lee Gallery

<http://www.leegallery.com/prejune.html>

Wittliff Gallery of Southwestern & Mexican Photography, Texas State University San Marcos :
Russell Lee Collection:

<http://www.library.swt.edu/swwc/wg/exhibits/rlee>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Carl Mydans

Carl Mydans was born in Boston on May 20, 1907 to a family of second-generation Russian immigrants. Mydans became interested in photography while an undergraduate student at Boston University School of Journalism. His first reporting jobs were for *The Boston Globe* and the *Boston Herald*. After graduating from Boston University in 1930, he went to New York as a writer for the *American Banker*. He joined Roy Stryker's Historical Section in 1935 and worked there for about a year. He travelled throughout New England and the South. He gained recognition for his photographs of Arkansas farmers and their families. In 1936, he joined *Life* as one of its earliest staff photographers. At the onset of World War II, *Life* sent him to photograph the Soviet invasion of Finland in 1939. He then photographed images of war throughout Europe and Asia during World War II. In 1941, he and his wife Shelley, also a journalist, were captured by the Japanese forces in the Philippines. They were held for almost a year in Manila, then for another year in Shanghai before they were released. He was sent back to Europe to cover campaigns in Italy and France. By 1944, he was back in the Philippines to cover MacArthur's landing and retaking of the Philippines. Some of his most famous photographs include the Japanese surrender aboard the U.S.S. Missouri in 1945, angry French citizens shaving the heads of women accused of sleeping with Germans during the occupation and a 1950 portrait of Douglas MacArthur smoking a pipe. He later photographed the Korean War and had a long and distinguished career in photojournalism working for *Life* for two decades and publishing numerous books. He died in 2004 in Larchmont, New York.

Carl Mydans Bibliography

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Carl Mydans, Photojournalist. Carl Mydans. New York: Abrams, 1985.

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More Than Meets the Eye. Carl Mydans. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974.

The Violent Peace: Report on Wars in the Post War World. Carl Mydans. New York: Scribner, 1968.

Carl Mydans Websites

Gallery M-Carl Mydans

<http://www.gallerym.com/artist.cfm?ID=30>

Hard Times: Arkansas Depression Era Photos

http://www.oldstatehouse.com/exhibits/virtual/hard_times/carl_mydans/

Duke University Libraries

<http://library.duke.edu/exhibits/carlmydans/index.html>

VP Photo Gallery

http://www.vpphotogallery.com/photog_mydans.htm

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Arthur Rothstein

Arthur Rothstein was born in 1915 in New York City to Latvian immigrant parents. He attended the Angelo Patri School in the Bronx and then Columbia University from 1931 to 1935. He developed an interest in photography while at Columbia University. He met Roy Stryker while at Columbia University, where Stryker was an instructor. As a senior in 1935, he helped to create a visual record of American agriculture that Stryker was assembling for a National Youth Project. Before the year was out, Stryker had hired the twenty year old at the newly created Resettlement Administration to establish the photographic laboratory and darkroom. Rothstein was one of the FSA's most productive photographers. The photographs he made during his five years with the Historical Section reflect the work of the agency. His first assignment was to photograph Virginia farmers who were being moved to make way for the Shenandoah National Park and to be relocated by the Resettlement Administration. In 1936 he went to Cimarron County, Oklahoma to cover the Dust Bowl. He took a photograph that was captioned "Fleeing a Dust Storm," showing a man and his two sons walking into the face of a dust storm. It became one of the iconic photos of the 1930s. The Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act passed in 1937 and gave the agency a change of purpose as the Farm Security Administration, focusing on tenant farmers. Stryker wrote Rothstein that Beverly Smith was writing an article on tenancy at Gee's Bend, Alabama for an issue of *The American Magazine*. Starting in 1935, the Resettlement Administration had made loans and provided farm and home advice and instruction at Gee's Bend. Stryker thought perhaps a major magazine would be interested. He told Rothstein, "We could do a swell story; one that *Life* will grab." *Life* did not do a story about Gee's Bend, but an article by reporter John Temple Graves II ran in the *New York Times Magazine* on August 22, 1937. The article included eleven of Rothstein's photographs. The article relied on information from a report published by the agency. The article praised the agency's regional director and reported very favorably on work of the agency being carried out at Gee's Bend. The agency's work at Gee's Bend continued after Rothstein's visit, purchasing the Pettway plantation and adjacent farms and renting it to farmers. The next year, construction was started on a school, store, blacksmith shop and cooperative cotton gin. In 1939 Stryker sent Marion Post Wolcott back to the Gee's Bend to photograph the progress made by the residents. During 1940s, some of the families bought their farms from the government. Rothstein left the Farm Security Administration in 1940 to join the staff of *Look* magazine where he remained, except for his time in military service, until 1971 when the magazine ceased publication. In 1942 he was drafted and served in India, Burma and China with the U.S. Army Signal Corps. In 1946 he was the chief photographer for the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in China. He returned to *Look* as director of photography and then worked for *Parade* magazine from 1972 to 1976. He also

published several books on photography between 1956 and his death. He died in 1985 in New Rochelle, New York.

Arthur Rothstein Bibliography

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Arthur Rothstein: Words and Pictures. Arthur Rothstein. Boston: Focal Press, 1984.

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Indiana Farm Security Photographs



John Vachon

John Vachon was born in 1914 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He graduated from St. Thomas College in 1934. While enrolled in graduate school at Catholic University he was looking for a job in Washington, D.C., when he heard of a possible opportunity with the Resettlement Administration. He interviewed with Roy Stryker, who told him the job was temporary and consisted of the “rather dull work” of copying photo captions onto the back of prints done by the Historical Section’s photographers. Vachon began studying their photographs as he worked and in 1937, with encouragement and assistance from Stryker and other senior photographers, he began taking his own photographs around the Potomac River area using a borrowed Leica. In 1938, Stryker gave him his first solo assignment in Nebraska, and until 1941 Vachon both photographed and continued to classify the FSA photo file. Vachon continued working with the FSA until it was disbanded, and after he finished his service in World War II he worked with Stryker at Standard Oil. He later worked for both *Life* and *Look* magazines. After *Look* ceased publication in 1971, he became a freelance photographer and completed a visiting lectureship at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Vachon’s hallmark became the use of natural light and black-and-white film, though many of his later and more well-known photographs were in color. He died in 1975 at the age of 60.

John Vachon Bibliography

Fields of Vision: The Photographs of John Vachon: The Library of Congress. Kurt Anderson. Washington, DC: D. Giles, 2010.

John Vachon's America: Photographs and Letters from the Depression to World War II. John Vachon. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Poland, 1946: The Photographs and Letters of John Vachon. John Vachon. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995.

John Vachon Websites

FSA-OWI Photos, Documenting America, Omaha: Photographer: John Vachon, Omaha, Nebraska, November 1938, Farm Security Administration, Lot 412

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fachap02.html>

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FSA and Other New Deal Documentaries

The Resettlement Administration funded two documentary films, *The Plow That Broke the Plains* about the creation of the Dust Bowl and *The River* about the importance of Mississippi River. Both films, written and directed by Pare Lorentz, showed work of the FSA and other agencies in regard to conservation, the effects of soil erosion, deforestation and flooding.

The Plow that Broke the Plains (1936)

This documentary film shows what happened to the plains when uncontrolled agricultural farming led to the Dust Bowl. It was written and directed by Pare Lorentz. Lorentz worked on the film with composer Virgil Thomson, who shared Lorentz' enthusiasm for folk music and incorporated many folk melodies and popular and religious music into the soundtrack. The film was sponsored by the Resettlement Administration to raise awareness about the New Deal. The film details the ecological causes for the natural disasters befalling farmers. It illustrates in an up-close and personal fashion the devastating effect those disasters had on farmers and their families. Lorentz concluded his film on an upbeat note, showing the efforts made by the Resettlement Administration to improve conditions for the farmers and to institute environmental reforms to prevent another Dust Bowl. *The Plow That Broke the Plains* was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."

The River (1938)

This short documentary, written and directed by Pare Lorentz film shows the importance of the Mississippi River. It details the history of the flood prone Mississippi basin and how farming and timber practices had caused topsoil to be swept down the river and into the Gulf of Mexico. The film was sponsored by the Resettlement Administration, which later became the Farm Security Administration in 1937. The film covers the efforts to control floods and conserve soil. Some of the scenes in the film have become clips in subsequent film and documentaries. The visual beauty of Lorentz's images is complemented by his free verse narration. *The River* was also selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."

Other Federal agencies beside the FSA made documentaries during the New Deal. The Civilian Conservation Corps had its own production company which made more than 30 films depicting the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the nation's forests, parks and farms. It worked with the Soil Conservation Service to produce a full-length film entitled *The Heritage We Guard* about the dangers of soil erosion. The Office of War Information produced newsreels and films. It also produced radio series and cleared commercial network radio scripts. It produced a series of 267 newsreels in 16mm film, called the United Newsreel. The Bureau of Overseas Motion Pictures of the Office of War Information made 26 documentaries, including *Toscanini*, *Autobiography of a Jeep* and *Cowboy*, in the Projections of America series. *The Town*, directed and cut by Josef von Sternberg, is about Madison, Indiana. It tells the story of how the town was dealing with the war and was becoming a melting pot. Other documentaries made by federal agencies during the Great Depression are listed below. *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, *The River* and the documentaries listed below are available in various places, including YouTube and the *Internet Archive*. They are also available in libraries or can be purchased. Teachers can also get many of them from the Pare Lorentz Film Center at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.

The Road Is Open Again (1933)

Produced by Warner Brothers Studio for the National Recovery Administration, this five minute musical short stars Dick Powell as a songwriter who falls asleep on the job and is visited in a dream by George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt. After they voice their opinions about the New Deal in song, Powell awakes with a new outlook on life.

The New Frontier (1934)

This eleven-minute film done by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration shows a view of an experimental rural community.

Hands (1934)

This five minute silent film, directed by Ralph Steiner, is a portrait of one mankind's most essential tool, hands. It was produced by the Works Progress Administration.

Better Housing News Flash # 7: Housing Act Peps Building (1935)

This five minute film produced by the Federal Housing Administration discusses the benefits of the National Housing Act for homebuilders and homeowners.

Better Housing News Flash # 9: Low Price Homes (1936)

This six minute film produced by the Federal Housing Administration discusses how the average American can own a home.

Work Pays America (1936)

This is a 36 minute overview of the public projects of Works Progress Administration, including the building of 650,000 miles of roads, 78,000 bridges, 125,000 buildings, 700 miles of airport runways and the creation of 475,000 works of art and 225,000 concerts for audiences totaling 150 million.

Dawn Strikes the Capitol Dome (1936)

This ten minute film was produced by the Works Progress Administration. It is an impressionistic study of Washington, D. C.

Man Against the River (1937)

This Works Progress Administration film documents the flood in Ohio, Kentucky and Arkansas when the Ohio River overflowed its banks. The Works Progress Administration provided disaster relief.

