



# Walker Evans: Decade by Decade

*James Crump*

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Walker Evans (1903-1975) is, without doubt, one of the most influential American photographers ever, and many of his images have become fixed in the collective memory. But while Evans' uncompromising depiction of poverty during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the subject of a series commissioned by the Farm Security Administration, has become a key chapter in the history of photography, his equally innovative images from later decades have generally commanded less attention. This exciting new monograph attempts to redress the balance by examining Evans' complete body of work, and features many rarely seen photographs, including his final works, a sequence of Polaroids shot in the early 1970s (a sequence made possible by an unlimited supply of film from its manufacturer). Evans' re-ascendancy in the 1970s, and his close relationship with legendary Museum of Modern Art curator John Szarkowski, are also closely examined, in this essential and definitive volume on a great photographer who certainly achieved his aim to produce pictures that were "literate, authoritative, transcendent." Born in St. Louis, Missouri, **Walker Evans** (1903-1975) took up photography in 1928. His book collaboration with James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), which portrayed the lives of three white tenant families in southern Alabama during the Depression, has become one of that era's most defining documents. Evans joined the staff of *Time* magazine in 1945, and shortly after moved to *Fortune* magazine, where he stayed until 1965. That year, he became a professor of photography at the Yale University School of Art. Evans died at his home in Old Lyme, Connecticut, in 1975.

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