Finding aid for the Ansel Adams (1902-1984) collection, 1939

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Finding aid for the Ansel Adams (1902-1984) collection, 1939
Dates: 1902-1984, 1939
Collection Number: GPC Box 11
Extent: One box in collection, 0.5 linear feet.
Repository: Los Angeles Public Library
Los Angeles, California 90071
Abstract: The Ansel Adams Collection is a collection of images (prints & negatives) commissioned by Fortune Magazine around 1939 for a story about the aviation history of Los Angeles. It consists of 217 images portraying businesses, street scenes, aerospace employees, and everyday life in Los Angeles. Only a few of the images were printed in the article, 'City of Angels,' which appeared in the March 1941 issue of Fortune. Includes photographs of Cole Weston and his wife.
Language of Material: English
Access
This collection is stored on-site at the Central branch of the Los Angeles Public Library. It is closed for research. Photograph collections may be browsed, digitally, via the Los Angeles Public Library website at http://photos.lapl.org/carlweb/jsp/photosearch_pageADV.jsp
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Preferred Citation
Finding aid for the Ansel Adams (1902-1984) collection, 1939. Los Angeles Public Library
Acquisition Information
Sold to the Library by Ansel Adams, c. 1960.
Biography/Administrative History
Fortune magazine commissioned Ansel Adams around 1939 to take photographs of Los Angeles for an article about the regions aviation history entitled City of Angels. For the assignment Adams made 217 photographs of Los Angeles, its daily and business life, street scenes and aerospace employees. Only a few of the images were printed in the article, which ran in the March, 1941 issue of the magazine. In the early 1960’s, after finding the photographs among his papers at his home in Carmel, Adams contacted the Los Angeles Public Library regarding their interest in receiving the collection as a donation. In his letter, Adams expressed disappointment in the quality of the photographs due to the weather, and the value of the images in general. He suggested that they “represent about $100.00 minimum value” and that if unwanted, they be destroyed. The Los Angeles Public Library accepted the gift of 135 contact prints and 217 2.25 black and white negatives, placing the collection value at $150.00. Born in San Francisco in 1902, Ansel Adams became one of the best-known photographers and dedicated conservationists of the 20th century. In 1939 Adams, along with Edward Weston, founded the f/64 group of photographers. He was the recipient of three Guggenheim fellowships to photograph national parks (1944-1958) and served on the Sierra Club board from 1934 to 1971. Adams died on April 22nd, 1984.
Scope and Content of Collection
This small collection consists of 217 photographs taken by Ansel Adams on commission by Fortune Magazine in 1940. It covers Los Angeles' daily life, cityscapes, aerospace employees and some images of Cole Weston (son of Edward Weston) and his wife Dorothy. The collection represents a departure from Adams' typical subject matter and offers a unique look at how the photographer handled an urban milieu for commercial purpose.
Indexing Terms
Lockheed Aircraft Corporation
Streets--California--Los Angeles
Burbank (Los Angeles County, Calif.)
Los Angeles (Calif.)
Wilshire Boulevard (Los Angeles, Calif.)
San Vicente Boulevard (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Ansel Adams Fortune Magazine Collection Photographs

Finding Aid for the Ansel Adams Collection