Rain for the Earth (1937)

This ten minute film by the Works Progress Administration chronicles the devastating effects of the dust bowls in the plains.

We Work Again (1937)

This sixteen minute film was an effort to document the federal government's efforts to ensure African-Americans benefited from New Deal programs. It was produced by the Works Progress Administration.

Shock Troops of Disaster (1938)

This four and a half minute film by the Works Progress Administration shows the Works Progress Administration response to the New England hurricane of 1938.

Power and the Land (1940)

This 33 minute film, directed by Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, was produced by the United States Film Service. The film portrays the changes experienced by an Ohio farm community after the Rural Electrification Administration brought electricity to the region. The poet Stephen Vincent Benet narrated.

The Land (1942)

Filmmaker Robert Flaherty wrote, directed and narrated this film while working for the U. S. Film Service. Together with his wife Frances, he traveled 100,000 miles and shot 25,000 feet of 35 mm film. Despite the lack of a plot, the film captured poverty in the devastated farmlands of the Midwest and the South. The goal was to detail the New Deal efforts to help farmers but the camera caught a different story. Unfortunately, the project was derailed while the Flahertys were still filming. Congress ended the U. S. Film Service and the footage was handed over to the

Department of Agriculture. The footage was ultimately edited into a 42-minute film. It premiered in February 1942 at the Museum of Modern Art, but its general release was denied.

Valley of the Tennessee (1944)

Alexander Hammid's film, produced for the Office of War Information, documents the origins of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the impact its creation had on residents of the Tennessee River Valley in Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and other Southern states.

The Columbia (1949)

In May of 1941, Woody Guthrie was unemployed with a family to support, when an offer came from the Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration to narrate a documentary about the Bonneville Power Administration. By the time he arrived in Portland, the film project was discontinued, but the Bonneville Power Administration gave him a contract as a temporary laborer to write songs about rural electrification, irrigation and the Columbia River dams. A documentary called *Roll on Columbia: Woody Guthrie and the Bonneville Power Administration* recount the entire tale.

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Videos about the FSA

There are three videos about the photography project of the Farm Security Administration. The first two documentaries chronicle the story of how Roy Stryker assembled a group of photographers in the Historical Section of the Farm Security Administration to create a photographic archive of America in the Great Depression. These videos are about the overall photographic project. The last one focuses specifically on Indiana. It is a documentary based on the book, *Back Home Again: Indiana in the Farm Security Administration Photographs, 1935 - 1943* by Robert Reid. It was published by Indiana University Press in 1987. These may be available in libraries or can be purchased.

Documenting the Face of America: Roy Stryker and the FSA/OWI Photographers. Columbia: South Carolina Educational Television Network, 2007. 60 min.

Stryker's America. Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2007. 23 min.

Back Home Again. Evansville, IN: WNIN TV, 1988. 28 min.

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Films that Depict the Great Depression

There are numerous commercial films that show what different aspects of what life was like during the Great Depression. They show the hardship, economic hard times as well as public opinion. Some are political in nature, while others are more personal stories. The list below is divided into two parts. First are films that were made during the 1930s and early 1940s that have themes related to the Great Depression. The second part lists films made after the 1930s that are set during the time of the Great Depression. They present a view of life during the Great Depression looking back from when they were made. Both sets of films provide perspectives of the Great Depression.

Films Made During the Great Depression:

American Madness (1932)
Cabin in the Cotton (1932)
Dead End (1937)
Gabriel Over the White House (1933)
Gold Diggers of 1933 (1933)
Grapes of Wrath (1940)
Hallelujah, I'm a Bum (1933)
Just Around the Corner (1938)
I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang (1932)
A Man's Castle (1933)
Meet John Doe (1941)
Modern Times (1936)
Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936)
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939)
My Man Godfrey (1936)
Of Mice and Men (1939)
Our Daily Bread (1934)
Pennies from Heaven (1936)
Rufus Jones for President (1933)
Sullivan's Travels (1941)
Wild Boys on the Road (1933)

Films Set in the Great Depression:

Annie (1981)
Ballad of the Sad Café (1991)
Bonnie and Clyde (1967)
Bound for Glory (1976)

Boxcar Bertha (1972)
Cinderella Man (2005)
The Color Purple (1985)
The Cradle Will Rock (1999)
Emperor of the North (1973)
Hard Times (1975)
The Height of the Sky (1999)
Honkytonk Man (1982)
Ironweed (1987)
It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
Journey of Natty Gann (1985)
King of the Hill (1993)
Kit Kittredge: An American Girl (2008)
O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000)
Of Mice and Men (1992)
Pennies from Heaven (1981)
Paper Moon (1973)
Places in the Heart (1984)
Public Enemy (2009)
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (1978)
Seabiscuit (2003)
Shadrach (1998)
Souder (1972)
The Sting (1973)
They Shoot Horses, Don't They (1969)
Thieves Like Us (1974)
Two Bits (1994)
Warm Springs (2005)
Wild River (1960)

You can find plot summaries by searching Allmovie, the IMDb, Amazon and Wikipedia. Many of these movies are available in libraries or can be purchased.

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Documentaries about the Great Depression

The Great Depression (1993)

This PBS documentary series is the best on the Great Depression. It uses newsreels, archival photos and footage, Hollywood films and eyewitness accounts to tell the story of the Great Depression from the end of the 1920s to World War II. The American Experience series includes seven parts, all 57 minutes long. The seven episodes are:

A Job at Ford's

The Road to Rock Bottom

New Deal, New York

We Have a Plan

Mean Things Happening

To Be Somebody

Arsenal of Democracy

The PBS American Experience website

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/collections/1930s/> includes a section on *The 1930s* where you can watch other PBS documentaries online that are related to the Great Depression and New Deal. They include:

The Civilian Conservation Corps

The Crash of 1929

Hoover Dam

Riding the Rails

Seabiscuit

Surviving the Dust Bowl

Other PBS documentaries related to the Great Depression and New Deal are:

American Experience: FDR (1994)

Huey Long: A Film by Ken Burns (1987)

The Dust Bowl: A Film by Ken Burns (2012)

The March of the Bonus Army (2006)

Other documentaries that include material about the Great Depression and New Deal are:

Breadline – Great Depression at Home (2000)

Brother Can You Spare a Dime (1975)

The City (1939)

FDR: A Presidency Revealed (2005)

The Great Depression (1998)

The 20th Century: 1930's (2000)

World of Tomorrow (1992)

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Websites about FSA Photographers in Indiana

Esther Bublely

Carnegie Library of Philadelphia: The Photographers

<http://www.clpgh.org/exhibit/photog6.html>

Esther Bublely, Photojournalist.

<http://estherbublely.com/>

Women Come to the Front: Journalists, Photographers and Broadcasters during WWII: Esther Bublely

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0012.html>

Women Photojournalists: Esther Bublely

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/womphotoj/bublelyintro.html>

Paul Carter

The Carters of Yorkshire: As they relate to "The Rectory Family" and beyond

<http://www.cartertools.com/cartyork.html>

Jack Delano

Center for Railroad Art and Photograph

<http://www.railphoto-art.org/galleries/delano.html>

Chicago Rail Photographs of Jack Delano: Chicago Reader

<http://www.chicagoreader.com/TheBlog/archives/2010/09/03/the-chicago-rail-photographs-of-jack-delano>

Jack Delano at the Museum of Contemporary Photography

http://www.mocp.org/collections/permanent/delano_jack.php

Smithsonian Archives of American Art: Interview with Jack Delano

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/delano65.htm>

Theodor Jung

Theodor Jung Photo Collection

<http://www.shorpy.com/image/tid/124>

Dorothea Lange

America's Stories from America's Library: Dorothea Lange

http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/lange/aa_lange_subj.html

The Art Department of the Oakland Museum of California Dorothea Lange Collection:

http://www.museumca.org/global/art/collections_dorothea_lange.html

Documenting America : FSA B&W Photos Migrant Workers Photographer: Dorothea Lange:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fachap03.html>

DOROTHEA LANGE: Focus on Richmond:

<http://www.ibiblio.org/channel/Lange.html>

Dorothea Lange: Photographer of the People:

<http://www.dorothea-lange.org/text.home.htm>

Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother" Photographs in the Farm Security Administration Collection: An Overview

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/128_migm.html

History Place: Dorothea Lange:

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/lange/>

Smithsonian Archives of American Art: Interview with Dorothea Lange conducted by Richard K. Doud in New York, New York, May 22, 1964

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/Lange64.htm>

The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco: Dorothea Lange and the Relocation of the Japanese:

<http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist/lange.html>

Women Come to the Front: Journalists, Photographers and Broadcasters during WWII:

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0013.html>

Russell Lee

A Guide to the Russell Lee Photograph Collection

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utcah/00123/cah-00123.html>

The Handbook of Texas Online

<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/LL/fle71.html>

Lee Gallery

<http://www.leegallery.com/prejune.html>

Wittliff Gallery of Southwestern & Mexican Photography, Texas State University San Marcos;
Russell Lee Collection:

<http://www.library.swt.edu/swwc/wg/exhibits/rlee>

Carl Mydans

Gallery M-Carl Mydans

<http://www.gallerym.com/artist.cfm?ID=30>

Hard Times: Arkansas Depression Era Photos

http://www.oldstatehouse.com/exhibits/virtual/hard_times/carl_mydans/

Duke University Libraries

<http://library.duke.edu/exhibits/carlmydans/index.html>

VP Photo Gallery

http://www.vpphotogallery.com/photog_mydans.htm

Arthur Rothstein

Arthur Rothstein Oral Interview

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/rothst64.htm>

Hard Times: Arkansas Depression Era Photos

http://www.oldstatehouse.com/exhibits/virtual/hard_times/arthur_rothstein/

Roy Stryker

Carnegie Library of Philadelphia: The Photographers; Roy Stryker

<http://www.clpgh.org/exhibit/photog14.html>

Oral history interview with Roy Emerson Stryker, 1963-1965

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/stryke63.htm>

John Vachon

FSA-OWI Photos, Documenting America, Omaha: Photographer: John Vachon, Omaha, Nebraska, November 1938, Farm Security Administration, Lot 412:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fachap02.html>

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FSA Communities Websites

Alabama

Cahaba Homesteads (Near Birmingham)

http://www.bplonline.org/resources/exhibits/new_deal/homesteads/

Palmerdale Homesteads (Near Birmingham)

http://www.bplonline.org/resources/exhibits/new_deal/default.htm

Prairie Farms (Macon County)

<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-2148>

Skyline Farms (Jackson County)

<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1546>

Arizona

Phoenix Homesteads (Phoenix)

<http://www.historicphoenix.com/historic-districts/phoenix-homestead-phoenix-homesteads-historic-district/history-phoenix-homesteads-historic-district/index.html>

Arkansas

Dyess Colony (Mississippi County)

<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entrydetail.aspx?entryID=2397>

