

Dorothea Lange

“The good photograph is not the object, the consequences of the photograph are the objects.”

Dorothea Lange, one of America's greatest photographers, was born in Hoboken, New Jersey, in 1895. She was stricken with polio as a young girl, giving her a limp which she believed heightened her sensitivity to the suffering of others. From 1917-1919, she studied photography at Columbia University, which led her to a job as a studio photographer.

Dorothea soon became concerned with the conditions in which people were living during the Great Depression and, from that concern, she began photographing people on the street. From 1935 to 1942, Dorothea photographed migrant workers, share croppers, tenant farmers, and other downtrodden individuals, wanting to make their plight known. She teamed up with Paul Taylor, whom she later married, and together they worked for the California Rehabilitation Administration. Their example of concern and compassion for the nation's poor was partly responsible for the creation of the photographic unit of the Federal Resettlement Administration and brought the tragic realities of life to the attention of the government. Her photographs were so powerful, the government actually hired her to take pictures for the Office of War Information during World War II.

After the war, poor health made Dorothea inactive until 1951, when she began conducting seminars and photography conferences. Before dying of cancer in 1965, she had the opportunity to travel the world with her husband, photographing people from many different nations. Since her death, Dorothea has been honored for her courage and integrity in various art exhibits all over the nation. She fought for the rights of the nation's poor and was a tremendous example of strength and compassion to all people.