

# Finding Aid for the

Ansel Adams (1902-1984) Collection, 1939

Los Angeles Public Library, <Department>



Los Angeles, California

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## **Descriptive Summary**

### **Title**

Ansel Adams (1902-1984), 1939

### **Collection Number**

GPC Box 11

### **Extent**

One Box in Collection, .5 linear feet.

### **Repository**

The Los Angeles Public Library. History and Genealogy / Rare Books  
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.

### **Physical Location**

135 original contact prints and 217 negatives are stored in the Rare Books department on the third floor of Central Library and by appointment on a case-by-case basis. Copy prints are housed in the "cold storage" room on LL4 of Central Library.

## **Administrative Information**

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### **Restrictions on 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](http://photos.lapl.org/carlweb/jsp/photosearch_pageADV.jsp)

### **Provenance/Source of Acquisition**

Sold to the Library by Ansel Adams, c. 1960.

### **Preferred Citation**

[Item], <Collection Name>. Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles California, Ansel Adams Collection.

### **Biography/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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1984.

### **Scope and Content**

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.

## **Organization and Arrangement**

The collection was arranged and numbered by a librarian of LAPL. Unfortunately no notation or description exists to explain the process behind the organization. The original negatives and contact prints are stored in the Rare Books area of the Central Library, while a number of prints made for use are stored in the cold storage room on LL4 in the History and Genealogy department. The negatives have been hand numbered by the librarian in accordance with the filing system established by the library in the early 1980's after receiving a large collection from the Security Pacific National Bank (S prefix). One small sub-set of images seem to have been set aside for wider use and numbered using a different system (utilizing the N prefix) and have been labeled on the sleeves with additional indexing terms. Until recently the negatives were interfiled with the other negatives in the photo collection.

## **Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

## **Container List**

Note: This is a list of publicly available copy prints. Original negatives and contact prints are housed in the Rare Books section.

### **Box 11 – (GPC-b11)**

- *Folder 1 (GPC-b11-f1)* – Contains items numbered i1 to i40, bw copy prints for use. Includes images of Olympic Trailer Court (2121 Bundy Dr.) and 3655 Wilshire Blvd. (with Temple in bkgnd).
- *Folder 2 (GPC-b11-f2)* – Contains items numbered i1 to i40, bw copy prints for use. Includes images of Olympic Trailer Court (2121 Bundy Dr.), images of Cole and Dorothy Weston "8 miles from Lockheed", newsstand, gas station, and parking lot all presumed to be near Lockheed.
- *Folder 3 (GPC-b11-f3)* – Contains items numbered i1 to i40, bw copy prints for use. Includes images of the corner of Beverly & Crescent Heights, 8328 Wilshire Blvd. (corner of Wilshire & Tower), corner of 30<sup>th</sup> & Ocean Park Blvd., Betty Mack's Barn, and Cape Cod Cottage.
- *Folder 4 (GPC-b11-f4)* – Contains items numbered i1 to i42, bw copy prints for use. Includes images of 8844 Wilshire Blvd., 9134 Wilshire Blvd., Fluoroscopy (6630 Sunset), House of Westmore (6638 Sunset), 6633 Sunset Blvd., 12728 Washington Blvd., 5017 Sunset Blvd.

- *Folder 5 (GPC-b11-f5)* – Contains items numbered i1 to i39, bw copy prints for use. Includes images of 8801 Wilshire Blvd., downtown LA from top of Court Flight, Corner of Temple & Hill, image from top of Hill Street Tunnel between 1<sup>st</sup> & Court, Owl Drugs on SW corner of Broadway & Hill.
- *Folder 6 (GPC-b11-f6)* – Contains items numbered i1 to i16, bw copy prints for use. Images of Burbank Bowl, 430 San Fernando Rd. (with Cole and Dorothy Weston) and 5800 Sunset Blvd. (old Warner Bros. Studio).