Georgia

Flint River Farms (Macon County)

<http://flintriverfarms.org/resettlement2.html>

Maryland

Greenbelt (Berwyn)

<http://greenbeltmuseum.org/>

<http://www.greenbelthomes.net/hgreenbelt.htm>

Mississippi

Tupelo Homesteads (Tupelo)

<http://mdah.state.ms.us/pubs/homesteads.pdf>

New Mexico

Bosque Farms (Valencia County)

http://www.bosquefarms.us/village_history.htm

North Carolina

Penderlea Homesteads (Pender County)

<http://www.azaleacoast.com/pender/history/PenderleaHomestead.s.html>

Tennessee

Cumberland Homesteads (Crossville)

<http://www.cumberlandhomesteads.org/>

<http://plateauproperties.com/home.html>

Virginia

Aberdeen Gardens (Newport News)

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UG99/lane/introduction.html>

West Virginia

Arthurdale (Reedsville)

<http://www.arthurdaleheritage.org/>

Tygart Valley Homesteads (Elkins)

<http://www.wvculture.org/goldenseal/summer05/tygart.html>

Wisconsin

Greendale (Milwaukee)

http://www.greendale.org/About_Greendale/About_Greendale.html

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New Deal Websites

America in the 1930s (from the University of Virginia)

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s/front.html>

American Life Histories: Projects from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html>

ArtLex on New Deal Art

<http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/n/newdeal.html>

FDR – A History of the New Deal

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76nq7w-i3IA>

New Deal 1933-2008 (from the Franklin D. Roosevelt American Heritage Center)

<http://www.newdeal75.org/>

New Deal Cultural Projects: Experiments in Cultural Democracy

<http://www.wwcd.org/policy/US/newdeal.html>

The New Deal Stage: Selections from the Federal Theatre Project 1935-1939

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fedtp/fthome.html>

New Deal Achievements (from the FDR American Heritage Center Museum)

http://www.fdrheritage.org/new_deal.htm

New Deal Agencies

http://faculty.washington.edu/qtaylor/Courses/101_USH/new_deal.htm

New Deal Agriculture (from National Archives)

<http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/new-deal-agriculture.html>

New Deal Art during the Great Depression

<http://www.wpamurals.com/>

New Deal for Farmers during the Great Depression (from Wessel's Living History Farm, York, NE)

http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/money_13.html

New Deal for the Arts (from National Archives)

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/new_deal_for_the_arts/index.html

The Real Deal: The Battle to Define FDR's Social Programs

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA02/volpe/newdeal/intro.html>

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Teaching and Learning Resources Websites

America in the 30s

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s/front.html>

best of history web sites

<http://www.besthistorysites.net/index.shtml>

FDR Cartoon Archive

<http://www.nisk.k12.ny.us/fdr/index.html>

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence

<http://free.ed.gov/index.cfm>

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum

<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/>

Library of Congress: American Memory

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

National Archives: Educators and Students

<http://www.archives.gov/education/>

New Deal Network

<http://newdeal.feri.org/>

Pare Lorentz Center

<http://www.parelorentzcenter.org/>

PBS News Hour Extra

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/>

Teachinghistory.org

<http://teachinghistory.org/13>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Websites about FSA Photography

1930s-1940s in Color

http://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/sets/72157603671370361/

African-American Portraits, 1935-1944: Farm Security Administration Collection

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nypl/sets/72157610969038056/>

America from the Great Depression till WWII: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsowhome.html>

Every Picture Tells a Story: Documentary Photography and the Great Depression

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/fsa>

Fourteen Rare Color Photographs from the FSA/OWI

<http://www.pdnphotooftheday.com/2009/03/628>

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum: New Deal Photos

<http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/gdphotos.html>

New Deal Network: New Deal Photo Library

<http://newdeal.feri.org/library/default.cfm>

The People's America: Farm Security Administration Photographs - Selections from the Henry Holmes Smith Archive

http://www.iub.edu/~iuam/online_modules/fsa/fsa.html

Voices from the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/afctshhtml/tshome.html>

Walker Evans Revolutionizes Documentary Photography

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UG97/fsa/welcome.html>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Books about FSA Photography

America 1935-1946 the Photographs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Security Administration, and the U.S. Office of War Information, Arranged by Region and by Subject. Cambridge, England: Chadwyck-Healey, 1980.

America: 1935-1946; The 87,000 Captioned Photographs of the Farm Security Administration and the Office of War Information in the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. Cambridge, England: Chadwyck-Healey, 1980.

American Modernism and Depression Documentary. Jeff Allred. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

American Photographers of the Depression: Farm Security Administration photographs 1935-1942. London: Thames and Hudson, 1991

Amassing American Stuff: The Library of Congress's New Deal Arts Collection. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Center for the Book. 1994.

American Photographers of the Depression: Farm Security Photographs 1935-1942. Centre National De La Photographie. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985

The Bitter Years 1935-1941: Rural America as Seen by the Photographers of the Farm Security Administration. Edward Steichen. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1962.

The Black Image in the New Deal: The Politics of the FSA Photography. Nicholas Natanson. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992.

Bound for Glory: America in Color, 1939-43. Paul Hendrickson. New York: Abrams, 2004.

Children of the Depression. Patrick McNaughton and Hilary MacAustin. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Documenting America, 1935-1943. Carl Fleischhauer and Beverly W. Brannan, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Documentary Expression in Thirties America. William Stott. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Dust Bowl Descent. Bill Ganzel. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.

FSA: The American Vision. Beverly Brannan and Gilles Mora. New York: Abrams, 2006.

FSA: The Illiterate Eye, Photographs from the Farm Security Administration. Maurice Berger. New York: Hunter College Art Gallery, 1985.

In This Proud Land: America 1935-1943 as Seen in the FSA Photographs. Roy E. Stryker and Nancy C. Wood. New York: Graphic Society, 1973.

The Iron Horse at War: The United States Government's Photodocumentary Project on American Railroading during the Second World War. James E. Valle. Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1977.

Just before the War: Urban America from 1935 to 1941 as seen by Photographers of the Farm Security Administration. T. H. Garver. Los Angeles: Rapid Lithograph Company, 1968.

The Likes of Us: Photography and the Farm Security Administration. Stu Cohen. Boston: David R. Godine, 2008.

Long Time Coming: A Photographic Portrait of America, 1935-1943. Michael Lesy. New York: Norton, 2002.

Mind's Eye, Mind's Truth: FSA Photography Reconsidered. James Curtis. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.

Official Images: New Deal Photography. Pete Daniel, Merry Foresta, Maren Stange and Sally Stein. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987.

Picturing Faith: Photography and the Great Depression. Colleen McDannell. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.

Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and FSA Photographs. Cara A. Finnegan. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003.

Portrait of a Decade. Jack F. Hurley. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972.

Poverty and Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Farm Security Administration. S. Baldwin. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968.

Seeing America: Women Photographers between the War. Melissa A. McEuen. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999.

Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890-1950. Maren Stange. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

To the City: Urban Photographs of the New Deal. Julia L. Foulkes, ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010.

A Vision Shared: A Classic Portrait of America and Its People, 1935-1943. Hank O'Neal. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976.

The Years of Bitterness and Pride: Farm Security Administration Photographs, 1935-1943. W. Evans. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Books about FSA Photographs in Other States

Alabama

Agee, James and Walker Evans. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941.

Five Cent Cotton: Images of the Depression in Alabama. Birmingham, AL: Birmingham Public Library, 1982.

Arkansas

Counts, I. Wilmer. *A Photographic Legacy*. Bloomington, IN: I. W. Counts, 1979.

Vanderpool, Guy C. *Building for a Better Tomorrow: The Farm Security Administration in Arkansas*. Texarkana, AR: Texarkana Museums System, 1996.

Colorado

Leonard, Stephen J. *Trials and Triumphs: A Colorado Portrait of the Great Depression, with FSA Photographs*. Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1993.

Connecticut

Eiseman, Alberta. *In Touch with the Land: Images of Connecticut Farm Life, 1937-1985*. Hartford: Connecticut State Library, 1985.

Florida

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Illinois

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Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Objectives

These curriculum activities have been developed for teachers to use in the classroom or as homework. Each activity has been designed to allow students to utilize a variety of research skills including: reading for understanding, researching historic evidence, interpreting primary and secondary sources and analyzing primary sources. Primary sources include letters, reports, speeches, diaries, cartoons, newspaper and magazine articles, films and photographs. Students will learn that a primary source is a record created by someone who participated in or who witnessed the event. Interpreting primary sources and historical documents helps students gain a more complete understanding of history. It helps them develop their critical thinking skills. It is important for students develop a passion for learning about history and in order to understand history, students need to examine and evaluate history. Each of the activities can be adapted to different teaching styles, classroom and students' needs and the local resources at hand. These activities are intended to enable students to improve their research skills.

These skills include being able:

- Find, organize and evaluate information
- Examine and analyze primary sources
- Examine and analyze data, evidence and factual information
- Identify differing points of view and varying interpretations
- Compare and contrast information and weigh generalizations
- Describe and interpret events
- Establish perspectives and form opinions
- Prepare, present and defend arguments
- Draw conclusions

Another goal is to help understand the economic and social conditions faced by Americans during the Great Depression and New Deal. These activities will help students understand the government efforts to document those economic and social conditions. To do that, students need to be able to:

- Identify the economic conditions people faced during Great Depression
- Describe the living conditions of people during Great Depression
- Empathize with people during the Great Depression
- Explain the behavior and attitudes and of people living during the Depression

In particular, these activities will involve the use of photographs as primary documents. Students should also be able to:

- Realize the importance of photographs as primary sources
- Analyze and interpret photographs
- Collect historical information from photographs
- Integrate photographs with other primary sources
- Historically document current events using photography

Students can use the Study Guide as a text for understanding the history and role of the Farm Security Administration, the FSA photographs taken in Indiana and background for all the activities.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Analyzing a Photo

Students can engage in photographic observation by learning how to analyze photographs. Students can also use photographs for a discussion of the use of photography as a historical document. The students can discuss elements such as composition, balance, focal point, perspective and lighting. They can also discuss the content of the photo such as the location, time of day, the season, clothing, furniture and fixtures, architecture and other features.

Photographer's name:

Date of photograph:

Title of photograph:

Describe the people, objects, setting and activities in the photo.

What is happening in the photograph?

Are there specific details that provide clues to what is happening?

Are there any details that suggest a time, date, season or year?

Are there any details that suggest where the photograph was taken?

What is your overall impression of the photograph?

Based on your observation, what general conclusions can be drawn from the photograph?

What questions does the photograph raise?

Where could you find answers to them?

Why do you think the photographer took this particular photo?

What do you think were the motivations of the photographer?

What might an appropriate alternative title for this photograph be?

What biases, points of view or assumptions do the photographs suggest?



Analyzing a Primary Document

When examining a primary document it is important to analyze and evaluate the information in the document. Use this worksheet to help think about the quality of the information and the motivations and point of view of the author/creator.

