

Stunning Rare Photographs of Manzanar by Ansel Adams: A Glimpse into History

The name Ansel Adams is synonymous with breathtaking landscape photography, but his lesser-known collection of photographs taken at Manzanar during the Japanese American internment in World War II is a powerful and haunting testament to this dark chapter in history.

The Forgotten Story of Manzanar

Manzanar, located in California's Owens Valley, served as one of the ten internment camps where over 120,000 Japanese Americans were forcibly relocated during the war. Under Executive Order 9066, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, innocent citizens were stripped of their rights, possessions, and dignity.

The purpose of Adams' visit to Manzanar in 1943 was to document the living conditions and daily life of those held captive behind barbed wire fences. Despite the government censorship banning any images that depicted the internment camps in a negative light, Adams managed to capture the true essence of the residents' experiences.

Photographs of Manzanar



Ansel Adams

Photographs of Manzanar by Ansel Adams (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 22216 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 248 pages
Lending : Enabled



An Unlikely Collaboration

Adams' involvement in photographing Manzanar was not by chance. As a close friend of the camp's director, Adams obtained special permission to document the internment camp. His images were intended to humanize the Japanese American population, challenging the prevalent misconceptions and biases held by many Americans at the time.

Adams' attention to detail and masterful composition are evident in his Manzanar photographs. Each image tells a story, capturing the everyday struggles, resilience, and courage of those confined within the camp's confines.

The Manzanar Collection: A Journey Through Time

Adams' Manzanar collection consists of over 200 photographs, each providing a unique glimpse into the lives of the interned Japanese Americans. The subjects range from candid portraits to scenes of everyday activities, revealing the humanity and strength of the individuals caught in this tragic chapter of American history.

The photographs evoke deep emotions, transporting viewers to a time when innocent families were unjustly imprisoned solely based on their ethnic background. Adams' sharp eye captured the resilience and dignity of these individuals, igniting an empathy that should never be forgotten.

Ansel Adams: A Legacy Preserved

Thanks to the foresight of Adams, his Manzanar collection has been preserved and continues to educate and inspire. The stark black-and-white images serve as

a reminder of the importance of acknowledging past injustices and fighting for a more inclusive future.

Through exhibitions, publications, and educational programs, the photographs of Manzanar remain powerful tools for outreach and awareness. They prompt conversations on the impact of prejudice, the fragility of civil rights, and the necessity of standing up for justice.

The Significance Today

Decades have passed since Adams' visit to Manzanar, yet the relevance of his photographs remains as strong as ever. As society grapples with issues surrounding race, immigration, and civil liberties, these images serve as a timeless reminder of the repercussions of unchecked fear and prejudice.

By acknowledging and confronting the dark chapters of our past, we can strive for a more empathetic and inclusive future. The importance of preserving and sharing the photographs of Manzanar by Ansel Adams is not only a tribute to the victims of internment but a call to action for the generations to come.

Ansel Adams' photographs of Manzanar capture the essence of a time when Japanese American citizens were unjustly stripped of their rights and humanity. Through his lens, Adams tells the stories of resilience and courage, reminding us of the power of empathy and the necessity of fighting against injustice.

The Manzanar collection serves as an invaluable historical record and a haunting reminder of the consequences of unfounded fear and prejudice. These photographs must continue to be shared and preserved so that future generations can learn from the mistakes of the past and strive for a more inclusive and compassionate tomorrow.

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Manzanar was one of ten relocation centers formed by an executive order issued by President Roosevelt in early 1942, just a few months after the attack on Pearl Harbor. About 110,000 people of Japanese descent were interned in these camps; of those, over 60% were native born American citizens. There were no charges of disloyalty, no trials, and no hearings. While the internment is almost universally recognized today as unjust, at the time it was strongly supported by most Americans, especially on the west coast. In 1983 a commission established by the US Congress called the internment "unjust and motivated by racism rather than real military necessity" and reparations were paid. The US Supreme Court never explicitly ruled the internment unconstitutional.

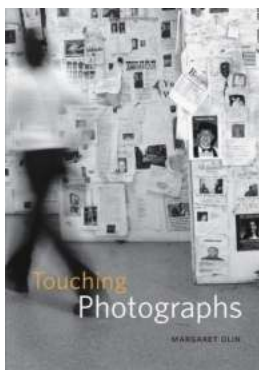
The following is from the Library of Congress website:

"In 1943, Ansel Adams (1902-1984) photographed the Manzanar War Relocation Center at the suggestion of its director, his good friend and fellow Sierra Club member, Ralph Merritt. Adams wanted to contribute to the war effort while at the same time show the loyalty of the Japanese-Americans interned at Manzanar, located in Inyo County, California, approximately 200 miles northeast of Los Angeles. In 1944, some of these images were published in [Adams's] book Born

Free and Equal. The book had a limited circulation, perhaps due to the political climate of war-time America. When offering the collection to the Library, Adams said in a letter, 'All in all, I think this Manzanar Collection is an important historical document, and I trust it can be put to good use...The purpose of my work was to show how these people, suffering under a great injustice, and loss of property, businesses and professions, had overcome the sense of defeat and despair by building for themselves a vital community in an arid (but magnificent) environment.'

"Beginning in 1965, Adams gave 241 original negatives and 209 photographic prints to the Library. Adams printed the photographs in the 1960's. By this time, his outstanding darkroom style produced prints with rich tonalities. The Library's Duplication Services does not attempt to duplicate [Adams's] printing style. Adams often cropped his images and his prints are frequently much darker than those printed by the Library's Duplication Services, so patrons ordering prints will not receive ones exactly as Adams would have printed them."

There are 244 images in this collection on the LoC site, and all of them appear in this book, along with his original captions (complete with misspellings). The notation "[in book]" at the end of a caption indicates that the image was in Born Free and Equal.



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ANSEL ADAMS

The Camera



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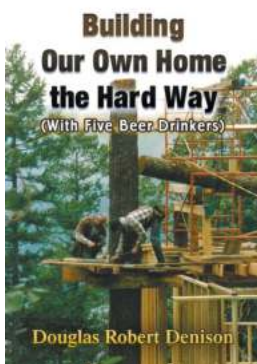
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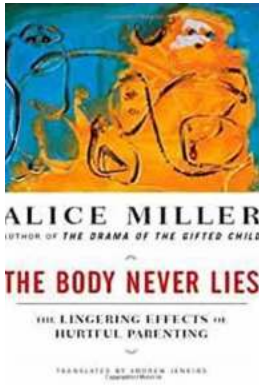
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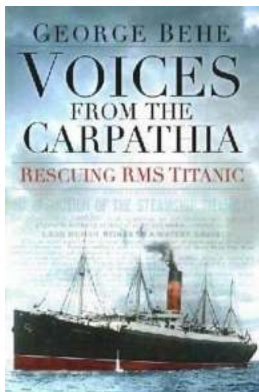
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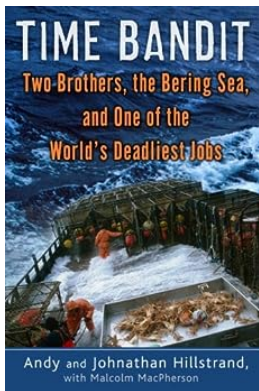
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