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Daring to Look: Dorothea Lange's Photographs and Reports from the Field

Anne Whiston Spirn

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Daring to Look presents never-before-published photos and captions from Dorothea Lange's fieldwork in California, the Pacific Northwest, and North Carolina during 1939. Lange's images of squatter camps, benighted farmers, and stark landscapes are stunning, and her captions—which range from simple explanations of settings to historical notes and biographical sketches—add unexpected depth, bringing her subjects and their struggles unforgettably to life, often in their own words.

When Lange was dismissed from the Farm Security Administration at the end of 1939, these photos and field notes were consigned to archives, where they languished, rarely seen. With *Daring to Look*, Anne Whiston Spirn not only returns them to the public eye, but sets them in the context of Lange's pioneering life, work, and struggle for critical recognition—firmly placing Lange in her rightful position at the forefront of American photography.

"A thoughtful and meticulously researched account of Lange's career. . . . Spirn, a photographer herself, traces Lange's path, visiting her locations and subjects in a fascinating series of 'then and now' shots."—*Publishers Weekly*

"Dorothea Lange has long been regarded as one of the most brilliant photographic witnesses we have ever had to the peoples and landscapes of America, but until now no one has fully appreciated the richness with which she wove images together with words to convey her insights about this nation. We are lucky indeed that Anne Whiston Spirn, herself a gifted photographer and writer, has now recovered Lange's field notes and woven them into a rich tapestry of texts and images to help us reflect anew on Lange's extraordinary body of work."—William Cronon, author of *Nature's Metropolis*

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