Title of Document:

Call number, URL or any other location reference or designation:

Describe the type of Document:

Circle one of the types below if appropriate

- Diary, Memoir
- Film, Video
- Government publication
- Interview
- Letter
- Manuscript
- Memorandum
- Newspaper
- Oral history
- Press release
- Research report
- Speech, Audio recording
- Other

Describe any Unique Physical Qualities:

Circle one of the types below if appropriate

- Letterhead
- Handwritten
- Typed
- Seals
- Notations
- Stamps
- Signatures
- Illustrations

- Maps
- Other

Date of Document:

Author/creator of the Document:

Position, title or situation of author/creator:

For what audience was the document written:

How credible is this document?

Why do you think this document was created?

What purpose does it serve?

What evidence in this document helps you know why it was written?

List three things the document tells you about life when it was created:

1.

2.

3.

List three things you learned from the document that you think are important:

1.

2.

3.

Write a question to the author/creator that is not answered by the document:

How is this document useful to historians?

Do you think there are any biases in the document?

How does this document add to your understanding of the subject?

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Comparing FSA Photographers

Ask students to analyze and compare the differences among the FSA photographers who took photos in Indiana. There were nine FSA photographers who took photographs in Indiana: Carl Mydans, Dorothea Lange, Arthur Rothstein, Russell Lee, Esther Bubley, Jack Delano, John Vachon, Theodore Jung and Paul Carter. Do they see differences in their photographs? What are the differences in their subjects and themes? Do they compose their pictures differently? Do they have different styles?

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Comparing Indiana with Another State

There are numerous books on FSA photographs by state. Compare photographs taken in Indiana with another state. How do the experiences of people in Indiana compare with those in another state? Are they the same or are they different? Are there types of photos in other states that are not found in Indiana? What might the reasons be if they are different? Students can look at the **Books about FSA Photography in Other States** bibliography in the Curriculum Resources section of this website to see what other states have books about them. In addition there are two states for which there are websites:

FSA Photographs in Florida: A Guide for Teachers and Students

<http://digital.library.miami.edu/fsa/>

Photographs of Oklahoma: Farm Security Administration

<http://www.crossroads.odl.state.ok.us/shell/exhibits/fsa/>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Comparing to Family Photos

Ask if your family has an album or a collection of old photographs from the Depression Era. Find out as much as you can about the people in the photographs. What do your family photographs tell you about your own family's history and experiences? Are those photographs similar to FSA photographs?

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Conducting a Photo Contest

Students can run an online photo contest for the entire school or certain grade levels. They can invite participants to capture images about life in Indiana similar to the FSA photography project. The students running the contest will need to develop guidelines and rules for the contest, publicize the contest, establish how the winning photos will be chosen and consider the means for awarding prizes. The students should also consider developing an online archive that can be a record of their work.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Conducting an Interview

Ask students to talk to their grandparents, great grandparents or older members of their community who lived during the Great Depression and can remember it. They will have to be at least 80 years old. Before conducting an interview do some research about what the Great Depression was like. If possible tape or video record the interview. Record the name of the interviewer, date, time and place of the interview, as well as the person being interviewed, spelling out their complete name and date of birth, at the beginning of the tape. If you are not recording the interview, take extensive notes, including the same information as mentioned above. Ask permission to use your interview as part of an assignment that you will be sharing with your fellow students. Students can select and take FSA photographs of Indiana with them to the interview. The photographs may be helpful in having people recall the past. Another possible project might be to bring together a group of older people and have them share their memories about the Great Depression. Often these photos will trigger memories for one another. Possible questions you might want to ask include:

When were you born?

Where did you live during the Great Depression?

Did you live on a farm, in a small town or in a city?

Who lived with you in your family when you were a child?

How did your family support itself?

Who worked in the family?

What type of work did they do?

How did the Depression affect the daily life of your family?

Did you know what the Great Depression meant when you were a child?

Did the Great Depression have a direct effect on your life as a child?

Did the Depression influence how you thought about things later in your life?

Is there anything else you would like to tell about the Great Depression?

Share the results of the interview with fellow students, either as a formal written report or a presentation to the class about the person you interviewed and their experiences. Students can include segments from the actual interview.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Creating an Exhibit

The Historical Section of the Farm Security Administration often put together photo exhibits. Exhibits were a form of advocacy education. The exhibits were designed by the Special Skills Division and the Historical Section of the Information Division. The exhibits fell into three groups: large scale exhibits for expositions; exhibits for smaller conferences, conventions and meetings; and a standard panel exhibit covering the programs of the agency. They were designed to be easily handled and shipped and adaptable for presentation under varying conditions. They were reproduced for each region. Exhibits were shown at county fairs, libraries, and other types of local meetings, such as 4H Clubs. Exhibits were also reproduced as an under the arm photographic portfolio for individual travel by county employees. Students can use their own camera or be provided with a disposable one. They can develop their own shooting script similar to the ones Roy Stryker provided to the Farm Security photographers. The students can then photograph people, places, and events in their own community and create a photo exhibit. The exhibit can be open to the public or even put online as an archival project.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Creative Writing

Students can try their hand at creative writing by writing a poem, short story, one-act play, film script, or essay about living in Indiana during the Great Depression by examining photographs showing what the economic and social conditions were like in the 1930s. They can use photographs of homesteads, housing, farms, livestock or crops, or people at work or play. If novels, films, memoirs or oral histories are used as an activity, the creative writing could be related to one of those as well.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Documentary Photography Today

Today, a dedicated group of photographers and writers, inspired by the work of the FSA photographers, have created a nonprofit collective to finance photographic projects on economic and social issues and again introduce America to Americans. The organization is called *Facing Change: Documenting America*. Students can spend time examining and analyzing the Facing Change website and discuss what is meant by documentary photography. What is it? How is it different from photos in newspapers or on news websites? What is the role of a documentary photographer? *Facing Change* is on Facebook and their website is at <http://facingchange.org>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Exploring Local Libraries and County Historical Museums

An important resource that should not be overlooked is local libraries and historical museums. They often have many original source documents that cannot be found anywhere else, including diaries, memoirs, newspaper clippings files, city and town documents and oral histories, etc. Many historical museums also have artifacts from the Great Depression that would help to bring history to life. Students should make a trip to local libraries and historical museums to see what they can discover.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Indiana Then and Now

If you live in the same county as where the FSA photographs were taken, go out and see if you can find similar scenes or the exact same places. Take photographs of the places today. Students can discuss how things have changed or stayed the same in the years since the FSA photographs were first taken. Students can also write an essay based on all photographs of Indiana during the Great Depression, discussing how it was the same or different from the Indiana they know today.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Listening to President Roosevelt

Have students listen or watch speeches by President Roosevelt about the Great Depression and its effects on the nation. After watching or listening to speeches, have a classroom discussion about the content of speeches and Roosevelt's delivery and style. Then have the students select FSA photographs that could be used to go along with the speech, demonstrating the conditions that Roosevelt depicted. A good speech to start off with might be his Inaugural speech of March 4, 1933. A great place to find audio and video resources for Roosevelt's speeches is the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum and Pare Lorentz Film Center at the Library and Museum at <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Making a Documentary

Students can work in groups to produce a short docudrama of several minutes. As docudramas very often use photographs as part of the visual presentation, students can incorporate photographs, and other visual materials, to illustrate their topic. Students can choose a topic, write the narrative and prepare storyboards. Perhaps they can use a video camera to actually shoot their docudrama, or play out scenes themselves as a sort of mini play. They might choose topics such “Life on a Homestead” or “Surviving a Flood.” They can also do research about the topic to incorporate into the docudrama.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Photos as Art

One of the tasks of the FSA photographers was to document America during the Great Depression and make a photographic record of life on farms, in rural areas and towns. They were also very talented photographers. Have students look at the photographs taken in Indiana and try to explain why they are such powerful images. Can they explain why they are great images? Are some photographs more artistic than others? What makes a photograph art?

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Point of View

The FSA photographers were often criticized for taking photos that were propaganda, intended to influence how people viewed the New Deal and the conditions of the rural poor during the Great Depression. Look at the Indiana FSA photographs. Are they propaganda? If so, is this good or bad? What is propaganda? Are all photos in some sense propaganda? Did the FSA photographers have specific points of view? Did they try to be neutral?

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Power of Photos

The Information Division of the FSA was responsible for providing educational and press information to the public and government. Many of the images appeared in popular magazines. Stryker sought photographs that "related people to the land and vice versa" because those photographs helped the idea that poverty could be changed by through reform. The official job description was:

“To direct the activities of investigators, photographers, economists, sociologists and statisticians engaged in the accumulation and compilation of reports, statistics, photographic material, vital statistics, agricultural surveys, maps and sketches necessary to make accurate descriptions of the various phases of the Resettlement Administration, particularly with regard to the historical, sociological and economic aspects of the several programs and their accomplishments.”

The method was to send photographers to shoot before and after stories about resettlement projects to show the need for action and the results of FSA programs. There were many aims, including:

- Promote and explain to Congress the benefits of FSA programs
- Emphasize the importance of agriculture to the overall economy
- Explain to the public its programs and what it was trying to accomplish
- Ensure continued funding from Congress
- Contrast with images in newspapers and newsreels
- Create sympathy in the citizenry and elected representatives for sharecroppers, tenant farmers and migrants

An excellent class project would be to have students identify current examples of photos that have influenced public opinion in some fashion. Then the class could engage in a discussion of the use and effectiveness of photographs in the mass media, sharing the photos they have chosen. How have the photos influenced public opinion? How effective are they in conveying a story? Would the story be the same without the photos?

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Putting a Photo into Words

Or as the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. Students can select one or more photos that convey an idea or message to them. Students can write an essay of 1000 words about the photo. Why is it important and meaningful? Why does the image make it possible to convey a large amount of information quickly? Students can give the photo a caption that captures the essence of the photo.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Then and Now

Have students look closely at the photographs taken in Indiana. Is the clothing the same or different from what people wear today? Are people wearing different clothing depending on whether they live in a rural area or a town? How does their clothing relate to the type of work they are doing, or to their socio-economic class? In some of the FSA photographs taken in Indiana, the prices of products or services are listed. See if students can find the prices of things, and then compare them with what those things cost today. Students can also compare the type of work people are doing. Is the work the same or different from what people do today? Another area for comparison is photographs of children. What do their clothes tell you about their lives? Do they look happy? Do they look hungry? Do they look healthy? Do they have homes that look comfortable? There are many subjects students can use to compare life then and now, such as types of relaxation and recreation, kitchens, farm equipment, etc. Or students can select Indiana photos and find current photos from magazines, newspapers or the Internet that show a similar scene or one that is the complete opposite. They can then discuss why they are similar or different and why.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Books Using FSA Photos

Some FSA photographers also worked with writers to publish books incorporating their photos along with a narrative to focus on a particular social problem. Likewise, many authors made use of free FSA photographs to illustrate their works. These books have become important documents of the Great Depression. They are also part of the history of documentary photojournalism. Students can choose one of these works and write a critical essay about the work. They can analyze how well the photographs compliment the text. Are the photographs used out of context? Do the photographs add to the impact of the work? Students can select a work from the list below:

Agee, James, and Walker Evans. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941.

Anderson, Sherwood. *Home Town: The Faces of America*. New York: Alliance, 1940.

Barnes, Peter, ed. *The People's Land*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press Division, 1975.

Caldwell, Erskine, and Margaret Bourke-White. *Say, Is This the U. S. A.* New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1941.

Caldwell, Erskine, and Margaret Bourke-White. *You Have Seen Their Faces*. New York: Modern Age Books, 1937.

Chamberlain, Samuel, ed. *Fair Is Our Land*. 3rd ed. New York: Hastings House, 1967.

Conrat, Maisie and Richard. *The American Farm: A Photographic History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

Coyle, David C. *Land of Hope: The Way of Life in the Tennessee Valley*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson & Co., 1941.

Davidson, Marshall. *Life in America*. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1974.

Lomax, Alan, Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard Hitting People*. New York: Oak Publications, 1967.

MacLeish, Archibald. *Land of the Free*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938.

McCamy, James L. *Government Publicity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939.

Nixon, Herman C. *Forty Acres and Steel Mules*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1938.

Raper, Arthur F. *Tenants of the Almighty*. New York: Macmillan, 1943.

Raper, Arthur F. *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936.

Raper, Arthur F. and Ira De A. Reid. *Sharecroppers All*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941.

Richardson, Lewis C. *Puerto Rico, Caribbean Crossroads*. New York: U. S. Camera Publishing Corporation, 1947.

Roskam, Edwin, and Ruby Black. *Washington Nerve Center: The Face of America*. New York: Alliance, 1939.

Sandburg, Carl. *Poems of the Midwest*. 2 vols. New York: World Publishing Company, 1946.

Smith, J. Russell, and M. Ogden Phillips. *North America*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940.

Taylor, Paul S., and Dorothea Lange. *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion*. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939.

Vance, Rupert. *How the Other Half Is Housed: A Pictorial Record of Sub-Minimum Farm Housing in the South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1936.

Wilson, Charles M. *Roots of America: A Travelogue of American Personalities*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1936.

Wright, Richard and Edwin Roskam. *Twelve Million Black Voices: A Folk History of Negro in the United States*. New York: Viking Press, 1941.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Cartoons

Cartoons, like photographs, are images that convey meaning and information. Students can select a photograph and cartoon that focus on an issue or theme and compare and contrast them. How are they different? What can one do that the other one cannot? Students can write a short essay on their analysis of the photograph and cartoon and how as primary documents they convey information. Students can search the Internet for other sources of cartoons about the New Deal and Great Depression. A good source for cartoons is *FDR Cartoons* at <http://www.nisk.k12.ny.us/fdr/FDRcartoons.html>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Diaries

Students can select a single photograph or series of photographs and write diary entries that discuss a typical day in the life of the people in the photographs. Or students can write diary entries that describes what they think the people in the photograph are feeling or thinking, such as their hopes, fears, desires, worries, etc.

Another activity is to read diary selections from *The Great Depression: A Diary* by Benjamin Roth (edited by James Ledbetter and Daniel B. Roth, New York: Public Affairs, 2009) and write an essay on how Roth's experiences compare with current events. Roth wrote his diary in Youngstown, Ohio and it is an excellent account of urban life in the Great Depression and a man trying to understand what happened to the economy.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Films

Another great student project is to watch a film from the time depicting similar themes as those in FSA photographs. An interesting film to watch is *Our Daily Bread*. Student can write essays comparing the film to the FSA photos. What are the similarities? How do the images differ? Are there themes common to both? After writing their essays, students can have a discussion about the film and their analyses of the film and FSA photos.

Our Daily Bread (1934), directed by King Vidor, tells the story of a couple's quest to turn an abandoned farm into an agricultural collective. The film's main characters are John and Mary Sims, who are months behind on their rent. John is unemployed and can't get an interview. They decide to leave the city to work on an abandoned farm given to them by Mary's uncle. While they do not have any farming experience, they hope to compensate with their enthusiasm. A few days after arriving at the farm, they begin to realize how little they know about farming. Then a Swedish farmer and his family, who are fixing a flat tire near their gate, appear. When John learns that they lost their farm, he invites them to come live on the farm. In exchange for their farming knowledge, they can stay there for free. Shortly, the two couples begin to make progress on the farm. This gives John an idea. He will put up a string of signs along the road by the farm, like the old Burma Shave ads, that call for unemployed tradesmen to join them. In exchange for their work, they will get a place to live and an opportunity to share in the proceeds from the farm. Then in a steady stream come a plumber, carpenter, blacksmith, stone mason, barber, merchant, shoemaker, undertaker, ex-convict, lawyer, politician, cigar salesman and violinist. It is a microcosm of the Great Depression. Soon they've formed a communal cooperative with everyone working together for the common good.

Capturing the problems and daily life of a subsistence farm for unemployed men from the cities, this film stands as a statement of social cinema. The formation of a collective farm and its growth as a community of the unemployed is a drama of idealism that was unique during the time of the Great Depression. When the sheriff attempts to sell the farm at public auction, the community saves the day by excluding outside bids and obtaining the deed for pennies, mirroring real life events. At one point, the Swedish farmer laughs at John's inexperience in farming. He catches him in the act of throwing away some "weeds" that turn out to be carrots. In reality, even many relocated farmers were not always familiar with what were weeds in the new areas they were farming.

Successful irrigation was vital to resettlement farmers, but fewer than 10% of the farmers had irrigated previously. To go from dry land cultivation to irrigation farming required a change in traditional beliefs about water and farm management. Farmers had to learn time-consuming irrigation techniques, as well as the responsibilities with those who shared the water. Irrigation was supposed to make diversification possible including production for both home consumption and the market. Eventually, the farm grows to include both the skilled and unskilled. John doesn't have the heart to turn anybody away, including a pants presser, an undertaker, a professor and a bank robber, who truly believes in the commune. In fact the bank robber decides to turn himself in so that the \$500 reward will go to the farm. They are soon joined by Sally, who just regards the farm as a temporary place to crash, until something better turns up.

Ultimately problems begin to develop, including drought and failed crops. The cooperative is unable to get a bank loan and must struggle along. John becomes despondent and takes off with Sally. Eventually John pulls himself together and returns in time to supervise construction of an irrigation ditch to the farm. *Our Daily Bread* was unique in the Great Depression as it was one of only a small number of films that addressed social issues. It is about a communal farm and its tribulations. King Vidor said he got the idea from an article by Malcolm McDermott entitled "An Agricultural Army" in *Readers' Digest*, in which the author proposes cooperatives as the solution to unemployment.

The idea of moving back to the land was not an idle idea during the Depression. In the early 1930s there were more migrations to the country than from the country to urban areas. In 1933, a realtor's ad in the *Wall Street Journal* even proclaimed "Buy an abandoned farm and live on trout and applejack until the upturn." The film is an example of King Vidor's preference for the simple virtues of rural life. The film shows farm life as opposed to atomistic city life. It also contrasts community with the dehumanizing and competitive life of the city as portrayed in Vidor's earlier film, *The Crowd*. It also depicts a community of varying nationalities and talents, the American idea of the melting pot. It shows the possibility of how land can be held in common and everyone shares the work. The film is also an idealization of work, i.e. "getting the job done" is the story. There is no sense of competition or capitalistic ethos in the film and it finds fault with both socialism and democracy. Unable to secure Hollywood backing, Vidor wrote, produced and financed the picture himself, with last minute assistance from Charlie Chaplin. United Artists, a company founded by Chaplin and run as a cooperative by directors and actors who wanted an outlet for their works, released the film. It was a film made outside studio control with a cast of mostly nonprofessionals, many of them unemployed men from the streets of Los Angeles. Average films at the time ran \$300,000 to \$500,000. *Our Daily Bread* cost about \$125,000. To save money, the irrigation ditch digging scene was done without sound. The frantic attempt of the men is shot artfully, creating a visual rhythm as the workers, with shovels and picks, dig the irrigation ditch in the hard, dry earth. The sight of the men working together with shovels and picks is a quintessential New Deal iconographic image. The scene took

ten days to film and used Mack Sennet stunt men. It was filmed on the United Studios back lot. King Vidor did write to Stephen Early, Roosevelt's Press Secretary, hoping to perhaps get the President's endorsement to *Our Daily Bread*, but Early held firm to the policy of not endorsing any commercial film. Vidor hoped that Roosevelt would see the connection between his film and the subsistence homesteads planned by the Resettlement Administration/Farm Security Administration and make an exception. Vidor wrote:

“I have felt since I first planned to do this picture two years ago that the idea projected was in accord with the President's plan of subsistence homesteads ... Even entertainment can carry an amount of propaganda and educational element. I deeply feel the screen to be the greatest power of exploitation and I cannot wholly ignore a social consciousness in producing a picture.”

It is one of a few films to portray the impact of the Great Depression on working-class Americans. The film earned second prize at a film festival in Moscow, the Soviet International Exposition on Film. It also won an award from the League of Nations “for its contribution to humanity.” Some critics saw the film as too political. The *Los Angeles Times* refused to advertise it. The Hearst press called it “pinko.” The *Nation* called it a travesty. And a headline in a Paris newspaper even said, “King Vidor prefers food to sex.”

Hollywood in the 1930s was synonymous with the film industry, producing 3/4th of the world's motion picture footage and perhaps as many as 5,000 films came out of Hollywood. During the Depression, a higher percentage of the population went to the cinema each week than any time since. In 1930 weekly movie attendance was 80 million people, approximately 65% of the US population. But in 1933 one third of all movie theaters closed. Weekly movie attendance declined from 1930 to 1934. But attendance was up to 85 million in 1939. Nearly 83 cents of every dollar spent on recreation in the 1930s was for movies. At the beginning of the decade, movie admission prices ranged from 25 cents to 50 cents. With the Depression, admission went to a dime for a neighborhood theater and a quarter for the bigger movie palaces. Theaters switched to a new format, the double feature, with the second movie called a “B” movie. Some theaters also showed a cartoon, newsreel, a serial and maybe a short documentary. They also had “dish night” (now called Depression glass) when cheap glassware or crockery was given away to lucky ticket holders. Some theaters also had Bank Night or Bingo as well as other promotions. Popcorn and candy were introduced in the 1930s to make more money. The films of the 1930s are known for escapism, laughing away the Depression and making the world a happier place to live. Hollywood was known as “The Dream Factory.” Hollywood in the 1930s was involved with myth making, celebrating small towns, the importance of home, family, and traditional values of neighborliness, generosity and belonging. They also promoted the idea that love will conquer class lines and that tomorrow will be another day. Depression-era films included the following genres: gangster, police and G-men, westerns, musicals, screwball comedy, fantasy,

horror and science fiction, adolescent films and Disney animation. Depression films did remember the depression. The Mickey Mouse cartoon *Moving Day* features Donald and Goofy, who are evicted after falling six months behind on rent. *Stand Up and Cheer* was Shirley Temple's first feature film, in which FDR appoints a Secretary of Amusement. FDR watched as many as three to four movies per week. Warner Theaters and the Motion Picture Producer Distributor Association provided films gratis. Roosevelt never endorsed films or allowed any promotional use of his viewing, but Eleanor did write about films in her columns.

There are other films besides *Our Daily Bread* that portray the Great Depression. Students could choose another film to watch and write a report comparing it to FSA photographs.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using FSA Documentary Films

The Resettlement Administration/Farm Security Administration funded two documentary films, *The Plow That Broke the Plains* about the creation of the Dust Bowl and *The River* about the importance of the Mississippi River. Both films, written and directed by Pare Lorentz, showed the effects of soil erosion, deforestation and flooding and the work of the FSA and other agencies. Both documentaries were selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant." Lorentz himself referred to the films as "Films of Merit" and not documentaries. Students can watch one or both of the documentaries as a group and discuss their merit and how they compare to FSA photographs. Are there similarities between the documentaries and the photographs? Are their similarities in style and content between the two? How are they different? Is one medium more powerful than the other?

The Plow That Broke the Plains (1936) shows what happened to the plains when uncontrolled agricultural farming led to the Dust Bowl. The film details the ecological causes for the natural disaster. It illustrates in an up-close and personal way the devastating effect that the misuse of the natural environment had on farmers and their families. Lorentz wanted to document natural history, as "grass and rivers have stories to tell." Despite not having any film credits, Lorentz was appointed to the Resettlement Administration as a film consultant. He was given \$6,000 to make the film. He got \$18 dollars a day, less than cameramen and paid some of the cost for the film out of his own pocket. It was the first film he made. The film was shot in five states: Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas and Texas. He wanted to buy stock footage from the studios, but they would not cooperate. The movie industry was not happy with his book, *Censored: The Private Life of the Movies*. But he eventually did get some stock film footage through King Vidor. He interviewed twelve composers for the film. Virgil Thomson was the only one willing to work for the money left in the budget. He incorporated tradition folk songs, hymns and popular music. The music works not only as a thematic backdrop, but is also a commentary in its own right. The score was recorded by the New York Philharmonic. On the day they were to record Lorentz was forced to stop the session at midnight, as he did not have enough money to pay the musicians beyond that time. The musicians decided to complete the recording for free. The script was not done until the shooting and score were completed. Thomas Chalmers, a former soloist with the Metropolitan Opera and the voice of *The March of Time*, did the narration. Lorentz did the editing because he did not have the money to hire both an editor and pay for a score. Since he believed the score was of greater importance, he decided to do the editing himself. Lorentz's script, combined with Thomas Chalmers's narration and Virgil

Thomson's score, made the movie powerful and moving. Lorentz concluded his film on an upbeat note, showing the efforts made by the Resettlement Administration to improve conditions for the farmers and to institute environmental reforms to prevent another Dust Bowl. It ended by stating that the Resettlement Administration was the people's hope and a depiction of its work relocating families. After the Resettlement Administration became the FSA the ending was dropped. It was the first film the U. S. government was planning to produce for commercial release and distribution. It was first shown at the White House in March 1936. Roosevelt considered sending the film to Congress as a Presidential Message. Its official showing was at the Mayflower Hotel on May 10, 1936, sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art. Lorentz convinced the owner of the Rialto Theater in New York to show the film. Its positive public reaction opened the doors to other independent theaters and eventually played in 3000 cinemas. The major theater chains used the excuse that it was too short or too long. The film was taken out of circulation in 1939. The farmer used for the plowing scene is discussed in the book, *The Worst Hard Time*. The film was met with critical acclaim, but not by Hollywood. It was considered propaganda and not a documentary. Although one reviewer said "Voice, music and pictures made the rape of 400,000,000 acres more moving than the downfall of any Hollywood blonde." It was not welcomed by some Resettlement Administration field officers. One Texas regional office complained that the film depicted Texas as dry and windswept. Another Texas Resettlement Administration official suggested that wind erosion was only local and that the region is without rivers. Texas Congressmen protested and so did newspapers, calling it a "libel on the Southwest."

The River (1938) is another film made by Lorentz for the FSA. It shows the importance of the Mississippi River and celebrates the Tennessee Valley Authority. The TVA mitigated flooding, put a stop to the pillaging of forests and provided hydroelectric power. It details the history of the flood prone Mississippi River basin and how farming and timber practices had caused topsoil to be swept down the river. The film covers the efforts to control floods and conserve soil. Some of the scenes in the film have become clips in subsequent film and documentaries. While the film shows the way in which the River is misused, it is also a paean to the American landscape and mythos. He combined stunning visuals, a magnificent score and moving narration to show the necessity of the TVA. *The River* is considered Lorentz's greatest achievement. Supposedly it was inspired by a map that hung in the Secretary of Agriculture's office. It was filmed in fourteen states, with a larger crew and a budget two and half times the final size of *The Plow That Broke the Plains*. *The River* was budgeted at \$50,000 and he delivered it just short of that amount. The shooting ratio for *The River* was 30 to 1. *The River* had 100,000 feet of film for a film that would be 3,000 feet long. He had planned to use stock footage of flooding, but instead used actual footage from the 1937 Ohio River flood. The WPA also made a documentary about the flood of 1937 in Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. The title of that film is *Man Against the River*. The visual beauty of Lorentz's images is complemented by his free verse narration. He had been asked to do

an article for *McCall's* about the condition of the Mississippi River. He thought the article might be the basis for his next documentary. When the article was done, he thought it was too long, and spent a week writing a poem. Lorentz used Walt Whitman's style of repetition of place names in the poem. He sent both to *McCall's* allowing them to decide which one they preferred. They published the poem in May 1937 and received 150,000 requests for copies by readers. He decided to use it for the script. The script was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in poetry in 1938. Again, Thomas Chalmers did the narration and Virgil Thomson wrote the score. The score was highly praised for its beauty and creativity and the way it worked with the visuals. Aaron Copeland called it "a lesson on how to treat America." The score was originally recorded by the General Services Studio, but Lorentz and Thomson were unhappy with it. Lorentz found enough money to subcontract the recording to Samuel Goldwyn Studios, who agreed to do the recording at cost instead of a profit. It premiered in New Orleans on Oct. 29, 1937. Many newspapers gave it glowing reviews, although some critics still looked at it as government propaganda. The government made it available to theaters at no charge and it was picked up by Paramount Pictures. Unlike *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, it was a critical and commercial success, even with government agencies. It was nominated for an Academy Award and won the top prize in the "Best Documentary" category at the Venice Film Festival in 1938, beating out Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympiad*.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using FSA Documents

The Farm Security Administration issued a wide variety of publications, both nationally and from regional offices. Some of the publications were intended to explain the programs and policies of the FSA. Others were designed specifically to help farmers, such as setting up cooperatives, getting medical care and even a farm family recordkeeping book. Students can select a document to read and critically examine an original source from the time. Students can also identify other documents not in this small archive and borrow them via inter-library loan. This is an excellent way for students to read and analyze documents from the time. A number of scanned documents are available in the Digital Archive of FSA Documents at <http://www.libraries.iub.edu/index.php?pageId=1001916>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Indiana: A Guide to the Hoosier State

From 1935 to 1942 the Indiana office of the Federal Writers Project employed writers and photographers as field workers to create *Indiana: A Guide to the Hoosier State*. The aim was to publish a book that provided a portrait of the state, including its history, culture, education, people, industry and agriculture, folklore and all the major cities. The finished guide included 109 illustrations, including many photographs. Some of the field workers submitted snapshots, but the photos came from a variety of places. Besides using some photos from the Farm Security Administration, they also sought photos from Indiana newspapers, chambers of commerce, state agencies, Purdue University, commercial photographers, as well as many other businesses and organizations, such as the United States Steel Corporation and Studebaker plant in South bend.

The volume contains twenty-five tours that people can take along major highways and roads. The guide and tours have been used ever since its publication. Many of the tours include counties where FSA photographers took pictures. Those tours that include counties in which FSA photographers took photos for the Farm Security Administration project are as follows:

Tour 3

Lake

Tour 4

Starke
Lake

Tour 5

Huntington
Newton

Tour 7

Marion
Hendricks
Parke

Tour 8

Marion
Hendricks
Clay

Tour 8A

Marion
Hendricks

Tour 9

Brown
Monroe
Clay

Tour 10

Dearborn
Martin
Daviess
Knox

Tour 11

Gibson

Tour 11A

Posey

Tour 11B

Posey

Tour 12

Martin
Knox

Tour 13

Adams

Tour 14

Huntington
Grant

Tour 16

Marion

Tour 17

Starke
Grant

Tour 17A

Marion
Shelby

Tour 18

Dearborn
Shelby
Marion
Tippecanoe
Benton
Newton

Tour 19

Marion
Morgan
Monroe

Tour 19A

Morgan
Greene
Knox

Tour 20

Lake
Newton
Benton
Parke
Knox
Gibson

A great project for students would be to read the *Guide* and take a tour today to see how those counties have changed. They can take pictures and put together a tour of their own to match one in the *Guide*. How do things look today? How have they changed? What would they want to take photos of?

Indiana State University, then a college, was the base of the WPA Indiana Writers' Project, which is where the papers and photographs are housed today at the Cunningham Memorial Library. The collection houses many more photos than are in the guide, which are described at <http://library.indstate.edu/about/units/rbsc/iwpp/iwpp-idx.html>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Letters

During the Great Depression, men, women and children wrote letters to President Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor, as well as Cabinet members and heads of agencies. The letters were written by the young and old, white and black, poor and well off, rural and urban residents, unemployed and those on relief. These letters express the raw emotional reactions to the Depression and New Deal, including their hopes, fears, anger, despair, and feeling about the government and its programs. The letters, as primary documents, capture the daily attitudes and emotions of people written at the time. The letters put the reader in direct contact with those who lived through the Great Depression. Students can select one or more photographs and put themselves in the shoes of the person in the photograph and write a letter to President Roosevelt or another government figure about their plight and what they need. Or they can write a letter to a friend or relative about his or her feelings about the FSA photography project.

Students can also read letters contained in *Down & Out in the Great Depression: Letters from the "Forgotten Man"* (Edited by Robert S. McElvaine, Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1983) and write an essay about the themes expressed in the letters. Another excellent book to use in the classroom is *A Secret Gift: How One Man's Kindness – And a Trove of Letters – Revealed the Hidden History of the Great Depression* (Ted Gup, New York: Penguin Press, 2010). The book tells the story of letters written in response to an ad placed in a small newspaper in Canton, Ohio in December 1932. The ad offered cash gifts to 75 families. Readers were asked to send letters describing their situation. The author's grandfather had placed the ad under a pseudonym. The author searched records and for relatives to tell how the gifts impacted those who received them. It is a fascinating account of those who wrote the letters and what happened to their families.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Memoirs

Mildred Armstrong Kalish grew up on her grandparents' farm in Iowa during the Great Depression. She wrote about her experiences in her memoir, *Little Heathens: Hard Times and High Spirits on an Iowa Farm During the Great Depression* (New York: Bantam Books, 2007). She gives a loving and realistic portrait of what farm and rural life was like during the Great Depression, including work, play and family life. The book is a joy to read gives a very detailed picture of daily life during the Great Depression. Students can read this book and discuss it in class. They can also select Indiana photographs that are similar to her depictions of life in Iowa. There is more information about the book and author on the website at <http://www.little-heathens.com/index.html>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Music

There are many songs associated with the Great Depression, such as *Easy Street*, *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime*, *We Don't Have to Sell the Farm*, *Come Home Prosperity*, *Remember My Forgotten Man*, *Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee*, *Marching Along Together*. Students can look for the lyrics of popular songs of the Great Depression and see if they can put some photographs to match the lyrics. One possibility would be to use songs that Woody Guthrie made popular. Or if students want to be more contemporary they can see if there are photos that would be appropriate for some songs written by John Mellencamp as many of his songs are about small town and rural America. Students can search the Internet for the lyrics to songs from the Great Depression. A good introduction online is *Manufacturing Memories: American Popular Music in the 1930's* at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug03/jukebox/front.html>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Newspapers

There are many articles in the *New York Times* about the work of the Farm Security Administration. There are two *New York Times* articles students can read about FSA homestead projects, similar to the Decatur Homesteads in Indiana. These are: “Government Testing Value of Subsistence Homesteads.” By M. L. Wilson, Feb. 11, 1934 and “FSA Winding up Its Homestead Program; Built 11,800 Farm Dwellings as ‘Models’.” By Lee E. Cooper, March 19, 1939. Ask students to do research on Indiana in the Great Depression by using local Indiana newspapers. They can write a report about a city, town or county in Indiana using the local newspapers. The report can relate what life and conditions were like during the Great Depression in that city, town or county. Ask them to select FSA photographs taken in Indiana that would help bring their reports to life.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Novels

Students can read *Now in November* by Josephine Winslow Johnson. Published in 1934, this novel is about a rural farm family's struggle during the Great Depression. The novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 1935. Johnson grew up on a farm in Kirkwood, Missouri and she understood the situation of farmers in the Great Depression. Students can individually or in groups cite examples of imagery in the novel that reflect the same themes depicted in FSA photographs. These could be images related to the characters in the novel, the role of women, the economics of farming, mortgages and foreclosures, tenant farming, or the description of nature and the land. *Now in November* is an especially good novel for students in Indiana, as the novel captures what rural life was like for many farmers in the Midwest during the Great Depression.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Oral Histories

Students can learn how to analyze primary documents by examining sources such as photographs and oral histories. Students can learn how to critically view photographs by selecting one or more photographs and then describing the economic and social conditions portrayed in them. Next, students can read several life histories and then select one and analyze the needs and desires of the person. Lastly students can research a New Deal program to evaluate how it was intended to improve the life in the oral history. Students learn how to interpret and evaluate photographs and oral histories. They learn how to evaluate the quality of primary documents as well research a New Deal program, and synthesize all the information. Students can get life histories from Studs Terkel's *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: Pantheon, 1970) or by accessing the Library of Congress' *American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940* at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/wpaintro/wpahome.html>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Portraits

Ansel Adams called them the FSA photographers “a bunch of sociologists with cameras.” Others called them “poets with cameras” or “crusaders with cameras.” Alan Lawson suggests that the celebration of people in FSA photographs represented a search for a “coherent national character” that transcended divisions of class and religion. The FSA photos made a substantial contribution to the “cult of the people” which emerged in the 1930s and was part of the New Deal democratization of American culture and a national yearning for stability and harmony in a turbulent era. Jack Delano, an FSA photographer, defined the purpose of the photography project as a “search for the heart of the American people.” He also believed that the sentiment that united the FSA photographers was an effort to register “the pulse of the nation through its people.” Ben Shahn, another FSA photographer, noted that, “the poor who were rich in spirit” maintained “a transcendent indifference to their lot.” The cult of the commoner was that they were poor in substance but rich in spirit. The FSA photographers were beguiled by the “common man” and their photos gave common people voices. Bernarda Shahn recalled her husband’s “glee that these people are so real and are so ordinary, and that in each one, in his ordinariness, is so markedly unique.” William Stott contends that the FSA photographers searched for the “look” that encapsulated adversity, and fortitude, pain and grace. Stryker attributed the birth of the larger FSA photography project to a personal dream to create a pictorial encyclopedia of American agriculture and to preserve what was rapidly disappearing:

- Kinship with nature
- Neighborliness
- The spaciousness of the country

Other commentators have said that the efforts also sought to capture the following:

- The mythos of American yeoman
- A sense of rootedness in the land
- A sense of renewal
- A simpler, safer, peaceful way of life
- The pastoral ideal
- The rugged individualism of the farmer and rural family
- That the individual could rise above disaster
- The individuals have within themselves the qualities to regenerate

Stryker also described the images as “dignity versus despair.” One commentator remarked that, “With haunting permanence, the documentary venture of the 1930s fixed an ambivalent image in place. The dignity of the poor, closest to nature and simple virtue, graces the FSA photographs, but so does the indignation that such poverty should exist in a land of such rich resources.”

There are many photos of individuals. Students can analyze the photographs of individuals and write an essay about the different ways individuals are portrayed. What was the photographer attempting to capture? Was the photographer trying to give a message? Are there different conventional ways of taking a portrait or family photo?

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Posters

During the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration employed artists and designers to make posters, including lithographs, silks screens and woodcuts. The posters were intended to publicize government programs, such as health, safety, education, cultural and community programs. Students can search for posters to pair with photographs to tell a story. Students can describe how they might complement each other and reinforce the theme of a story. There are two excellent sources of posters online: the Library of Congress site, *By the People, For the People, Posters from the WPA 1936-1943* and *Posters for the People*.

By the People, For the People, Posters from the WPA 1936-1943

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaposters/wpahome.html>

Posters for the People

<http://postersforthepeople.com>

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Using Videos about the FSA

Have students watch a documentary about the FSA photographers and write a review of the film after they have done research about the FSA photography project. Are there things they would have included in the documentary? How might they have done a documentary differently? There are three documentaries you could use:

Stryker's America (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2007)

This is a documentary by Laurence Levin, an Indiana School of Journalism graduate. This documentary tells the story of Roy Stryker's photography project. It shows the work of the photographers whom Stryker hired and Stryker's commitment to documenting the life of Americans during the Depression. The documentary includes interviews, footage and photographs from the New Deal to show the work of Stryker's Historical Section and what he contributed to photojournalism.

Back Home Again: FSA Photographers in Indiana (WNIN TV9, 1988)

The film is based on the book *Back Home Again: Indiana in the Farm Security Administration Photographs, 1935-1943* by Robert Reid. The film presents a selection of photographs taken in Indiana and discusses the types of photographs taken in Indiana.

Documenting the Face of America: Roy Stryker and the FSA/OWI Photographers (SCETV, 2007)

This documentary chronicles the story of how FSA photographers worked together and ended up creating a photographic portrait of America. The Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information photographic archive chronicled the economic distress of the Depression era. There is a website that provides additional information about the film at

<http://www.documentingamerica.org>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



What Is in a Sign?

Have students look at the signs included in the photographs taken in Indiana. What do the signs say? What do they advertise? Which of these products can still be bought today? Who is the intended audience? How are signs today different?

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Writing a Newspaper Article

Students can select a photograph and imagine they are a newspaper reporter. Students can write an article that would accompany the photograph if it were to be published in a newspaper. Being a reporter they will need to answer the basic questions that every reporter must address: what, when, where and how. They will also need to think of a headline and caption for the photograph.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Writing a Research Paper

Students can write longer research papers on topics that are found in FSA photographs. Many of the same problems facing people during the Great Depression are present today. They can compare some aspect of the Great Depression to our current economic crisis. In many ways the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* is very reminiscent of the New Deal programs. Described below are some aspects of the Great Depression that students could do further research on and compare to events today. Students can use both FSA photographs and photographs from today to go along with their papers.

Back to the Land Movement

During the Great Depression there developed a whole genre books devoted to explaining how one could leave the city and survive on one's own in rural America, such as *The Retreat from Wall Street* by Edward Parkinson; *Escape from Babylon* by Louise Owen; *A Home for \$130* by Katrina Hinck; *Five Acres and Independence* by Maurice Kain and *Flight from the City* by Ralph Borsodi. Borsodi's book was probably the most famous. Ralph Borsodi was a former advertising executive and social critic and an advocate of the back-to-the-land movement. He spent the earliest years of his life in Manhattan. He never went to public or private school and did not attend college. He was educated mostly by reading in libraries and by his father. In 1920 Borsodi and his family left the city and moved to sixteen wooded acres in Rockland County, NY. They built temporary shelters and settled down to modern "homesteading." They built shelters for chickens, rabbits, goats and pigs and a home for themselves and added a craft area for looms and weaving. They planted and harvested vegetables, as well as berries and fruit. They were 80% self-sufficient in food and cut wood for heat. They built a swimming pool and tennis court, and installed a linotype in their basement. He was interested in ways of living based on self-direction and self-reliance. He experimented on many levels, from building his own home and garden, weaving his clothes and furnishings to organizing experimental small communities, and developing new social institutions, such as the Community Land Trust and a currency he called Constants. He established the School of Living during the winter of 1934-1935. The School was at the center of family homesteads, on a 40-acre plot called Bayard Lane Community. Borsodi initiated the group title to the land, with member families paying annual rent rather than an amount for private ownership.

Bank Foreclosures

The *Federal Reserve Act* was passed in 1913 to regulate interest rates and coordinate a balance between state and federal banks, but about 65% of banks did not join. They were mostly small, under-financed banks run by local leaders more interested in status than competence. There were 3,109 bank failures between 1865 and 1920, 367 in 1922 and 959 in 1929. Between 1923 and 1929, 691 banks failed per year, some 7 times the failure rate in the first 20 years of the century. In 1929 there were about 25,000 banks operating under 52 different regulations. And only about a third belonged to the Federal Reserve. The vast majority of banks only had their own resources. Even in the prosperous 1920s, 7,000 banks failed. Most were small country banks. In 1930 1,352 banks failed. In 1931 2,294 banks failed. Between 1929 and 1932, 5,000 banks failed. From 1921 to 1933 depositors lost on average \$156 million a year. The most spectacular bank failure was the Bank of the United States in New York. It went under with 450,000 depositors. The name was misleading as many thought it was some kind of official bank. 400,000 depositors had \$400 or less on deposit and lost it all. When word spread of the failure, 8,000 depositors lined up at a single branch in the Bronx. By March 4, 1933, 38 states had closed their banks. After Roosevelt's Bank Holiday 12,756 banks, out of 18,290, reopened. As the year went on another 3,000 opened. Some people claim that one of most important achievements of the New Deal was the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The *Banking Act of 1935* brought all state banks in the federal system.

Conservation

FSA planners linked social and environmental goals. They wanted to create permanent agriculture with continuous productivity by adopting improved practices, efficient production and environmental sustainability. And they hoped regional planning would alleviate farm poverty, raise the rural standard of living, modernize farm areas, restore viability of rural living and balance urban and rural America. One of the objectives of the FSA, as well as other agencies, was also conservation. Ultimately, they wanted to expand economic opportunities for rural people through conservation. There were many agencies working to address farm issues and conservation. New Deal conservation projects included reducing soil and seacoast erosion, prevention of steam and river pollution, soil building crops and rotation, reforestation, better land utilization, creating more pasturage, establishing wildlife preserves and building recreational facilities.

Cooperatives

Upton Sinclair wanted to seize idle lands and factories and turn them into farmers' and workers' cooperatives, putting the jobless to work in unused factories and on unused farms. The movement was known as End Poverty in California. He wanted to create what he called "Land Colonies." They would trade what they produced with other EPIC colonies. Collectively, they

would become what he called the “Cooperative Commonwealth.” Sinclair also suggested letting unemployed actors take over abandoned studios to make their own movies. Studio heads were conservative to begin with and Sinclair’s idea did not go over well. An MGM director took a Hearst Metrotone News camera crew up and down the state filming interviews with prospective voters. Some were legitimate, other were staged with bit actors with prepared scripts. Neatly dressed people endorsed Sinclair’s opponent, while unkempt and agitated people with foreign accents endorsed Sinclair. MGM and Fox produced a newsreel showing an army of hobos coming to California for the EPIC colonies. One photograph that showed this migration began to appear on the front pages of newspapers. But it was identified as a still shot from the movie, *Wild Boys on the Road*, supplied to the newspapers by Warner. Newsreels were believed to be nonpartisan, but they were not.

Another cooperative venture was the Diga Colony, founded in 1932 by Maury Maverick, the Mayor of San Antonio. It first started as a relief effort by the city for veterans. The city facilities were not large enough, so he secured land about 5 miles outside the city from Humble Oil Company for a dollar a year and used discarded railway cars from the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Residents numbered 171 in 1933 and were organized along communal lines. Diga was Maverick’s idea, an anagram made up from the words Agricultural and Industrial Democracy. Maverick defined Liberalism as “freedom plus groceries.”

The Unemployment Cooperative Relief Organization in Compton, CA had 500 families in 1932, and eventually grew to 45 units with 150,000 people. It operated a warehouse, distribution center, gas station, refrigeration facility, sewing shop and medical services, all on cooperative principles. Members were expected to work two days per week and benefits were allocated according to need.

The Unemployment Exchange Association in Oakland, CA started in a Hooverville called “Pipe City,” near the East Bay waterfront. An unemployed musician and engineer started going door to door to do repairs for unwanted items. As others joined him, they repaired items and used them in the camp. There were 1,500 members with a thriving economy that included a foundry, machine shop, woodshop, garage, soap factory and print shop. They rebuilt 18 trucks from scrap and distributed 40 tons of food a week. It all worked on a time credit system and all work was paid the same rate. The members called it a “reciprocal economy.”

Crop Improvements

In 1931 the average corn yield per acre was 24 bushels, the same as it had been since the Civil War. By 1941 it was 31 bushels per acre and by 1981 it was 110 bushels. This was a result, in part, of hybrid seed, of which Henry Wallace, the Secretary of Agriculture during the Great Depression, had started as the Pioneer Hi-Bred Company in 1926. In the Corn Belt, only 1% of

the yield came from hybrid seed in 1933. By 1943 it was 78%. In Iowa, the use of hybrid seed went from less than 1% in 1933 to 99.5% ten years later. Most corn up to that time was Reid Yellow Dent, which won a gold medal at the Chicago's World Fair in 1893. It was the Midwestern ideal. Agricultural organizations and institutions sponsored "corn shows" at which ears were judged by appearance. Judging corn became a fine art, with a perfect ear of corn at 10 ½ inches long and 7 ½ inches in circumference. It should have 20-22 straight rows of plump, wide, keystone shaped kernels with no evidence of shrinkage or blistering. Of course this had nothing to do with yield. One of Wallace's salesmen would give farmers enough hybrid seed to plant half a field alongside the corn he was already growing. At harvest, the salesman would be entitled to ½ of the increased yield produced by the hybrid seed. It would usually take a few years at most to convince a farmer to use hybrid corn seed.

Gardens

Gardens were another way people supplemented their food. In Kansas, 63 of 78 counties had garden plans by 1933. By the end of 1933 there were more than 12,000 backyard garden plots or vacant lots in Kansas and 15,000 a year later. Relief clients could get free seeds only after a family filed a subsistence garden project that had been approved by the county agricultural agent. All participating families were expected to be involved with educational programs on cultivation, canning, and preserving food. Many large corporations provided garden space for its employees, including Standard Oil, Studebaker, B.F. Goodrich, U.S. Steel and Ford. Henry Ford sponsored 50,000 gardens in the Detroit area. In 1932 he announced that no employee at his plant at Iron Mountain, Michigan could retain his job unless he grew a garden, thus they were called "shotgun gardens." Detroit's vacant lot garden project goes back to the 1890s, when Mayor Hazen Pingree started the "Pingree Potato Patch Plan," providing vacant lots for urban homesteading. Ford also designed and established 19 decentralized village factories outside Dearborn. These small-scale factories employed anywhere from twenty to a thousand workers at a time, while hundreds of thousands worked at River Rouge. The plan was to allow workers in these villages to retain their factory jobs while they also tended their own small subsistence farms and to create new kinds of communities that combined the best of the city and countryside.

Mortgages

Before the New Deal only about 4 in 10 Americans lived in their own homes. In the 1920s homeowners usually paid cash for a house or a large down payment of not less than 30%, but as high as 35%. Mortgages usually had 5-10 year maturity and as high as 8% interest, well above market rates. In 1931 home construction had fallen to only 5% of 1929 numbers. In 1932 273,000 home mortgages were foreclosed, almost four times the normal rate. It doubled again in 1933 and new home construction was still only 10% of the 1929 level. By the spring of 1933 more than half of all home mortgages were technically in default and foreclosures reached 1000

a day. The Federal Housing Administration, created as part of the National Housing Act of 1934, changed mortgages to down payments of 10% and 30 year maturity.

Townsend Plan

There are only three photos in the entire FSA photo collection that refer to Townsend Clubs. There is a photo of a Townsend Club headquarters and another of a Townsend Club sign in a car. The third is a photo taken in Indiana of a Townsend Club member, reading the *Townsend National Weekly*. In 1936 the *Townsend National Weekly* was earning a quarter of a million dollars a year in advertising fees. Dr. Frances Everett Townsend was the son of a farmer from Fairbury, Illinois. He wrote a letter in 1933 to a Long Beach, California newspaper about three women going through garbage cans looking for food. He was 67 at the time and broke. He advocated the establishment of a government sponsored old age pension plan. He proposed that the federal government give every person over 60 a monthly pension of \$150 (later increased to \$200). It was called the Old Age Revolving Pension Plan, commonly referred to as the Townsend Plan. The recipients would be required to spend it within a month. It would be an economic stimulus to revive the nation's economy. The plan would be financed by a federal tax of 2% on all sales, wholesale and retail. There were about 15 to 20 million Americans over 60 at the time. Townsend made the cover of *Newsweek* magazine. In 1935, the 4,550 Townsend Clubs had over 5 million members. It held its first convention in Chicago with 7,000 delegates from all 50 states. In 1935 he handed to President Roosevelt a petition signed by over 20 million people. Townsend spoke at the State Fairgrounds in September 1935. The lieutenant governor, mayor of Indianapolis and other political dignitaries formed a welcoming party. He drew an audience of tens of thousands. The main criticism of the plan was that the taxes would not be enough to pay for the pensions. This did have an effect on FDR and the Congress, as the Social Security Act was passed in 1935. Townsend continued to advocate for higher benefits after the Act's passage. The average Old Age Assistant benefit was \$20 as late as 1939, and Social Security did not start immediate payments. The movement did spur amendments to the Act in 1939. It was not until the 1950s that Social Security payments outpaced welfare benefits.

There are many other subjects that students can research, comparing the Great Depression with circumstances today. Below are listed just a few such topics:

Canning and food preservation

Community development

Drought

Erosion

Farm aid

Farm auctions

Farm bills in Congress

Farm foreclosures

Floods
Food safety
Home economics
Job creation
Local food
New farm technologies
Poverty
Recreation
Relief
Scarcity
Social Security
Suburbia
Sustainable agriculture
Tenancy
Tractors

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Writing a Shooting Script

Roy Stryker was extremely good at getting the best out of his photographers. Before going out on assignments, each photographer was encouraged to learn as much about the area as possible. They consulted J. Russell's socio-economic geography book *North America*, maps, government pamphlets, and magazines such as *Look*, *Life*, *Harper's* and *Atlantic*. While Stryker did not tell his photographers how to shoot their photos, he did give them lists of themes, such as meeting places, small towns, industry, etc. He briefed them on their assignments before sending them out, giving them detailed instructions, or so called "shooting "scripts." He also wrote many letters, memos, and notes to his photographers. For example, on Jan. 14, 1936, Stryker wrote to Dorothea Lange the following:

"As you are driving along through the agricultural area and if you can do it without much extra effort, would you take a few shots of various types of farm activities such as your picture showing the lettuce workers? I think Dr. Tugwell would be very appreciative of photographs of this sort to be used as illustrative material for some things which the Department of Agriculture is working on. I would not want you to take much time to do this, but of the various types of agricultural activity in the area I think it would be very much worthwhile."

Students can examine the shooting scripts Stryker wrote and write their own detailed shooting scripts. If they were sending photographers out to capture America now, what would they include in their shooting scripts and memos?

There are other examples shooting scripts in the Curriculum Guide, "*This Great Nation Will Endure*": *Photographs of the Great Depression*, produced by the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. You can download a PDF of this guide from the FDR Presidential Library and Museum at <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/pdfs/fsa.pdf>.

Indiana Farm Security Photographs



Writing a Speech

After students have done some reading and research about the Farm Security Administration and the New Deal, have them write a short speech of five minutes that supports or opposes the work, or a specific program, of the Farm Security Administration. Students should also incorporate FSA photographs into their presentation. Teachers can work with students on what constitutes a good speech and the how a good speech is structured and organized. Have the students give their speeches.